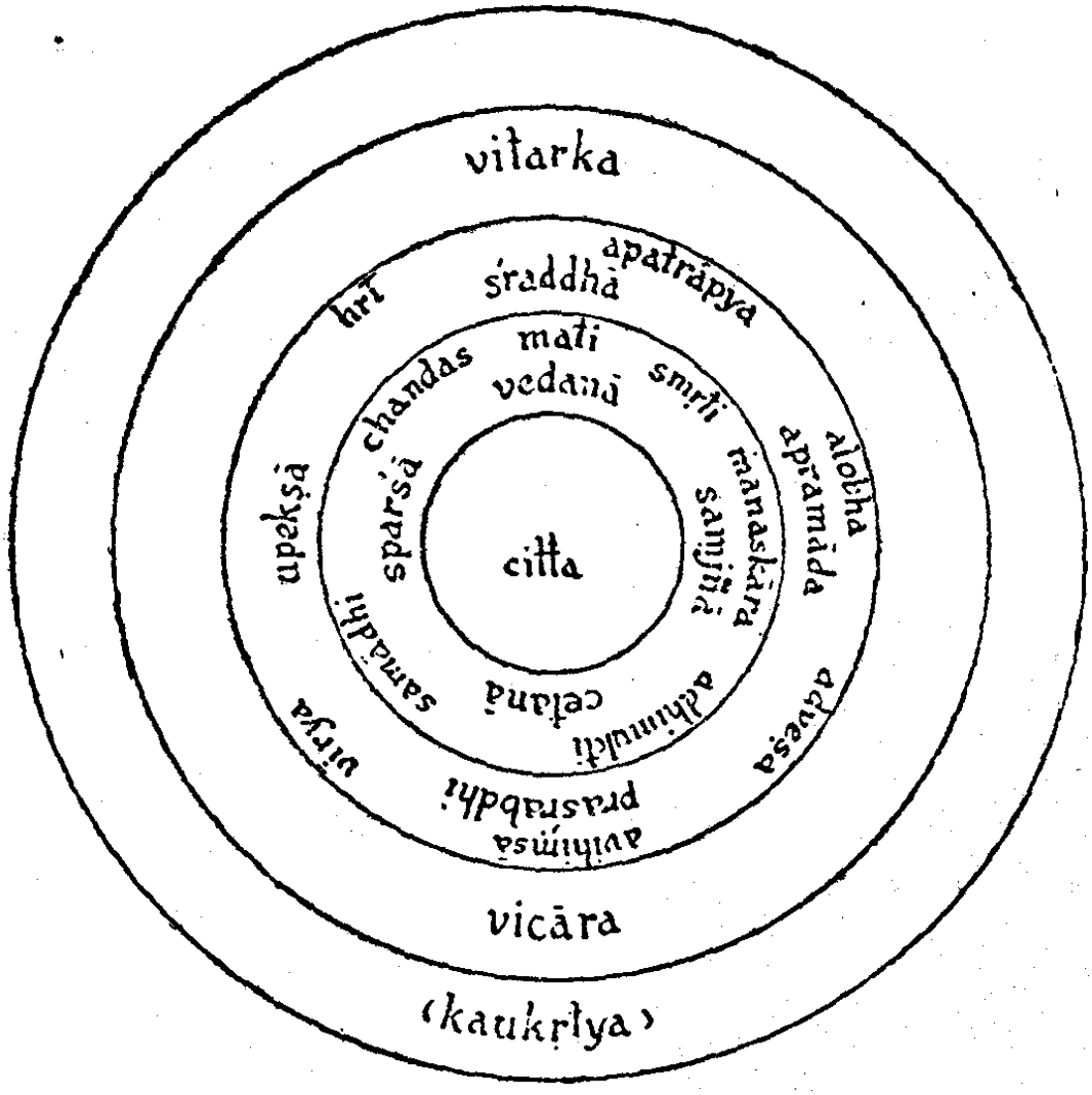
LOOKING AT MIND

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND AS THE BASIS FOR THE PATH

A Sourcebook of Readings



The Structure of Mind according to the Abhidharmakosa

RIME SHEDRA CHANTS

ASPIRATION

In order that all sentient beings may attain Buddhahood,
From my heart I take refuge in the three jewels.

This was composed by Mipham. Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee

MANJUSHRI SUPPLICATION

Whatever the virtues of the many fields of knowledge
All are steps on the path of omniscience.
May these arise in the clear mirror of intellect.
O Manjushri, please accomplish this.

This was specially composed by Mangala (Dilgo Khyentse Rinpoche). Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee

DEDICATION OF MERIT

By this merit may all obtain omniscience
May it defeat the enemy, wrong doing.
From the stormy waves of birth, old age, sickness and death,
From the ocean of samsara, may I free all beings

By the confidence of the golden sun of the great east
May the lotus garden of the Rigden's wisdom bloom,
May the dark ignorance of sentient beings be dispelled.
May all beings enjoy profound, brilliant glory.

Translated by the Nalanda Translation Committee

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Understanding the Mind as the Basis for the Path

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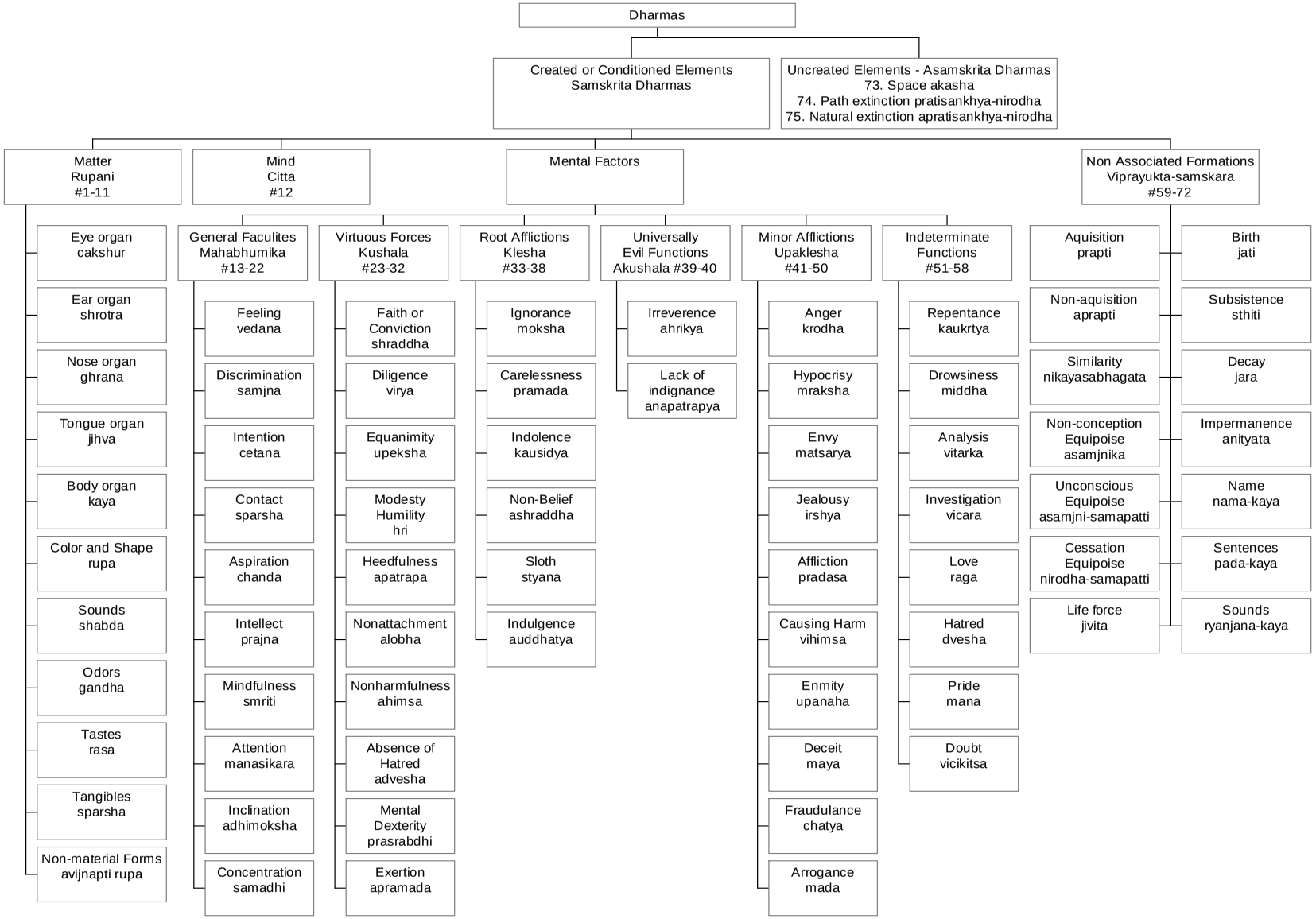

Looking at Mind

Understanding the Mind as the Basis for the Path

An Advanced Buddhist Studies/Rime Shedra Course

Nine Tuesdays from May 19th through July 21 (omitting June 9)

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ABHIDHARMA: THE NATURE OF MIND AND EMOTIONS

Central circle: *citta*, mind, basic knowing. Here depicted as a mirror.

First ring: first group of *cetasika* or mental functions. These five are **omnipresent**, which means that they arise simultaneously with mind in every fraction of a second.

1. *vedanā*, feeling, the second skandha (tshor-ba)
2. *saṃjñā*, perception, discernment, sensation, the third skandha ('du-shes)
3. *cetanā*, intention, drive, the first and leader of all fourth skandha activity (sems-pa)
4. *sparśa*, contact, totality of a given situation (reg-pa)
5. *manaskāra*, attention, ego-centric demandingness (yid-la-byed-pa)

Second ring: second group of mental functions which also arise in every moment of experience, but differ from the first because they are **object-ascertaining**, which means they are the aspects of mental functions which focus on an object.

1. *chanda*, aspiration, desire, interest ('dun-pa)
2. *adhimokṣa*, appreciation, inclination, intensified interest (mos-pa)
3. *smṛti*, recollection, inspection, mindfulness (dran-pa)
4. *samādhi*, concentration, absorption (ting-nge-'dzin)
5. *prajñā*, intelligence, discrimination, penetrating insight (shes-rab)

Outside rings: What appears in the outside rings varies from moment to moment in our stream of experiencing. There are the following choices, and there cannot be a mixture of these kinds of choices in a single moment of experience.

A. Perceptual experience: In a moment of sensory experience, the faculty and the sense-field dharmas will appear on the outer rim, for example, faculty of sight and object of sight. These, however, are not counted among the 51 mental factors.

B. Wholesome mental factors: These arise with one function as primary and the other ten serving as background functions.

1. *śraddhā*, faith, confidence-respect (dad-pa)
2. *hrī*, self-respect (ngo-tsha)
3. *apatrāpya*, consideration for others, decorum (khrel-yod-pa)
4. *alobha*, detachment, non-cupidity, passionlessness (ma chags-pa)
5. *adveśa*, non-hatred, non-antipathy (zhe-sdang med-pa)
6. *amoha*, non-bewilderment, non-delusion (gti-mug med-pa)
7. *vīrya*, enthusiasm, exertion (brtson-'grus)
8. *praśrabdhi*, suppleness, absence of strain (shin-tu sbyangs-pa)
9. *apramāda*, conscientiousness, vigilence (bag-yod)
10. *upekṣa*, equanimity (btang-snyoms)
11. *ahiṃsa*, non-violence (rnam-par-mi-'tshe'ba)

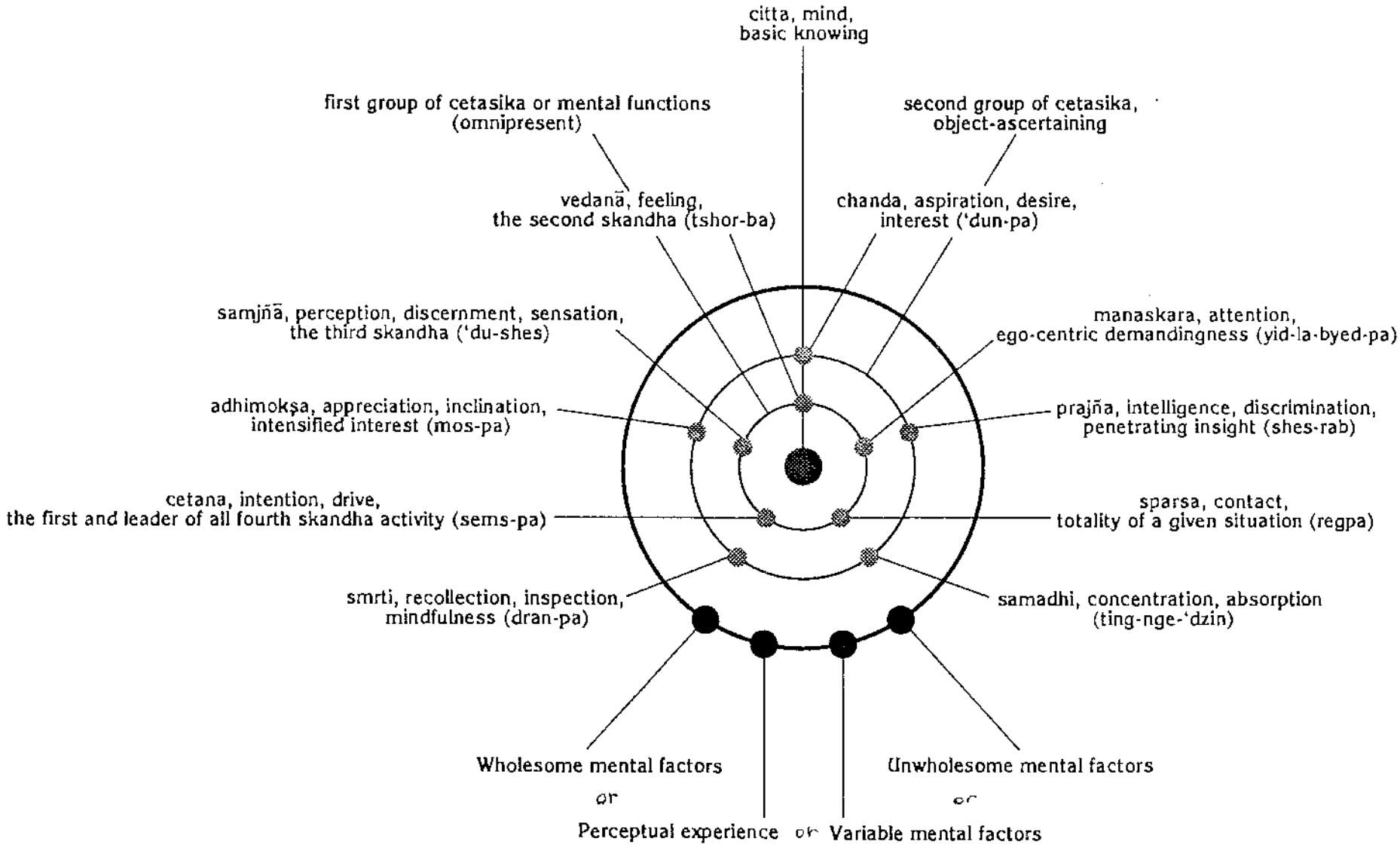
C. Unwholesome emotions, the Klesas: First are the root klesas, then the derivative klesas. The order of the root klesas differs in different presentations.

1. *rāga* or *lobha*, attaachment, cupidity, passion ('dod-chags)
2. *pratighā* or *dveśa*, anger, antipathy, aggression (khong-khro)
3. *māna*, self-importance, conceitedness, arrogance (nga-rgyal)
4. *avidyā* or *moha*, ignorance, bewilderment (ma-rig-pa)
5. *vicikitsā*, afflicted indecision, doubt (the-tshoms)
6. *dṛṣṭi*, afflicted views, opinionatedness (lta-ba)

The derivative klesas are elaborations of the root klesas, with combinations of the root klesas in the recipe, in many cases. Again, the order of the presentation differs in various sources.

1. *krodha*, wrath (kro-ba)
2. *upanāha*, vengeance, resentment (khon du 'dzin-pa)
3. *pradāsa*, spite ('tshig-pa)
4. *irṣya*, envy, jealousy (phrag-dog)
5. *vihiṃsa*, cruelty, malice (rnam-par 'tshe-ba)
6. *mātsarya*, avarice, parsimony (ser-sna)
7. *māda*, self-satisfaction, pride, mental inflation (rgyags-pa)
8. *auddhatya*, excitement, restlessness, ebullience (rgod-pa)
9. *mrakṣa*, concealment, slyness ('chab-pa)
10. *styāna*, dullness, low-spiritness, gloominess (rmugs-pa)
11. *aśraddhya*, faithlessness, lack of trust, unbelief (ma-dad-pa)
12. *kausīdya*, laziness, sloth (le-lo)
13. *musitasmṛtitā*, forgetfulness, lack of mindfulness (brjed ngas-pa)
14. *vikṣepa*, inattentiveness (shes-pa bzhin ma yin)
15. *māyā*, pretension, deceit (sgyu)
16. *śaṭhya*, dishonesty, faudulence (gyo)
17. *ahrī*, shamelessness, lack of self-respect (ngo-tsha med-pa)
18. *anapatrāpya*, inconsideration for others, lack of decorum (khrel med-pa)
19. *pramāda*, unconscientiousness, unconcern, negligence (bag-med)
20. *asaṃprajñā*, distraction, desultoriness, non-discernment (rnam-pa gyeng-ba)

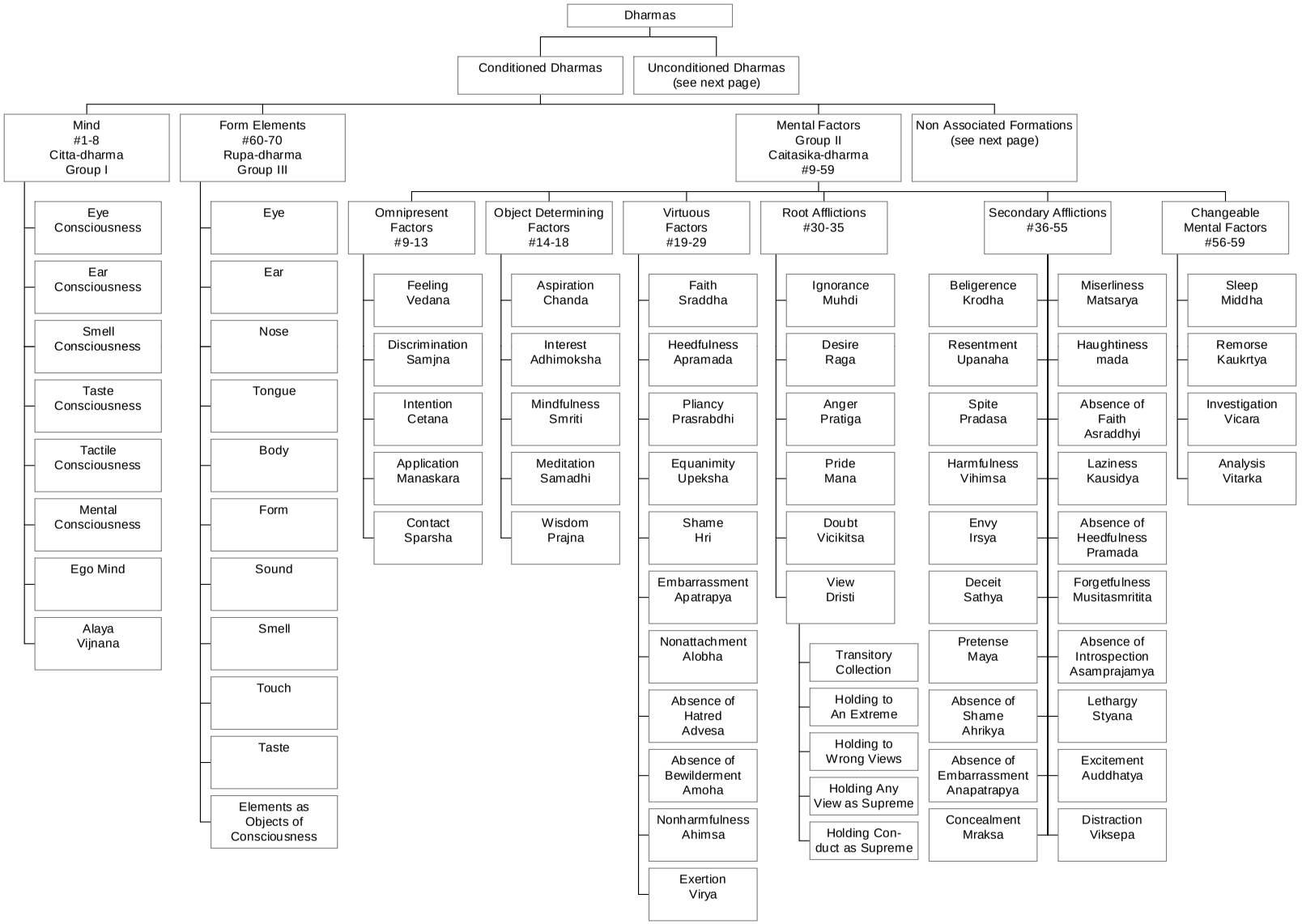
Mind and its Functions — The Basic Mandala*



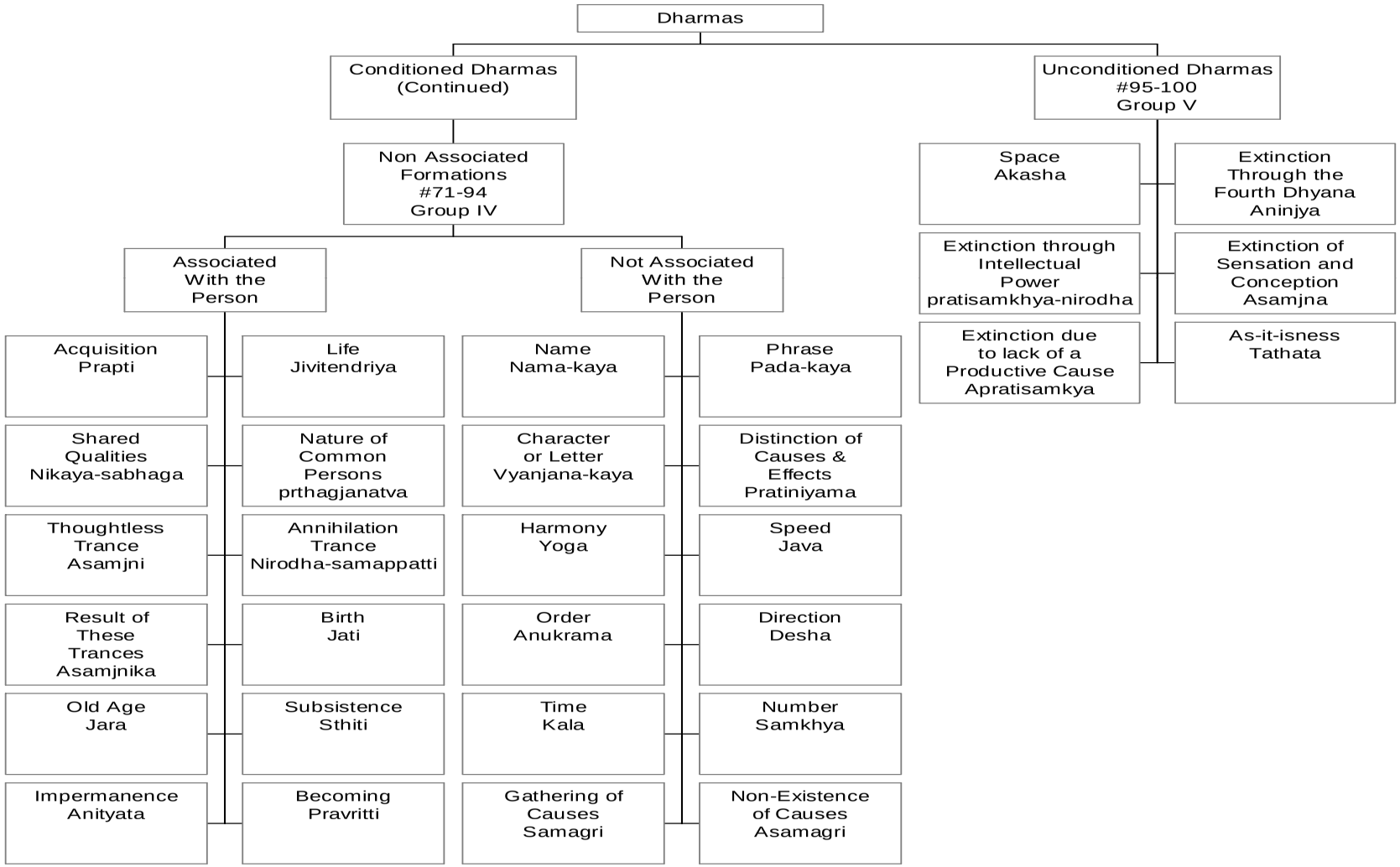
Sources:
a. Sanskrit
b. Geshe Rabten's *Mind and Its Functions*
c. Herbert Guenther's *Philosophy and Psychology of the Abhidharma*
and from *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*
d. other general translations
(Takakusu's *Essentials of Buddhist Philosophy)*
e. Tibetan, derived from Guenther's *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*

* from the Abhidharmasamuccaya

The 100 Dharmas - Part I



The 100 Dharmas – Part II



The Quest for Consciousness

A Neurobiological Approach

CHRISTOF KOCH

ROBERTS AND COMPANY PUBLISHERS
Englewood, Colorado

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction to the Study of Consciousness

Consciousness is what makes the mind-body problem really intractable... Without consciousness the mind-body problem would be much less interesting. With consciousness it seems hopeless.

From *What Is It Like to Be a Bat?* by Thomas Nagel

In Thomas Mann's unfinished novel, *Confessions of Felix Krull, Confidence Man*, Professor Kuckuck comments to the Marquis de Venosta on the three fundamental and mysterious stages of creation. Foremost is the creation of something—namely, the universe—out of nothing. The second act of genesis is the one that begat life from inorganic, dead matter. The third mysterious act is the birth of consciousness[1] and conscious beings, beings that can reflect upon themselves, out of organic matter. Humans and at least some animals not only detect light, move their eyes, and perform other actions, but also have "feelings" associated with these events. This remarkable feature of the world cries out for an explanation. Consciousness remains one of the key puzzles confronting the scientific worldview.

1.1 | WHAT NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED?

Throughout recorded history, men and women have wondered how we can see, smell, reflect upon ourselves, and remember. How do these sensations arise? The fundamental question at the heart of the mind-body problem is, *what is the relation between the conscious mind and the electro-chemical interactions*

[1]The word consciousness derives from the Latin *conscientia*, composed of *cum* (with or together) and *scire* (to know). Until the early 17th century, consciousness was used in the sense of moral knowledge of right or wrong, what is today referred to as *conscience*.

in the body that give rise to it?[2] How do the salty taste and crunchy texture of potato chips, the unmistakable smell of dogs after they have been in the rain, or the feeling of hanging on tiny fingerholds on a cliff a couple of meters above the last secure foothold, emerge from networks of neurons? These sensory qualities, the building blocks of conscious experience, have traditionally been called *qualia*. The puzzle is, how can a physical system have qualia?

Furthermore, why is a particular quale the way it is and not different? Why does red look the way it does, quite distinct from the sensation of seeing blue? These are not abstract, arbitrary symbols; they represent something *meaningful* to the organism. Philosophers talk about the mind's capacity to represent or to be *about* things. How meaning arises from electrical activity in the vast neural networks making up the brain remains a deep mystery. The structure of these networks, their connectivity, surely plays a role, but how so?[3]

How is it that humans and animals can have experiences? Why can't people live, and beget, and raise children without consciousness? From a subjective vantage point, this would resemble not being alive at all, like sleepwalking through life. Why, then, from the point of view of evolution, does consciousness exist? What survival value is attached to subjective, mental life?

In Haitian lore, a zombie is a dead person who, by the magical power of a sorcerer, must act out the wishes of the person controlling him. In philosophy, a *zombie* is an imaginary being who behaves and acts just like a normal person but has absolutely no conscious life, no sensations, and no feelings. A particularly insidious zombie will even lie, claiming that she is experiencing something when she is not.

The fact that it is so difficult to imagine such a scenario is living proof of the fundamental importance of consciousness to daily life. Following René Descartes's famous remark—made in the context of establishing his existence—I can ascertain with certainty that "I am conscious." Not always,

[2]No consensual usage of objective and subjective terms has emerged across disciplines. I adopt the following convention throughout the book: *detection* and *behavior* are objective terms that can be operationalized (see, Dennett, 1991), as in "the retina detects the red flash, and the observer presses her finger in response." Detection and behavior can occur in the absence of consciousness. I use *sensation*, *perception*, *seeing*, *experience*, *mind*, and *feeling* in their subjective senses, as in "conscious sensation" and so on. While I'm on the topic of convention, here is another one. Throughout the book, I use *awareness* and *consciousness* (or *aware* and *conscious*) as synonyms. Some scholars distinguish between these two on ontological (Chalmers, 1996), conceptual (Block, 1995), or psychological (Tulving, 1995) grounds. At this point, little empirical evidence justifies such a distinction (see, however, Lamme, 2003). I might have to revise this standpoint in the future. Curiously, the contemporary scientific literature discourages the usage of the word consciousness, while awareness is acceptable. This is more a reflection of sociological trends than deep insight.

[3]The exact relationship between qualia and meaning is unclear (see the anthology by Chalmers, 2002).

not in a dreamless sleep or while under anesthesia, but often: when I read, talk, climb, think, discuss, or just sit and admire the beauty of the world.[4]

The mystery deepens with the realization that much of what goes on in the brain bypasses consciousness. Electrophysiological experiments prove that furious activity in legions of neurons can fail to generate a conscious percept or memory. In a reflex action, you will instantly and vigorously shake your foot if you detect an insect crawling over it, even though the realization of what is happening only comes later on. Or your body reacts to a fearful sight, a spider or gun, before it's been consciously registered: Your palms become sweaty, your heartbeat and blood pressure increase, and adrenaline is released. All this happens before you know that you are afraid, or why. Many relatively complex sensory-motor behaviors are similarly rapid and nonconscious. Indeed, the point of training is to teach your body to quickly execute a complex series of movements—returning a serve, evading a punch, or tying shoelaces—without thinking about it. Nonconscious processing extends to the highest echelons of the mind. Sigmund Freud argued that childhood experiences—especially those of a traumatic nature—can profoundly determine adult behavior in a way that is not accessible to consciousness. Much high-level decision making and creativity occurs without conscious thought, a topic treated in more depth in Chapter 18.

So much of what constitutes the ebb and flow of daily life takes place outside of consciousness. Some of the best evidence for this comes from the clinic. Consider the strange case of the neurological patient D.F. She is unable to see shapes or recognize pictures of everyday objects, yet she can catch a ball. Even though she can't tell the orientation of a thin mail box-like slit (is it horizontal?) she can deftly post a letter into the slit (Figure 13.2). By studying such patients, neuropsychologists have inferred the existence of *zombie agents* in the brain that bypass awareness; that is, they don't involve consciousness (recall that in the second footnote to this chapter, I equate awareness with consciousness). These agents are dedicated to stereotypical tasks, such as shifting the eyes or positioning the hand. They usually operate fairly rapidly and don't have access to explicit memory. I'll return to these themes in Chapters 12 and 13.

Why, then, isn't the brain just a large collection of specialized zombie agents? Life might be boring if it were, but since such agents work effortlessly and

[4]Strictly speaking, I don't know whether you are conscious or not. You might even be a zombie! However, because you act and speak just as I do, because your brain is similar to mine, and because you and I share the same evolutionary heritage, I sensibly assume that you are also conscious. At present, our scientific understanding of consciousness is insufficient to prove this, but everything about the natural world is compatible with this assumption. *Mental solipsism* denies this and argues that only the subject himself is truly conscious while everybody else is a zombie. This seems implausible and also rather arbitrary. After all, why should I, out of all the people in the world, be singled out for consciousness?

rapidly, why is consciousness needed at all? What is its function? In Chapter 14, I argue that consciousness gives access to a general-purpose and deliberate processing mode for planning and contemplating a future course of action. Without consciousness, you would be worse off.

Consciousness is an intensely private matter. A sensation cannot be directly conveyed to somebody else but is usually circumscribed in terms of other experiences. Try to explain your experience of seeing red. You'll end up relating it to other percepts, such as "red as a sunset" or "red as a Chinese flag" (this task becomes next to impossible when communicating to a person blind from birth). You can talk meaningfully about the relationships among different experiences but not about any single one. This too needs to be explained.

Here, then, is the charter for our quest: To understand how and why the neural basis of a specific conscious sensation is associated with that sensation rather than with another, or with a completely nonconscious state; why sensations are structured the way they are, how they acquire meaning, and why they are private; and, finally, how and why so many behaviors occur without consciousness.

1.2 | A SPECTRUM OF ANSWERS

Philosophers and scientists have pondered the mind-body problem in its present form since the publication of René Descartes's *Traité de l'homme* in the mid-17th century. Until the 1980s, however, the vast majority of work in the brain sciences made no references to consciousness. In the last two decades, philosophers, psychologists, cognitive scientists, clinicians, neuroscientists, and even engineers have published dozens of monographs and books aimed at "discovering," "explaining," or "reconsidering" consciousness. Much of this literature is either purely speculative or lacks any detailed scientific program for systematically discovering the neuronal basis of consciousness and, therefore, does not contribute to the ideas discussed in this book.

Before introducing the approach my long-time collaborator Francis Crick and I have taken to address these problems, I will survey the philosophical landscape to familiarize readers with some of the possible categories of answers that people have considered. Keep in mind that only cartoon-like pocket sketches of these positions are provided here.[5]

[5]I can't possibly do justice to the sophisticated nature of these arguments. Anyone interested in all the subtle twists and turns is urged to consult the philosophical anthologies by Block, Flanagan, and Güzeldere (1997) and by Metzinger (1995). The textbook by the philosopher Patricia Churchland (2002) surveys different aspects of the mind-body problem with an emphasis on the relevant neuroscience. I also recommend the compact and readable monograph by Searle (1997). For the reverberations of these discussions among theologians, see Brown, Murphy, and Malony (1998) and the thoughtful McMullin (2000).

Consciousness Depends on an Immaterial Soul

Plato, the patriarch of Western philosophy, is widely credited with the concept of a person as an immortal soul imprisoned in a mortal body. He also proposed that ideas have a real existence and are eternal. These Platonic views were subsequently absorbed into the New Testament and form the basis of the classical Roman Catholic doctrine of a *soul*. The belief that at the heart of consciousness lies a transcendent and immortal soul is widely shared by many religions and faiths throughout the world.[6]

In modern times, Descartes distinguished between *res extensa*—physical substance with spatial extent that includes the animal spirits running through nerves and filling the muscles—and *res cogitans*, thinking substance. He argued that *res cogitans* is unique to humans and gives rise to consciousness. Descartes's ontological division constitutes the very definition of *dualism*: two forms of substances, matter and soul stuff. Weaker forms of dualism had been proposed earlier by Aristotle and by Thomas Aquinas. The most famous modern defenders of dualism are the philosopher Karl Popper and the neurophysiologist and Nobel laureate John Eccles.

While logically consistent, strong dualist positions are dissatisfying from a scientific viewpoint. Particularly troublesome is the mode of interaction between the soul and the brain. How and where is this supposed to take place? Presumably, this interaction would have to be compatible with the laws of physics. This, however, would require an exchange of energy that needs to be accounted for. And what happens to this spooky substance, the soul, once its carrier, the brain, dies? Does it float around in some hyperspace, like a ghost?[7]

The concept of an immaterial essence can be saved by postulating that the soul is immortal and completely independent of the brain. This leaves it as something ineffable, undetectable, a "ghost in the machine," to use a phrase coined by Gilbert Ryle, outside of science.

[6]Being raised in a devout Roman Catholic family, I have much sympathy for this point of view. Flanagan's book (2002) explores the clash between the notion of soul (and free will) and the modern scientific view that tends to deny both (see also Murphy, 1998).

[7]Popper and Eccles (1977) argued that brain-soul interactions are camouflaged by Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, according to which it is impossible to know precisely both the position and the momentum of a microscopic system, such as an electron, at the same time. In 1986, Eccles postulated that the conscious mind interferes with the release probability of vesicles at synapses in a way that does not violate conservation of energy yet is sufficient to influence the brain's behavior. These ideas have not been received with enthusiasm by the scientific community. Yet what is refreshing about the Popper and Eccles (1977) monograph is that they take consciousness seriously. They assume that sensations are a product of evolution that cries out for some function (see, in particular, Eccles, 1991). This was a remarkable sentiment after so many decades of behaviorism that disregarded consciousness entirely.

Consciousness Cannot Be Understood by Scientific Means

Quite a different philosophical tradition is the *mysterian*[8] position, which claims that human beings are unable to comprehend consciousness because it is just too complex. This limitation is either a principled, formal one (how can any system completely understand itself?) or a practical one, expressed as a pessimism about the human mind's inability to perform the necessary massive conceptual revisions (what chance does an ape have of understanding general relativity?).

Other philosophers assert that they don't see how the physical brain can generate consciousness and that, therefore, any scientific program to explore the physical basis of consciousness is doomed to failure. This is an argument from ignorance: The current absence of a compelling argument for a link between the brain and the conscious mind cannot be taken as evidence that such a link does not exist. Of course, to answer these critics, science will have to come up with the relevant concepts and evidence to support this link.

Although scientists may never fully comprehend—even in principle, let alone in practice—the workings of brains and the genesis of consciousness, it is premature to conclude so now. Neuroscience is a young discipline, accumulating new knowledge with ever-more-refined methods at a breathtaking pace. Before much of this development has run its course, there is no reason to come to this defeatist conclusion. Just because one particular scholar is unable to understand how consciousness might arise does not mean that it must be beyond all human comprehension!

Consciousness Is Illusory

Another type of philosophical reaction to the mind-body dilemma is to deny that there is any real problem at all. The most lively contemporary exponent of this rather counterintuitive notion—originating in the behaviorist tradition—is the philosopher Daniel Dennett from Tufts University. In *Consciousness Explained*, he argues that consciousness as most people conceive of it is an elaborate illusion, mediated by the senses in collusion with motor output, and supported by social constructions and learning. While acknowledging that people claim that they are conscious and that this persistent, but erroneous, belief needs to be explained, he denies the inner reality of the ungraspable aspects of qualia. He thinks that the usual way of thinking about consciousness is wildly wrong. Dennett seeks to explain the *third-person account* of consciousness while rejecting those aspects of the *first-person account* that render it resistant to reduction.[9]

[8]The term *mysterian* originates with Flanagan (1992), who used it to characterize the approaches of Lucas (1961), Nagel (1974), and McGinn (1991).

Having dental pain is about expressing, or wanting to express, certain behaviors: To stop chewing on that side of the mouth, to run away and hide until the pain has subsided, to grimace, and so on. These "reactive dispositions," as he calls them, are real. But not the badness of the pain, according to Dennett. That elusive feeling doesn't exist.[10]

Given the centrality of subjective feelings to everyday life, it would require extraordinary factual evidence before concluding that qualia and feelings are illusory. Philosophical arguments, based on logical analysis, even when fortified by results from cognitive psychology, are not powerful enough to deal with the real brain with all of its subtleties in a decisive manner. The philosophical method is at its best when formulating questions, but does not have much of a track record at answering them. The provisional approach I take in this book is to consider first-person experiences as brute facts of life and seek to explain them.[11]

Consciousness Requires Fundamentally New Laws

Some have called for new scientific laws to explain the puzzle of consciousness, rather than just more facts and principles about the brain. Roger Penrose, at Oxford University, argues in the wonderful *The Emperor's New Mind* that present-day physics is incapable of explaining the intuitive powers of mathematicians—and, by extension, of people at large. Penrose believes that a yet-to-be-formulated theory of quantum gravity will explain how human con-

[9]A third-person account recognizes only objective events, such as light of a certain wavelength impinging upon the retina, causing the person to exclaim "I see red," while the first-person account is concerned with subjective events, such as the sensation of red. The late Francisco Varela labeled the program of mapping first-person experiences onto the brain *neurophenomenology* (Varela, 1996).

[10]I refer the reader to Dennett's book (1991), and to Dennett and Kinsbourne (1992). See Ryle (1949) for an antecedent in the behavioral tradition. For an update on his views, consult Dennett (2001). In his 1991 book, Dennett rightly takes aim at the notion of a *Cartesian theater*, a single place in the brain where conscious perception must occur (note that this does not exclude the possibility of a distributed set of neuronal processes that express consciousness at any one point in time). He proposes a *multiple drafts* model to account for various puzzling aspects of consciousness, such as the nonintuitive role of time in the organization of experience. Dennett's writing is characterized by his skillful use of colorful metaphors and analogies, of which he is overly fond. It is difficult to relate these to specific neuronal mechanisms.

[11]These are deep waters. Dennett retorts that innocently accepting feelings as facts to be explained is giving a hostage to fortune; that to talk about real qualia is a highly ideological move akin to presupposing the existence of "real magic," full of epistemological implications (Dennett, 2004).

sciousness can carry out processes that no possible digital (Turing) computer could implement. In conjunction with the anesthesiologist Stuart Hameroff, at the University of Arizona at Tucson, Penrose has proposed that microtubules, self-assembling cytoskeletal proteins found throughout all cells in the body, are critically involved in mediating coherent quantum states across large populations of neurons.[12]

While Penrose has generated a vigorous debate regarding the extent to which mathematicians can be said to have access to certain noncomputable truths and whether these can be instantiated by computers, it remains utterly mysterious how quantum gravity could explain how consciousness occurs in certain classes of highly organized matter. Both consciousness and quantum gravity have enigmatic features, but to conclude that one is therefore the cause of the other seems rather arbitrary. Given the lack of any evidence for macroscopic quantum-mechanical effects occurring in the brain, I will not pursue this idea further.

The philosopher David Chalmers, at the University of Arizona at Tucson, has sketched an alternative proposal in which information has two aspects: a physically realizable aspect that is used in computers, and a phenomenal or experiential aspect that is inaccessible from the outside. In his view, any information-processing system, from a thermostat to a human brain, can be conscious in at least some rudimentary sense (although Chalmers admits that it probably doesn't feel like much "to be a thermostat"). While the audacity of endowing all systems that represent information with experience has a certain appeal and elegance, it is not clear to me how Chalmers's hypothesis could be tested scientifically. For now, this modern-day *panpsychism* can only be accepted as a provocative hypothesis. Over time, though, a theory couched in the language of probabilities and information theory might well prove necessary to understand consciousness. Even if Chalmers's framework is accepted, a more quantitative structure must be worked out. Do certain types of processing architectures, such as massive parallel versus serial, facilitate the development of consciousness? Does the richness of experience relate to the amount or

[12]Penrose's books (Penrose, 1989, 1994) are among the most lucid and best-written accounts of Turing machines, Gödel's theorems, computing, and modern physics I have read. However, given that both monographs nominally deal with the human mind and brain, they are equally remarkable for the almost complete absence of any serious discussion of psychology and neuroscience. Hameroff and Penrose (1996) outline their proposal that microtubules, a major component of cellular scaffolding, are critical to the processes underlying consciousness. The Achilles' heel of this idea is the lack of any biophysical mechanism that would permit neurons, and not just any cells in the body, to rapidly form highly specific coalitions across large regions of the brain on the basis of quantum-coherency effects. All of this is supposed to take place, of course, at body temperature, a rather hostile environment for sustaining quantum coherency over macroscopic scales. See Grush and Churchland (1995) for a telling criticism.

organization of memory (shared or not, hierarchical or not, static or dynamic memory, and so on)?[13]

While I cannot rule out that explaining consciousness may require fundamentally new laws, I currently see no pressing need for such a step.

Consciousness Requires Behavior

The *enactive* or *sensorimotor* account of consciousness stresses the fact that a nervous system can't be considered in isolation. It is part of a body living in a habitat that has acquired, through myriad sensorimotor interactions over its lifetime, knowledge about the way that the world (including its own body) acts. This knowledge is put to skillful use in the body's ongoing encounters with the world. Proponents of this view acknowledge that the brain supports perception but claim that neural activity is not sufficient for consciousness, and that it is futile to look for physical causes or correlates of consciousness. The behaving organism embedded in a particular environment is what generates feelings.[14]

While proponents of the enactive point of view rightly emphasize that perception usually takes place within the context of action, I have little patience for their neglect of the neural basis of perception. If there is one thing that scientists are reasonably sure of, it is that brain activity is both necessary and sufficient for biological sentience. Empirical support for this fact derives from many sources. For instance, in dreaming, a highly conscious state, almost all voluntary muscles are inhibited. That is, each night, most of us have episodes of phenomenal feelings yet fail to move.[15] Another example is that direct brain stimulation with electrical or magnetic pulses triggers simple percepts, such as flashes of colored light, the basis for ongoing research in neuroprosthetic devices for the blind. Also, many patients are unfortunate enough to lose the use of their motor system, either during short-lived episodes[16] or permanently,[17] yet continue to experience the world.

[13]I definitely recommend at least browsing through Chalmers's (1996) book, in particular his Chapter 8. For a theoretical approach toward consciousness based on measures of complexity and information theory, see Tononi and Edelman (1998) and Edelman and Tononi (2000). Nagel (1988) examines panpsychism.

[14]The manifesto of this movement is O'Regan and Noë, (2001). See also Noë (2004) and Järvilehto (2000). Historical antecedents of the enactive movement in philosophy and psychology are (Merleau-Ponty, 1962) and (Gibson, 1966) respectively.

[15]The eyes move, of course, during periods of heightened dream activity. Revonsuo (2000) and Flanagan (2000) overview the form and putative functions of dream content.

[16]A transient form of paralysis is one of the characteristic features of *narcolepsy*, a neurological disorder. Triggered by a strong emotion—laughter, embarrassment, anger, excitement—the afflicted subject suddenly loses skeletal muscle tone without becoming unconscious. Such *cataplectic* attacks can last for minutes and leave the patient collapsed on the floor, utterly unable to move or to signal, but fully aware of her surroundings (Guilleminault, 1976; Siegel, 2000).

[17]The most dramatic of these have *locked-in syndrome* (Feldman, 1971; see also Celesia, 1997).

I conclude that action is not necessary for consciousness. Of course, this is not to argue that motion of the body, eyes, limbs, and so on, isn't important in shaping awareness. It is! Yet behavior is not strictly necessary for qualia to occur.

Consciousness Is an Emergent Property of Certain Biological Systems

The working hypothesis of this book is that consciousness emerges from neuronal features of the brain.[18] Understanding the material basis of consciousness is unlikely to require any exotic new physics, but rather a much deeper appreciation of how highly interconnected networks of a large number of heterogeneous neurons work. The abilities of coalitions of neurons to learn from interactions with the environment and from their own internal activities are routinely underestimated. Individual neurons themselves are complex entities with unique morphologies and thousands of inputs and outputs. Their interconnections, the *synapses*, are molecular machines that come equipped with learning algorithms that modify their strength and dynamics across many timescales. Humans have little experience with such a vast organization. Hence, even biologists struggle to appreciate the properties and power of the nervous system.

A reasonable analogy can be made with the debate raging at the turn of the 20th century concerning vitalism and the mechanisms underlying heredity. How can mere chemistry store all the information needed to specify a unique individual? How can chemistry explain how splitting a single frog embryo at the two-cell stage gives rise to two tadpoles? Doesn't this require some *vitalistic* force, or new law of physics, as Erwin Schrödinger postulated?

The central difficulty faced by researchers at the time was that they could not imagine the great specificity inherent in individual molecules. This is perhaps best expressed by William Bateson, one of England's leading geneticists

Take the case of Jean-Dominique Bauby, editor of the French fashion magazine *Elle*, who retained nothing but the ability to move his eyes up and down following a massive stroke. He composed an entire book on his inner experiences using eye movements as a form of Morse code. Bauby's 1997 *Le Scaphandre et le Papillon* (translated as *The Diving-Bell and the Butterfly*) is a strangely uplifting and inspirational volume written under appalling circumstances. If his last link with the world, his vertical eye movements, had been severed, Bauby would have been condemned to living a fully conscious life while appearing all but dead! He and other such patients perceive the world consciously, although this has never been systematically studied. *Frozen addicts*, referred to in footnote 24 in Chapter 7, are yet another living proof that complete lack of mobility and consciousness can coexist.

[18] A system has emergent properties if these are not possessed by its parts. There are no mystical, new-age overtones to this. In that sense, the laws of heredity emerge from the molecular properties of DNA and other macromolecules, or the initiation and propagation of the action potential in axonal fibers, emerge from the attributes of voltage-dependent ionic channels inserted into the neuronal membrane. For a general introduction to the problem of emergence, see Beckermann, Flohr, and Kim (1992).

in the early part of the 20th century. His 1916 review of *The Mechanism of Mendelian Heredity*, a book by the Nobel laureate Thomas Hunt Morgan and his collaborators, states:

> The properties of living things are in some way attached to a material basis, perhaps in some special degree to nuclear chromatin; and yet it is inconceivable that particles of chromatin or of any other substance, however complex, can possess those powers which must be assigned to our factors or gens. The supposition that particles of chromatin, indistinguishable from each other and indeed almost homogeneous under any known test, can by their material nature confer all the properties of life surpasses the range of even the most convinced materialism.

What Bateson and others did not know at the time, given the technology available, was that chromatin (that is, the chromosomes) is only homogeneous statistically, being composed of roughly equal amounts of the four nucleic bases, and that the exact linear sequence of the nucleotides encodes the secrets of heredity. Geneticists underestimated the ability of these nucleotides to store prodigious amounts of information. They also underestimated the amazing specificity of protein molecules, which has resulted from the action of natural selection over a few billion years of evolution. These mistakes must not be repeated in the quest to understand the basis of consciousness.

Once again, I assume that the physical basis of consciousness is an emergent property of specific interactions among neurons and their elements. Although consciousness is fully compatible with the laws of physics, it is not feasible to predict or understand consciousness from these.

1.3 | MY APPROACH IS A PRAGMATIC, EMPIRICAL ONE

In order to make progress on these difficult questions without getting bogged down in diversionary skirmishes, I will have to make some assumptions without justifying them in too much detail. These provisional working hypotheses might well need to be revised or even rejected later on. The physicist turned molecular biologist Max Delbrück advocated "The Principle of Limited Sloppiness" when it comes to experiments. He recommended trying things in a rough and ready manner to see whether they might work out. I apply this principle to the realm of ideas about the brain.

A Working Definition

Most everyone has a general idea of what it means to be conscious. According to the philosopher John Searle, "Consciousness consists of those states of sentience, or feeling, or awareness, which begin in the morning when we awake

17.3 | TWO CONSCIOUS MINDS IN ONE BODY

To understand the following, remember that sensory information from the left visual field or the left side of the body is represented in the right cerebral hemisphere, and vice versa. A typical split-brain patient is quite capable of calling a knife a knife if it is placed, out of sight (or with eyes closed), into his right hand—whose touch receptors project into the left somatosensory cortex, on the same side where his speech centers are located. When grasping the knife with his left hand—whose tactile information is sent into the silent, right hemisphere—he's at a loss to say what it is. If he is now given a picture chart, he can point at the drawing of a knife with his left, but not his right, hand. If asked why he chose that particular image, he doesn't know since his left, speaking, hemisphere has no information on what his left hand is grasping (in this test the patient must not look at the object). Instead of remaining silent, however, the patient often confabulates and invents some explanation to cover up the fact that he has no idea why his left hand did what it did.

One half of the brain quite literally does not know what the other half does, which can lead to situations somewhere between tragedy and farce. Victor Mark, a neurologist at the University of North Dakota, videotaped an interview with a complete split-brain patient. When asked how many seizures she had recently experienced, her right hand held up two fingers. Her left hand then reached over and forced the fingers on her right hand down. After trying several times to tally her seizures, she paused and then simultaneously displayed three fingers with her right hand and one with her left. When Mark pointed out this discrepancy, the patient commented that her left hand frequently did things on its own. A fight ensued between the two hands that looked like some sort of slapstick routine. Only when the patient grew so frustrated that she burst into tears was one reminded of the sad nature of her situation.[7]

Other clinical anecdotes involve patients that unbutton their shirt or blouse with one hand and close it with the other. These examples of hemispheric rivalry usually disappear a few weeks after the operation.

In a visual search task (as in Figure 9.2), split-brain patients appear to deploy two independent attentional searchlights to scan an array, one for the left and

[7]In this unusual patient, both hemispheres had the ability to speak. This led to frequent back-and-forth between them, as when Mark echoed one of her statements that she did not have feelings in her left hand. She then insisted that her hand was not numb, followed by a torrent of alternating Yes's and No's, ending with a despairing "I don't know!" For the details consult Mark (1996).

one for the right field of view.[8] With the corpus callosum intact, competition between the two hemispheres reduces the effective search rate, manifesting itself in a single, spatial focus of attention.

Any connections remaining after complete sectioning of the corpus callosum and the anterior commissure are incapable of relaying specific sensory or symbolic information, such as "a red vertical bar in the upper left visual field." However, they can communicate more diffuse emotional states, such as anger, happiness, or embarrassment. For instance, if one hemisphere is shown pictures of a sexual nature that cause the patient to blush, the other side is aware of the emotion without knowing why.

The intellectual abilities of the left hemisphere is close to that of the general population. Or, put differently, the intellect of the normal, entire brain is not much different from that of one of its halves (the dominant one). This explains the seeming lack of deficits in most split-brain patients, particularly when they are asked how they feel (because it is the left hemisphere that does the talking).

Yet the cognitive and motor capabilities of both sides, while not the same, have the same general character. The right hemisphere can access explicit memory and symbolic processing, something beyond the abilities of zombie systems. It certainly passes the delay test for consciousness introduced in Section 13.6.[9]

Because both the speaking *and* the mute hemispheres carry out complex, planned behaviors, both hemispheres will have conscious percepts, even though the character and content of their feelings may not be the same. The two minds have autonomous but shared experiences in one body, as emphasized by Sperry:

> Although some authorities have been reluctant to credit the disconnected minor hemisphere even with being conscious, it is our own interpretation based on a large number and variety of nonverbal tests, that the minor hemisphere is indeed a conscious system in its own right, perceiving, thinking, remembering, reasoning, willing and emoting, all at a characteristically human level, and that both the left and the right hemisphere may be conscious simultaneously in different, even in mutually conflicting, mental experiences that run along in parallel.[10]

[8]The reaction times of four split-brain patients shows that their search rates for a target hidden among a field of distractors spread across the entire field of view were approximately twice as fast as search rates when the target and distractors were limited to one hemifield only. This pronounced difference was not present in a group of normal control subjects (Luck et al., 1989 and 1994).

[9]For instance, if the left hand of a blindfolded split-brain patient can palm momentarily a star-shaped object, the left—but not the right hand-—can later retrieve it in a bag filled with other objects (Bogen, 1997c).

[10]See Sperry (1974). The idea that bi-hemispheric brain organization must be reflected in a duality of the mind goes back to at least the middle of the 19th century (Wigan, 1844).

This independence has been confirmed within the context of binocular rivalry (as treated in the previous chapter). Both hemispheres show the pattern of dominance and suppression expected of two (more or less) independent brains.[11]

How does it *feel* to be the mute hemisphere, permanently encased in one skull in the company of a dominant sibling that does all of the talking? Given the right's inability to speak, is it less self-conscious than its twin? Is its content of consciousness more closely related to that of great apes and monkeys that can't talk? Imagine the silent storms raging across the remaining interbrain connections, giving control of this or that part of the body to one or the other hemisphere.[12] Will some future technology permit direct access to the right hemisphere and its conscious mind?

In split-brain patients, the NCC must exist, at least semi-independently, in the left and the right cortical hemispheres (without denying that some classes of percepts might be unique to one or the other). How, then, is integration achieved in the intact brain? The NCC must employ the callosal fibers to establish a single, dominant coalition throughout the forebrain, sufficient for a single conscious sensation, rather than two.

But is integration truly always achieved? Can echoes of the two hemispheres arguing with each other be found in everyday life? Read again the chapter epigraph from the harrowing account of Simpson's fall into a crevasse, on the verge of death, and his subsequent crawl onto a glacier with a broken leg. Sounds like the "voice" might come from his left hemisphere, urging him to get off the mountain, while the right cortex isn't much use except for distracting him with suggestive images. During a workout, have you ever experienced the unvoiced conflict raging in your head between the "better" self that insists on running yet another mile or adding more weights to the bar and your "inner wimp" that invents reason after reason for why enough is enough? Are these the reflections of the two hemispheres? Do they have distinct attributes, characteristic of the more linguistic and the more visual hemispheres? Are split-brain patients, or those people who live with but a single cortical hemisphere, devoid of such conflicting streams of consciousness?[13]

[11] O'Shea and Corballis (2001) report on binocular rivalry in split-brain observers. Their data argue against the tantalizing, but unlikely, hypothesis that in binocular rivalry the two hemispheres are competing against each other, with the left hemisphere preferring one percept and the right one the other (Pettigrew and Miller, 1998; and Miller et al., 2000).

[12] Marchiafava-Bignami disease, a rare complication of chronic alcoholism, is characterized by necrosis and subsequent atrophy of the corpus callosum and the anterior commissure (Kohler et al., 2000). The philosopher Puccetti (1973) wrote a fictionalized court case of such a patient, whose right hemisphere killed his wife in a particularly lurid manner. The jury found the husband—more precisely, his language-dominant hemisphere—not guilty. As far as I know, nobody has taken up the challenge of writing an account of the mental life of split-brain patients from the point of view of one or the other hemisphere (but see Schiffer, 2000).

[13] Bogen (1986).

17.4 | RECAPITULATION

At the macroscopic level, the brain—like the body—is a structure with a remarkable degree of bilateral symmetry. The mind, however, has but a single stream of consciousness, not two. Under ordinary conditions, the two hundred million callosal axons, with the help of the anterior commissure and other minor-fiber bundles, integrate neural activity in the two halves of the forebrain, such that only a single dominant coalition forms, sufficient for a percept.

In split-brain patients, these pathways have been severed to prevent epileptic seizures from spreading from one cortical hemisphere to the other. Remarkably, after recovery, these patients act, speak, and feel no different than before. They do not complain of a loss of half their visual field or of other dramatic deficits. Upon closer inspection, however, a persistent and profound disconnection syndrome can be observed. If specific information is provided to one or the other hemisphere, the information is not shared with its twin.

This clinical experience, fortified by fMRI studies in volunteers, proves that in most people, regions in the left cortex are specialized for linguistic processing (including reading and writing). The right hemisphere, by itself, is mute but can communicate by pointing, nodding the head, or singing. As if to compensate, the right cortical hemisphere specializes in aspects of visual attention and perception, such as face recognition.

It seems that split-brain patients harbor two conscious minds in their two brain halves. In these patients, the NCC must be present, independently, on each side. In the intact brain, activity in the two hemispheres competes and only one coalition survives, sufficient for a single conscious percept.

Can the members of this dominant coalition that subserve consciousness be recruited throughout the front of the brain, seat of the highest mental faculties, or are some of these regions excluded from awareness and subjective feelings? This is the topic of the next chapter, once again a more speculative one.

CHAPTER 5

Asian Perspectives: Indian Theories of Mind

Georges Dreyfus and Evan Thompson

Abstract

This chapter examines Indian views of the mind and consciousness, with particular focus on the Indian Buddhist tradition. To contextualize Buddhist views of the mind, we first provide a brief presentation of some of the most important Hindu views, particularly those of the Sāṃkhya school. Whereas this school assumes the existence of a real transcendent self, the Buddhist view is that mental activity and consciousness function on their own without such a self. We focus on the phenomenological and epistemological aspects of this no-self view of the mind. We first discuss the Buddhist Abhidharma and its analysis of the mind in terms of awareness and mental factors. The Abhidharma is mainly phenomenological; it does not present an epistemological analysis of the structure of mental states and the way they relate to their objects. To cover this topic we turn to Dharmakīrti, one of the main Buddhist epistemologists, who offers a comprehensive view of the types of cognition and their relation to their objects.

Introduction

In discussing Asian views of mind and consciousness, we must start from the realization that this topic presents insurmountable challenges. The diversity of Asian cultures from China to India to Iran is so great that it is impossible to find coherent ways to discuss the mental concepts of these cultures over and above listing these conceptions and noting their differences. Hence, rather than chart a territory that hopelessly extends our capacities, we have chosen to examine Indian views of the mind, with a special focus on the Indian Buddhist tradition, which can be traced back to the first centuries after the life of Siddhartha Gautama, the Buddha (566–483 BCE), and which continued to develop in India through the 7th and 8th centuries CE. This approach allows us to present a more grounded and coherent view of the mind as conceived in the Indian philosophical tradition and to indicate some areas of interest that this tradition offers to cognitive scientists and philosophers of mind.

In talking about the mind, it is important to define the term, for it is far from unambiguous. In most Indian traditions, the mind is neither a brain structure nor a mechanism for treating information. Rather, mind is conceived as a complex cognitive process consisting of a succession of related mental states. These states are at least in principle phenomenologically available; that is, they can be observed by attending to the way in which we experience feeling, perceiving, thinking, remembering, and so on. Indian thinkers describe these mental states as cognizing (*jñā*) or being aware (*buddh*) of their object. Thus, the mind is broadly conceived by traditional Indian thinkers as constituted by a series of mental states that cognize their objects.

This general agreement breaks down quickly, however, when we turn to a more detailed analysis of the nature and structure of the mind, a topic on which various schools entertain vastly different views. Some of these disagreements relate to the ontological status of mental states and the way they relate to other phenomena, particularly physical ones. Such disagreements are related to well-known ideas in the Western tradition, particularly the mind-body dualism that has concerned Western philosophy since Descartes. But many of the views entertained by Indian thinkers are not easily mapped in Western terms, as we see in this chapter.

Most Indian thinkers do not consider the ontological status of mental states to be a particularly difficult question, for most of them accept that there is an extra-physical reality. Among all the schools, only the Materialist, the Cārvāka, reduces the mental to physical events. For its proponents, mental states do not have any autonomous ontological status and can be completely reduced to physical processes. They are just properties of the body, much like the inebriating property of beer is a property of beer. Most other thinkers reject this view forcefully and argue that the mind can neither be eliminated nor reduced to the material. Their endorsement of an extra-physical reality does not, however, necessarily amount to a classical mind-body dualism (of the sort found in Descartes' *Meditations* or Plato's *Phaedo*). Moreover, although they agree in rejecting the materialist view, they strongly disagree in their presentations of the mind.

In this chapter, we focus mostly on the Buddhist tradition, exploring some of its views of the mind. One of the most salient features of this tradition is that its accounts of the mind and consciousness do not posit the existence of a self. According to this tradition, there is no self, and mental activity cannot be understood properly as long as one believes in a self. The Hindu tradition, by contrast, maintains that mental life does involve a permanent self. Thus, to contextualize Buddhist views of the mind, we begin with a brief presentation of some of the most important Hindu views. We then present the Buddhist Abhidharma and its analysis of the mind in terms of awareness and mental factors. Traditionally, the Abhidharma makes up one of the 'three baskets' into which Buddhists divide their scriptures – *Sutra* or sayings of the Buddha, *Vinaya* or monastic discipline, and *Abhidharma*, which systematizes Buddhist teachings in the form of detailed analyses of experience. In examining the Abhidharma, we examine the ways in which this tradition analyzes the different functions of the mind without positing the existence of a self. These analyses are in certain ways reminiscent of those in cognitive science that aim to account for cognitive processing without invoking a homunculus or 'little man' inside the head who oversees the workings of the mind (or merely passively witnesses the results; see Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991, for further discussion of this parallel). The Abhidharma, however, is phenomenological; its concern is to discern how the mind works as evidenced by experience (but especially by mentally disciplined and refined contemplative experience). Although thus it is also epistemological, the Abhidharma does not present any developed epistemological analysis of the structure of mental states and the way they relate to their objects so as to produce knowledge. To cover this topic we turn to

Dharmakīrti (c. 600 CE), one of the main Buddhist epistemologists, who offers a comprehensive view of the types of cognition and their relation to their objects.

The phenomenological analyses contained in the Abhidharma and the epistemological analyses of Dharmakīrti offer significant resources for cognitive scientists and philosophers of mind in their efforts to gain a better understanding of consciousness. These analyses also constitute the theoretical framework for the ways in which the Buddhist tradition conceives of meditation and mental training, both with regard to the phenomenology of contemplative mental states and the epistemology of the types of knowledge that these states are said to provide. Given the increasing scientific interest in the physiological correlates and effects of meditation and their relation to consciousness (see Chapter 19), it is important for the scientific community to appreciate the phenomenological and philosophical precision with which these states are conceptualized in the Buddhist tradition.

Self and Mental States: A Sāṃkhya View

One of the most important views of the mind in the Hindu tradition is found in the Sāṃkhya school. Traditionally this school is said to have been founded by the philosopher Kapila, a legendary figure who may have lived as early as the 7th century BCE, but the earliest Sāṃkhya text we possess dates from the 3rd century CE. The Sāṃkhya tradition is one of the six classical schools of Hindu philosophy (Nyaya, Vaisesika, Sāṃkhya, Yoga, Purva Mimamsa, and Vedānta). Its influence extends to the other schools, particularly the Vedānta school, which later became especially important in the development of Hindu thought. The Sāṃkhya was in fact less a school proper than a way of thinking based on the categorization of reality. It was crucial in the formation of Indian philosophical thinking before and after the start of the Common Era, and hence it is unsurprising that its view of the mind has been largely adopted in the Hindu tradition and beyond.[1]

The Sāṃkhya approach rests on a dualistic metaphysics built on the opposition between material primordial nature (*pradhāna*) or materiality (*prakṛti*) and a spiritual self (*ātman*) or person (*puruṣa*).[2] Nature is the universal material substratum out of which all phenomena other than the self emerge and evolve. These phenomena, which make up the world of diversity, are physical transformations of the three qualities (*guṇa*) that compose primordial nature. These three qualities are *sattva* (transparency, buoyancy), *rajas* (energy, activity), and *tamas* (inertia, obstruction). They are principles or forces, rather than building blocks. All material phenomena, including the intellect and organs of perception, are understood to be made up of a combination of these three principles. The one principle not included in this constant process of transformation is the self, which is permanent, non-material, and conscious or aware. The self is also described as the conscious presence that witnesses the transformations of nature, but does not participate in them. As such it is passive, though it witnesses the experiences deriving from the transformations of the world of diversity.[3]

Although the Sāṃkhya analysis of mind is dualistic, it does not fit within classical mind-body dualism. For the Sāṃkhya, the mind involves a non-material spiritual element, namely the self. The self, however, is not the same as the mind. Rather, the self is the mere presence to or pure witnessing of the mental activities involved in the ordinary awareness of objects. This pure witnessing, untainted by the diversity of the material world, is not sufficient for mental activities, for mental activities are representational or semantic and require more than passive mirroring. Mental activity is the apprehension of an object, and this activity requires active engagement with objects and the formation of ideas and concepts necessary for purposeful action in the world. The self cannot account for such activity, however, because it is changeless and hence passive. To account for our cognitive activities,

we therefore need other elements that participate in the world of diversity. Because any element that participates in the world of change must emerge out of primordial materiality and hence be material, it follows that the analysis of mental states cannot be limited to their spiritual dimension (the self), but must also involve material elements. Hence, for the Sāṃkhya, mental activity requires the cooperation of the two fundamental types of substance that make up the universe, passive consciousness and material nature.

Having described the Sāṃkhya metaphysics, we can now sketch its influential analysis of mental activity.[4] This analysis starts with *buddhi*, which is usually translated as 'the intellect' and is the ability to distinguish and experience objects. This ability provides the prereflective and presubjective ground out of which determined mental states and their objects arise; it is also the locus of all the fundamental predispositions that lead to these experiences. The intellect emerges out of primordial matter and therefore is active, unlike the non-material and passive self. The self is described metaphorically as a light, for it passively illuminates objects, making it possible for the intellect to distinguish them. The intellect operates in a representational way by taking on the form of what is known. This representational ability works in two directions – toward the conscious and uninvolved self and toward the objects. The intellect, thanks to its quality of clarity and transluscence (*sattva*), takes on the form of the self by reflecting it. As a result, it seems as if the self experiences the diversity of objects, when it is actually the intellect that undergoes these experiences, the self being the mere witness of them. This ability of the intellect to usurp the function of consciousness helps the intellect in its apprehension of objects, for by itself the intellect is active but unconsious. Awareness of objects arises only when the intellect takes on the light of the self and reflects it on objects, much like pictures are created when light is projected onto a film. In this way, the intellect becomes able to take on the form of the object and thus to discern it.

The intellect's reflecting the self and taking on the form of an object are not, however, sufficient to fully determine experience. To become fully cognitive, experience requires the formation of subjective and objective poles. Experience needs to be the experience of a particular individual apprehending a particular object. The formation of the subjective pole is the function of the 'ego-sense' (*ahaṃkāra*), the sense of individual subjectivity or selfhood tied to embodiment. This sense colors most of our experiences, which involve a sense of being a subject opposed to an object. The determination of the objective pole, on the other hand, is the function of 'mentation' (*manas*), which oversees the senses and whose special function is discrimination. This function allows mentation to serve as an intermediary between the intellect and the senses. Mentation organizes sensory impressions and objects and integrates them into a temporal framework created by memories and expectations. In this way, our experience of objects in the world is created.

Although the dualistic metaphysics associated with this view was rejected in the history of Indian philosophy, the Sāṃkhya model of the mind was taken over by other Hindu schools. It serves as a foundation of the philosopher Patañjali's (c. 2nd century BCE) Yoga view of mind, which is similar to the Sāṃkhya.[5] The Yoga view also rests on the opposition between passive self and active mental activities (*citta*), a rubric under which intellect, ego-sense, and mentation are grouped. Similarly, Śamkara (788–820 CE), who savaged the dualism of the Sāṃkhya, took over its model of the mind in his Advaita Vedānta, emphasizing the contrast between the transcendence of the self and the mental activities of the 'inner sense' (*antaḥkarava*) belonging to the person.[6] Hence, the Sāṃkhya view can be taken as representative of the Hindu view of the mind, especially in its emphasis on the difference between a passive witnessing consciousness and mental activity.

According to this view, as we have seen, mental events come about through the conjunction of two heterogeneous factors – a

transcendent self and a diversity of mental activities. It is a basic presupposition of the Hindu tradition that mental life involves a permanent self. Yet because mental life also undeniably involves change, it cannot be reduced to this single, motionless factor of the self; hence the need for the complicated analysis briefly summarized here. This tension in accounts of the mind and consciousness between identity and change, unity and diversity, is of course also prevalent throughout Western philosophy and persists in cognitive science. We turn now to the Buddhist tradition, which presents a different perspective on this issue.

The Abhidharma Tradition and its View of the Mind

The Buddhist tradition is based on the opposite view of no-self (*anātman*). For the Buddhists, there is no self, and hence mental activity is not in the service of such an entity, but rather functions on its own. In short, for the Buddhists there is no self that is aware of the experiences one undergoes or the thoughts one has. Rather the thoughts themselves are the thinker, and the experiences the experiencer.

How, then, do Buddhists explain the complexities of the mind? How do they explain mental regularities if there is no central controller to oversee the whole process?

For an answer, we turn to the Abhidharma, one of the oldest Buddhist traditions, which can be traced back to the first centuries after the Buddha (566–483 BCE). First elaborated as lists,[7] the Abhidharma contains the earlier texts in which Buddhist concepts were developed and hence is the source of most philosophical developments in Indian Buddhism. But the Abhidharma is not limited to this role as a source of Buddhist philosophical development. It remained a vital focus of Buddhist thought and kept evolving, at least until the 7th or 8th century CE. In this chapter, we focus on two Indian thinkers from the 4th or 5th century CE, Asaṅga and Vasubandhu, and ignore the diversity of opinions and debates that has animated this tradition.

The object of the Abhidharma is to analyze both the realm of sentient experience and the world given in such experience into its components in language that avoids the postulation of a unified subject. This analysis concerns the whole range of phenomena, from material phenomena to nirvana (the state of enlightenment, understood as the direct realization of the nature of reality, including especially the lack of any essential self and the consequent liberation from suffering). For example, there are elaborate discussions of the four primary and four secondary elements that make up matter (see de la Vallée Poussin, 1971, I: 22). There are also lengthy treatments of the nature, scope, and types of soteriological practices prescribed by the Buddhist tradition, a central focus of the Abhidharma. But a large part of the Abhidharmic discourse focuses on the analysis of mental phenomena and their various components. It is this part of the Abhidharma that we examine in this chapter.

In considering experience, the Abhidharma proceeds in a rather characteristic way that may be disconcerting for newcomers, but reflects its historical origin as mnemonic lists of elements abstracted from the Buddha's discourses. For each type of phenomenon considered, the Abhidharma analyzes it into its basic elements (*dharma*), lists these elements, and groups them into the appropriate categories (examples are given below). The study of the Abhidharma thus often revolves around the consideration of series of extended lists.

In elaborating such lists of components of experience and the world given in experience, the Abhidharma follows the central tenets of Buddhist philosophy, in particular the twin ideas of non-substantiality and dependent origination. According to this philosophy, the phenomena given in experience are not unitary and stable substances, but complex and fleeting formations of basic elements that arise in dependence on complex causal nexuses. Such non-substantiality is particularly true of the person, who is not a substantial self, but a changing construct

dependent on complex configurations of mental and material components. This analysis, which is diametrically opposed to the Sāṃkhya view, is not just limited to the person, but is applied to other objects.

All composite things are thus analyzed as being constituted of more basic elements. Moreover, and this point is crucial, these basic elements should not be thought of as reified or stable entities, but as dynamically related momentary events instantaneously coming into and going out of existence. Thus, when the Abhidharma analyzes matter as being made up of basic components, it thinks of those components not as stable particles or little grains of matter, but rather as fleeting material events, coming into and going out of existence depending on causes and conditions. Similarly, the mind is analyzed into its basic components; namely, the basic types of events that make up the complex phenomenon we call 'mind'.

This Abhidharmic analysis is not just philosophical but it also has practical import. Its aim is to support the soteriological practices that the Buddhist tradition recommends. The lists of material and mental events are used by practitioners to inform and enhance their practices. For example, the list of mental factors we examine shortly is a precious aid to various types of meditation, providing a clear idea of which factors need to be developed and which are to be eliminated. In this way, the Abhidharma functions not just as the source of Buddhist philosophy but also informs and supports the practices central to this tradition.

In the Abhidharma the mind is conceived as a complex cognitive process consisting of a succession of related momentary mental states. These states are phenomenologically available, at least in principle: They can be observed by turning inwardly and attending to the way we feel, perceive, think, remember, and so on. When we do so, we notice a variety of states of awareness, and we also notice that these states change rapidly. It is these mental states arising in quick succession that the Abhidharma identifies as being the basic elements of the mind.

It should be clear from this preliminary characterization that in elaborating a theory of the mind the Abhidharma relies primarily on what we would call a first-person approach. It is by looking directly at experience that we gain an understanding of mind, not by studying it as an object and attending to its external manifestations. This approach of the Ahbhidharma is not unlike that of such Western thinkers as James, Brentano, and Husserl, who all agree that the study of the mind must be based on attention to experience (see Chapter 4). This approach is well captured by James's famous claim that in the study of the mind, "Introspective Observation is what we have to rely on first and foremost and always" (James, 1981, p. 185).

As James himself recognizes, however, first-person observation of the mind, although it might seem a straightforward enterprise, is not a simple affair and raises numerous questions. What does it mean to observe the mind? Who observes? What is being observed? Is the observation direct or mediated? In addition to these difficult epistemological issues (some of which we take up in the next section), there are also questions about the reliability of observation. We are all able to certain degrees to observe our own minds, but it is clear that our capacities to do so differ. Whose observations are to be considered reliable? This question is significant for the Abhidharmists, who may include in their data not only ordinary observations but also the observations of trained meditators. This inclusion of observation based on contemplative mental training and meditative experience marks an important difference between the Abhidharma and James, as well as other Western phenomenologists. Nevertheless, the degree to which meditative experience is relevant to Buddhist theories of the mind is not a straightforward matter, as we see shortly.

The comparison between the Abhidharma and James goes further, however, than their reliance on an introspective method. They also share some substantive similarities, the most important of which is perhaps the idea of the *stream of consciousness*.

For the Abhidharma, mental states do not arise in isolation from each other. Rather, each state arises in dependence on preceding moments and gives rise to further moments, thus forming a mental stream or continuum (*santāna*, *rgyud*), much like James's 'stream of thought'. This metaphor is also found in the Buddhist tradition in which the Buddha is portrayed as saying, "The river never stops: there is no moment, no minute, no hour when the river stops: in the same way, the flux of thought" (de la Vallée Poussin, 1991, p. 69, translation from the French by Dreyfus).

Unsurprisingly, there are also significant differences between James and the Abhidharma. One difference of interest to contemporary research is the issue of whether mental states arise in continuity or not (see Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991, pp. 72–79). James's view is well known: "Consciousness does not appear to itself chopped up in bits" (James, 1981, p. 233). Although the content of consciousness changes, we experience these changes as smooth and continuous, without any apparent break. The Abhidharma disagrees, arguing that although the mind is rapidly changing, its transformation is discontinuous. It is only to the untrained observer that the mind appears to flow continuously. According to the Abhidharma, a deeper observation reveals that the stream of consciousness is made up of moments of awareness, moments that can be introspectively individuated and described.

Several Abhidharma texts even offer measurements of this moment, measurements one would expect to be based on empirical observation. Yet such claims are problematic, for different Abhidharma traditions make claims that at times are strikingly at odds with one another. For example, the *Mahavibhāṣā*, an important text from the first centuries of the Common Era, states that there are 120 basic moments in an instant. The text further illustrates the duration of an instant by equating it to the time needed by an average spinner to grab a thread. Not at all, argues another text: This measurement is too coarse. A moment is the 64th part of the time necessary to click one's fingers or blink an eye (see de la Vallée Poussin, 1991, pp. 70–71). Although these measurements differ, one could argue that given the imprecision of premodern measurement, there is a rough agreement between these accounts, which present a moment of awareness as lasting for about 1/100th of a second. This is already significantly faster than pyschophysical and electrophysiological estimates of the duration of a moment of awareness as being on the order of 250 milliseconds or a quarter of a second (see Pöppel, 1988; Varela, Thompson, & Rosch, 1991, pp. 72–79). But consider the claim made by a Theravada Abhidharma text that "in the time it takes for lightning to flash or the eyes to blink, billions of mind-moments can elapse" (Bodhi, 1993, p. 156). The time scale in this account, which is standard in the Theravada tradition, is faster by many orders of magnitude.

This dramatic discrepancy alerts us to some of the difficulties of accounts based on observation. For whom are we to believe? On which tradition should we rely? Moreover, we cannot but wonder about the sources of these differences. Do they derive from the observations of meditators, or are they the results of theoretical elaborations? It is hard to come to a definitive conclusion, but it seems reasonable to believe that these accounts are not simply empirical observations, but largely theoretical discussions, perhaps supplemented by observation reports. Hence one must be cautious and not assume that these texts reflect empirical findings. Although some may, they are mostly theoretical elaborations, which cannot be taken at face value, but require critical interpretation. Finally, another Abhidharma text seems to muddy the waters further by claiming that the measure of a moment is beyond the understanding of ordinary beings. Only enlightened beings can measure the duration of a moment (de la Vallée Poussin, 1991, p. 73). Thus it is not surprising that we are left wondering!

According to the Abhidharma, the mental episodes that compose a stream of consciousness take as their objects either real or

fictional entities. This object-directed character of mind has been called 'intentionality' by Western philosophers, such as Brentano and Husserl. Brentano claimed that intentionality is an essential feature of consciousness and proposed it as a criterion of the mental. All acts of awareness are directed toward or refer to an object, regardless of whether this object is existent or not. We cannot think, wish, or dread unless our mind is directed toward something thought about, wished for, or dreaded, which thus appears to the mind. Therefore, to be aware is for something to appear to the mind. The Abhidharma seems to share this view, holding that every moment of cognition relates to particular objects, and hence it assumes that intentionality and consciousness are inseparable.[8]

The Abhidharma also holds that this stream of consciousness is not material. It is associated with the body during this lifetime, but will come to exist in dependence on other bodies after the death of this body. It is crucial to recognize, however, that the immaterial stream of consciousness is not a soul in the Platonic or Cartesian sense, but an impersonal series of mental events. Buddhist philosophers do not believe in an ontology of substances – that reality comprises the existence of independent entities that are the subjects of attributes or properties. Rather, they argue that reality is made up of events consisting of a succession of moments. Thus, mind and matter are not substances, but evanescent events, and mental and material events interact in a constantly ongoing and fluctuating process. Moreover, Buddhist philosophers partake of the general Indian reluctance to separate the mental and the material. Hence they do not hold that the divide between the material and mental spheres is absolute. Nevertheless, for the Buddhists, in contrast to the *Sāṃkhya*, there is a sharp divide between the mental, which is intentional and conscious, and other elements. In this respect, Buddhists are perhaps the closest among Indian philosophers to a classical mind-body dualism.

The Abhidharma, however, does not stop at a view of the mind as a succession of mental states, but goes much further in its analysis, breaking down each mental state into its components. According to the Abhidharma schema, which is to our knowledge unique, each mental state is analyzed as having two aspects: (i) the *primary factor of awareness* (*citta*), whose function is to be aware of the object, and (ii) *mental factors* (*caitesika*), whose function is to qualify this awareness by determining its qualitative nature as pleasant or unpleasant, focused or unfocused, calm or agitated, positive or negative, and so on. The philosopher Vasubandhu (c. 4th or 5th century CE), one of the great Abhidharmists, explains this distinction between awareness and mental factors as follows:

> *Cognition or awareness apprehends the thing itself, and just that; mental factors or* dharmas *associated with cognition such as sensation, etc., apprehend special characteristics, special conditions (de la Vallée Poussin, 1971, I: 30).*[9]

The basic insight is that mental states have two types of cognitive functions – (1) awareness and (2) cognitive and affective engagement and characterization. The mental state is aware of an object. For example, the sense of smell is aware of a sweet object. But mental states are not just states of awareness. They are not passive mirrors in which objects are reflected. Rather, they actively engage their objects, apprehending them as pleasant or unpleasant, approaching them with particular intentions, and so forth. For example, a gustatory cognition of a sweet object is not just aware of the sweet taste but also apprehends the object as pleasant, distinguishes certain qualities such as its texture, and so on. It also categorizes the object as being (say) one's favorite Swiss chocolate. Such characterization of the object is the function of the mental factors. We now describe this distinction between the *primary factor of awareness* and *mental factors* in more detail.

The Primary Factor of Awareness

The primary factor of awareness (*citta*) is also described as *vijñāna*, a term often

translated as *consciousness* or *cognitive awareness*. It is the aspect of the mental state that is aware of the object. It is the very activity of cognizing the object, not an instrument in the service of an agent or self (which, as we have seen, the Buddhist philosophers argue is nonexistent). This awareness merely discerns the object, as in the above example where one apprehends the taste of what turns out to be one's favorite Swiss chocolate. Thus Vasubandhu speaks of awareness as the "bare apprehension of each object" (de la Vallée Poussin, 1971, I: 30).

In most Abhidharma systems, there are six types of awareness: five born from the five physical senses (sight, hearing, smell, taste, and touch) and mental cognition. Each type of sensory cognition is produced in dependence on a sensory basis (one of the five physical senses) and an object. This awareness arises momentarily and ceases immediately, to be replaced by another moment of awareness, and so on. The sixth type of awareness is mental. It is considered a sense by the Abhidharma, like the five physical senses, though there are disagreements about its basis (see Guenther, 1976, pp. 20–30).

Some Abhidharma texts, such as Asaṅga's (Rahula, 1980), argue that these six types of consciousness do not exhaust all the possible forms of awareness. To this list Asaṅga adds two types of awareness: the *store-consciousness* (*ālaya-vijñāna*, *kun gzhi rnam shes*) and *afflictive mentation* (*kliṣṭa-manas*, *nyon yid*; Rahula, 1980, p. 17).[10] The idea of a store-consciousness is based on a distinction between the six types of awareness, which are all described as manifest cognitive awareness (*pravṛtti-vijñāna*, *'jug shes*), and a more continuous and less manifest form of awareness, which is the store-consciousness. This awareness is invoked to answer the following objection: If there is no self and the mind is just a succession of mental states, then how can there be any continuity in our mental life? Asaṅga's answer is that there is a more continuous form of consciousness, which is still momentary, but exists at all times. Because it is subliminal, we usually do not notice it. It is only in special circumstances, such as fainting, that its presence can be noticed or at least inferred. This consciousness contains all the basic habits, tendencies, and propensities (including those that persist from one life to the next) accumulated by the individual. It thus provides a greater degree of continuity than manifest cognitive awareness on its own.

The store-consciousness is mistaken by the afflictive mentation as being a self. In this way one's core inborn sense of self is formed. From a Buddhist point of view, however, this sense of self is fundamentally mistaken. It is a mental imposition of unity where there is in fact only the arising of a multiplicity of interrelated physical and mental events. The sense of control belonging to one's sense of self is thus largely illusory. There is really nobody in charge of the physical and mental processes, which arise according to their own causes and conditions, not our whims. The mind is not ruled by a central unit, but by competing factors whose strength varies according to circumstances.

Thus Asaṅga, allegedly Vasubandhu's half-brother, posits as many as eight types of consciousness, a doctrine usually associated with a particular Buddhist school, the Yogācāra. This school contains many interesting insights, without which there is no complete understanding of the depth of Buddhist views of the mind, but there is not space to discuss these insights here. Let us simply point out that there are some interesting similarities between the Yogācāra and the Sāṃkhya views. The store-consciousness, in acting as the holder of all the potentialities accumulated by an individual, is not unlike the intellect (*buddhi*), whereas the afflictive mentation seems similar to the ego-sense (*ahaṃkāra*). Furthermore, mental cognition does not seem too different from mentation (*manas*). These similarities indicate the reach of the Sāṃkhya model, even in a tradition whose basic outlook is radically different.

Mental Factors

Mental states are not just states of awareness; they also actively engage their objects,

qualifying them as pleasant or unpleasant, approaching them with a particular attitude, and so on. Mental factors, which are aspects of the mental state that characterize the object of awareness, account for this engagement. In other words, whereas consciousness makes known the mere presence of the object, mental factors make known the particulars of the content of awareness, defining the characteristics and special conditions of its object. They qualify the apprehension of the object as being pleasant or unpleasant, attentive or distracted, peaceful or agitated, and so forth.

The translation of these elements of the mind (*caitesika*) as *factors* is meant to capture the range of meanings that the Abhidharma associates with this term. The relation between cognitive awareness and mental factors is complex. At times the Abhidharma construes this relation diachronically as being causal and functional. Factors cause the mind to apprehend objects in particular ways. At other times, the Abhidharma seems to emphasize a synchronic perspective in which cognitive awareness and mental factors coexist and cooperate in the same cognitive task.[11]

In accordance with its procedure, the Abhidharma studies mental factors by listing them, establishing the ways in which they arise and cease, and grouping them in the appropriate categories. Each Abhidharma tradition has a slightly different list. Here we follow a list of 51 mental factors distributed in 6 groups.[12] The mental typology presented in this list has a number of interesting features in relation to more familiar Western philosophical and scientific typologies:

- Five omnipresent factors: feeling, discernment, intention, attention, and contact
- Five determining factors: aspiration, appreciation, mindfulness, concentration, and intelligence
- Four variable factors: sleep, regret, investigation, and analysis
- Eleven virtuous factors: confidence/faith, self-regarding shame, other-regarding shame, joyful effort, pliability, conscientiousness, detachment, non-hatred (lovingkindness), wisdom, equanimity, and non-harmfulness (compassion).
- Six root-afflictions: attachment, anger, ignorance, pride, negative doubt, and mistaken view.
- Twenty branch-afflictions: belligerence, vengefulness, concealment, spite, jealousy, avarice, pretense, dissimulation, self-satisfaction, cruelty, self-regarding shamelessness, other-regarding shamelessness, inconsideration, mental dullness, distraction, excitement, lack of confidence/faith, laziness, lack of conscientiousness, and forgetfulness.

The nature of this complex typology becomes clearer when one realizes that these six groups can be further reduced to three. The first three groups contain all the neutral factors. They are the factors that can be present in any mental state, whether positive or negative. Hence these factors are neither positive nor negative in and of themselves. The next three groups are different. These factors are ethically determined. The eleven virtuous factors are positive in that they do not compel us toward attitudes that lead to suffering. They leave us undisturbed, open to encounter reality with a more relaxed and freer outlook. The twenty-six afflictive factors, on the other hand, disturb the mind, creating frustration and restlessness. They are the main obstacles to the life of the good as understood by the Buddhist tradition. The very presence of these factors marks the mental state as virtuous or afflictive. Thus it is clear that the Abhidharma typology is explicitly ethical.

This presentation also offers interesting insights concerning the cognitive functions of the mind. In particular, the analysis of the five omnipresent factors – feeling, discernment, intention, attention, and contact – shows some of the complexities of Abhidharmic thinking. These five are described as omnipresent because they are present in every mental state. Even in a subliminal state such as the store-consciousness these five factors are present. The other factors are not necessary for the performance of the most minimal cognitive task (the apprehension of

an object, however dimly and indistinctly). Hence they are not present in all mental states, but only in some.

One striking feature of this list is the pre-eminent place of feeling (*vedanā*, *tshor ba*) as the first of the factors. This emphasis reflects the fundamental outlook of the tradition, which views humans as being first and foremost sentient. But it also reflects a distinctive view of the cognitive realm that emphasizes the role of spontaneous value attribution. For the Abhidharma, a mental state is not only aware of an object but at the same time it also evaluates this object. This evaluation is the function of the feeling tone that accompanies the awareness and experiences of the object as either pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. This factor is central in determining our reactions to the events we encounter, because, for the most part, we do not perceive an object and then feel good or bad about it out of considerate judgments. Rather, evaluation is already built into our experiences. We may use reflection to come to more objective judgments, but those mostly operate as correctives to our spontaneous evaluations.

Feeling is not the only important factor, however. A mental state involves not only awareness and feeling but also discernment (*saṃjñā*, *'du shes* also often translated as perception or recognition). This factor involves the mind's ability to identify the object by distinguishing it from other objects. This concept of discernment presents some difficulties, however. In its most elaborate form, discernment is based on our semiotic ability to make distinctions, mostly through linguistic signs. But for the Abhidharma, the mind's ability to identify objects is not limited to linguistic distinctions, however important they may be. Infants and non-human animals are understood to have the ability to make distinctions, although they do not use symbolic thinking. Are these prelinguistic cognitions nevertheless semiotic? Do they involve non-linguistic signs, or do they make distinctions without the use of signs? It seems plausible to argue that some of these states involve non-linguistic signs, as in the case of visual cognitions that distinguish objects on the basis of visual clues. For the Abhidharma, however, this question strikes deeper, because several meditative states in the Buddhist tradition are described as signless (*animitta*, *mthan med*).[13] Can the mind in these states identify its object without making distinctions? Or is it the case that even in the case of signless states the mind still makes distinctions, although they are not linguistic or even conceptual? In a short chapter such as this one, we cannot delve into this issue, despite its relevance to the dialogue between Buddhism and the sciences of mind.

Other factors are also significant. Intention (*cetanā*, *sems pa*) is a central and omnipresent factor, which determines the moral (not ethical) character of the mental state. Every mental state approaches its object with an intention, a motivation that may be evident to the person or not. This intention determines the moral nature of the mental state, whether it is virtuous, nonvirtuous, or neutral. This factor is associated with the accomplishment of a goal and hence is also thought of as a focus of organization for the other factors.

Also important is the role of attention (*manasikāra*, *yid la byed pa*), another one of the five omnipresent factors. It is the ability of the mind to be directed to an object. A contemporary commentator explains attention this way: "Attention is the mental factor responsible for the mind's advertence to the object, by virtue of which the object is made present to consciousness. Its characteristic is the conducting of the associated mental states [i.e., factors] to the object. Its function is to yoke the associated mental states [i.e., factors] to the object" (Bodhi, 1993, p. 81). Every mental state has at least a minimal amount of focus on its object; hence attention is an omnipresent factor.

Attention needs to be distinguished from two other related factors. The first is concentration (*samādhi*, *ting nge 'dzin*), the ability of the mind to dwell on its object single-pointedly. The second is mindfulness (*smṛti*, *dran pa*, also translated as recollection), which is the mind's ability to keep the object in focus without forgetting, being distracted, wobbling, or floating away from the object.

Both abilities are not present in every mental state. Concentration differs from attention in that it involves the ability of the mind not just to attend to an object but also to sustain this attention over a period of time. Similarly, mindfulness is more than the simple attending to the object. It involves the capacity of the mind to hold the object in its focus, preventing it from slipping away in forgetfulness. Hence both factors, which are vital to the practice of Buddhist meditation (see Chapter 19), are included among the determining factors. They are present only when the object is apprehended with some degree of clarity and sustained focus.

The factors discussed so far are mainly cognitive, but the Abhidharma list also includes mental factors we would describe as emotions. Consider the ethically determined factors, starting with the eleven virtuous ones: confidence/faith, self-regarding shame, other-regarding shame, joyful effort, pliability, conscientiousness, detachment, nonhatred (lovingkindness), wisdom, equanimity, and non-harmfulness (compassion).

We would describe several of these factors, such as lovingkindness and compassion, as emotions. These two factors belong to what we would characterize as the affective domain, although here they are understood not with regard to their affectivity, but rather in relation to their ethical character.[14] Hence they are grouped with other factors, such as wisdom and conscientiousness, that are more cognitive than affective. For the Abhidharma all these factors are grouped together. They are all positive in that they promote well-being and freedom from the inner compulsions that lead to suffering.

The afflictive factors, on the other hand, are precisely those that lead to suffering. They are by far the most numerous group and are clearly a major focus of this typology:

- Six root-afflictions: attachment, anger, ignorance, pride, negative doubt, and mistaken view.
- Twenty branch-afflictions: belligerence, vengefulness, concealment, spite, jealousy, avarice, pretense, dissimulation, self-satisfaction, cruelty, self-regarding shamelessness, other-regarding shamelessness, inconsideration, mental dullness, distraction, excitement, lack of confidence/faith, laziness, lack of conscientiousness, and forgetfulness.

Here again we notice that this list contains factors that look quite different. Some factors such as ignorance are clearly cognitive, whereas others such as anger and jealousy are more affective. They are grouped together because they are afflictive: They trouble the mind, making it restless and agitated. They also compel and bind the mind, preventing one from developing more positive attitudes. This afflictive character may be obvious in the case of attachment and jealousy, which directly lead to dissatisfaction, frustration, and restlessness. Ignorance – that is, our innate and mistaken sense of self – is less obviously afflictive, but its role is nonetheless central here, because it brings about the other more obviously afflictive factors.

Although there are many elements in the typology of mental factors that we can identify as emotions (anger, pride, jealously, lovingkindness, and compassion), there is no category that maps onto our notion of emotion. Most of the positive factors are not what we would call emotions, and although most of the negative factors are affective, not all are. Hence it is clear that the Abhidharma does not recognize the notion of emotion as a distinct category of a mental typology. There is no Abhidharma category that can be used to translate our concept of emotion, and similarly our concept of emotion is difficult to use to translate the Abhidharma terminology. Rather than opposing rational and irrational elements of the psyche, or cognitive and emotive systems of the mind (or brain), the Abhidharma emphasizes the distinction between virtuous and afflictive mental factors. Thus, our familiar Western distinction between cognition and emotion simply does not map onto the Abhidharma typology. Although the cognition/emotion

distinction has recently been called into question by some scientists (see Chapter 29 and Damasio, 1995), it remains central to most of contemporary cognitive science and philosophy of mind. The Abhidharma typology offers a different approach, one in which mental factors are categorized according to their ethical character. This typology could prove fruitful for psychologists and social and affective neuroscientists interested in studying the biobehavioral components of human well-being (see Goleman, 2003).

The analyses of mental factors we have reviewed indicate the complexity, sophistication, and uniqueness of the Abhidharma mental typology. For this reason, the Abhidharma is often called, somewhat misleadingly, 'Buddhist psychology'.[15] Yet the Abhidharma analysis does not answer all the questions raised by the Buddhist view of the mind as lacking a real self. In particular, it leaves out the issue of the cognitive or epistemic structure of the mental states that make up the stream of consciousness. To examine this issue, we turn to another Indian Buddhist tradition, the logico-epistemological tradition of Dignāga and Dharmakīrti (see Dreyfus, 1997; Dunne, 2004).

Buddhist Epistemology

This tradition was started by Dignāga around 500 CE and was expanded significantly more than a century later by Dharmakīrti, the focus of our analysis. Its contribution was the explicit formulation of a complete Buddhist logical and epistemological system. The importance of this system in India can be seen in the continuous references to it by later Buddhist thinkers and the numerous attacks it received from orthodox Hindu thinkers. It gradually came to dominate the Indian Buddhist tradition, even eclipsing the Abhidharma as the prime focus of intellectual creativity.

The concern of this tradition is the nature of knowledge. In the Indian context, this issue is formulated as this question: What is the nature of valid cognition (*pramāṇa*) and what are its types? Hindu thinkers tend to present a realist theory, which liberally allows a diversity of instruments of valid cognition. For example, the Sāṃkhya asserts that there are three types of valid sources of knowledge: perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), and verbal testimony (*śabda*). The Nyāya, perhaps the most important Hindu logico-epistemological tradition, added a fourth type of valid cognition, analogy (*upamāna*). This fourfold typology provided the most authoritative epistemological typology in India. Buddhist epistemology, however, rejects these typologies and offers a more restrictive view, limiting knowledge to inference and perception. It is in its examination of inference as a source of knowledge that the Buddhist tradition analyzes reasoning, in particular the conditions necessary for the formation of sound reasons and all their possible types. Hence this tradition is often described, also somewhat misleadingly, as 'Buddhist logic'.[16]

The interpretation of the word *pramāṇa* is itself a topic of debate among Buddhist and Hindu thinkers. For the latter, this word, in accordance with its grammatical form, refers to 'means of valid cognition'. This understanding also accords with the basic view of this school that knowledge is owned by a subject, the self, to whom knowledge is ultimately conveyed. For example, the Nyāya asserts that knowledge is a quality of the self. It is only when I become conscious of something that I can be said to know it. This view is energetically rejected by Dharmakīrti, who follows the classical Buddhist line that there is no knowing self, only knowledge. Hence, *pramāṇa* should not be taken in an instrumental sense, but as referring to the knowledge-event, the word itself being then interpreted as meaning *valid cognition*. This type of cognition is in turn defined as that cognition that is non-deceptive (*avisaṃvādi-jñāna*):

> *Valid cognition is that cognition [that is] non-deceptive* (avisaṃvādi). *Non-deceptiveness [consists] in the readiness*

> *[for the object] to perform a function (Dharmakīrti,* Commentary on Valid Cognition II: 1, *translated by Dreyfus, in Miyasaka, 1971–2).*

This statement emphasizes that *pramāṇa* is not the instrument that a knowing self uses to know things. There is no separate knowing subject, but just knowledge, which is *pramāṇa*. According to this account, a cognition is valid if, and only if, it is non-deceptive. Dharmakīrti in turn interprets non-deceptiveness as consisting of an object's readiness to perform a function that relates to the way it is cognized. For example, the non-deceptiveness of a fire is its disposition to burn, and the non-deceptiveness of its perception is its apprehension as burning. This perception is non-deceptive because it practically corresponds to the object's own causal dispositions, contrary to the apprehension of the fire as cold.

The scope of the discussion of *pramāṇa*, however, is not limited to the analysis of knowledge, but constitutes a veritable philosophical method used in investigating other philosophical and even metaphysical topics. All pronouncements about the world and our ways of knowing it must rest on some attested forms of knowledge, such as perception and inference, if they are to be taken seriously. No one can simply claim truth, but must be able to establish statements by pinning down their epistemic supports. The advantage of this method is that it provides intertraditional standards of validation and the development of a relatively neutral framework within which philosophical and metaphysical claims can be assessed, without regard to religious or ideological backgrounds. This procedure is different from the Abhidharmic approach, which presupposes Buddhist ideas and vocabulary.

In analyzing the mind, Dharmakīrti starts from the same view of mind as the Abhidharma. Mind is made up of momentary mental states that arise in quick succession. Each moment of consciousness comes to be and disappears instantaneously, making a place for other moments of awareness. Moreover, each moment apprehends the object that appears to it and in the process reveals the object that is apprehended. In this way, each mental state cognizes its object. But as an epistemologist, Dharmakīrti investigates issues left out by the Abhidharma, tackling questions that are central to any philosophical exploration of the mind. In this chapter, we examine some of these questions. First, we consider Dharmakīrti's analysis of the nature of cognitive events. We examine his view of the mind as apprehending representations of external objects, rather than the objects themselves, and the consequences that this view has for the issue of whether the mind is inherently reflexive (self-revealing and self-aware). We also examine Dharmakīrti's theory of perception, as well as some of his views on the nature of conceptuality and its relation to language. Finally, we revisit the issue of intentionality, showing the complexity of this notion and attempting to disentangle its several possible meanings within the context of a Buddhist account of the mental.

The Reflexive Nature of Mental Events

We commonly assume that we have unproblematic access to our environment through our senses. Even casual first-person investigation shows, however, that such access may well not be the case. There are cases of perceptual illusions, and even when we are not deceived, the perceptions of individuals vary greatly. Hence philosophy cannot take for granted the common-sense view of perceptual knowledge. Many Western philosophers have argued that our perceptual knowledge goes well beyond the sensible experiences that give rise to it. Although this claim is debatable, we cannot assume without examination that we understand the way in which cognition apprehends its objects.

In thinking about the nature of cognition, Dharmakīrti relies crucially on the concept of *aspect* (*ākāra*), a notion that goes back to the Sāṃkhya, but has been accepted by several other schools. The idea behind this position, which is called in Indian philosophy *sākāravāda* ('assertion of aspect'), is that cognition does not apprehend its object

nakedly, but rather through an aspect, which is the reflection or imprint left by the object on the mind. For example, a visual sense consciousness does not directly perceive a blue color, but captures the likeness of blue as imprinted on cognition. Thus, to be aware of an object does not mean apprehending this object directly, but having a mental state that has the form of this object and being cognizant of this form. The aspect is the cognitive form or epistemic factor that allows us to distinguish mental episodes and differentiate among our experiences. Without aspects, we could not distinguish, for instance, a perception of blue from a perception of yellow, for we do not perceive yellow directly. The role of the aspect is thus crucial in Dharmakīrti's system, for it explains a key feature of consciousness: Consciousness is not the bare seeing that direct realism and common sense suppose, but rather the apprehension of an aspect that represents this object in the field of consciousness. The aspect is not external to consciousness. It is not only the form under which an external object presents itself to consciousness but also the form that consciousness assumes when it perceives its object. Thus an aspect is a representation of objects in consciousness, as well as the consciousness that sees this representation.

The implication of this analysis is that perception is inherently reflexive. Awareness takes on the form of an object and reveals that form by assuming it. Thus, in the process of revealing external things, cognition reveals itself. This view of cognition as 'self-luminous' (*svayam prakāśa*) and self-presencing is not unique to Dignāga, its first Buddhist propounder, or to Dharmakīrti, his follower. It is also accepted by other thinkers, particularly the Hindu Vedāntins, who identify consciousness as the self and describe it as being 'only known to itself' (*svayaṃvedya*) and 'self-effulgent' (*svayamprabha*; see Gupta 1998, 2003; Mayeda, 1979/1992, pp. 22, 44). For Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, however, the inherently reflexive character of consciousness is not a consequence of its transcendent and pure nature, but of its consisting of the beholding of an internal representation. From one side, consciousness has an externally oriented feature, called the objective aspect (*grāhyākāra*). This feature is the form that a mental state assumes under the influence of an external object. The second side is the internal knowledge of our own mental states. It is called the subjective aspect (*grāhakākāra*), the feature that ensures that we are aware of the objective aspect, the representation of the object. These two parts do not exist separately. Rather, each mental state consists of both and hence is necessarily reflexive (aware of itself in being aware of its object).

The necessary reflexivity of consciousness is understood by Dharmakīirti and his followers as a particular type of perception called *self-cognition* (*svasaṃvedana*). Self-cognition can be compared to what Western philosophers call *apperception*; namely, the knowledge that we have of our own mental states. It is important to keep in mind, however, that apperception does not imply a second and separate cognition directed toward a given mental state of which one is thereby aware. For Dharmakīrti, apperception is not introspective or reflective, for it does not take inner mental states as its objects. It is instead the self-cognizing factor inherent in every mental episode, which provides us with a non-thematic awareness of our mental states. For Dharmakīrti, reflexivity is a necessary consequence of his analysis of perception, according to which a subjective aspect beholds an objective aspect that represents the external object within the field of consciousness. Self-cognition is nothing over and above this beholding.

Self-cognition is the intuitive presence that we feel we have toward our own mental episodes. We may not be fully aware of all the aspects and implications of our experiences, but we do seem to keep track of them. Tibetan scholars express this idea by saying that there is no person whose mental states are completely hidden to him- or herself. This limited self-presence is not due to a metaphysical self, but to self-cognition. Because apperception does not rely on reasoning, it is taken to be a form of perception.

Apperception does not constitute, however, a separate reflective or introspective cognition. Otherwise, the charge that the notion of apperception opens an infinite regress would be hard to avoid.

Dharmakīrti's ideas are not unlike those Western philosophers who have argued that consciousness implies self-consciousness (see Chapters 3 and 4). Such philosophers include (despite their otherwise vast differences) Aristotle, Descartes, Locke, Kant, Husserl, and Sartre (see Wider, 1997, pp. 7–39). According to Locke, a person is conscious of his or her own mental states. He defines consciousness as "the perception of what passes in a man's mind" (*Essay Concerning Human Understanding* II: ii, 19). Leibniz, in his *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding* (II: i, 19), criticizes Locke, pointing out that this view leads to an infinite regress, for if every cognitive act implies self-awareness, self-knowledge must also be accompanied by another awareness, and so on ad infinitum. This regress arises, however, only if knowledge of one's mental states is assumed to be distinct from knowledge of external objects. This assumption is precisely what Dharmakīrti denies. A consciousness is aware of itself in a non-dual way that does not involve the presence of a separate awareness of consciousness. The cognizing person simply knows that he or she cognizes without the intervention of a separate perception of the cognition. This knowledge is the function of apperception, which thus provides an element of certainty with respect to our mental states. Apperception does not necessarily validate these states, however. For example, one can take oneself to be seeing water without knowing whether that seeing is veridical. In this case, one knows that one has an experience, but one does not know that one knows. The determination of the validity of a cognition is not internal or intrinsic to that cognition, but is to be established by practical investigation.

Several arguments are presented by Dharmakīrti to establish the reflexive nature of consciousness.[17] One of his main arguments concerns the nature of suffering and happiness as it reveals the deeper nature of mental states. For Dharmakīrti, as for the Abhidharma, suffering and happiness are not external to consciousness, but integral to our awareness of external objects. Our perceptions arise with a certain feeling-tone, be it pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral; this feeling-tone is a function of the presence of the mental factor of feeling as described by the Abhidharma. This feeling needs to be noticed, however; otherwise we would not be aware of how the apprehension of the object feels. Because this noticing cannot be the function of another mental state without incurring the problem of an infinite regress, it must be the mental state apprehending the external object that becomes aware at the same time of the feeling. This conclusion indicates, for Dharmakīrti, the dual nature of mental states. In a single mental state, two aspects can be distinguished: (1) the objective aspect, the representation of the external object in consciousness, and (2) the subjective aspect, the apprehension of this appearance or self-cognition.

For Dharmakīrti, a mental state thus has two functions. It apprehends an external object (*ālambana*) and beholds itself. The apprehension of an external object is not direct, but results from the causal influence of the object, which induces cognition to experience (*anubhava*) the object's representation. Hence, mind does not experience an external object, but beholds an internal representation that stands for an external object. Cognition cannot be reduced to a process of direct observation, but involves a holding of an inner representation. This beholding is not, however, an apprehension in the usual sense of the word, for the two aspects of a single mental episode are not separate. It is an 'intimate' contact, a direct experiencing of the mental state by itself through which we become aware of our mental states at the same time as we perceive things.

Theory of Perception

This view of cognition as bearing only indirectly on external objects has obvious consequences for the theory of perception. The

theory of perception is an important element of Dharmakīrti's epistemology, for we have access to external reality first and foremost through perception, the primary valid cognition. But this access is not as unproblematic as one might think. Although it might seem commonsensical that perception results from our encounter with the world, in reality consciousness does not directly cognize the object, but only indirectly cognizes it. For Dharmakīrti, as we have seen, the mind has direct access only to the representational *aspect* caused by the object; the object itself remains inaccessible to consciousness. The similarity between object and aspect – and hence between object and consciousnesss, the aspect being the cognitive form of the object that stands for the object in the field of consciousness – is the crucial element in this causal theory of perception. This similarity ensures that perception is not locked up in its own appearances, as conceptions are. Consciousness is not in direct contact with the external world, but only with an internal impression caused by the external object. Hence the external object remains hidden, though not completely.

When pressed by these problems, Dharmakīrti sometimes shifts between the views of two different Buddhist philosophical schools, using one perspective to bypass problems that arise in the other. These two views are the Sautrāntika theory of perception, which is representationalist in the ways just described, and the Yogācāra theory, which is idealist and denies that there is anything outside of consciousness. Following Dignāga's example and his strategy of ascending scales of philosophical analysis, Dharmakīrti holds that the Yogācāra theory is truer and hence higher on the scale of analysis. This theory denies that there are any external objects over and above the direct objects of perception. Thus its view of perception is phenomenalist: It reduces external objects to interpreted mental data, but such data are no longer taken to stand for external objects (because it is now held that nothing exists outside of consciousness). This theory, however, is counter-intuitive, and so Dharmakīrti refers to it only occasionally, preferring to argue on the basis of the commonsensical assumption that external objects exist. His theory of perception thus has a peculiar two-tiered structure, in which he presupposes the existence of external objects, which he then ultimately rejects to propound a form of idealism.

Among these two tiers, the one Dharmakīrti most often refers to is the Sautrāntika representationalist theory of perception. According to this view, consciousness does not have direct access to external objects, but grasps objects via the intermediary of an aspect caused by and similar to an external object. He sometimes replaces this view by a Yogācāra view, which holds that internal impressions are not produced by external objects, but by internal tendencies. This shift into full-blown idealism allows Dharmakīrti to bypass the difficulties involved in explaining the relation between internal perceptions and external objects. Because there are no external objects, the problem of the relation between internal impressions and external objects does not arise. At this level, his philosophy of perception can be described as phenomenalist, for it holds that there is no external object outside of aspects.

Another major feature of Dharmakīrti's account is his sharp separation between perception and conception, a separation enshrined in his definition of perception as the cognition that is unmistaken (*abhrānta*) and free from conceptions (*kalpanāpoḍha*) (*Commentary on Valid Cognition*, III: 300 cd). Because perception is unmistaken and conception is mistaken, perception must be free from conception. This analysis of perception differs sharply from the dominant account in India, the epistemological realism of the Nyāya school and its assertion of the existence of a determinate (*savikalpaka*) form of perception. For the Nyāya, perception does not stop with the simple taking in of sensory stimuli, but also involves the ability to categorize this input. Although we may start with a first moment of indeterminate perception, in which we merely take in external reality, we do not stop there but go on to formulate perceptual judgments. Moreover, and this is the crux of the

question, these judgments are for the Nyāya fully perceptual. They are not mistaken conceptual overlays, but true reflections of reality.

This commonsensical view of perception is not acceptable to Dharmakīrti, for it leads to an unenviable choice: either accept the reality of the abstract entities necessary for the articulation of the content of perception or reject the possibility of an unmistaken cognition. Because neither possibility is acceptable for Dharmakīrti, he holds that perception can only be non-conceptual. There is no determinate perception, for the judgments induced by perception are not perceptual, but are just conceptual superimpositions. They do not reflect the individual reality of phenomena, but instead address their general characteristics. Because those are only constructs, the cognitions that conceive them cannot be true reflections of reality. Hence for perception to be undistorted in a universe of particulars, it must be totally free from conceptual elaborations. This position implies a radical separation between perception, which merely holds the object as it is in the perceptual ken, and interpretation of this object, which introduces conceptual constructs into the cognitive process.

This requirement that perception be non-conceptual is the cornerstone of the Buddhist theory of perception. But it creates problems for Dharmakīrti. It would seem that given his privileging of perception he should hold an empiricist view, according to which perception boils down to a bare encounter with reality and knowledge is given to the senses. Dharmakīrti should hold the view that the aspects through which we come to perceive reality are fully representational like Locke's ideas, that they stand for external objects, and that their apprehension is in and of itself cognitive. Dharmakīrti's view of perception, however, is more complex, for he shares with Sellars (1956) the recognition that knowledge, even at the perceptual level, does not boil down to an encounter with reality, but requires active categorization. We do not know things by sensing them, for perception does not deliver articulated objects, but only impressions, which by themselves are not forms of knowledge but become so only when they are integrated within our categorical schemes. For example, when we are hit on the head, we first have an impression. We just have a sensation of pain, which is not by itself cognitive. This sensation becomes cognitive when it becomes integrated into a conceptual scheme, in which it is explained as being an impact on a certain part of our body due to certain causes. It is only then that the impression of being hit becomes fully intentional. Prior to this cognitive integration, the impression, or to speak Dharmakīrti's language, the aspect, does not yet represent anything in the full sense of the word. It only becomes so when interpreted conceptually.

This view of perception agrees with Dharmakīrti's analysis of the validity of cognitions, which consists in their being 'non-deceptive', a term interpreted in practical terms. Cognitions are valid if, and only if, they have the ability to lead us toward successful practical actions. In the case of perception, however, practical validity is not as straightforward as one might think. Achieving practical purposes depends on correctly describing the objects we encounter. It is not enough to see an object that is blue; we must also see it *as* being blue. To be non-deceptive, a cognition depends on the appropriate identification of the object as being this or that. Perceptions, however, do not identify their objects, for they are not conceptual. They cannot categorize their objects, but only hold them without any determination. Categorization requires conceptual thought under the form of a judgment. Such a judgment subsumes its object under an appropriate universal, thereby making it part of the practical world where we deal with long-lasting entities that we conceive of as parts of a determined order of things. For example, we sense a blue object that we categorize as blue. The perceptual aspect (the blue aspect) is not yet a representation in the full sense of the word, because its apprehension, the perception of blue, is not yet cognitive. It is only when it is interpreted by a conception that the aspect becomes a full-fledged

intentional object standing for an external object. Hence, Dharmakīrti's account of perception leads us to realize the importance of categorical interpretation in the formation of perceptual knowledge, a position that is not without problems for his system, given his emphasis on the primacy and nonconceptuality of perception. Nevertheless, the merit of this analysis is that it disentangles the processes through which we come to know the world, explaining the role of perception as a way to contact the world while emphasizing the role of conceptual categorization in the formation of practical knowledge.

Thought and Language

In examining thought (*kalpanā*), Dharmakīrti postulates a close association with language. In fact, the two can be considered equivalent from an epistemological point of view. Language signifies through conceptual mediation in the same way that thought conceives of things. The relation between the two also goes the other way: We do not first understand things independently of linguistic signs and then communicate this understanding to others. Dharmakīrti recognizes a cognitive import to language; through language we identify the particular things we encounter, and in this way we integrate the object into the meaningful world we have constructed. The cognitive import of language is particularly obvious in the acquisition of more complex concepts. In these cases, it is clear that there is nothing in experience that could possibly give rise to these concepts without language. Without linguistic signs thought cannot keep track of things to any degree of complexity. Dharmakīrti also notes that we usually remember things by recollecting the words associated with those things. Thus concepts and words mutually depend on each other.

This close connection between thought and language, inherited from Dignāga, differentiates Dharmakīrti from classical empiricists, such as Locke and modern sense-data theorists, who believe in what Sellars (1956) describes as the 'myth of the given'. Locke, for example, holds that concepts and words are linked through association. The word 'tree' acquires its meaning by becoming connected with the idea *tree*, which is the mental image of a tree. Hence for Locke the representation of the tree is not formed through language, but is given to sensation (Dharmakīrti's perception). We understand a tree as a tree through mere acquaintance with its representation without recourse to concepts. Dharmakīrti's philosophy is quite different, for it emphasizes the constitutive and constructive nature of language. This conception of language is well captured by one of Dharmakīrti's definitions of thought:

> *Conceptual cognition is that consciousness in which representation (literally, appearance) is fit to be associated which words (*Ascertainment of Valid Cognition *40: 6–7, in Vetter, 1966).*

Thought identifies its object by associating the representation of the object with a word. When we conceive of an object we do not apprehend it directly, but through the mediation of its aspect. Mediation through an aspect also occurs with perception, but here the process of mediation is different. In the case of perception there is a direct causal connection between the object and its representation, but no such link exists for thought. There is no direct causal link between the object and thought, but rather an extended process of mediation in which linguistic signs figure prominently.

For Dharmakīrti, the starting point of this process is our encounter with a variety of objects that we experience as being similar or different. We construct concepts in association with linguistic signs to capture this sense of experienced similarity and difference. This linguistic association creates a more precise concept in which the representations are made to stand for a commonality that the objects are assumed to possess. For example, we see a variety of trees and apprehend a similarity between these objects. At this level, our mental representations have yet to yield a concept of tree. The concept of tree is formed when we connect our

representations with a socially formed and communicated sign and assume that they stand for a treeness that we take individual trees to share. In this way experiences give rise to mental representations, which are transformed into concepts by association with a linguistic sign. The formation of a concept consists of the assumption that mental representations stand for an agreed-upon imagined commonality. Thus concepts come to be through the conjunction of the experience of real objects and the social process of language acquisition. Concept formation is connected to reality, albeit in a mediated and highly indirect way.

But concept formation is also mistaken, according to this view. A concept is based on the association of a mental representation with a term that enables the representation to stand for a property assumed to be shared by various individuals. In Dharmakīrti's nominalist world of individuals, however, things do not share a common property; rather, the property is projected onto them. The property is manufactured when a representation is made to stand for an assumed commonality, which a variety of individuals are mistakenly taken to instantiate. Hence this property is not real; it is merely a pseudo-entity superimposed (*adhyāropa*) on individual realities. This property is also not reducible to a general term. In other words, the commonality that we project onto things does not reside in using the same term to designate discrete individuals. Upon analyzing the notion of *sameness of terms*, we realize that identifying individual terms as being the same presupposes the concept of sameness of meaning, in relation to which the individual terms can be identified. Thus commonality is not due simply to a term, but requires the formation of concepts on the basis of the mistaken imputation of commonality onto discrete individuals.

What does it mean, however, for a concept to be based on an assumed commonality? Here Dharmakīrti's theory must be placed within its proper context, the *apoha* or exclusion theory of language, which was created by Dignāga. This complex topic is beyond the scope of this chapter. Suffice it to say that the *apoha* theory is a way to explain how language signifies in a world of individuals. Linguistic meaning poses a particularly acute problem for Dignāga and Dharmakīrti, for they are committed to a connotationist view of language, in which sense has primacy over reference. Such a view, however, is difficult to hold in a nominalist ontology that disallows abstract entities, such as meaning.[18]

The *apoha* theory tries to solve this conundrum by arguing that language does not describe reality positively through universals, but negatively by exclusion. Language is primarily meaningful, but this does not mean that there are real senses. Rather, we posit agreed-upon fictions that we construct for the sake of categorizing the world according to our purposes. Thus 'cow' does not describe Bessie through the mediation of a real universal (cowness), but by excluding a particular (Bessie) from the class of non-cow. Matilal describes Dignāga's view this way:

> *Each name, as Dignāga understands, dichotomizes the universe into two: those to which the name can be applied and those to which it cannot be applied. The function of a name is to exclude the object from the class of those objects to which it cannot be applied. One might say that the function of a name is to locate the object outside of the class of those to which it cannot be applied (Matilal, 1971, p. 45).*

Although linguistic form suggests that we subsume an individual under a property, analysis reveals that words merely exclude objects from being included in a class to which they do not belong. The function of a name is to locate negatively an object within a conceptual sphere. The impression that words positively capture the nature of objects is misleading.

This theory was immediately attacked by Hindu thinkers, such as Kumārila and Uddyotakara, who raised strong objections. One of them was that this theory is counter-intuitive, because we do not perceive ourselves to eliminate non-cows when we

conceive of cows. Dharmakīrti's theory of concept formation is in many ways an attempt to answer these attacks. It argues that the *apoha* theory is not psychological, but epistemological. In conceiving of objects we do not directly eliminate other objects, but instead rely on a representation that is made to stand in for an assumed commonality shared by several particulars. It is this fictional commonality that is the result of an exclusion. There is nothing over and above particulars, which are categorized on the basis of their being excluded from what they are not. The concept that has been formed in an essentially negative way is projected onto real things. In the process of making judgments such as 'this is a tree', the real differences that exist between the different trees come to be ignored and the similarities are reified into a common universal property, which is nothing but a socially agreed-upon fiction.

The eliminative nature of thought and language is psychologically revealed when we examine the learning process. The word 'cow', for instance, is not learned only through a definition, but by a process of elimination. We can give a definition of 'cow', but the definition works only if its elements are known already. For example, we can define cows as animals having dewlaps, horns, and so on (the traditional definition of 'cow' in Indian philosophy). But how do we know what counts as a dewlap? Not just by pointing to the neck of a cow, but by eliminating the cases that do not fit. In this way, we establish a dichotomy between those animals that fit, and other animals or things that do not, and on the basis of this negative dichotomy we construct a fictive property, cowness. This construction is not groundless, however, but proceeds through an indirect causal connection with reality. Concepts are not formed a priori, but elaborated as a result of experiences. Dharmakīrti's solution to the problem of thought and meaning is thus to argue that in a world bereft of real abstract entities (properties), there are only constructed intensional (linguistic) pseudo-entities, but that this construction is based on experience; that is, perception. This grounding in perception ensures that, although conception is mistaken in the way reviewed above, it is neither baseless nor random and hence can lead to the formation of concepts that will be attuned to the causal capacities of particulars.

Dharmakīrti and Abhidharma: Intentionality Revisited

Dharmakīrti's analysis has in certain respects a great deal of continuity with the Abhidharma. Both view the mind as constituted by a succession of mental states in accordance with their ontological commitments, which privilege the particular over the general. Reality is made up of a plurality of elements (here moments of awareness), and generality, when it is not a figment of our imagination, is at best the result of aggregation. This emphasis on the particular derives from the central tenets of the Buddhist tradition; namely, non-substantiality and dependent origination. In Dharmakīrti's epistemological approach, this emphasis expresses itself in valuing perception over conception, and in the problematic but necessary cooperation between the two forms of cognition. We do not come to know things by merely coming across them, but by integrating them into our conceptual schemes on the basis of our experiences.

One question raised by this analysis concerns intentionality. The Abhidharma tradition had assumed all along that cognitions were intentional, but did not provide a systematic analysis of intentionality. Dharmakīrti fills this gap, analyzing the way in which various types of cognition bear on their objects. But because he makes a sharp distinction between perception and conception, his analysis does not yield a single concept of intentionality, but on the contrary leads us to realize that this central notion may have to be understood in multiple ways. The cognitive process starts with our encounter with the world through perceptions, but this encounter is not enough to bring about knowledge. Only when we are able to integrate the objects delivered through the senses into our categorical

schemes can we be said to know them in the full sense of the word. Hence, if we understand intentionality as cognitive – that is, as pertaining to knowledge – we may well have to agree with Dharmakīrti that perception is not in and of itself fully intentional. Only when perception is coordinated with conception does it become intentional; hence it can be said to be intentional only in a derived sense of the word. Perception is not in and of itself cognitive, but only inasmuch as it has the ability to induce conceptual interpretations of its objects. This does not mean, however, that perception is completely blank or purely passive. It has an intentional function, that of delivering impressions that we take in and organize through our conceptual schemes. Hence, perception can be said to have a phenomenal intentionality, which may be revealed in certain forms of meditative experiences.

Dharmakīrti alludes to such experiences when he describes a form of meditation, in which we empty our mind without closing it completely to the external world (*Commentary on Valid Cognition* III: 123–5, in Miyasaka 1971–2). In this state of liminal awareness, things appear to us but we do not identify them. We merely let them be. When we come out of this stage, the usual conceptual flow returns, and with it the conceptualization that allows us to identify things as being this or that. This experience shows, Dharmakīrti argues, that identification is not perceptual, but is due to conceptualization. In such a state, perception takes place but not conceptualization. Hence, perception is a non-conceptual sensing onto which interpretations are added.

Due to the speed of the mental process, the untrained person cannot differentiate conceptual from non-conceptual cognitions. It is only on special occasions, such as in some form of meditation, that a clear differentiation can be made. There, the flow of thought gradually subsides, and we reach a state in which there is a bare sensing of things. In this state, what we call shapes and colors are seen barely (i.e., as they are delivered to our senses without the adjunctions of conceptual interpretations). When one gradually emerges from such a non-conceptual state, the flow of thoughts gradually reappears, and we are able to make judgments about what we saw during our meditation. One is then also able to make a clear differentiation between the products of thoughts and the bare delivery of the senses and to distinguish cognitive from phenomenal intentionality.

The analysis of intentionality, however, may have to go even further to account for all the forms of cognition known to Buddhist traditions. We alluded above to the Abhidharmic idea of a store-consciousness, a subliminal form of cognition that supports all the propensities, habits, and tendencies of a person. Although such a store-consciousness is usually asserted by the Yogācāra to support their idealist view, it is known to other traditions under other names and hence has to be taken seriously within a Buddhist account of the mind, regardless of the particular views that are associated with it. But given the particularities of this form of consciousness, its integration within a Buddhist view of the mind is not without problems. The difficulties come from the fact that the store-consciousness does not seem to have cognitive or even phenomenal intentionality. Because it does not capture any feature, it cannot be said to know its object, like conceptions. Because it is subliminal, it is difficult to attribute to it a phenomenal content able to induce categorization, like perceptions. How then can it be intentional?

To respond to this question would necessitate an analysis that goes well beyond the purview of this chapter. Several avenues are open to us. We could argue that the store-consciousness is not intentional and hence that intentionality is not the defining characteristic of the mental, but only of certain forms of cognitions. We would then be faced with the task of explaining the nature of the mental in a way that does not presuppose intentionality. Or we could extend the concept of intentionality, arguing that the store-consciousness is not intentional in the usual cognitive or phenomenal senses of the word, but rather that its intentionality consists in its having a dispositional ability to generate more explicit cognitive states. Some Western phenomenologists, notably Husserl and

Merleau-Ponty, distinguish 'object directed intentionality' from 'operative intentionality' (see Chapter 4). Whereas the former is what we usually mean by intentionality, the latter is a non-reflective tacit sensibility, a spontaneous and involuntary level that makes us ready to respond cognitively and affectively to the world, though it is not by itself explicitly cognitive. This most basic form of intentionality is important in explaining our openness to the world. It also seems an interesting avenue for exploring the cognitive nature of the store-consciousness.

Conclusion

We can now see the richness and the complexities of the Indian Buddhist analyses of the nature of the mind and consciousness. The Abhidharma provides the basis of these analyses, with its view of the mind as a stream of moments of consciousness and its distinction between the primary factor of awareness and mental factors. This tradition also emphasizes the intentional nature of consciousness, the ability of consciousness to be about something else. As we have seen, however, this concept is far from self-evident and needs further philosophical clarification. This clarification is one of the important tasks of Dharmakīrti's philosophy. In accomplishing this task, Dharmakīrti critically explores the variety of human cognitions, distinguishing the conceptual from the perceptual modes of cognition and emphasizing the constructed nature of the former and its close connection with language. Yet, as we have also seen, this philosophy is not always able to account for all the insights of the Abhidharma, particularly those concerning the deeper layers of consciousness.

When we look at the Indian Buddhist tradition, we should not look for a unified and seamless view of the mind. Like any other significant tradition, Indian Buddhist philosophy of mind is plural and animated by debates, questions, and tensions. This rich tradition has a great deal to offer contemporary mind science and philosophy, including rich phenomenological investigations of various aspects of human cognition and exploration of various levels and types of meditative consciousness. This tradition also shows, however, that it would be naïve to take these investigations of consciousness as being objectively given or established. Rather, they are accounts of experience that are often intertwined with doctrinal formulations and hence are open to critique, revision, and challenge, like any other human interpretation. Indeed, these formulations need to be taken seriously and examined with the kind of critical spirit and rigorous philosophical thinking exhibited by Dharmakīrti. Only then, can we do justice to the insights of this tradition.

Glossary

Sāṃkhya

Pradhāna: primordial nature or *prakṛti*, materiality. The primordial substance out of which the diversity of phenomena arise. It is composed of three qualities (*guṇa*): *sattva* (transparency, buoyancy), *rajas* (energy, activity), and *tamas* (inertia, obstruction). They are the principles or forces whose combination produces mental and material phenomena.

Atman: spiritual self or *puruṣa*, person. The non-material spiritual element that merely witnesses the mental activities involved in the ordinary awareness of objects.

Buddhi: usually translated as 'the intellect'. It has the ability to distinguish and experience objects. This ability provides the prereflective and presubjective ground out of which determined mental states and their objects arise. It is also the locus of all the fundamental predispositions that lead to these experiences.

Ahaṃkāra: egoity or ego-sense. This is the sense of individual subjectivity or selfhood tied to embodiment, which gives rise to the subjective pole of cognition.

Manas: mentation. It oversees the senses and discriminates between objects. By serving as an intermediary between the intellect and the senses, mentation organizes sensory impressions and objects and integrates them into a temporal framework created by memories and expectations.

Citta: mental activities or *antaḥkaraṇa*, internal organ. This is the grouping of *buddhi*, *ahaṃkāra*, and *manas*.

Pramāṇa: instrument of valid cognition of the self. The Sāṃkhya recognizes three such instruments: perception, inference, and testimony. The Nyāya adds a fourth one, analogy.

Buddhist

Citta: primary factor of awareness or *vijñāna*, consciousness. It is the aspect of the mental state that is aware of the object, or the bare apprehension of the object. It is the awareness that merely discerns the object, the activity of cognizing the object.

Caitesika: mental factor. Mental factors are aspects of the mental state that characterize the object of awareness and account for its engagement. In other words, whereas consciousness makes known the mere presence of the object, mental factors make known the particulars of the content of awareness, defining the characteristics and special conditions of its object.

Alaya-vijñāna: store-consciousness. This continuously present subliminal consciousness is posited by some of the Yogācāra thinkers to provide a sense of continuity in the person over time. It is the repository of all the basic habits, tendencies, and propensities (including those that persist from one life to the next) accumulated by the individual.

Bhavaṇga citta: life-constituent consciousness. Although this consciousness is not said to be always present and arises only during the moments where there is no manifest mental activity, it also provides a sense of continuity for the Theravada school, which asserts its existence.

Kliṣta-manas: afflictive mentation. This is the inborn sense of self that arises from the apprehension of the store-consciousness as being a self. From a Buddhist point of view, however, this sense of self is fundamentally mistaken. It is a mental imposition of unity where there is in fact only the arising of a multiplicity of interrelated physical and mental events.

pramāṇa: valid cognition. Not the instrument of a self but the knowledge-event itself. There are only two types of valid cognition admissible in Buddhist epistemology, *pratyakṣa*, perception, and *anumāna*, inference.

Svasaṃvedana: self-cognition. This is the limited but intuitive presence that we feel we have toward our own mental episodes, which is due not to the presence of a metaphysical self but to the non-thematic reflexive knowledge that we have of our own mental states. Because self-cognition does not rely on reasoning, it is taken to be a form of perception. It does not constitute, however, a separate reflective or introspective cognition. Otherwise, the charge that the notion of apperception opens an infinite regress would be hard to avoid.

Notes

1. Presenting the Sāṃkhya view in a few lines is problematic given its evolution over a long period of time, an evolution shaped by the addition of numerous refinements and new analyses in response to the critiques of Buddhists and Vedāntins. For a quick summary, see Mahalingam (1977). For a more detailed examination, see Larson and Bhattacharya (1987).
2. Contrary to Vedānta, the Sāṃkhya holds that there are many individual selves rather than a universal ground of being such as *Brahman*.

3. The notion of a pure and passive 'witness consciousness' is a central element of many Hindu views about consciousness (see Gupta, 1998, 2003).
4. For a thoughtful discussion of this view of the mind, see Schweizer (1993).
5. Numerous translations of Patañjali's *Yoga Sutras* are available in English.
6. For discussion of the Advaita Vedānta view of consciousness, see Gupta (2003, Chapter 5). For a philosophical overview of Advaita Vedānta, see Deutsch (1969).
7. For a glimpse of the origins of the Abhidharma, see Gethin (1992).
8. For Husserl, by contrast, not all consciousness is intentional in the sense of being object-directed. See Chapter 4 and the final section of this chapter.
9. All quotations from this work are translated from the French by G. Dreyfus.
10. See Rahula (1980, p. 17). Although the Theravada Abhidharma does not recognize a distinct store-consciousness, its concept of *bhavaçga citta*, the life-constituent consciousness, is similar. For a view of the complexities of the *bhavaçga*, see Waldron (2003, pp. 81–87).
11. They are then said to be conjoined (*sampayutta*, *mtshungs ldan*), in that they are simultaneous and have the same sensory basis, the same object, the same aspect or way of apprehending this object, and the same substance (the fact that there can be only one representative of a type of consciousness and mental factor at the same time). See Waldron (2003, p. 205).
12. This list, which is standard in the Tibetan tradition, is a compilation based on Asaçga's *Abhidharma–samuccaya*. It is not, however, Asaçga's own list, which contains 52 items (Rahula 1980, p. 7). For further discussion, see Napper (1980) and Rabten (1978/1992). For the lists of some of the other traditions, see Bodhi (1993, pp. 76–79) and de la Vallée Poussin (1971, II: 150–178).
13. Although some of these states may be soteriologically significant and involve the ability to transcend duality, not all need be. The practice of concentration can involve signless meditative states, and so too does the practice of some of the so-called formless meditative states.
14. For a discussion of whether compassion and lovingkindness, seen from a Buddhist point of view, are emotions, see Dreyfus (2002).
15. For a brief but thoughtful discussion of the idea of Buddhism as a psychology, see Gomez (2004).
16. For discussion of the characteristics of Indian logic, see Matilal (1985) and Barlingay (1975). On Buddhist logic, see Kajiyama (1966). For an analysis of Dharmakīrti's philosophy, see Dreyfus (1997) and Dunne (2004).
17. For a detailed treatment of Dharmakīrti's arguments and their further elaboration in the Tibetan tradition, see Dreyfus (1997, pp. 338–341, 400–415).
18. For more on this difficult topic, see Dreyfus (1997) and Dunne (2004).

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THE CONSTRUCTION OF MINDFULNESS

Andrew Olendzki

Mindfulness is examined using the Abhidhamma system of classification of phenomena (dharmas) as found in the Pali work Abhidhammattha-saṅgaha. In this model the mental factors constituting the aggregate of formations (saṅkhāra) are grouped so as to describe a layered approach to the practice of mental development. Thus all mental states involve a certain set of mental factors, while others are added as the training of the mind takes place. Both unwholesome and wholesome configurations also occur, and mindfulness turns out to be a rather advanced state of wholesome constructed experience. Wisdom, the prime transformative factor in Buddhist thought and practice, arises only under special conditions. This system is then contrasted with the different parsing of phenomena presented in the Sanskrit Abhidharmakośa, where both mindfulness and wisdom are counted among the universal factors, which provides a basis for an innatist model of development; this is then critiqued from a constructivist perspective.

One of the most compelling aspects of the expansive and enduring Buddhist tradition is the sophisticated model of mind and body presented in the *Nikāyas* of the Pali Canon and systematized in both the Pali Abhidhamma literature of South Asia and the Sanskrit Abhidharma literature of Northwest India and beyond. The historical Buddha is surely the source of most of these ideas, though they were significantly developed by many others as time went by and the lore was taken up by new communities. The comprehensive analysis and description of experience offered in these teachings is of particular interest to modern thinkers, both because of its empirical underpinnings and its remarkable affinity with post-modern thought. Rooted in ancient yogic meditative practices and articulated with great intellectual precision, they offer a dynamic, process-oriented view of experience as a series of interdependent cognitive events arising and passing away each moment as the senses encounter incoming environmental data and the mind builds a world of meaning to interpret this information and respond to it both emotionally and behaviourally. Moreover, this system of thought goes beyond mere description to offer practical guidance for optimizing wellbeing, which is accomplished by overcoming the habitual compulsions deriving from the pleasure/pain reflex and by developing a greater working understanding of the nature of human experience.

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This ancient knowledge about how the mind and body constructs experience and how a person can use this knowledge to attain greater health and happiness rests at the heart of the early Buddhist tradition, but was soon bypassed and relegated to a scholarly and meditative backwater as Buddhism turned in more popular, devotional, and culturally syncretic directions. It is gradually being rediscovered by the current generation of scholars and teachers, and is of special concern to those in contemporary fields who study human experience and who have an interest in augmenting human wellbeing. Among these are cognitive scientists and psychologists, and the many others who overlap with these disciplines. Early Buddhist thought employs a crisply defined technical vocabulary that can be useful in identifying and untangling the thickets of subjective experience. It also offers a detailed examination of the mechanisms of attention, which may help in working towards a better definition of mindfulness and related mental states, and may even suggest a way of measuring levels of greater or lesser attention. Of particular value to the therapeutic agenda is the basic orientation of these teachings toward transformation and the alleviation of suffering, insofar as they track progress along a scale of change from a state of affliction toward one of profound wellbeing under any circumstances.

What most characterizes the model of mind and body expressed in early Buddhist literature is the breaking down of experience into its constituent phenomenological bytes, called *dharmas*, and then the organization and classification of these *dharmas* in various ways to clarify their definition and delineate their function as part of a complex interdependent system. Just as the natural world presents itself one way at a certain level of scale and another upon closer examination, so too Buddhist thought identifies the manner in which lived experience at the level of macro-construction differs significantly from its constituent processes as they are revealed under the close investigation of a concentrated mind. For example, it can be relatively easily shown, both experientially and neurologically, that what appears as an uninterrupted flow of continuous and coherent experience is actually a series of discreet sensory and mental events that arise and pass away in rapid succession, while the sense of continuity and narrative coherence is something supplied by higher level imaginative capabilities. At the heart of the Buddha's insight is the discrepancy between what appears to be the case, which is characterized as misapprehension or even delusion, and what is actually the case, which is called wisdom.

A central feature of this model that is seldom part of corresponding Western psychological models is the evaluative characterization of various *dharmas* as either wholesome or unwholesome. The word for this quality (*kusala/akusala* in Pali) might better be translated as healthy or unhealthy, insofar as it delineates not a moral standard or a normative definition of right and wrong as much as a description of what factors contribute to or detract from the result of wellbeing, the reduction of suffering and the capacity for understanding. The word also has the sense of skillful and unskillful, which means that the Buddhist practice of integrity (*sīla*) is regarded as a skill that can be learned, while even the most

atrocious misbehaviour is evidence not of an evil nature but of a lack of understanding. The centrality of this ethical evaluation reveals the extent to which this entire system, both in its *Nikāya* origins and in its *Abhidhamma* extension, is meant as a tool for effecting personal psychological transformation rather than as an intellectual exercise of building doctrine.

Another important constituent of this system is the distinction made between the object of consciousness on one hand and the attitude or emotional involvement with that object on the other. *What* is cognized with consciousness is one thing; *how* it is cognized, that is to say with what quality of mind it is cognized, is something else. Thus many of the *dharmas* enumerated in the Abhidhamma system correspond to what we might in another context call emotional attitudes, and this becomes important for understanding how meditation is regarded in early Buddhist thought. Part of meditation training has to do with learning to focus the mind on a particular object or on a series of emerging objects, but most of the training has more to do with cultivating particular qualities of mind by means of which the object is regarded. The technology of awareness is a matter of how the aggregate of consciousness (*viññāṇa*) interacts with the aggregate of material form (*rūpa*) as it manifests in the sense organs of the body and the sense objects of the environment; but the development of mindfulness and insight is rather a matter of how the aggregate of formations (*saṅkhāra*) co-arises with the other aggregates. This should become more clear as we examine the details of how experience is constructed.

The construction of experience

Consciousness arises and passes away each moment because it is a process or an event that occurs rather than something that exists in any stable and identifiable way. It is characterized just by 'knowing' and thus can only arise in relationship with an object that is known and an organ by means of which the object is known. Six classes or modalities of consciousness are enumerated, which correspond to the five sense organs (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body) and the mind as sixth, as well to the five sense objects (forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches) with thoughts as the sixth. The starting point or foundation of all experience is thus an episode of cognition in one or another of these six modes, which occurs again and again in a temporal series we generally refer to as the stream of consciousness. Since consciousness manifests in dependence upon organs and objects that are constantly changing, consciousness itself it always 'moving and tottering, impermanent, changing, and becoming otherwise' as one passage puts it.[1] Moreover, consciousness does not carry any characteristics other than the mere knowing or cognizing of an object, so all the textures and qualities of experience are supplied by other mental functions arising in various combinations. A detailed account of any given moment of experience thus consists of identifying first, which of the six modes of consciousness is manifesting (i.e. in dependence on which pair of organs and objects) and second, what

associated *dharmas* or constituent factors are co-arising with consciousness to shape the overall experience. The method for describing mental states in this way is outlined in the *Nikāyas* and greatly refined in the *Abhidhamma* literature.

Rather than undertake a systematic review of this method, which would lead very far afield, let us focus on one particular aspect of this mapping of the *dharmas*, one that may prove helpful in understanding the definition and function of mindfulness. It has to do with the grouping of *dharmas* into several categories, delineating those that arise and pass away together in any given moment of consciousness. According to the Abhidhamma analysis summarized in the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*,[2] seven mental factors arise together in all states of consciousness and are thus called *universals;* six other mental factors may or may not be present in any particular moment and are called *occasionals*. In addition to these two groupings, 39 other mental factors are classified as either *unwholesome* or *wholesome*, but factors from each group will never arise together with those of the other group—the two are mutually exclusive. Finally, these 39 states are further broken down into four *unwholesome universals*, 10 *unwholesome occasionals*, 19 *wholesome universals* and six *wholesome occasionals*. We are thus left, generally speaking, with six different groupings of the mental factors that co-arise with consciousness to help give shape and texture to the attitude or emotion with which an object is cognized by consciousness. The whole range of individual configurations are a good deal more complex than this, but these six basic groupings yield a model that layers mental experience, so to speak, into six general levels of mental functioning, and it is these six levels that can help us understand how experience can be viewed as building upon itself to delineate a scale from lesser to greater degrees of conscious awareness.

1. The universals

The simplest manifestation of mind is characterized by the universal mental factors inherent in all moments of consciousness. It is not possible, according to the Abhidhamma, for consciousness to manifest with anything less than seven mental factors, but it may arise and pass away with only these seven and no more. Thus even in its most austere forms consciousness includes the mental functions of: *contact* between consciousness, an object and organ; a *feeling* tone that may be pleasant, unpleasant or neither; a *perception* of that object as something categorized symbolically according to prior experience; a *volition* or intentional response to the object that produces karma; a degree of *one-pointedness* or focus upon only one object at a time; a cohesive quality of *mental vitality* sustaining and supporting the interdependent functioning of the seven universal mental factors; and a function of *attention* that directs the associated factors toward the object as a rudder might steer a ship. The fact that these dharmas are always present means that they must describe even the most unreflective states of mind. We are thus always paying attention, for example, even if we are not aware we are doing so or even if we are paying attention to an object different than the one to which we

would like to be attending. Similarly, the mind is always focused upon a single object, even in entirely untrained mind moments, though the object upon which it is unified might change moment to moment. If we were not capable of such baseline focus and attention, coherent mental experience would presumably not be possible.

2. The occasionals

In addition to these seven universal mental factors, six other factors are listed that may or may not arise either individually or as a whole. These include: *applied thought*, by means of which one deliberately place attention on a chosen object; *sustained thought*, the mental factor that enables one to hold the attention upon the object over multiple mind moments; *decision*, a state of confident and committed engagement with the object; *energy*, a factor that upholds and supports the others by bringing additional interest to bear; *joy*, a quality of uplifting enthusiasm; and *impulse-to-act*, a desire to act that is not rooted in greed or attachment but nonetheless impels the mind to initiate appropriate action. These are the factors called upon when we train the mind in meditation, since such training involves consciously directing attention to be placed upon and then held steadily upon a chosen object such as the breath. The steadiness of focus induces decision, requires energy, and often can result in joy, and impulse allows the meditator to shift attention from one part of the body to another, or toward the wellbeing of all creatures above, below, and all around, without doing so in ways that engage desire or compulsion. These factors may not always manifest from the moment one sits down to meditate until the bell rings an hour later, just as a baseball player is in the game even when sitting in the dugout between innings or standing around in the outfield, but to the extent deliberate mental training is ever successful, even for a moment, some combination of these factors come in to play.

3. The universal unwholesomes

The thing about the occasional factors just mentioned is that they are ethically variable, meaning they may be operative in wholesome or unwholesome mind states. All unwholesome mind moments will add four more factors: *delusion*, defined as not understanding some basic truths about experience, such as its impermanence, selflessness, and the causes of suffering; *restlessness*, a state of agitation that ruffles the mind like wind upon water; *suspension of conscience*, rendering momentarily inoperative the innate sense of self-respect that prevents us from serious wrongdoing; *suspension of respect*, turning off the innate sense of respect for the rights and opinions of others that also restrains our behaviour to stay within socially defined norms. This is the minimal set of mental factors that will be arising in the mind during any moment's misbehaviour, along of course with the seven universals. In the case of universals, it is all or nothing—when delusion is

present the other three necessarily will be present as well. One interesting point about this analysis is that restlessness will always be unwholesome, suggesting that any practice that encourages one to relax and calm down is inherently healthy. It is a helpful and transformative practice in itself to reduce restlessness in the mind, since this will lead naturally to the elimination of its co-arising factor delusion, and will thus purge the moment of its most dangerous toxins and nudge it out of its unwholesomeness. Another point of some interest is the suggestion that conscience and respect function naturally as a sort of innate ethical immune system, protecting individuals and society from egregious wrongdoing, but that this is suppressed at those moments when one misbehaves.

4. The unwholesome occasionals

While delusion can manifest in such a simple form as to involve only the four universal unwholesome factors, more often than not delusion is joined by either *greed* or *hatred*, the other two components of the three toxins. Yet greed and hatred are really opposite expressions of the same impulse, namely desire. Greed is the desire to want or like or remain attached to that which is pleasing or gratifying, while hatred is the desire to not want, not like, or otherwise ignore or destroy that which is displeasing or identified with pain. As such, greed and hatred are mutually exclusive and cannot arise together in the same mind moment. One can be deluded and greedy, deluded and hateful, or just plain deluded, but one will never be both greedy and hateful in the same instant. When this appears to be the case, the Abhidhamma models asserts, the two are simply alternating one after another in rapid succession, with the illusion of simultaneity being constructed at higher levels of mental organization. Other unwholesome factors that may arise with delusion and the other universals include *wrong view*, *conceit*, *envy*, *avarice*, *worry*, *sloth*, *torpor* and *doubt*. One way of looking at these unwholesomes is as unique shades of colour mixed from the three primary colours of greed, hatred and delusion.

From the point of view of meditation practice, there is not much difference between the two groups of universal and occasional unwholesome factors—they are both serving as obstacles to mental serenity and clarity. They include, for example, the classical list of five hindrances (sense desire, ill-will, restlessness and remorse, sloth and torpor, doubt), mental factors that must be temporarily abandoned in order for the mind to reach entry level concentration and begin the process of consciousness attenuation known as the absorptions (*jhāna*). For our present purposes it suffices to say that little progress toward transformation can occur while any unwholesome state is arising in experience, and learning how to abandon such states is a fundamental part of the path. For example, while it is important to be able to notice the arising and passing away of all mental states, noticing annoyance (a mild form of hatred—not liking what is happening) with an attitude of annoyance will only reinforce the quality of annoyance. Similarly, avoiding, repressing, or otherwise pushing away the annoyance will only ensure

that it comes back again later with greater urgency or intensity. The middle way between accepting and rejecting the experience of annoyance is to notice it, see it for the unwholesome factor that it is, and gently release one's hold upon it. All unwholesome states need to be similarly neutralized, and will just proliferate if met with other unwholesome states.

5. The wholesome universals

Altogether there are 19 mental factors that arise together in every wholesome mind moment, and these comprise a remarkable list. *Mindfulness* is one of them, which is regarded as a particular attitude or emotional stance toward the object of awareness. One cognizes an object with a quality of attention shaped by mindfulness, that is to say with presence of mind, non-forgetfulness, and a certain stability of focus. As a universal wholesome factor, mindfulness is exclusive of restlessness, delusion and all the other unwholesome states, and cannot co-arise with these in the same moment. It is also a mental state that arises over and above basic levels of attention, intention and one-pointedness, and that arises over and above factors that help train the mind, such as applying and sustaining attention on a consciously chosen object of awareness and generating energy or joy. The factors that co-arise with mindfulness under all circumstances also help define it and refine how it functions in the mind. *Non-greed* and *non-hatred* help clarify that mindful attention neither favours nor opposes the object, but rather it expresses an attitude of *equanimity*. This is where modern definitions of mindfulness get the sense of not judging the object but of accepting it just as it is. Also arising with mindfulness are the twin guardians of *conscience* and *respect*, which were suspended in all unwholesome states, as well as *confidence* or faith, construed as a basic trust that comes from the dispersal of the toxins. These six factors arising with mindfulness are joined by six others that can be taken in a two-fold sense of applying to both consciousness itself and to the associated mental factors: *tranquility*, *lightness*, *malleability*, *wieldiness*, *proficiency*, and *rectitude*. These can be seen as qualities of mindfulness, further shaping the attitude with which an object will be cognized by consciousness when it becomes an object of mindful awareness, rather than just an object of awareness. All 19 of these wholesome universal factors will arise and pass away as a group, not only when one practices insight meditation formally but at any time one has a wholesome thought, performs a wholesome action, or speaks a wholesome word. As such, mindfulness is a non-extraordinary mind state which may come up frequently, though mindfulness meditation involves its deliberate cultivation in a continuous series of mind moments.

6. The wholesome occasionals

The final set of factors to consider are those that build upon the universal wholesome factors. There are six of these, which can only arise if the previous 19

are present but which may or may not arise together with one another. Three of these are elements of the eightfold path, namely *right speech*, *right action* and *right livelihood*. It is a bit hard to gather how these act as mental factors, since they seem to be descriptive of behavioural patterns rather than psychological states, but they are described as being present in the mind in any moment when one deliberately abstains from misbehaving in one of the three modes. The next two are *compassion* and *appreciative joy*, two of the four *brahma-vihāras* or illimitable mind states (the other two being loving kindness and equanimity, both on the list of wholesome universals). This means that one can be simply mindful, a state which includes a benevolent and even-minded attitude toward an object, or one can also be mindful with compassion or with appreciative joy, which adds something to mindfulness. Compassion adds an empathic response to suffering, while appreciative joy adds an empathic response to good fortune or happiness. And finally one can also add *wisdom* as a wholesome occasional factor. Wisdom in Buddhist thought is a quality of understanding the nature of experience, of seeing clearly the impermanence, interdependence, and impersonality of it all, as well as seeing the origin and cessation of suffering as it manifests moment to moment in experience. It is only when the wisdom factor arises that insight meditation really occurs, for while mindfulness can regard an object with balanced objectivity, it is understanding that is ultimately transformative. As the matter is expressed in one metaphor, just as a reaper will grasp a handful of barley in one hand and a sickle in the other, one takes hold of the mind with attention and cuts off its defilements with wisdom.[3]

A model of layered attention

With the data on the table we may now step back and see what pattern emerges from this analysis of experience. Whatever the number of possible combinations of mental factors mapped out by this model, it seems helpful to make use of the six groupings outlined above and postulate that five (if we conflate the unwholesome factors into a single group) levels or layers of experience can be identified. Each of these represents a general type of mental functioning whose particular details might be almost infinitely variable. Every moment of consciousness is going to arise in correspondence with one or another of the six pairs of organs and objects (eye and forms; ear and sounds, etc.), but then each will be additionally augmented by some combination of mental factors following along the lines of these groupings. Depending on what mental factors arise in conjunction with consciousness, awareness of the object will be directed, shaped and otherwise characterized each moment by the particular combination of mental factors.

In its most basic configuration, the mind has enough support from the seven universal mental factors to be capable of cognizing any object (utilizing *contact*, *attention*, and *mental vitality*), holding the attention steadily upon it (with *volition* and *one-pointedness*), and understanding its features (*perception*) and

textures (*feeling*) sufficiently to yield coherent experience. As long as one is not dead, in a coma, or in deep sleep, at least this much mind is functioning at all times. Thus even when daydreaming, multitasking, or otherwise thinking in an entirely unstructured way, these factors always cooperate to help guide and support consciousness as it cognizes an object by means of an organ. Each moment the process arises, passes away, and arises again, with all seven factors working together to construct meaning around the incoming torrent of stimuli. As moments string together into a stream of consciousness, it can feel like we are deliberately choosing to shift attention from one object to another and thus are directing awareness, but in fact most of the time what comes next in the series is conditioned by causes that lie entirely outside the scope of conscious awareness. In any given string of free association, for example, one image suggests another in ways that are habitually conditioned, and we can do all sorts of actions and behaviours of which we are entirely unaware. Paradoxically, even though consciousness is always occurring, we may well be entirely not conscious that this is the case.

At a second level of experience, built upon the foundation of the first, functions we identify with conscious awareness begin to come into play. When the mind is deliberately placed upon a particular object (using *applied thought*) rather than allowed to drift there 'on its own,' or held deliberately upon a chosen object (using *sustained thought*) even though it may be inclined to wander elsewhere, we are imposing some control on the process and it is no longer entirely conditioned by unconscious forces. As factors such as *decision*, *energy*, *joy*, and *impulse-to-act* are added, the sense of conscious engagement becomes amplified. It is at this level of mental function that mental training takes place, and the heightened concentration that comes from applying and sustaining attention in particular ways is useful to learning all sorts of skills, both wholesome and unwholesome. Training at this level of mind is where most meditation, especially for recent initiates to the practice, takes place. Instead of allowing the mind to wander wherever it will, one attempts to bring and then hold attention on the physical sensations associated with the breath, for example, or upon a phrase of loving kindness. Or, one may sanction the free and easy wandering of the mind among various different objects, but try to bring heightened awareness by applying attention with enhanced energy to following its series of manifestations. Because it takes effort to direct the mind in particular ways, this sort of mental training can feel like hard work much of the time.

The third and fourth level of mental function might best be viewed as two aspects of the same process, insofar as both deal with the arising and passing away of unwholesome states. Whether it manifests as pure *delusion*, such as what occurs when one is confused or dazed, or whether it includes the primal driving forces of *greed* and *hatred*, unwholesome mind states are worked with in Buddhist practice in similar ways. When they are strong we are swept away by their force and act out their emotions in behaviour that is harmful to ourselves and others. Much of the time we are not even consciously aware that we are in their grasp, in

which case the universal factors are co-arising with the unwholesome factors without the participation of the occasional factors. Other times the occasional factors are present and we are acting in harmful ways even though we know they are harmful. One of the effects of the three poisons in such states is that we do not really care that we may be acting badly and are even enthralled by the power and gratification of such emotion. On still other occasions we might bring attention to bear upon the unwholesome states by exercising applied and sustained thought, but these are now in the service of the unwholesome state and are co-opted by delusion. One can thus be consciously aware of hatred, for example, but such awareness is not going to be transformative and may only serve to perpetuate the hatred.

It is at the next level that the transformative power of mindfulness comes to bear upon experience. As mentioned above, mindfulness and its associated factors shape the awareness of an object in very different ways than mere attention. Mindfulness is not just heightened attention, but is attention that has become confident, benevolent, balanced, and fundamentally wholesome. As such it builds not only upon the seven universal mental factors, as do all mind states, but it also builds upon the occasional factors. Basic attention (included among the universals) is augmented by deliberate conscious attention (brought in by the occasionals), and is then further refined and enhanced by mindful attention, which is always a wholesome universal. For example, one breathes all the time and may or may not be aware of the fact because of a range of various conditions. When distracted by something else we lose track of the breath; when unable to breathe or when winded we attend naturally to the breath; but in these cases our attention is 'stumbling upon' the breath as if by chance (though according to Buddhist thought there is always a cause for attention going where it does, whether one knows it or not). With meditation training, one may deliberately direct attention to the breath, but the quality of this attention may still be quite ordinary, especially when it phases in and out as the mind wanders all over the field of experience. Such directed attention may also be present in unwholesome mind states, such as when one breaths heavily in a rage or in the process of committing a terrible crime. But when the wholesome form of attention manifests, namely mindfulness, the breath is viewed in a different light, is held with a different touch, is cognized with a different quality of mind. Now the emotional tone, the intentional stance, the attitude with which one beholds the object is rooted in non-greed, non-hatred, and non-delusion, which functionally excludes from the mind their opposites, the three poisons, and even though the object of awareness is something as ordinary as the sensations of breathing, the moment is profoundly transformative. Shifting from the breath to a more challenging topic, in the case where someone who is angry is able to bring attention to the anger, and then further is able to bring mindfulness to the anger, then the anger has become a mental object, an echo from the preceding mind moments, and is no longer functioning as the attitude driving the mind. One cannot be angry and mindful at the same moment, so at whatever point true mindfulness arises the actual anger is

already banished and it is only a relic of that angry state that is acting as the object of consciousness. If the wholesome attention can be sustained moment after moment, the entire stream of consciousness becomes purified of its naturally-arising toxins and wholesome dispositions are reinforced while their unwholesome counterparts atrophy. Mindfulness of unwholesome states is transformative precisely because the unwholesome quality of awareness has been replaced with a wholesome attitude.

The final grouping to consider is the wholesome occasional factors, which arise building upon the foundation of the wholesome universals. Here we meet with wisdom, which according to this model does not arise automatically with mindfulness. It is possible, in other words, to experience purification of the mind stream through mindful meditation without necessarily understanding with wisdom the nature of experience. Mindfulness practice ripens into insight meditation when one sees directly such things as impermanence, suffering and selflessness in the arising and passing away of the objects of awareness. Once again, it does not matter what the object is; it is the way of understanding the object that is important here. Wisdom in this model is itself as impermanent and tenuous as every other element of the mind and body. It arises under certain conditions, and cannot be sustained if those conditions change even slightly. One tends to experience wisdom in brief glimpses, therefore, which may be repeated more often as one's skills increase.

Meditation as process

What this model provides is a layered way of understanding what happens when one sits down to practice meditation. Much of the time there is only a rudimentary form of attention manifesting, as the mind registers changes in the environment, such as sounds, or moves from one association to another in a natural and ordinary way. The mind is constantly shifting its attention from one object to another, and one can guide this process somewhat by exercising volition and attention to encourage engaging the mind with one thing rather than another. Most forms of popular self-development strategies work at this basic level of *changing the mind* (1) by guiding attention from one thing to another. What Buddhists would call *training the mind* (2) begins as the commitment to cultivating attention in a more directed and deliberate way. One becomes gradually more adept at placing the attention on a chosen object and maintaining it upon that object for some period of time. If one is practicing concentration meditation the attention might even remain steady upon an object for a considerable length of time, or might be capable of focusing well on a long series of changing objects. While doing any of this, it is natural that unwholesome mind states will arise and pass away in experience, both deluded states with greed and hatred and states that are merely deluded. One will try to abandon these as they are noticed, either right away or after a long ride on a train of thought that carries one well down the track. Abandoning such toxic mind states after they have arisen

and guarding the mind from the arising of such toxic states are important Buddhist practices for *purifying the mind* (3). At other moments, when these toxins do not manifest, mindfulness may arise with its host of associated factors, and this too will either pass away quickly or be sustainable for multiple mind moments. Mindfulness practice serves the function of *transforming the mind* (4) by simultaneously blocking all unwholesome states and developing and strengthening wholesome states. And when mindfulness does become steady enough, the conditions ripen for wisdom also to arise and greatly magnify the transformative effect of mindfulness, although it may collapse just as rapidly as it arose. Wisdom has the function of *liberating the mind* (5), both in the short-term, as the unconscious effects of delusion are neutralized, and in the long-term, as the latent disposition toward greed, hatred and delusion are expunged from the mind altogether and are no longer capable of arising.

In this way of looking at things, the mind is intrinsically neither polluted nor pristine. It is capable of functioning at a basic level of awareness that includes the six internal and six external sense bases, the six corresponding modalities of consciousness, and all five of the aggregates. Over and above this, it can add either wholesome or unwholesome mental factors (both of which are volition formations or *saṅkhāras*) in various combinations, which will serve to clarify or pollute the resulting quality of awareness. Mental training in general, and the development of mindfulness and wisdom in particular, will optimize the functioning of the mind, and will culminate in its transformation such that unwholesome states can no longer occur at all and the mind will become entirely liberated from its suffering. The process unfolds something like the classical image of the lotus, whose roots are in the mud, growing through the water and ultimately opening its petals to the sky.

Abhidhamma and Abhidharma

All that has been said so far is from the perspective of the Pali Abhidhamma, those texts that emerged and stabilized in the Southern Buddhist schools of South and Southeast Asia. These texts include such works as the seven books of the *Abhidhamma-piṭaka* and such later manuals as the *Abhidhammatthasaṅgaha*. There is also a parallel Sanskrit *Abhidharma* tradition, expressed in texts that developed in Northern Buddhist schools of North West India and elsewhere. Here too we find seven (somewhat different) books of an *Abhidharma-piṭaka* and later compilations such as the *Abhidharmakośa*. For the most part there is a great deal of similarity and agreement between these two textual, meditational, and philosophical traditions, which can clearly be seen as two parallel strands of development from a more or less common source. On the matter at hand, however, namely the classification of the *dharmas* into groupings of universal and occasional wholesome and unwholesome factors, there is a very interesting divergence between the two traditions. This discrepancy is not trivial, and speaks

to the very core of the different models of practice and liberation the two approaches take.

In the *Abhidharmakośa*, the mental factors of *mindfulness* and *wisdom* are considered among the universal mental factors, and thus arise and pass away in every single mind moment.[4] They are presumably eclipsed or over-ridden by unwholesome factors, but nevertheless underlie such mental states. This model is thus in line with the later Buddhist view of the mind as already awakened, inherently wise, but with its wisdom habitually occluded by greed, hatred and delusion. The practice becomes one of uncovering the originally pure nature of mind rather than of building up wisdom upon the prepared ground of mindfulness.

The implications of this distinction are huge, and clearly go beyond the scope of what can be said here. Suffice it to say that including mindfulness and wisdom among the universal factors provides a rationale for the so-call 'innatist' model of later Buddhist tradition, as contrasted to the 'constructivist' model favoured by the earlier tradition (see Dunne 2011). A natural historical question to emerge is whether the philosophical changes of the Abhidharma system preceded or postdated the emergence of the innatist model of awakening. And the doctrinal question that naturally arises is whether a new approach to practice led to revisions of the Abhidharma system, or whether the patterns laid down by the Abhidharma paved the way for a different orientation toward practice. Again, these questions need to be pursued elsewhere, though it might not be surprising if it turned out these two had a chicken and egg relationship. Let us conclude here with a brief reflection upon the innatist approach from the perspective of the constructivist model outlined above.

A constructivist critique of non-duality

From the earlier constructionist perspective of the Nikayas and the Abhidhamma, the whole issue of dual or nondual experience is somewhat puzzling. The *Nikāyas* tell us that every cognitive event depends not upon a duality between subject and object, but upon a trinity of sense organ, sense object and consciousness.[5] The coming together of these three constitutes contact (*phassa/sparśa*), the starting point of any episode of knowing. If there is indeed a duality in early Buddhist thought, it is not one of subject and object but of organ and object. The events cognized by cognition are the collisions between the inner and outer world, the interaction of stimuli such as light and sound waves (etc.) upon the sensitive matter of retina and inner ear (etc.) that translate these modulations into the neuronal activity we call consciousness. The knowing of an object by means of an organ is not the same as the subject-object relation. Consciousness is not a subject, but an activity, a process, an event recurring moment after moment. It is a relationship between organs of sensation and thought on one hand, and objects of sensation and thought on the other. It is a natural interface between the sensitive matter of the body's sense receptors

(which would include the brain) and the data contained in the surrounding (and internal) environment that is mediated by mental states of knowing. This mentality is likely an emergent property of materiality, but the virtual world constructed of this mental activity presents as a robust phenomenology of experience.

The experience of arising and passing phenomena do indeed involve the arising and passing away of moments of consciousness, but these do not in themselves qualify as a subject. The subject is constructed elsewhere in the model, at the point where desire is generated toward the objects of experience. By liking or not liking the object, a subject who likes or does not like the object is created. It is craving, manifesting as clinging, that leads to the becoming of a self (*atta-bhāva*), and it is only when one has become a self, a subject, there can then also be suffering. The one who craves becomes the one who suffers, as pointed out in the Second Noble Truth. And as the Third Noble Truth indicates, the cessation of craving will lead to the cessation of suffering by means of the cessation of the making of a self (*ahaṃ-kāra*). The duality to which non-dual Buddhist thought seems to be pointing, therefore, is the duality between the object and the subject who likes or does not like it, rather than between the object and the knowing of the object. That knowing, the mere functioning of consciousness, is an impersonal event; the liking or disliking of it is a personal construction. From earliest times, in this way of looking at it, the Buddha was always directing his students toward non-dual experience, but this had nothing to do with the relationship between consciousness and the object cognized by it. It was only about the object and the illusory sense of being a person who stands in relation to it. It is then entirely perplexing to discover that the solution to this 'problem' in later tradition is to de-couple consciousness from its object and aspire to an experience of consciousness that takes no object. This seems to preserve the subject at the expense of the object, while the entire point of the early teaching is to understand the fundamentally illusory nature of the subject and thus allow the object to be known with consciousness as it really is (*yathā-bhūta*).

If the non-dual experience has to do with the dissolution of the subject-object relation, then according to Abhidhamma analysis it must refer to the elimination of the mistaken view of self (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*).[6] This eliminates one dichotomy, between phenomena as they really are and the illusory sense of there being a separate person to whom the experience of the phenomena belongs. But it leaves intact the dichotomy between the organs and objects of experience, because each only exists as an interaction with the other and each therefore requires the other by definition. Cognition thus remains, even after the person who experiences the cognition is vanquished, as the mere view it really is.

It seems as if somewhere along the line a conflation occurred between consciousness and the view of self, insofar as consciousness is identified as the subject in a subject-object relation. I think the entire concept of subject-object duality is an issue inherited by Buddhist thinkers from non-Buddhist schools of Indian philosophy, where the issue is simplified by the real existence of a soul. In

Hindu thought, consciousness (*cit*) is inextricably bound up with real existence (*sat*), so it is taken for granted that where there is something known (*grāhya*) there must be a knower of it (*grāhaka*). But the Buddha sought to purge his language of all agent nouns, and would likely regard any reference to a 'knower of the known' to be fundamentally deluded.[7] A soul in relation to anything constitutes a duality, and the liberation of the soul from anything results in a non-dual state. In this binary environment of self and other it is natural to explore the subject-object distinction philosophically, and it seems Buddhist thinkers were drawn in to this discourse. But in the non-binary world of the non-orthodox Indic teachings, such as Buddhism, where consciousness is seen to be a multiply-conditioned natural phenomenon, the situation is more complex. The interdependent arising and cessation of consciousness (along with its corresponding organs and objects and the other four aggregates) unfolding each moment is one thing, while the construction of an illusory sense of being the person to which it is all happening is something else again.

So I would entirely agree that Buddhist insight has to do with experiencing non-duality of subject and object, but would suggest that this is accomplished when the sense of self is lost, either briefly, as in the short-term loss of self occurring in any peak experience, or unshakeably, as with the awakening of a Buddha. This sort of non-dual understanding is hardly an innovation of the fourth century, however, and has been an intrinsic part of the Buddhist message from its earliest times.

NOTES

1. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 35:93.
2. Bodhi (1993). In what follows the impulse to list each of the following technical terms along with their Pali and Sanskrit names is replaced with a simple English rendering. See Bodhi (1993) for the Pali and Pruden (1991) for the Sanskrit. See also Olendzki (2010, 163ff).
3. *Milindapañho* 2:1.8.
4. *Abhidharmakośa* 2:24 (Pruden, 1991, 189–90). The universals are here called *mahābhūmikas*.
5. See, for example, the *Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta, Majjhima Nikāya* 28.
6. *Majjhima Nikāya* 48: 'This is the way leading to the origination of personality: One regards [all experience] thus: "This is mine, this I am, this is my self." This is the way leading to the cessation of personality: One regards [all experience] thus: "This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self." Notice the functioning of consciousness remains unchanged.
7. *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 12:12: 'Venerable sir, who makes contact . . . who feels . . . who craves . . . ?' "Not a valid question. I do not say "One makes contact . . . one feels . . . one craves . . . " If one should ask me, "Venerable sir, with what as condition does contact come to be . . . with what as condition does feeling come

to be . . . with what as condition does craving come to be?" —this would be a valid question.' See also, e.g., *Visuddhimagga* 16:90: *kāriko na . . . vijjati; gamako na vijjati* . . . etc. (a do-er is not found; a go-er is not found).

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THE THERAVĀDA ABHIDHAMMA

Its Inquiry into the Nature of Conditioned Reality

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CHAPTER 10

THE COGNITIVE PROCESS

The Abhidhamma theory of cognition is based on two basic ideas of early Buddhist psychology. One is that mind is a process without an enduring substance. The other is that all psychological experience is a continuum of mental events. Accordingly cognition is not the immediate result of the contact between the sense-organ and the sense-object. Rather, it is the cumulative result of a continuum of cognitive events. The process begins from a simple sensory contact and proceeds gradually to the apprehension of the object. There is no self or subject behind the cognitive process as an enduring entity experiencing the object or an agent directing the various mental activities. They take place naturally according to the principles of psychological order (*citta-niyāma*), each stage in the continuum being conditioned by the immediately preceding one (*laddha-paccaya-citta-santāna*).[1] *Ācariya* Buddhaghosa, after describing the process of cognition, makes this interesting observation: "There is no agent or director who, after the object has impinged on the sense-organ says: 'You perform the function of attention or you perform the function of cognition'".[2] Each of the various acts such as adverting attention to the object functions according to their own law and the whole process is recognized as the law of the operation of the mind (*citta-niyāma*). The momentary mental events do not occur in the mind. Rather, the momentary mental events themselves are the mind.

The cognitive process, as described in the Abhidhamma, is mainly based on a formulated theory of moments and the conception of *bhavaṅga* consciousness. What is called *bhavaṅga* is not a kind of consciousness additional to the 89 or 121 types mentioned earlier. It is a name given to one of the resultant consciousnesses when it performs a particular function. In this technical sense, the term occurs first in the *Paṭṭhāna* of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka and then in the *Milindapañha*.[3] However, it was in the Pāli exegetical works that the idea came to be fully developed. The term literally means "constituent of becoming" but what it means as a technical term will become clear if we refer here to the two streams of consciousness recognized in the Pāli exegesis.

One is called *vīthi-citta*. *Vīthi* means a pathway or a process. Hence what is called *vīthi-citta* refers to mind when it is active, that is, when consciousness occurs in a cognitive process. The other is called *vīthi-mutta*. It refers to mind when it is free from cognitive processes,

that is, when it is in its passive condition.[4] These two processes could be referred to as process-consciousness and process-free consciousness respectively.

The process-free consciousness performs three different functions. The first is its function as *bhavaṅga*. In this capacity it ensures the uninterrupted continuity of individual life through the duration of any single existence. For whenever the process-consciousness is interrupted as, for example, in deep dreamless sleep, it is immediately followed by the process-free consciousness, thus preventing the possibility of any gap arising in the continuous flow of consciousness. Whenever a cognitive process subsides the *bhavaṅga* consciousness supervenes. In other words, it intervenes between every two cognitive processes and thus separates them as two different cognitive units. The second function of the process-free consciousness is its function as death-consciousness (*cuti-citta*), the last consciousness to occur in any individual existence. The third function of the process-free consciousness is as rebirth-linking consciousness (*paṭisandhi-citta*), the first consciousness to occur at the moment of rebirth. Immediately after the rebirth-linking consciousness has arisen and fallen away, it is followed by the *bhavaṅga* consciousness, which performs the function of preserving the continuity of the individual existence.[5]

The process-free consciousness, too, has its object. It is identical with the object an individual has experienced in his last cognitive process in the immediately preceding existence. When a person is almost near death some object will present itself to the last cognitive process of that person. This object can be one of three kinds: (1) an act of good or evil *kamma* committed earlier, (2) a sign or image of the *kamma* (*kamma-nimitta*) which will determine the kind of rebirth awaiting him, (3) a sign of the plane of existence (*gati-nimitta*) where the dying person is destined to be reborn.

Whenever the process-free consciousness performs the three functions of death, rebirth-linking, and life-continuum in all these instances it has its own object, i.e., an object which is identical with what an individual has experienced in his last cognitive process in the immediately preceding existence. This situation conforms to the early Buddhist teaching that there is no such thing as an uncaused consciousness. Therefore the process-free consciousness should not be understood as an unrelated entity existing by itself. As E. R. Sarachchandra observes it is also a cognizing consciousness although it does not cognize the external world. Nor is the process-free consciousness an undercurrent persisting as the substratum of the process-consciousness. It does not function like a self-conscious soul, nor is it the source of the process-consciousness.[6] The two streams of consciousness are not parallel movements functioning concurrently.

The placid flow of the process-free consciousness must be interrupted if the active process-consciousness were to operate. In the same way it is only when process-consciousness consisting of a cognitive process subsides that the process-free consciousness supervenes. There is thus an alternative flow of the two streams of consciousness.

A cognitive process, as mentioned above, is called *citta-vīthi* and the activity set in motion is called *visayappavatti*, a process having reference to an object. However, it is after the sense-organ, and not after the sense-object, that each cognitive process is named. The six cognitive processes are referred to as those based on eye-door, ear-door, nose-door, tongue-door, body-door, and mind-door. The door, *dvāra* in Pāli, is the word used for the sense-organs, because it is through them as media that the mind interacts with the objects and it is through them that the objects enter the range of the mind.

Of the six doors of cognition, the first five are the five physical sense-organs. The reference is not to the visible sense-organs, what in common parlance are known as the eye, the ear and so on, but to their sentient organs (*pasāda*). Based on the six doors of cognition there are six cognitive processes. The first five, which involve the physical senses, are together called the five-door-processes (*pañca-dvāra-vīthi*) and the sixth the mind-door-process (*mano-dvāra-vīthi*). The mind-door is the channel from which even the five-door processes emerge. Therefore they are sometimes called mixed door-processes (*missaka-dvāra-vīthi*) as they involve both the mind-door and a physical sense-door. Accordingly the ideational processes that occur solely at the mind-door are also called bare mind-door-processes (*suddha-mano-dvāra-vīthi*).[7]

The five-door cognitive processes follow a uniform pattern although they are based on five different sense-organs. The objects presented at each sense-door could differ on their degrees of intensity. These objects accordingly are classified into four grades: very great (*ati-mahanta*), great (*mahanta*), slight (*paritta*), and very slight (*ati-paritta*). The words "great" and "slight" do not indicate the size or grossness of the object. They refer to the force of the impact the objects can have on the consciousness. In this particular context "great" and "slight" should be understood as strong and feeble.[8] One question that arises here is why the strength or weakness of the sense-organs is not taken into consideration here. As faculties it is the sense-organs that determine the degrees of intensity of the five kinds of consciousness, and this is precisely why each consciousness is named, not after its object, but after its sense-organ. However, if only the relative intensity of the sense-object is taken

into consideration here, this is to recognize the force of the stimulus as determined at a given moment by all possible factors. If the object is "very great", it will give rise to the maximum number of cognitive events, and if "great", "slight" or "very slight", this will reflect in the number of cognitive events that the object will generate.

A cognitive process with a very great object will give rise to a full cognitive process whose temporal duration will consist of seventeen mind-moments. When computed in relation to mind, the life-span of a moment of matter is equal to seventeen mind-moments. Therefore, if the cognitive process lasts for seventeen mind-moments this does also mean that it lasts for one moment of matter. The cognitive process with a very great object is the one where the object which enters the avenue of sense-door remains until it is fully grasped by that cognitive process.

A process of cognition begins when the placid flow of the *bhavaṅga* begins to vibrate owing to the impact of the sense-object entering a sense-door. This initial stage is called the vibration of the *bhavaṅga* (*bhavaṅga-calana*). In the second stage the flow of the *bhavaṅga* gets interrupted. This is called the arrest of the *bhavaṅga* (*bhavaṅga-upaccheda*). These two stages are, strictly speaking, not part of the cognitive process. Rather, they pave the way for its emergence. It is at the third stage that there arises the five-door adverting consciousness, called so because it adverts attention to the object at the sense-door. This is the beginning of the stream of process-consciousness which launches into the cognitive process (*vīthi-pāta*). The next stage could be one of the five types of sense-consciousness that cognizes the impingent object. If it is a visible object eye-consciousness will arise performing the function of seeing (*dassana-kicca*), and if it is sound, ear-consciousness will arise performing the function of hearing (*savaṇa-kicca*) and so forth. In this particular context sense-consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is defined as the mere awareness of the presence of the object. If it is eye-consciousness, it is the mere act of seeing (*dassana-matta*), if it is ear-consciousness, it is the mere act of hearing (*savaṇa-matta*) and so forth. It does not produce knowledge of any sort. It represents the initial level of consciousness when the impinging object "is experienced in its bare immediacy and simplicity", prior to its discriminative functions by the succeeding cognitive events. As clarified in Chapter 7, at this stage eye-consciousness is a form of non-verbal awareness. Through it one knows "blue" but not "this is blue". "This is blue" is re-cognition which involves some form of verbalizing. It is known only by mind-consciousness.

Next in the order of succession are the three types of consciousness (*citta*) performing the functions of receiving (*sampaṭicchana*), investigating (*santīraṇa*), and determining (*votthapana*) the object. It is at these three successive stages that the object comes to be gradually comprehended by the discriminative and selective functions of the mind.[9]

Immediately after the stage of determining (*votthapana*) comes the most important cognitive event in the cognitive process. This is called *javana*, a technical term whose meaning is "running swiftly". *Javana* "runs swiftly over the object in the act of apprehending it". It is at this stage that the object comes to be fully comprehended. For this purpose it is necessary for *javana* to have seven swift "runnings" over the object.

Javana has three main aspects: the first is cognitive, the second affective, and the third volitional. Its cognitive aspect is defined as "experiencing the object" (*anubhavana*). As to the affective aspect of *javana* we find two divergent views in the Theravāda exegesis. One is that *javana* does not produce any emotional reaction towards the object cognized. It is only after the end of the cognitive process does any feeling-tone arise. After the seven acts of cognition have arisen and fallen one by one in succession, there arises an emotion of attraction or aversion towards the object. One reason given for the non-emotive nature of *javana* is that the preceding cognitive events remain emotionally neutral and therefore the *javana* in itself is not in a position to initiate any feeling tone. Another reason given is that both *javana* and the cognitive events preceding it arise and perish in such quick succession that they cannot develop any inclination either to be attracted or repelled by the object.[10]

This explanation does not clarify how the emotive reaction could occur after the cognitive process is over. What this perhaps means is that the emotive reaction arises among the ideational processes that arise in response and consequence to a cognitive process based on any of the physical sense-organs.

The opposite view is that *javana* has an affective dimension as well. Depending on the attractive or repulsive nature of the object, the *javana* is either attracted to or repulsed by it.[11]

Javana, as noted above, has a volitional aspect as well. It is the only stage in the cognitive process which is associated with volition (*cetanā*). Unlike any of the preceding stages, *javana* has thus the ability to make an act of volition, and since all volitional activities can be morally qualified as wholesome and unwholesome, the *javana* is the only stage that has an ethical aspect as well.[12]

The final stage in a full process of cognition is called *tadārammaṇa*, a term which literally means "having that object". It is called so because it takes as its object the object that has been apprehended by the *javana*.[13]

What we have examined so far are the different stages in a full cognitive process occasioned by a "very strong" stimulus (*balavārammaṇa*). Such a cognitive process necessarily culminates in registration (*tadārammaṇa*) and is therefore called *tadārammaṇa-vāra*, a process ending in registration. If the stimulus is "strong", it will set in motion a cognitive process leading only up to *javana*. Such a process is called *javana-vāra*, a process leading to *javana*. If the stimulus is "slight", the cognitive process will end in *votthapana*, the determining consciousness. Such a process is called *votthapana-vāra*, a process ending in determining consciousness. If the stimulus is "very slight", it will result only in the vibrations of the *bhavaṅga*. It will not ensue a cognitive process and is therefore called *moghavāra*, a sensory stimulation without effect.

A full cognitive process ending in registration contains nine different stages but to make it complete another stage called the past-*bhavaṅga* (*atīta-bhavaṅga*) is added at the very beginning of the process. The past-*bhavaṅga* is the mind-moment that occurs in the process-free consciousness immediately before its vibration (*bhavaṅga-calana*) due to the impact of the object at the sense-door. The entire process beginning with past *bhavaṅga* and ending with *tadārammaṇa* takes place within seventeen mind-moments. The calculation is made by assigning a definite number of moments to each stage of the process, in the following manner:

	Stages of the cognitive process	Moments assigned
1.	past-*bhavaṅga* (*atīta-bhavaṅga*)	1
2.	*bhavaṅga*-vibration (*bhavaṅga-calana*)	1
3.	*bhavaṅga*-arrest (*bhavaṅga-upaccheda*)	1
4.	five-door-adverting (*pañca-dvāra-āvajjana*)	1
5.	sense-consciousness (*viññāṇa*)	1
6.	receiving/assimilating (*sampaṭicchana*)	1
7.	investigating (*santīraṇa*)	1
8.	determining (*votthapana*)	1
9.	*javana*	7
10.	registration (*tadārammaṇa*)	2
	Total number of mind-moments	17

It will be noticed that though the past-*bhavaṅga* is assigned one mind-moment, apparently it does not play a role in the cognitive process. Why it is introduced needs explanation. According to the Abhidhamma theory of moments, matter is weak and lethargic at the sub-moment of arising but strong and efficient at the sub-moment of existence.[14] Therefore a material object must pass its sub-moment of arising and arrive at the sub-moment of existence in order to have an impact at the sense-door. It must also be noted that in terms of temporal duration the sub-moment of the arising of matter is exactly equal to a mind-moment.[15] This situation should show that the mind-moment called past-*bhavaṅga* coincides exactly with the sub-moment of arising of the material object. It is in order to recognize the arising-moment of the material object that the past-*bhavaṅga* is added to represent the initial stage of the cognitive process.

The addition of past-*bhavaṅga* makes the cognitive process to consist of seventeen mind-moments. As noted above, seventeen mind-moments are exactly equal to the life-span of one matter-moment because the mind is said to change rapidly and break up more quickly than matter.[16] Accordingly a matter-moment which arises simultaneously with a mind-moment perishes together with the seventeenth mind-moment in a given series.[17] When it is said that a complete cognitive process lasts for seventeen mind-moments it does also mean that a complete cognitive process lasts for one matter-moment.

Why the cognitive process is calculated in this manner can be understood in a wider perspective if we examine here the Vaibhāṣika-Sautrāntika controversy on the causality of cognition. Any act of cognition, it may be noted here, involves the participation of at least three things, namely the sense-object, the sense-organ, and the sense-consciousness. According to the theory of moments, however, these three items are equally momentary. (For the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas do not make a distinction between mind and matter as to their life-span.) Since causality demands a temporal sequence between the cause and the effect, how can a causal relationship be established between three equally momentary things?

The Vaibhāṣikas seek to solve this problem by their theory of simultaneous causation (*sahabhū-hetu*), according to which the cause need not precede the effect. Both cause and effect can be co-existent and therefore as far as this situation is concerned causality can be defined as the invariable concomitance of two or more things.[18] Accordingly the object, the organ, and the cognition can arise simultaneously and operate as cause and effect, as in the case of the lamp and its light or the sprout and its shadow.

The Sautrāntikas take strong exception to this interpretation. They reject the Vaibhāṣika theory of simultaneous causation on the ground that the cause must necessarily precede the effect and therefore to speak of a causality when the cause and the effect are co-existent is meaningless. The example of the lamp and the light makes no sense because the lamp is not the cause of light, both the lamp and the light being results of a confluence of causes belonging to a past moment. Hence they maintain that object is the cause of cognition and therefore the object must precede the act of cognition. The two cannot arise simultaneously and yet activate as cause and effect. The whole situation is clearly brought into focus by the following objection raised by the Dārṣṭāntikas:

> The organs and the objects of the sense-consciousness, as causes of sense-consciousness, belong to a past moment. When (for example) a visible object and the eye exist, the visual consciousness does not exist. When the visual consciousness exists, the eye and the visible object do not exist. In their absence during the moment of (visual) consciousness, there is no possibility of the cognition of the object. Therefore all sense-perceptions are indirect.[19]

This is what led the Sautrāntikas to establish their theory of the inferability of the external object (*bāhyārthānumeyavāda*).[20] What is directly known is not the object but its representation. The existence of the object is inferred from its correspondence to the impression perceived. The causal relationship between the object and its cognition is determined by the peculiar efficiency of the sense-object. This is also known as the theory of representative perception (*sākāra-jñāna-vāda*).[21]

This is a brief statement of how the Vaibhāṣikas and the Sautrāntikas solved the problem posed by the theory of moments to the causality of cognition. The Vaibhāṣika position is that the external object, though momentary, can be directly cognized as it activates simultaneously with the act of cognition. The Sautrāntika position is that the momentary object can never be cognized directly, but has to be inferred, since the object as cause has to arise before the act of cognition.

The Theravādins' solution to the problem takes a form different from both. What enabled them to solve the problem is their theory that the life-span of a moment of matter is longer than that of a moment of mind. The theory makes it possible for a given material thing to arise before the arising of consciousness, at least before the occurrence of one mind-moment, and yet be the object of that very same consciousness. The fact that a material object lasts as long as seventeen mind-moments means that it allows itself to be fully cognized by a series of seventeen

cognitive events. Thus the Theravādins were able to establish the theory of direct perception of the external object despite their recognizing the theory of momentariness.

However, this explanation was not acceptable to the members of the Abhayagiri Fraternity. The theory they presented was similar to that of the Sautrāntikas. It says that the physical objects of sensory consciousness are not only momentary but atomic in composition, and therefore they disappear as soon as they appear "just as drops of water falling on a heated iron ball." As such they cannot come within the range of the respective consciousnesses based on the physical sense-organs. They become objects of mind-consciousness, but not objects of sensory consciousness. The clear implication is that they are inferred as objects of mind consciousness.[22] It is not possible to say more about this theory of the Abhayagiri Fraternity as there is only a passing reference to it in one of the Pāli sub-commentaries.[23]

If the Theravādins retain the theory of direct perception, this does not mean that conceptual activity does not contribute anything to the original bare sensation. It is of course true that as far as one single cognitive process is concerned the mind does not edit the raw data of perception in such a way as to falsify the true nature of the external object. The mind only performs the function of selective discrimination so that the external object is more clearly seen as the result of mental activity. A commentary gives this simile to illustrate this situation. When several children are playing on the road, a coin strikes the hand of one of them. He asks other children what it was that hit his hand. One child says that it is a white object. Another takes it with dust on it. Another describes it as a broad and square object. Another says that it is a *kahapana*. Finally they take the coin and give it to their mother who makes use of it.[24] Just as the *kahapana* in the simile the original stimulus which comes to the attention of the mind is gradually identified until it finally comes to be fully experienced at the *javana* stage of the cognitive process.

What is said above is true only of a single cognitive process based on any one of the physical sense-organs. However, each single cognitive process is not only repeated several times but is also followed by several sequels of mind-door or ideational processes, which exercise a synthesizing function on what is cognized. It is only then and then only that a distinct recognition of the object occurs. This will become more clear when we discuss towards the end of this chapter the cognitive processes that occur exclusively at the mind-door.

Another issue that divided Buddhist schools concerned the "agent" or "instrument" of perception. In the case of visual consciousness, for example, what is it that really sees the object. In this connection Venerable K. L. Dhammajoti refers to four different views as recorded in the *Abhidharma-mahāvibhāṣā-śāstra*: The Vaibhāṣikas maintain that it is the eye, the visual organ that sees. But it can do so only when it is associated with visual consciousness. It is the visual consciousness that cognizes the object. However, it can do so only when it relies on the force of the eye. What this seems to mean is that while the eye sees the object, visual consciousness is aware of it. Here a distinction is made between seeing (*paśyati*) and discerning or cognizing (*vijānāti*). The second view is the one held by *Ācārya* Dharmatrāta, according to which it is the visual consciousness that sees the object. According to the third view, held by *Ācārya* Ghoṣaka, it is the understanding (*prajñā*) conjoined with consciousness that really sees the object. The fourth view, held by the Dārṣāntikas, is that it is the confluence (*sāmāgri*) of consciousness and its concomitants that acts as the "agent" of seeing.[25]

The Theravādin view in this regard is similar to the one held by *Ācārya* Dharmatrāta. It is the visual consciousness, the consciousness dependent on the eye that sees the visible object. One reason given by those who say that it is the eye that sees is based on the sutta-saying, "on seeing a visible object with the eye" (*cakkhunā rūpaṃ disvā*). According to the Theravādins it is only an idiomatic expression, what is called an "accessory locution" (*sasambhāra-kathā*), like, "He shot him with the bow". It is a case of metaphorically attributing the action of that which is supported (visual consciousness) to that which is the support (visual organ), as when one says, "the cots cry" when in fact what one means by that is that the children in the cots cry (*nissitakriyaṃ nissāye viya katvā*). Therefore the sentence has to be rephrased as, "on seeing a visible object with visual consciousness" (*cakkhu-viññāṇena rūpaṃ disvā*).[26]

In this connection the Ancients say: "The eye does not see a visible object because it has no mind (*cakkhu rūpaṃ na passati acittakattā*). The mind does not see because it has no eyes (*cittaṃ na passati acakkhukattā*)".[27] It is argued that if the eye sees, then during the time a person is having other (non-visual) consciousnesses, too, he should be able to see visible things, which really is not the case. This is because the eye is devoid of volition (*acetanattā*). On the other hand, were consciousness itself to see a visible object, it would be able to see things lying behind a wall as well, as it cannot be obstructed by resistant matter (*appaṭighabhāvato*).[28]

Apparently the controversy on whether the eye sees or eye-consciousness sees seems to be a semantic issue. As one sub-commentary observes, when it is maintained by some that it is the eye that sees, they do not mean every instance of the eye but the eye that is supported by consciousness. Likewise, when others maintain that consciousness sees, they do not mean every instance of consciousness but consciousness supported by the eye. Both groups recognize the cooperation of both eye and consciousness.[29] However, there is this difference to be noted between the Vaibhāṣika and Theravāda positions: According to the former, it is the eye, supported by consciousness that sees; whereas, according to the latter, it is the consciousness, supported by the eye that sees.

This whole controversy, according to the Sautrāntikas, is a case of devouring the empty space. Depending on the eye and visible objects arises eye-consciousness. Therefore the question as to what is that sees and what is that is seen, does not arise. There is no agent or action here. What we really see here is the play of impersonal *dharmas*, the *dharmas* appearing as causes and effects. It is merely as a matter of conforming to worldly expressions that it is said: "the eye sees", "the consciousness cognizes".

This interpretation can easily be accommodated within the Theravāda Abhidhamma as well. For although it is said that consciousness cognizes (*viññāṇaṃ vijānāti*), it is a statement made according to agent-denotation (*kattu-sādhana*), i.e., on the model of subject-predicate sentence. It implies that there is an agent accomplishing a certain action. Therefore this statement is not valid in an ultimate sense (*nippariyāyato*). To be valid, it has to be restated in terms of activity denotation (*bhāva-sādhana*) as: "cognition is the mere phenomenon of cognizing" (*vijānana-mattam'eva viññāṇaṃ*). And when this statement is rephrased in the language of causality, it means: "Depending on the eye and the visible, arises visual consciousness."[30]

Another problem that engaged the attention of Buddhist schools is what exactly that constitutes the object of perception. The problem arose in the context of the theory of atoms, what the Theravādins call material clusters (*rūpa-kalāpa*). According to this theory all physical objects of perception are atomic in composition. The question is how an atomically analysable physical object becomes the object of sensory consciousness. In this regard there are two views. The one maintained by the Vaibhāṣikas is that an assemblage or agglomeration of atoms becomes the object of sensory consciousness. It is the atoms assembled together in a particular manner that is directly perceived. This is what they call immediate perception. It is the succeeding mental consciousness that synthesizes the raw data of perception into a synthetic unity, which determines whether the object is

a jug or a pot. This theory ensures that the object of direct and immediate perception is not an object of mental interpretation but something that is ultimately real.[31] The Sautrāntikas object to this view on the ground that if a single atom is not visible a collection of atoms, too, cannot become visible. In their opinion, it is the unified complex or the synthetic unity of the atoms that becomes the object of sensory consciousness. The Vaibhāṣikas reject this view because the synthetic unity of the atoms is not something real but a product of mental interpretation. It is a case of superimposing a mental construct on the agglomeration of atoms. This makes the object of sensory consciousness something conceptual (*prajñapti-sat*) and not something real (*paramārtha-sat*).[32]

The Theravādins' explanation on this matter is similar to that of the Vaibhāṣikas. It first refers to two alternative positions, both of which are not acceptable. The first alternative is to suppose that one single atom (material cluster) impinges on the organ of sight. Here the actual reference is to the colour associated in a single material cluster (*eka-kalāpa-gata-vaṇṇa*). On the impossibility of a single atom generating sensory consciousness, all Buddhist schools agree, for the obvious reason that a single atom is not visible. The second alternative is to suppose that several atoms impinge on the organ of sight. Here the actual reference is to the colour associated with several material clusters (*katipaya-kalāpa-gata-vaṇṇā*).This possibility too is rejected.[33] This does not amount to a rejection of the Vaibhāṣika view. What it seems to mean is that the object of sensory consciousness is not a mere collection of atoms, but a conglomeration of atoms assembled together in a certain manner.[34] In this connection one anticipatory objection is raised. If one single atom is not visible, even a multitude of them are not visible. It is just like assuming that although a single blind person cannot see, a group of them is capable of seeing.[35] It is interesting to notice that this same objection in almost identical terms is raised by *Ācārya* Śrīlāta against the Vaibhāṣika view as well.[36] The Theravādin response to this objection is that the above illustration is not all-conclusive (*nayidaṃ ekantikaṃ*). There is enough empirical evidence to support the view. For instance, although a single person cannot draw a [heavily laden] palanquin or a cart, a number of people joining together and gathering sufficient strength are in a position to do so. Or, it is like many strands of hair becoming visible, as each strand contributes to the total visibility of the hair.[37]

What we have discussed so far relate to the five-door cognitive processes, i.e., those that occur with the five physical sense-organs as their bases. What is called a mind-door cognitive process is one that occurs when ideas or images come into the range of the mind. It is an ideational

process that operates independently of the physical sense-organs. Hence it is introduced as bare mind-door process (*suddha-mano-dvāra-vīthi*).[38] There are four conditions necessary for an ideational process, namely, (a) the mind must be intact (*asambhinnattā manassa*), (b) mental objects must come within the mind's focus (*āpāthagatattā dhammānaṃ*), (c) dependence on the heart-base (*vatthusannissita*), (d) attention (*manasikāra-hetu*).[39] The stimulus in a five-door process, as we have noted, is graded into four according to its intensity. On the other hand, the stimulus at the mind-door process is graded into two as clear (*vibhūta*) and obscure (*avibhūta*).[40] However, there is this important difference to be noted: While the objects of the five-door processes belong strictly to the present moment, the objects of the mind-door process could belong to any period of time, past, present, or future. They could even be free from any temporal reference (*kāla-vimutta*), as in the case of conceptual constructs (*paññatti*) and Nibbāna, the Unconditioned.[41]

A mind-door process with a clear object (*vibhūtālambana*) has the following sequence of events: (a) vibration of the *bhavaṅga* when an object enters the avenue of the mind-door, (b) the arrest of the *bhavaṅga*, (c) mind-door adverting consciousness, (d) seven moments of *javana*, and (e) two moments of registration, after which the cognitive process subsides into the *bhavaṅga*. In the case of a mind-door process occasioned by an obscure object (*avibhūtālambana*), the two moments of registration do not occur.[42] Thus in a mind-door process the stages of receiving, investigating, and determining do not occur because they are mental activities which operate only in relation to an object which is external.

As to how an object enters the range of the mind-door, two occasions are identified. The first is the occasion when mind-door processes arise in response and consequence to a cognitive process based on any of the physical sense-organs. They are called consequent (*tad-anuvattaka*) or consecutive (*anubandhaka*) mind-door processes. Their genesis is due to the circumstance that when a five-door process has just ceased, its past object comes to the mind's focus and sets off many sequences of mind-door processes.[43] It is these mind-door processes that contribute to the distinct recognition of a sense-object. For as we have already noted, such recognition of a given object depends on a number of thought processes which grasp, among other things, its shape, name, etc., supplemented with an overall process of synthesizing the disparate elements into the perception of a unity. All these functions are performed by the mind-door processes which arise as a sequel to a five-door process.

The other occasion when mind-door processes take place is when an object enters the range of the mind-door entirely on its own or "naturally" (*pakatiyā*), i.e., without being occasioned by an immediately preceding five-door process. These are ideational processes which take place without the antecedent of sensory impingement. The commentaries identify three occasions for the revival of such ideational processes. The first is when one revives in memory what one has actually experienced with the five senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. The processes of reflection occasioned by such revival are called experience-based processes (*diṭṭhavāra*). The second type occurs when one revives in memory what one has reflected upon from information or knowledge gathered from a secondary source different from first hand experience, and the processes of reflection occasioned by such revival are called *sutavāra* or information-based processes. The third occasion when ideational processes could occur is when one imaginatively constructs an object on the basis of what one has actually experienced and also on what one has learned from information gathered from a secondary source. The processes of reflection occasioned by such imaginative construction are called processes based on both (*ubhayavāra*).[44]

In the Burmese tradition we find a slightly different classification of the occasions of ideal revival. When one revives in memory what one has actually experienced it is called *diṭṭhavāra*. But when one constructs in imagination fresh things based on one's own experience it is called *diṭṭha-sambandha* (associated with experience). When objects are constructed out of and connected with information gained either by listening to others or reading books it is *suta-sambandha* (associated with things heard). "Any apparently a priori object that may enter the field of presentation from any other sources except the last two is classed as things 'cogitated' (*viññāta*)."[45]

As E. R. Sarachchandra observes the third category is not found in the Abhidhamma commentaries, and as he further observes what seems to be included in the category of the cogitated (*viññāta*) are "abstract concepts, judgements and all forms of thinking that cannot be regarded as being based on sensory experience".[46] The absence of this third category in the Pāli commentaries is not without significance. It clearly shows that according to the mainstream Theravāda view, the third category is not acceptable. What is ideally revived should be based on past experience. Accordingly only what has been experienced through the five physical senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or touching can be revived as an image in the mind.

THE SELFLESS MIND

Personality, Consciousness and Nirvāṇa in Early Buddhism

Peter Harvey

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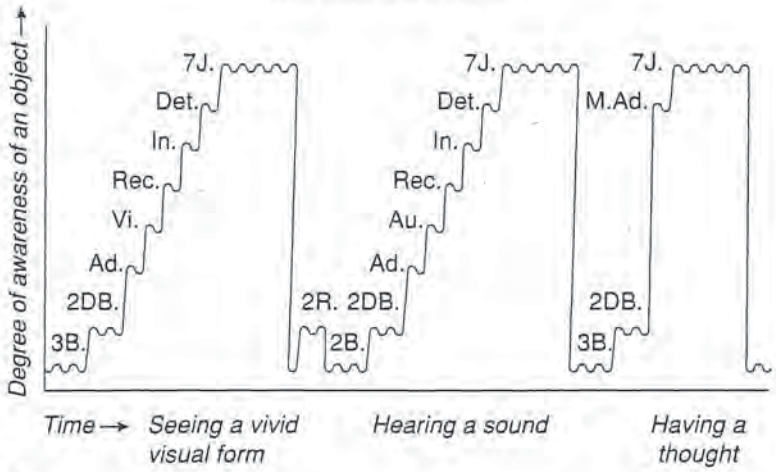
and discernment to cognize and discern what it knows; but it must do the work before they can follow.

(9.11) In the above explanation, it is clear that the discernment referred to cannot be e.g. visual-discernment; for the discernment which is simply aware of a visual field could hardly be aware of something as impermanent etc.. What must be referred to is the conceptional-discernment which follows visual-discernment etc., processing and judging its object. Similarly, when S.III.87 (Para 9.9) talks of discernment as that which discriminates between various tastes, this is likely to be referring to conceptional-discernment, rather than merely to gustatory-discernment, which occurs earlier in the perceptual process. Indeed, it is said that, while the eye 'sees' and the ear 'hears', it is conception that 'discerns (*vijānāti*)' (D.II.338). That is, the activity of discernment is typically done by conception (*mano*). As seen in Para.9.4, conceptional-discernment is part of the 'discernment-collection' relating to each sense-channel.

THE FUNCTIONS OF DISCERNMENT IN THE ABHIDHAMMA 'PROCESS OF *CITTA*S'

(9.12) Why is it, then, that forms of *viññāṇa* other than that arising from conception are said to *be* kinds of '*viññāṇa*', knowledge which *discerns or discriminates?* To what extent does auditory-*viññāṇa* 'discern', for example? To answer this, it is useful to refer to the detailed model of the perceptual process built up in the Abhidhamma literature. The fully developed version of this theory is found in the commentarial literature, such as Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, but most of it is already implicitly found in the Canonical Abhidhamma, especially the *Paṭṭhāna* (see Appendix). The theory views the key aspect of the perceptual process as a series of *citta*s, in the sense of momentary mind-sets. These consist of the forms of discernment related to each of the five physical senses, plus conceptional-discernment and the conception-element (*mano-dhātu*), each performing various functions. In waking consciousness, there is said to be constant alternation between the different *citta*s. As only one of the five-sense discernments can occur at one time, there must be a constant and extremely rapid flickering between the 'sense-doors', with seeing rapidly followed by hearing etc., so that, at the level of conscious experience, it all *seems* simultaneous. It is explained that the resting state of *citta* is called *bhavaṅga*, a state which also occurs in dreamless sleep. During waking consciousness,



Key

B.	*Bhavaṅga*	Rec.	Receiving
DB.	Disturbance of *bhavaṅga*	In.	Investigation
Ad.	Advertence to a physical sense-object	Det.	Determining
M.Ad.	Advertence to a mental object	J.	*Javana* (Impulsion)
Vi.	Visual-discernment	R.	Registration
Au.	Auditory-discernment		

A number before an abbreviation indicates the number of times a particular type of *citta* occurs successively.

Chart 1 The 'process of *cittas*' in waking consciousnes, according to Abhidhamma theory.

the mind momentarily lapses back into *bhavaṅga citta* after having processed each sense-object. It is then disturbed by another object, so that a moment of conception arises as 'advertence' to the object. If it is a visual object, there is then a moment of visual-discernment, and then a series of conception or conceptional-discernments which assess and determine what the object is, culminating in *javana*, 'impulsion', in which the mind reacts to the perceived object in some way, thus generating karmic results. If the impression of the object is strong, there is a moment or two of 'registration', before the mind again relapses back into the *bhavaṅga* state (Para.A.5). An example of such a sequence is depicted as in chart 1, in which each wave represents a *citta* arising and passing away, to be followed by another, with a different function.[3]

compares *bhavaṅga* to a spider sleeping at the centre of its web, with the process of *cittas* likened to the spider passing along its web to devour an insect caught in it. As such, *bhavaṅga* clearly has features in common with the *ālaya-vijñāna* of the Mahāyāna Yogācāra school, for this is also a form of discernment, as an underlying mental continuum, which is literally a 'home' (a natural resting place) or 'roosting place'. *Bhavaṅga citta* is also the natural, unencumbered state of *citta*, for Kvu.615 calls the *citta* of the very last moment of a person's life – i.e. *bhavaṅga-citta* in the form of 'falling away' *citta* (Para.A.7) – the 'natural (*pakati-*)' *citta*.

THE ROLES OF *BHAVAṄGA*

(10.13) The role of *bhavaṅga* in the perceptual process has already been described at Para.9.12. What of its role in sleep, which has only been mentioned in passing so far? Miln.299–300, which discusses this, explains that in order to 'see' a dream, one's *citta* must be 'functioning', which it is not when one has 'entered *bhavaṅga*'. Only in the interval between wakefulness and (deep) sleep, when one is drowsy and have not reached the state of *bhavaṅga* in deep, dreamless sleep, does one 'see' a dream. Such dreaming 'monkey sleep' ends when there is 'going to *bhavaṅga*'. As Vism.458 says, the 'continuity (*santāna-*)' of *bhavaṅga-cittas* goes on occurring endlessly in 'dreamless sleep', like the 'current of a river'.

(10.14) A.A.III.317 (on A.III.240) explains that the *cittas* of dreaming, unlike *bhavaṅga*, are associated with attachment and other defilements. Nevertheless, the karmically active *javana* state seems not to occur fully in dreams, for A.A.III.317 continues (after quoting Miln.299–300):

> as indeed, the sleep of a monkey is quick to change (*lahu-parivattā*), thus such (dreaming) sleep is quick to change due to the repeated state of confusion of wholesome etc. *cittas* (and) is, in its occurrence, a repeated moving out from *bhavaṅga*.

This must mean that the full complement of seven *javana cittas* does not occur, so that there is a particularly rapid flicking between *bhavaṅga* and *javana*, the karmically active state. In dreaming, unlike *bhavaṅga*, the objects consist of 'the sign of visible forms etc.' (A.A.III.317), though the type of *citta* involved in dreaming is not any of the forms of discernment related to the five senses, or the

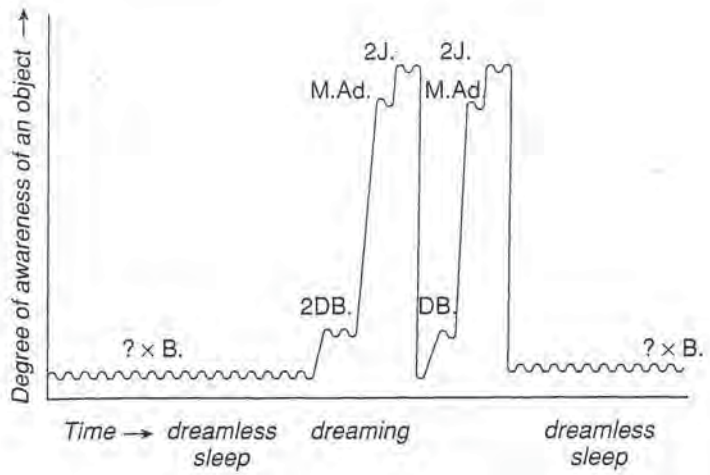


Chart 2 The *citta*-sequence in sleep. Key as at Para.9.12.

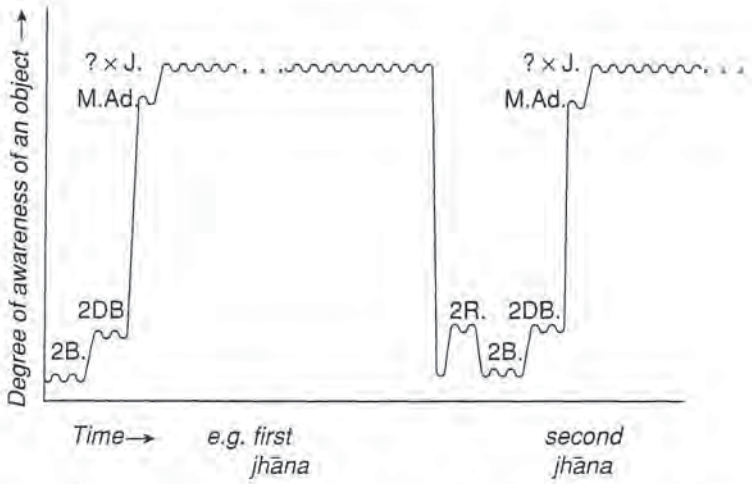


Chart 3 The *citta*-sequence in meditative *jhānas*. Key as at Para.9.12.

following state of conception-element (Vibh.322). It is thus a form of conceptional-discernment, arising in the mental sense-channel. As the normal *citta*-sequence relating to this channel is: *bhavaṅga*, two 'disturbances' of *bhavaṅga*, advertence, seven *javanas*, then return to *bhavaṅga* (Para.A.5), the sequence in dreaming thus becomes one which rapidly alternates between *bhavaṅga* (or its disturbance), advertence, and *javana*, as in chart 2. In normal waking consciousness, the mind is more active, such that more *javana cittas* occur (Para.9.12), yet the *bhavaṅga* state, typical of deep sleep, also occurs. This is not the case, though, when the mind attains the meditative states known as the *jhānas:* deeply calm lucid trances, based on strong concentration and mindfulness. Here, wholesome *javana cittas* alone occur for hours, with no *bhavaṅga*. *Jhāna* is thus pure *javana*, with the mind in a state which is more awake and (calmly) active than in normal waking consciousness, as in chart 3. Only when there is a change from one *jhāna* to another is *bhavaṅga* entered (Vism.126), so that it again acts as a natural transition-state.

(10.15) In the meditative state of the 'cessation of cognition and feeling', also known as the 'attainment of cessation (*nirodha-samāpatti*)', however, the situation is different. In the developed Theravāda theory, it is said that, in this state, a person is '*citta*-less' (Vism.708), with even *bhavaṅga-citta* 'ceased' (*niruddha*) (Asl.283). This position is the same as taken in the Canonical Abhidhamma, which says that neither *citta* nor wisdom exist in cessation (Kvu.519). The *Milindapañha* passage on *bhavaṅga* is rather more open-ended, for it says that, for a living person, *citta* is not 'functioning (*appa-vattaṃ*)' in one of two circumstances: 'when it has become drowsy and entered *bhavaṅga*; and . . . when it has attained cessation' (Miln.300). As this sees *citta* as not 'functioning' when *bhavaṅga* occurs, such a 'non-functioning' *citta could* also occur in cessation.

(10.16) The evidence from the 'early Suttas' as regards whether a residual *citta* exists in cessation is as follows. At M.I.296, a comparison is made between a dead body and a person in the state of cessation. In the first case, the body is without 'vitality, heat and discernment', being like a 'mind-less (*acetanan*)' log of wood, and the five sense-faculties are 'broken asunder'. In the second case, 'vitality' and 'heat' are not destroyed and the sense-faculties are 'purified'. The avoidance of saying that discernment is present in cessation is clearly deliberate. The passage also says that one in cessation is without 'bodily-activities', 'vocal-activities' and '*citta*-activities'. M.I.301 sees these as, respectively, breathing, applied

and investigative thought, and cognition and feeling. Cognition and feeling are said to be 'bound to *citta*' just as breathing is 'bound to the body', while speech follows after applied and investigative thought. Now, while speech is impossible without these speech-activities, the body (*kāya*) does not cease when breathing ceases, as it does temporarily in cessation and even the fourth *jhāna* (Vism.275). It is left unspecified whether *citta* can exist without its activities, like the body, or not, like speech. Several passages, e.g. M.I.175 and A.IV.454, describe a monk who 'enters on and abides in the cessation of cognition and feeling; and having seen by wisdom, his cankers are utterly destroyed'. This describes the attainment of Arahatship either in or *immediately after* the state of cessation. If the former is meant, then wisdom (*paññā*) can be present in cessation; if this is so, then so can discernment, for whatever is the object of wisdom is also known by discernment (M.I.292). Kvu.519, though, as seen above, denies that wisdom is present in cessation.

(10.17) The early texts, then, are not without some ambiguity on the issue of whether any kind of *citta* is present in cessation. It is not surprising, then, that the different schools had different opinions on this matter. Bareau reports that the Sarvāstivādin Vaibhāṣikas denied any *citta* in cessation, while it was accepted by the Sautrāntikas, Dārstāntikas, the Vibhajyavādins – who are almost identical to the Theravādins – and even by the Theravādins themselves.[9]

(10.18) Paul Griffiths (1987) has made a detailed study of different schools' views on the issue. He regards the developed Theravādin view, of a *citta*-less cessation, as being inconsistent with other Theravādin views. This is because he sees Theravāda as holding to a 'dualism' in which mental events never directly arise from physical ones (p.37). In the case of the resumption of *citta* after a *citta*-less cessation, however, such *citta* must be conditioned by a purely physical, *citta*-less body. In fact, Theravādin Abhidhamma is not so dualistic as Griffiths claims. While conception and conceptional-discernment normally arise conditioned by other mental states, they also have an unspecified form of matter (*rūpa*) as 'support condition' and 'basis' (Pt.I.5; CR.I.6; Pt.I.72; CR.80). It seems a small extension of explicit Theravādin doctrine to say that it is from this physical basis, unaided by mental states, that *citta* resumes on emergence from cessation.[10]

(10.19) It can thus be seen that the theory of *bhavaṅga* and the process of *citta*s sees dreamless sleep as pure *bhavaṅga*; dreaming sleep as an extremely rapid alteration between *bhavaṅga*, advertence

APPENDIX

The Theory of the Process of *Citta*s

(A.1) This appendix will show how the theory of the 'process (*vīthi*) of *citta*s' (Vism.22), normally associated with the commentarial writings of Buddhaghosa, was already implicit within the Canonical Abhidhamma of the Theravāda. As seen in ch.9, the early beginnings of such a theory were already present in the 'early Suttas'. The appendix will also give an outline of the fully developed theory, also known as the 'continuity (*-santānaṃ*)' of *citta*s.

(A.2) The earliest Theravādin Abhidhamma text was probably the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*. As can be seen from Para.7.11, this envisages a series of *citta*s consisting of one of visual-, aural-, nasal-, gustatory-, tactile-, or conceptional-discernment, or the conception-element (*mano-dhātu*), followed by another of these, etc.. The *Vibhaṅga* and *Paṭṭhāna* then outlined the specific sequences in which these *citta*s occurred. At the end of the period of the canonical Abhidhamma, the *Kathāvatthu* explicitly refers to *citta*s as lasting only a moment each, and talks of the 'continuity (*-santati*)' of *citta*s (Kvu.458). The *Milindapañha* also refers to a 'continuity of processes (*dhamma-santati*)', apparently consisting primarily of forms of discernment (Miln.40).

(A.3) The *Vibhaṅga* is the first text to put the *citta*s enumerated in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi* in some sort of sequence. Dhs.1418 says that there are just three conception-elements, these beings described at Dhs.455, 562 and 566 as the 'fruitions (*vipākā*)' of wholesome or unwholesome karma or as 'functional' (*kiriyā*, i.e. a spontaneous occurrence which is neither karmically active nor the fruition of karma). Vibh.88–9 explains them thus:

> Therein, what is conception-element? Immediately after the cessation of the visual-discernment-element that has arisen,

> there arises a *citta* . . . as appropriate conception-element . . . Or else it is the first act-of-attention (*samannāhāro*) to any process (*sabbe-dhammesu*).

This says that one conception-element succeeds visual-discernment (or any of the other four discernments related to physical sense-organs) and that another is the first act of attention to an object in *any* of the six sense-channels. As, from the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, a conception-element cannot be simultaneous with another *citta*, this latter conception-element must *precede* any of the five sense-discernments or conceptional-discernment. As M.I.190 says (Para.8.13), an 'act-of-attention' is needed for a 'share of discernment' to occur in relation to an object. Vibh.89–90 then adds that, after visual-discernment and the following conception-element, there arises 'an appropriate conceptional-discernment-element'. Vibh.320–21 shows that the latter is associated with the generation of karma. This is because it says the five (sense) discernments neither arise consecutively nor simultaneously, nor do they perform wholesome or unwholesome states. As, from the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, conception-element is either a fruition or is functional, then only the following conceptional-discernment-element can be what performs wholesome or unwholesome states, i.e. karmas, which generate later fruitions. Given that the five sense-discernments are only fruitions (Dhs.431, 443, 556), the following *citta*-sequence thus emerges in the *Vibhaṅga*:

i) conception-element, as the first act-of-attention to an object → a sense-discernment-element, which is a fruition, → conception-element → conceptional-discernment-element, as that which performs karma.
ii) conception-element, as the first act-of-attention to a mental object → conceptional-discernment-element.

(A.4) The *Paṭṭhāna* considerably extends these *citta*-sequences. As argued by Lance S. Cousins, 'almost all the stages of the consciousness process are precisely specified in the *Paṭṭhāna*' (1981: 41). It introduces the term '*bhavaṅga*' as an apparently already familiar term, and sees it as a fruitional state (Pt.I.368; CR.406–07) which is 'grasped at' (*upādiṇṇa*) and 'favourable to grasping' (*upādāniya*) (Pt.I.411; CR.461). It can be immediately followed by another *bhavaṅga* (Pt. I.313; CR.339), or by 'advertence' (*āvajjana*)

(Pt.I.312–13; CR.338–39). This 'advertence' is said to be a functional state (Pt.I.368; CR.406–07) and to be followed by five-fold-discernment (Pt.I.369; CR.407). 'Advertence' can thus be identified with the conception-element which is the first act-of-attention in the *Vibhaṅga*, and is shown to be the functional, rather than fruitional conception-element referred to in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*. The *Paṭṭhāna* also shows that, following after one of the five-fold-discernments, in succession, come fruitional conception-element, fruitional conceptional-discernment-element (Pt.I.411–12; CR.461), and then a functional conceptional-discernment-element (Pt.I.368; CR.407, and Pt.I.312; CR.339). It is also to be noted, here, that Dhs.431–97, in dealing with the fruitions of wholesome states, deals with them in the order visual- . . . tactile-discernment, conception-element, conceptional-discernment-element, conceptional-discernment-element. This suggests that the order was, even in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇi*, taken as partly indicating a set temporal sequence. In the case of the 'conception-door', or mental sense-channel, the *Paṭṭhāna* gives a different sequence from that for the other 'sense-doors': 'advertence', then 'personality-factors producing fruitions' (Pt.I.369; CR.407). The name for the latter, from Ps.II.72 and 73, can be seen to be *javana*, 'impulsion', as these passages refer to 'wholesome karma in the moment of *javana*'. *Javana* is thus clearly what produces fruitions, and is thus the karmically active state. Such states 'producing fruitions' are seen to succeed each other, an unspecified number of times, before being followed by 'emergence', a fruitional state (Pt.I.368 and 369; CR.407). Summarising the above details, along with those previously tabulated, the following *citta*-sequences emerge:

i) *Bhavaṅga* → *bhavaṅga* (etc.) → a functional *citta* accomplishing 'advertence', i.e. conception-element as the first act-of-attention to an object → a fruitional sense-discernment-element → fruitional conception-element → fruitional conceptional-discernment-element → functional conceptional-discernment-element → a sequence of conceptional-discernment-elements as what perform karma, i.e. *javana* → emergence, a fruitional state.
ii) *Bhavaṅga* → *bhavaṅga* (etc.) → a functional *citta* accomplishing 'advertence', i.e. conception-element as the first act-of-attention to a mental object → a sequence of personality-factors producing fruitions, i.e. a series of conceptional-discernment-elements (with any accompanying factors), called *javana* → emergence, a fruitional state.

(A.5) In the *Vimuttimagga* (Ehara et al, 1977: 256), now found only in Chinese, and in the later *Visuddhimagga*, which was partly based on it, the various *citta*s are given names and explanations are added. The sequence, as outlined at Vism.21 and 458–60, is as follows:

a) the continuity (*santāna*) of *bhavaṅga cittas*;
b) a visible form as object (*ārammaṇa*) comes into the eye's range such that there is 'impinging on the eye-sensitivity' and *bhavaṅga* arises and ceases twice, this being the 'disturbance' of *bhavaṅga*;
c) functional conception-element with the function of adverting (*āvajjana*) to the visible form, 'as it were, cutting off *bhavaṅga*';
d) visual-discernment with the function of 'seeing' (*dassana*), with eye-sensitivity as its 'physical basis', which discernment is a fruition.
e) fruitional conception-element with the function of 'receiving' (*sampaṭicchana*) the object;
f) fruitional 'root-causeless' (*ahetuka*) conceptional-discernment-element, with the function of 'investigating' (*santīraṇa*) the object;
g) functional root-causeless conceptional-discernment-element, accompanied by indifference (*upekkhā*), with the function of 'determining' (*votthapana*) what the object is;
h) six or seven 'impulsions impel (*javanāni javanti*)', if the object is vivid. *Javana*s are always carried out by forms of conceptional-discernment-element, be these normal karmically active wholesome or unwholesome *citta*s, Path or Fruit *citta*s, which have *nibbāna* as object, or the 'functional' *citta* specific to an Arahat, who generates no karmic fruits.
i) if the object is very vivid, there is then an occurrence, twice or once, of 'registration' (*tadārammaṇa*), also called 'aftermath *bhavaṅga*', which is fruitional;
a) *bhavaṅga* then resumes its occurrence and continues until interrupted again.

In this sequence, c)–i) all have the same object and comprise the 'process (*vīthi-*) of *citta*s' (Vism.22) or the 'continuity (*-santānaṃ*)' of *citta*s, occurring according to the 'law of *citta*' (Vism.460). All items, a)–i), are also said to be 'modes (*ākārā*)' in which *citta*s 'function (*pavattanti*)' (Vism.457). It is pointed out at Asl.269 that when the mind responds to a weak object, only stage b) or g) may be

reached before the mind lapses back into *bhavaṅga*. In the case of the mental sense-channel, the process of *citta*s is curtailed (Vism.458–60):

a) the continuity of *bhavaṅga*;
b) an object of any of the six kinds comes into the range of the conception-door and there is 'disturbance' of *bhavaṅga*;
c) the functional conceptional-discernment-element without root-cause arises, accompanied by indifference, as it were cutting off *bhavaṅga* and accomplishing the function of 'advertence'.

The sequence then jumps to h), i) and a), above. These two sequences simply put names to the *citta*s in the *Paṭṭhāna*, add a few details to them, add 'disturbance' of *bhavaṅga* at the beginning of each, and says that conceptional-discernment-element, rather than conception-element, adverts in the case of the mental sense-channel.

(A.6) In fact, Vibh.88–9 (Para.A.3) does not explicitly say that conception-element adverts in the mental sense-channel, and the *Paṭṭhāna* does not specify whether it is conception-element or conceptional-discernment-element. The functional conceptional-discernment-element which Buddhaghosa uses to perform this function is a *citta* already referred to, at Dhs.574, being also used for 'determining' in the other five sense-channels. In both cases, it is the *citta* which immediately precedes *javana*. This seems appropriate as, in the mental sense-channel, an object will be immediately perceived and 'determined' even at advertence: it does not need to be interpreted but arises as already having a determined meaning. As regards the conception-element of the Suttas, though, the above shows that Buddhaghosa makes this equivalent to various forms of conceptional-discernment-element in the Abhidhamma sense: for *bhavaṅga* and advertence in the mental sense-channel are all carried out by this type of *citta*. Thus at M.A.I.77, on M.I.112, he explains that 'conception' in 'conceptional-discernment arises conditioned by conception and mental objects' is just *bhavaṅga-citta* (with conceptional-discernment as advertence) or '*bhavaṅga*-conception with advertence' (with conceptional-discernment as *javana*). Similarly, at Vism.489, he says, 'conceptional-discernment arises conditioned by *bhavaṅga*-conception, a mental object and attention'.

(A.7) Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* scheme also mentions two modes of *citta* besides *bhavaṅga* and those arising in the sense-channels, as above.

i) 'falling away' (*cuti*), the last *citta* of a life, and
ii) 'relinking' (*paṭisandhi*), the *citta* occurring at the moment of conception in the womb.

These are referred to at Pt.I.312–13 (CR.338–39) as '*cuti-citta*' and 'rebirth-(*uppatti*)-*citta*', with the latter immediately following the former. Vism.457 explains that the relinking *citta* has the same object as the mind had 'at the time of death', which may be a particular karma done by the person, a symbol of this, or an indication of his next rebirth. Vism.549–50 makes clear that, at the time of death, there is a sequence, in the mental sense-channel, of: disturbance of *bhavaṅga*, advertence to such an object, *javana*s and registration. Alternatively, a fuller process may occur in one of the other sense-channels, with an item associated with unwholesome or wholesome thoughts as object. Next, 'one falling away *citta* arises making *bhavaṅga*'s objective field (*-visayaṃ*) its object (*ārammaṇaṃ*)'. The immediately following relinking discernment(s) (there may be between one and five) take the same object as advertence to registration, not the object taken by the 'falling away' *citta*. The object of this – and of the (past) *bhavaṅga* – is not specified. Nevertheless, after relinking discernment, *bhavaṅga*-discernment takes over, and has the same object as relinking discernment (Vism.458). This implies that the object of *bhavaṅga*-discernment changes from life to life, and is an item associated with the time of death in the previous life:

i) immediately prior to the end of one life, the mind focusses on an object associated with the next rebirth, or good or bad karma already done, or something associated with such actions;
ii) after 'registering' this object, one moment of 'falling away' *citta* follows, with the same object as the *bhavaṅga* of the ending life;
iii) immediately after this, one to five moments of 'relinking' *citta* arise at the very start of the next rebirth, with the same object as in i).
iv) the *bhavaṅga*, or resting-state, *citta* of that life then takes over, with, again, the same object.

It is clear from this that *bhavaṅga is* seen to have an object. Indeed, Asl.278 says that a *citta* may arise without adverting, but not without an object (*ārammaṇa*). *Bhavaṅga* is also said to be of the same *type* as the relinking *citta* at the start of the present life, which varies according to the type of rebirth and past karma (Vism.458; Gethin,

1994). Relinking, *bhavaṅga* and falling away *citta*s are all forms of conceptional-discernment and are karmic fruitions, which may include meditative states (the *jhāna*s or the formless attainments) arising due to past attainment of them. The latter would relate to the *bhavaṅga*s of beings in the heavens of (pure) form and formlessness.

7. In the Abhidhamma, the term is a clear synonym of *manasikāra* (Vibh.321), and in the Suttas, the verbal forms of the two words are used as equivalents (M.I.445). The word itself is derived from '*saṃ*' + '*anu*' + '*āhāra*', and literally means 'thoroughly (*saṃ*) bringing on (*āhāra*) along to (*anu*)'. At MLS.I.236, I.B.Horner renders *samannāhāra* by 'impact'. Apart from not fitting the derivation as well as 'act of attention', this is inappropriate to the context. Though an object may be within the range of the eye but not actually be focussed on so as to produce an 'impact', there is no similar situation with hearing. If a sound is audible it is *heard, unless* one's *attention* is not directed at it. As all the senses are treated in a parallel manner, '*samannāhāra*' must mean something like an 'act of attention' not only in the case of hearing, but in the other five cases too. This translation is that used by P.De Silva, 1973: 12.
8. Seeing the constant arising of discernment and feeling as a kind of recurrent 'birth' is in line with the view of the Burmese teacher Ledi Sayadaw (1914: 158–59):

> The genesis of consciousness belongs to the category birth, which is one ultimate phenomenon, as do all facts of inception, production, origination, propagation, or continual serial genesis. Analogous are mental decay and death, belonging respectively to the categories of the ultimate phenomenon of decay and that of death (p.158–9).

CHAPTER 9

1. And cf. S.II.151, D.II.58–9, D.III.289, A.IV.146–67.
2. An alternative meaning of the six 'discernment-collections' *might* be *all* occurrences of visual-discernment etc. that ever arise in a person. If that were the case, though, then there seems to be no reason why e.g. grasping (*upādāna*), as a causal link, should not be explained in terms of the four 'collections' of graspings of the same type (i.e. all examples of sensual grasping etc.). In fact, '*kāya*' is only used in the explanation of the discernment, stimulation, feeling and craving links (S.II.2–4), and the feeling, cognition, volition and discernment personality-factors (S.III.59–61). In each case, six *kāyas* are listed: the relevant process occurring in each of the six sense-channels. The 'collections' referred to, then, are particularly allied to the six sense-channels, and must refer to the various feelings etc. that can arise in particular sense-channels while processing and responding to a particular object.
3. The number of *bhavaṅga cittas* between each perceptual cycle is not specified in the Abhidhamma or Buddhaghosa's works, but it would make sense to say that it varies in inverse proportion to a person's degree of alertness or wakefulness. The more alert, the quicker he or she adverts to a new object.
4. Elsewhere, Buddhaghosa explains that 'registration' is like 'some water that follows a little after a boat going upstream' (Vism.460), thus showing that, though the mind would normally return to its *bhavaṅga*

state after *javana*, if the object is vivid or very clear, it remains on the same object for a short while to 'register' it.

5. 1976: 331. The OED. gives, on 'Consciousness': '5. The totality of impressions, thoughts and feelings which make up a person's conscious being'.
6. The OED. gives, on 'Consciousness': '3. The state or fact of being mentally conscious or aware *of* anything. 4. Philos. The state or faculty of being conscious, as a condition and concomitant of all thought, feeling and volition'.
7. The concise OED., on 'discern', gives: 'perceive clearly with mind or senses . . .'
8. Dhs.431, 443, 556, Vism.91, 71, 488. This could not be fully investigated in chs.5 or 8 as the differentiation of the functions of discernment in the perceptual process had not then been outlined.
9. I am grateful to Lance S. Cousins, of the University of Manchester (now retired), for suggesting this solution to the problem.
10. A possible problem, here, is that in the process of *cittas*, the conception-element which precedes a sense-discernment, accomplishing the function of 'advertence', i.e. attention, is a *functional* (*kiriya*), not a karmically resultant (*vipāka*) *citta* (see Para.A.5). Nevertheless, attention/advertence may be instrumental in the arising of a karmic result without itself being a karmic result. '*Vipāka*' literally means 'fruition', and so cannot refer to the process instrumental in the arising of an actual 'fruition', just as the 'fruition' of an apple tree is not the blossom, but only the apple. Indeed, not everything arising due to karma is described as a *vipāka*: Dhs.1211 does not use '*vipāka*' for physical states (*rūpas*) arising 'from karma having been wrought', and Kvu.351–52 has the Theravādin reserving '*vipāka*' as a description applicable only to (some) non-physical states.
11. As seen at Para.9.4, only indifferent feeling arise at the time of seeing, hearing, tasting or smelling: in the case of these senses, pleasant or unpleasant feelings arise as part of the mental reaction to such sense-objects. Such a reaction may include both feelings which immediately and automatically arise, and feelings as part of an active response to an object. Only those which automatically arise can be seen as due to past karma. Such karmically-resultant feelings will be those that arise at the time of the two karmically-resultant conception and conceptional-discernment immediately following e.g. a visual-discernment (Para.9.13). Feelings as part of an active response occur at the time of *javana* discernments.
    Past karma, then, determines what sort of visual objects are noticed, and the feeling-charge that these immediately invoke in the mind. Lance S. Cousins, citing Vism.456, says that the neutral feeling accompanying sense-discernments resulting from wholesome and unwholesome karma are, respectively, 'subtle and will shade towards pleasant feeling', and 'inferior and will shade towards unpleasant feeling' ('The *Paṭṭhāna* and the Development of the Theravādin Abhidhamma', p.31).
12. One cannot use this as a way of making b) plausible, as this would mean that sense-discernments were karmic results principally for this reason. If this were so, the only way that karma would *actively* determine a person's experience would be by determining their rebirth. This would

Mind in Tibetan Buddhism

Oral Commentary on
Ge-shay Jam-bel-sam-pel's
Presentation of Awareness and Knowledge
Composite of All the Important Points
Opener of the Eye of New Intelligence

Lati Rinbochay

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Awareness and knowledge (*blo-rig*) is the study of consciousness, of mind. Understanding mind is essential to understanding Buddhism in both its theoretical and practical aspects, for the process of achieving enlightenment is one of systematically purifying and enhancing the mind.

Mind and body, though associated, are not inseparably linked; they have different substantial causes. That this is so means that the increase and development of the mind is not limited to that of the body; though the continuum of the body ceases at death, that of the mind does not. This difference stems from the fact that whereas the body is composed of matter and as such is anatomically established, mind is not. It is an impermanent phenomenon (*anitya-dharma, mi rtag pa'i chos*), changing in each moment, and having a nature of clear light. Pure in its essential nature, the mind is stained by adventitious defilements (*ākasmika-mala, glo bur gyi dri ma*), the result of having misapprehended from beginningless time the actual nature of phenomena. These defilements can be removed; the mind can be totally purified, and the stages in this process of purification constitute the levels of progress towards enlightenment.

Within the Ge-luk-ba order of Tibetan Buddhism, on whose viewpoint this work is based, mind is first formally studied in the topic of 'Awareness and Knowledge'. It is the second major area of study undertaken during a course of intellectual

training that culminates after twenty to twenty-five years of intensive study in the attainment of the degree of ge-shay (*dge bshes*).[5] 'Awareness and Knowledge' is primarily an identification of the different types of minds, of consciousnesses which occur in the mental continuum, an introduction to the vocabulary connected with the mind, and a means of training the student in the processes of reasoning – an endeavour integrally linked with all steps of the Ge-luk-ba ge-shay training. Consciousness is examined mainly by dividing it into types and subtypes from several points of view, whereby a student develops a sense of the variety of consciousnesses, their functions, and interrelationships. Not found within the topic of 'Awareness and Knowledge' are descriptions of means for developing and training the mind nor even of the stages in that process; these are included in such topics as 'Grounds and Paths', the 'Concentrations and Formless Absorptions', the 'Perfections', 'Madhyamaka', and so forth – later areas of study for which thorough familiarity with 'Awareness and Knowledge' provides a necessary basis.

Presentations of 'Awareness and Knowledge' find their primary source in the works of the great Indian commentators Dignāga (480–540) and Dharmakīrti (600–660),[6] especially in Dignāga's *Compendium on Prime Cognition* (*Pramāṇasamuchchaya*)[7] and in Dharmakīrti's *Seven Treatises on Prime Cognition*, particularly his *Commentary on* (*Dignāga's*) *'Compendium on Prime Cognition'* (*Pramāṇavarttika*).[8] The one exception is the section on minds and mental factors (*chitta-chaitta, sems sems byung*) the source of which is Asaṅga's *Compendium of Knowledge* (*Abhidharmasamuchchaya*).[9]

These Indian texts as well as a number of Indian commentaries on them were translated into Tibetan, at the latest by the eleventh century[10] and the Tibetans continued the tradition of writing commentaries on them. They also began a new tradition of drawing important topics from those texts and presenting them in conjunction with the Sautrāntika mode of reasoning. The twelfth-century Ga-dam-ba (*bKa'-gdams-pa*) scholar Cha-ba-chö-gyi-seng-gay (Cha-pa-chos-kyi-seng-ge, 1109–1169) wrote the first text of this type, his work and subsequently the genre as a whole being entitled *The Collected Topics* [*of Prime Cognition*] (*bsDus sgrva*). His text, no longer extant, had eighteen sections, one of which was entitled 'A Presentation of Objects and Object-Possessors', a topic which includes within it what is studied as 'Awareness and Knowledge'.

Shortly after Cha-ba-chö-gyi-seng-gay, the Sa-gya (*Sa-skya*) scholar Sa-gya Pandita (Sa-skya Paṇḍita, 1182–1251/2) wrote a commentary on the Indian texts on prime cognition entitled *The Treasury of Reasoning*.[11] Contained within its second chapter is a complete presentation of 'Awareness and Knowledge'. Sa-gya Pandita himself wrote a commentary to this, and it was extensively elaborated on by later scholars within the Sa-gya tradition.

The founder of the Ge-luk-ba order, Tsong-ka-pa (Tsong-kha-pa, 1357–1419), did not write a separate presentation of 'Awareness and Knowledge' but did write a brief introductory commentary to Dharmakīrti's *Seven Treatises* entitled *Door of Entry to the Seven Treatises*;[12] this has three parts, the second of which, 'Object-Possessors', is a presentation of 'Awareness and Knowledge'. His disciple Kay-drup (mKhas-grub, 1385–1438) wrote a more extensive commentary on Dharmakīrti's *Seven Treatises, Clearing Away Darkness of Mind with Respect to the Seven Treatises*,[13] which includes a presentation of objects and object-possessors that extensively sets forth 'Awareness and Knowledge'. Another of Tsong-ka-pa's main disciples Gen-dun-drup (dGe-'dun-grub), the First Dalai Lama, 1391–1474) extensively set forth 'Awareness and Knowledge' within his *Ornament for Valid Reasoning*.[14]

The first Ge-luk-ba presentation of 'Awareness and Knowledge' as a separate text was probably that of Pan-chen Sö-nam-drak-ba (Paṇ-chen bSod-nams-grags-pa, 1478–1554),[15] textbook author for the Lo-sel-ling College of Dre-bung monastery. The next was that of Jam-yang-shay-ba, textbook author for the Go-mang College of Dre-bung, which is not so much a formal composition but his lectures on the topic to beginning

students which were subsequently written down. The next was a very extensive presentation of 'Awareness and Knowledge' by Lo-sang-da-yang (bLo-bzang-rta-dbyangs, 1867–1937),[16] which is a composite of all those that preceded it. Another important and quite recent text of this type is Pur-bu-jok's *Explanation of the Presentation of Objects and Object-Possessors as well as Awareness and Knowledge* from within his *Presentation of the Collected Topics Revealing the Meaning of the Treatises on Prime Cognition*. The text by Ge-shay Jam-bel-sam-pel translated in Part Two of this book is a recent presentation of 'Awareness and Knowledge', written in Tibet sometime prior to 1959. The particular feature of this text, currently used by Lo-sel-ling College as its textbook for the study of 'Awareness and Knowledge' is that it is a very concise presentation of the topic which dispenses with the syllogistic format usually employed in such works and merely lays out directly the salient points concerning 'Awareness and Knowledge'.

The Tibetan presentations of 'Awareness and Knowledge' unquestionably derive from and rely on Indian sources. However, the Tibetans also contributed a great deal to the topic, both in systematizing it and in refining the use of terminology. Although all the various topics and divisions within 'Awareness and Knowledge' are considered by the Tibetans to be indicated in the Indian texts, in support of which sources can be cited, they are not always indicated with the terms by which they are known in Tibet. For example, among the sevenfold division of awareness and knowledge, only four – the first two and the last two (direct perceivers, inferential cognizers, doubt, and wrong consciousnesses) – are mentioned by name either by Dignāga or Dharmakīrti; the remaining three (subsequent cognizers, correctly assuming consciousnesses, and awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained) are not explicitly mentioned, but that they are indicated is a necessary conclusion from the sources cited by Jam-yang-shay-ba. It appears that these terms were current in Tibet by the time of Sa-gya Pandita and perhaps even Cha-ba-chö-gyi-seng-gay,[17] but it is not clear whether

they were an early Tibetan innovation or perhaps may be found in the later Sanskrit commentaries.[18] This is an excellent topic for future study, the goal of this work, however, being to set out clearly the basic Ge-luk-ba presentation of 'Awareness and Knowledge' in the context of the oral tradition.

Among the four systems of Buddhist tenets studied in Tibet – Vaibhāṣhika, Sautrāntika, Chittamātra, and Mādhyamika, in ascending order – the specific viewpoint of the study of 'Awareness and Knowledge' is Sautrāntika, and within the division of Sautrāntika into Followers of Scripture and Followers of Reasoning, the latter. However, the general presentation is common at least to Sautrāntika, Chittamātra and Mādhyamika, and thus a study of 'Awareness and Knowledge' is used as a basis for all areas of study, requiring only slight modifications for each area.

MIND AND ITS TYPES

Consciousness (*jñāna, shes pa*), awareness (*buddhi, blo*), and knower (*saṃvedana, rig pa*) are synonymous; they are the broadest terms among those dealing with the mind. Any mind (*chitta, sems*) or mental factor (*chaitta, sems byung*) is a consciousness, is an awareness, is a knower. These terms should be understood in an active sense because minds are momentary consciousnesses which are active agents of knowing. In Buddhism mind is not conceived to be merely a general reservoir of information or just the brain mechanism, but to be individual moments of knowing, the continuum of which makes up our sense of knowing.

Consciousnesses can be divided in a number of different ways; a major mode of division is into seven:

1. SEVENFOLD DIVISION

1 direct perceivers (*pratyakṣha, mngon sum*)
2 inferential cognizers (*anumāṇa, rjes dpag*)
3 subsequent cognizers (**parichchhinna-jñana, bcad shes*)[19]

4 correctly assuming consciousnesses (**manaḥ parīkṣhā, yid dpyod*)
5 awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained (**aniyata-pratibhāsa, snang la ma nges pa*)
6 doubting consciousnesses (*saṃshaya, the tshom*)
7 wrong consciousnesses (*viparyaya-jñāna, log shes*)

Direct perceivers

Direct perceivers are, by definition, knowers which are free from conceptuality (*kalpanā-apodha, rtog bral*) and non-mistaken (*abhrānta, ma 'khrul ba*). To be free from conceptuality means that such a consciousness deals with its object directly without making use of an internal image. This is illustrated by the difference between seeing a pot – as is done by a directly perceiving sense consciousness – and thinking about a pot – as is done by a conceptual mental consciousness. In the first case, the consciousness is produced in dependence on contact with an actual pot, whereas in the second the mind is dealing only with a mental image of a pot.

To be non-mistaken means that there is no erroneous element involved in that which is appearing to the consciousness. As will be explained below (page 21), conceptual consciousnesses are necessarily mistaken in this regard; thus, the qualification 'non-mistaken' alone would be sufficient to eliminate them from the category of direct perceivers. 'Free from conceptuality', though redundant, is specifically stated in order to eliminate the non-Buddhist Vaisheṣhika view that there are conceptual sense consciousnesses.

The term 'non-mistaken' also eliminates from the class of direct perceivers those non-conceptual (*nirvikalpaka, rtog med*) consciousnesses which are mistaken due to a superficial cause of error (**pratibhāṣhikī-bhrānti-hetm, phral gyi 'khrul rgyu*)[20] such as a fault in the eye, sickness, and so forth. These are free from conceptuality, but not from mistake. An example is an eye consciousness of someone riding in a boat, to whom the trees on the shore appear to be moving. That person's eye consciousness is non-conceptual, for it is dealing directly with the trees, but is mistaken with respect to them in that they appear to be moving whereas they are not; thus, such a consciousness is not a direct perceiver.

Direct perceivers are of four types:

1 sense direct perceivers (*indriya-pratyakṣha, dbang po'i mngon sum*)
2 mental direct perceivers (*mānasa-pratyakṣha, yid kyi mngon sum*)
3 self-knowing direct perceivers (*svasaṃvedana-pratyakṣha, rang rig mngon sum*)
4 yogic direct perceivers (*yogi-pratyakṣha, rnal 'byor mngon sum*)

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

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

Using the example of an eye consciousness (*chakṣhur-vijñāna, mig gi rnam shes*)[21] its observed object condition is the form it perceives. Its uncommon empowering condition is the eye sense power (*chakṣhur-indriya, mig dbang*), a type of clear internal matter which empowers it in the sense that it enables it to comprehend visible forms as opposed to sounds, tastes, and so forth. Its immediately preceding condition is a moment of consciousness which occurs immediately before it and makes it an experiencing entity.

In all systems but Vaibhāṣhika, cause and effect must occur in a temporal sequence – they cannot be simultaneous. Thus, since the object observed by a consciousness is one of its causes, it must precede that consciousness, and therefore a consciousness is posited as knowing a phenomenon which exists one moment before it. Moreover, although consciousnesses are

momentary phenomena, that is, disintegrate moment by moment, one moment of consciousness is too brief to be noticed by ordinary persons. Rather, what we experience as sense perception is a continuum of moments of consciousness apprehending a continuum of moments of an object which is also disintegrating moment by moment.

Sense direct perceivers do not name their objects nor reflect on them. Non-conceptual in nature, they merely experience. All discursive thought about the object observed by sense direct perception is done by later moments of conceptual consciousness induced by that sense perception. Within the Buddhist tradition this has caused sense direct perceivers to be labelled 'stupid' and has led to the widespread view among Western interpreters of Buddhism that sense consciousnesses are mere passive 'transmitters', passing a signal from the sense organ to thought. Such is not the case, for sense consciousnesses do *know*, do realize (*adhigam, rtogs*) their object. Not only that, but sense consciousnesses can also be trained such that an eye consciousness can know not only that a person being seen is a man but also that that person is one's father. This is not to say that the eye consciousness labels the person, 'This is my father,' but it does know it, and that knowledge induces the subsequent conceptual consciousness which actually affixes the name 'father' without any intervening reflection. Sense consciousnesses are also capable of comprehending their object's ability to perform a function; thus, an eye consciousness itself can perceive that fire has the capacity to cook and burn.

The second division of direct perceivers, mental direct perceivers, has two types. The Ge-luk-bas assert that at the end of a continuum of sense direct perception of an object there is generated one moment of mental direct perception; this in turn induces conceptual cognition of that object, naming it and so forth. That one moment at the end of sense direct perception is the first type of mental direct perception. It is too brief to be noticed by ordinary beings but can be observed by Superiors (*Ārya, 'Phags pa*) those advanced in meditative

training who have through extensive practice developed the ability to perceive selflessness directly. The second type of mental direct perception includes various types of clairvoyances (*abhijñā, mngon shes*) such as the ability to know others' minds, to remember one's former lives, to perceive forms and sounds too distant or subtle to be apprehended by the sense consciousnesses, and so forth.

The third type of direct perceiver is a self-knower. The positing or not of the existence of such a direct perceiver serves as a major basis for distinguishing schools of tenets; among the four tenet systems – Vaibhāṣhika, Sautrāntika, Chittamātra, and Mādhyamika – Sautrāntika, Chittamātra, and Yogāchāra-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika posit the existence of self-knowers, whereas Vaibhāṣhika, Sautrāntika-Svātantrika-Mādhyamika and Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamika deny the existence of such. For those schools which do posit the existence of a self-knower, its function is to make possible the memory of one's cognitions. Its proponents say that if there were no consciousness observing the consciousness that perceives an object, there would be no way for one to know that one had perceived something. The systems which do not assert self-knowers deny that they are necessary in order to remember one's cognitions and say that positing them leads to an infinite regress of self-knowers knowing the self-knowers, and so forth.

The function of a self-knower is just to make possible memory of former consciousnesses. It does not have an active role of introspection, or self-awareness, as its name might suggest; such is carried out by a mental factor called introspection (*samprajanya, shes bzhin*) which can accompany a main consciousness. Thus, self-knowers are not something which one seeks to develop as part of training the mind. They perform their function in the same way at all levels of mental development.

The fourth and final type of direct perceiver is a yogic direct perceiver. Unlike clairvoyances which can occur in the continuum of anyone – Buddhist or non-Buddhist – and do not necessarily require advanced mental training, yogic direct

perceivers occur only in the continuums of Superiors, that is, those who from among the five paths – accumulation (*sambhāra-mārga, tshogs lam*), preparation (*prayoga-mārga, sbyor lam*), seeing (*darshana-mārga, mthong lam*), meditation (*bhāvanā-mārga, sgom lam*), and no more learning (*ahaikṣha-mārga, mi slob lam*) – have attained the path of seeing or above. Whereas the uncommon empowering condition of the five sense direct perceivers is their respective sense power, such as that of the eye, ear, nose, and so forth, the uncommon empowering condition of yogic direct perceivers is a meditative stabilization (*samādhi, ting nge 'dzin*) which is a union of calm abiding (*shamatha, zhi gnas*) and special insight (*vipashyanā, lhag mthong*). Thus, yogic direct perceivers are a level of consciousness very different from ordinary sense perception despite their similarity in being non-mistaken, non-conceptual knowers of objects.

The development of yogic direct perceivers is a major goal of meditative training. Although one effortlessly has the capacity to perceive directly such things as forms and sounds with an eye or ear consciousness, one does not have that ability with regard to profound phenomena such as subtle impermanence and selflessness. Thus, these must originally be understood conceptually, that is, they are comprehended by way of a mental image rather than directly. Then, through repeated familiarization with the object realized, it is possible to develop clearer and clearer realization until finally the need for a mental image is transcended and one realizes the object directly. Such yogic direct perceivers have great force, being able to overcome the misconceptions that bind one in cyclic existence.

Direct perceivers, therefore, include both ordinary and highly developed consciousnesses.

Inferential cognizers

An inferential cognizer is a type of conceptual consciousness which realizes, or incontrovertibly gets at, an object of comprehension which cannot be initially realized by direct perception. Generated as the culmination of a process of

reasoning, it is said to be produced in dependence on a correct sign (*liṅga, rtags*) acting as its basis. The meaning of this can be illustrated with a worldly example; if one looks out the window and sees smoke billowing from a neighbouring house, one will immediately infer that inside the house there is fire. The basis, the sign in dependence on which this inference was generated, was the presence of smoke. Because of the fact that there is an invariable relationship between the presence of an effect – in this case smoke – and the preceding existence of its cause – fire, one can correctly infer that fire is present. Such knowledge is not direct perception, for one did not actually see the fire; nonetheless it is valid, reliable knowledge.

Inasmuch as an inferential cognizer incontrovertibly realizes its object of cognition it is as reliable a form of knowledge as is a direct perceiver. However, there is the difference that whereas a direct perceiver contacts its object directly and non-mistakenly, an inferential cognizer, being conceptual, must get at its object through the medium of an image. That image, called a meaning generality (*artha-sāmānya, don spyi*), appears to thought as if it were the actual object although it is not, and in this respect a conceptual consciousness is mistaken with respect to the object that is appearing to it. This element of error does not, however, interfere with the accuracy with which that consciousness comprehends the object represented by the meaning generality, and thus it is a correct and incontrovertible (*avisaṃvādin, mi slu ba*) knower.

All conceptual consciousnesses are mistaken with respect to the object that appears to them, the meaning generality, and thus all are said to be mistaken consciousnesses (*bhrānti-jñāna, 'khrul shes*). However, only some are mistaken with respect to the actual object they are comprehending, the object in which thought is actually engaged. Conceptual consciousnesses which are not mistaken with respect to the object they are getting at are mistaken consciousnesses, but not wrong consciousnesses; those mistaken with respect to the object being gotten at are also wrong consciousnesses. Inferential cognizers are, by definition, *not* mistaken with respect to the

object comprehended, being incontrovertible in the sense that their realization is firm; this gives them their force and validity.

Subsequent cognizers

The first moment of a direct perceiver comprehends its object through the force of experience; the first moment of an inference does so in dependence on a sign. For both those types of perception, later moments within the same continuum of perception, that is, while still apprehending the same object, no longer rely on either experience or a sign but are merely induced through the force of the first moment of cognition. These later moments are called subsequent cognizers. The strength of the initial realization has not been lost, and therefore subsequent cognizers are incontrovertible knowers that do realize their objects. However, the element of realization is not gained through their own power, for they themselves do not do the removing of superimpositions (*āropa, sgro 'dogs*) which enables realization to occur. Rather, they realize that which has already been realized by the former moment of consciousness which has already removed superimposition and which induces them.

Correctly assuming consciousnesses

A correctly assuming consciousness is, as the translation indicates, necessarily a correct mode of thought; it must also be a conceptual consciousness as opposed to direct cognition. What distinguishes it from the above three types of consciousnesses – direct perceivers, inferential cognizers, and subsequent cognizers – is that unlike them it does not realize its object; it is not incontrovertible. Thus, a distinction is made between merely being correct with regard to an object and actually realizing, or getting at, that object. The reason for this difference lies in the mode of generation; whereas, firstly, direct perception is generated through the force of experience, secondly, an inferential cognizer is generated as the culmination of a lengthy and convincing process of reasoning, and, thirdly, subsequent cognizers are continuations of direct perceivers or

inferential consciousnesses, correctly assuming consciousnesses arrive at their conclusions either without reason, in a manner contrary to correct reasoning, or based on correct reasoning but without bringing it to its full conclusion. Most of the information we take in by listening to teachers or reading books, etc., falls within the category of correct assumption; much is just accepted, and even most which we think about and analyse has not been realized with the full force of inference. Because of the weakness of the basis from which it is generated, a correctly assuming consciousness is not a reliable form of knowledge as it lacks incontrovertibility; one will easily lose the force of one's conviction, as, for example, when confronted by someone strongly presenting an opposite viewpoint.

Awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained

An awareness to which an object appears but is not ascertained is a type of direct perceiver, set forth separately within the sevenfold division of awarenesses and knowers to emphasize that not all direct perceivers are minds which realize their objects. Like direct perceivers, they are non-conceptual consciousnesses which are non-mistaken with respect to the object they are comprehending. However, these are minds which for some reason, such as one's attention being intently directed elsewhere or the duration of the consciousness being too brief to be noticed, are unable subsequently to induce ascertainment (*nishchaya, nges pa*) knowing that one had that particular perception. A familiar example of this occurs when one is walking down a street while intently engaged in conversation with someone and has a sense of people passing by but later cannot at all identify who they were. Such a mind is not mistaken, for in that it does not perceive something that is not actually so to be so, it has not introduced an element of error; thus it is included among direct perceivers. However, because it does not provide reliable information and has no factor of certainty, it is not considered to realize its object or to be incontrovertible.

Doubting consciousnesses

Necessarily conceptual in nature, doubting consciousnesses are minds distinguished primarily by their quality of indecisiveness, or two-pointedness. Doubt can tend towards one side of an issue or another, or it can be completely undecided, but it is always accompanied by an element of uncertainty. The most forceful conclusion doubt can arrive at is, 'Probably it is such and such.' Included within doubt are consciousnesses that are correct, incorrect, and those that are neither. For example, a mind which wonders whether or not future lives exist and thinks that probably they do would be doubt tending toward the fact (*don 'gyur gyi the tshom*), correct doubt; one which wonders whether or not they exist and thinks that probably they do not would be doubt not tending to the fact (*don mi 'gyur gyi the tshom*), or incorrect; and one which merely wondered whether or not future lives exist and entertained both positions equally would be equal doubt (*cha mnyam pa'i the tshom*), neither correct nor incorrect.

Although inferior in force of realization to even correct assumption and far from the incontrovertibility of direct perception and inference, doubt tending toward the fact is nonetheless a powerful initial step in weakening the force of a strongly adhered to wrong view and in beginning the process toward development of correct understanding.

Emphasizing the force of doubt tending to the fact, Āryadeva's *Four Hundred* says, 'Those whose merit is small have no doubts about this doctrine [the profound nature of phenomena]. Even through merely having doubts, cyclic existence is torn to tatters.'[22]

Wrong consciousnesses

Wrong consciousnesses are those that are mistaken with respect to the object they are engaged in, the object which is actually being comprehended. As such they are to be distinguished from mistaken consciousnesses which, as described above in the context of inference, are mistaken with respect to what

appears to them. For example, conceptual consciousnesses are mistaken in that an image of the object appears to them as the actual object, but nonetheless they are capable of realizing correctly their object of comprehension. Such is not the case with wrong consciousnesses which cannot realize their objects and are thoroughly mistaken with respect to them.

Wrong consciousnesses are of two types, non-conceptual and conceptual. Non-conceptual ones are, for instance, an eye consciousness which sees snow-covered mountains as blue, an eye consciousness which due to jaundice sees everything as yellow, an eye consciousness which sees a double moon, and so forth. Because what appears to a non-conceptual consciousness is just the object that it is comprehending, or engaged in, a consciousness mistaken with respect to its appearing object (**pratibhāsa-viṣhaya, snang yul*) is necessarily mistaken with respect to its object of engagement (**pravṛtti-viṣhaya, 'jug yul*) and thus, non-conceptual wrong consciousnesses are mistaken with respect to both.

Wrong conceptual consciousnesses are, for instance, a mind which conceives that there are no former or future lives or one which conceives that there is a substantially existent self (*dravya-sat-ātman, rdzas yod kyi bdag*). Being conceptual, these minds are necessarily mistaken with respect to their appearing object – an image of that being comprehended which mistakenly appears to be the actual object. In addition they are mistaken with respect to the object being engaged in, thinking in the case of the view of the non-existence of former and future lives that what does exist does not and in the case of the view of self that what does not exist does.

These conceptual wrong consciousnesses provide the *raison d'être* for Buddhist meditational practice, for what Buddhism posits as the root cause, the basic motivating antecedent, of the endless round of birth, ageing, sickness, and death in which beings powerlessly cycle and in limitless ways suffer is just a wrong consciousness – the misapprehension of self where there is none. The way to free oneself from this suffering, to attain liberation from cyclic existence, is to identify its root as this

misapprehension of self and then engage in a means to overcome it. The means identified by the Ge-luk-ba tradition is reasoning (*nyāya, rigs pa*), and one can take the sevenfold division of awareness and knowledge as illustrative of the stages one might go through while developing correct understanding through its use.

One begins with a wrong view such as the idea that there is a substantially existent self. As long as this idea is held forcefully, it is a wrong consciousness. Then, through hearing teachings of selflessness one might begin to wonder whether in fact there is such a self. At this point one would have generated doubt; initially one's tendency could still be to think that most likely there was a self – this would be doubt not tending to the fact. Through repeated thought one would pass through the stage of equal doubt in which, wondering whether or not there is a substantially existent self, one reaches no conclusion either way, and would eventually develop doubt tending to the fact in which one feels that there probably is no self but is nonetheless still uncertain.

The next step in the development of the view of selflessness is to generate a correctly assuming consciousness, one which definitely decides that there is no substantially existent self. At this point one is holding the correct view. However, one has not yet realized selflessness, although the oral tradition describes the initial generation of correct assumption with regard to selflessness as a very powerful experience. It is now necessary to contemplate selflessness again and again, using reasoning, seeking to develop a certainty from which one cannot be shaken.

An inference is the end result of a specific process of reasoning. One establishes that if there were a substantially existent self, it would have to exist in one of a limited number of ways and that if it does not exist in any of those ways, it does not exist; through reasoned investigation one establishes that it does not exist in any of those ways and hence concludes that it does not exist. For this conclusion to have the force of reasoned conviction, one must go through the steps of this

investigation over and over again, so that one is accustomed to it and thoroughly convinced of it. One's consciousnesses throughout this process of familiarization are correct assumptions; when this is brought to the point of unwavering certainty, one generates an inference.

With the generation of an inferential cognizer, one can be said to have realized selflessness and to have incontrovertible knowledge of it. However, this is not the end of the process, for at this point one's realization is still conceptual, is still getting at selflessness only by way of an image. The goal is to develop one's realization still more and to bring it finally to the point of direct perception in which all need for an image has disappeared and one's mental consciousness is able to contact its object directly; such direct perception of selflessness is the actual antidote which, upon extended cultivation, is able to eradicate for ever the conception of self as well as all the other wrong views and afflictions that conception brings with it, thereby making liberation from cyclic existence possible.

The way in which an inference is transformed into direct perception is just repeated familiarization with the object of meditation. One's initial inference was generated in dependence on a sign. Later moments of that realization are subsequent cognizers, no longer directly dependent on the reasoning. Through taking selflessness to mind again and again within the force of one's realization, the clarity of appearance gradually increases until finally the image of the object disappears and is replaced by just clear appearance of the object itself. When this occurs, one has generated direct perception of one's object of meditation. This initial direct perception of selflessness is able to eradicate completely and forever a portion of the apprehension of self, but is not able to get rid of all levels of that conception. Inasmuch as the conception of self is the root of cyclic existence – is that view which has bound countless beings in immeasurable suffering since beginningless time – it is deeply ingrained and its force is extremely great. Initial direct perception overcomes only the grossest level of it, those

conceptions based on false reasoning and so forth. One must then continue to cultivate realization of selflessness, developing the force of one's direct perception; direct perceivers of increasing strength overcome more and more subtle levels of the conception of self until finally it is eradicated completely.

The sevenfold division of awareness and knowledge is not an exhaustive presentation of consciousness – there are minds not included anywhere within it, such as highly developed conceptual meditative consciousnesses like great compassion and non-conceptual ones in which a yogi views all his surroundings as only earth or only water.[23] Rather, the sevenfold division is a distinguishing of various types of consciousness in terms of their correctness and incorrectness and the degree to which they actually get at their objects, as well as an ordering of them in terms of preference.

II. THREEFOLD DIVISION

The division of awarenesses and knowers into three is in terms of the object appearing to them. The three are:

1 conceptual consciousnesses which take a meaning generality as their apprehended object
2 non-conceptual non-mistaken consciousnesses which take a specifically characterized phenomenon as their apprehended object
3 non-conceptual mistaken consciousnesses which take a clearly appearing non-existent as their apprehended object.

There are four main types of object posited for consciousnesses:

1 object of engagement (**pravṛtti-viṣhaya, 'jug yul*)
2 determined object (**adhyavasāya-viṣhaya, zhen yul*)
3 appearing object (**pratibhāsa-viṣhaya, snang yul*)
4 apprehended object (*grāhya-viṣhaya, bzung yul*)[24]

The first two refer to the object that a consciousness is actually getting at and understanding. However, there is the qualification that the term 'determined object' is used only for conceptual consciousnesses, whereas 'object of engagement' is used for both conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses. Thus the object of engagement of an eye consciousness apprehending blue is blue; both the object of engagement and the determined object of a *thought* consciousness thinking about blue are blue.

The latter two types of objects – appearing and apprehended – refer to the object which is actually appearing to the consciousness and not necessarily to what it is comprehending. Since the actual object that appears to direct perception is what it realizes, its appearing object, apprehended object, and object of engagement are all the same – in the example of an eye consciousness apprehending blue, all three are blue. However, for a conceptual consciousness, although the object of engagement and determined object are the actual object the consciousness is understanding – i.e., blue for a thought consciousness apprehending blue – the appearing object and apprehended object are just an image of blue, called a meaning generality.

This threefold division of consciousnesses centres on differences in the appearing, or apprehended, objects of different types of consciousnesses. All thought consciousnesses necessarily take as their appearing object a meaning generality. A meaning generality is a permanent phenomenon in that it does not disintegrate moment by moment as do impermanent phenomena and it is a negative phenomenon, an image which is a mere elimination of all that is not the object. Thus, for example, the meaning generality of pot that appears to a thought consciousness apprehending pot is not an externally existent pot with all its own uncommon features, but just a general image 'pot' which is described negatively as being an appearance of the opposite of that which is not pot. The relative impoverishment of such an image in comparison to the richness of the appearance of the object involved in direct perception is the reason why direct perception is so much more highly valued than thought. However, in order to understand things which we are now unable to perceive directly, we must

rely on thought, for it provides the means to train the mind so that direct perception can eventually be developed. Thus, in this system although thought is finally transcended by direct perception, its importance as the means to that goal is recognized and valued.

It is a common Western misunderstanding of Buddhism that because external objects cannot appear directly to thought but must be realized by means of an image, thought has absolutely no relationship to objects. This fails to take into account the two types of objects of thought consciousnesses; although that which appears to thought – for example, an appearance of the elimination of all that is not pot – is indeed only an image and not the actual object, the determined object of that consciousness, that which is understood through the image, is just that object itself. What it causes one to understand is just pot and not anything else such as house. The negative nature of the image eliminates everything else and leaves as that to be realized just pot. Thus, thought is a reliable way to ascertain objects.

The last two of the threefold division of awareness and knowledge are made from the viewpoint of the objects apprehended by non-conceptual consciousnesses. The first is a non-conceptual non-mistaken knower which takes as its apprehended object a specifically characterized phenomenon (*svalakṣhaṇa, rang mtshan*). It is synonymous with direct perceiver. Here, the emphasis is on the object appearing to such a consciousness – a specifically characterized phenomenon, synonymous in the Sautrāntika system with an impermanent phenomenon. Any impermanent phenomenon is suitable to be the appearing object of a direct perceiver, but no permanent phenomenon can, as the permanent appear only to thought.

The use of the term 'specifically characterized phenomenon' emphasizes that, unlike permanent phenomena which are mere imputations by thought, impermanent things have their own uncommon, or specific, characteristics which can appear to a direct perceiver. For example, whereas the image of pot that appears to thought is general in that it serves to represent all

pots at different times in different places, a specifically characterized pot is unique – of a certain size, shape, colour, in a certain place, at a certain time. Furthermore, all the uncommon characteristics of a pot appear to the direct perceiver that apprehends it. In the Sautrāntika system all the qualities that are established, abide, and cease with a thing – such as its shape, colour, impermanence, nature of being a product, and so forth – appear to any direct perceiver apprehending that object. An ordinary direct perceiver is unable to *notice* all of these, but a yogic direct perceiver can see and ascertain them.

Because the clarity of perception of the object is so much greater for direct perceivers than for conceptual consciousnesses the former are said to have clear appearance (*spuṭābha, gsal snang*) of their object whereas the latter do not. The third of the threefold division, non-conceptual mistaken consciousnesses, are also said to have clear appearance because they perceive their objects without relying on an image. However, in their case what appears is a non-existent rather than a specifically characterized phenomenon. For example, one might clearly see blue snow mountains, but blue snow mountains do not exist. Such a consciousness is mistaken in that a clearly appearing non-existent is seen as if it did exist.

III. TWOFOLD DIVISIONS

There are many twofold divisions of awareness and knowledge, of which six are discussed in the text translated here, each approaching the subject of consciousness from a slightly different angle.

Prime cognizers and non-prime consciousnesses

A prime cognizer (*pramāṇa, tshad ma*) is defined as a knower which is new and incontrovertible.[25] From within the sevenfold division of awarenesses and knowers, the first three – direct perceivers, inferential cognizers, and subsequent cognizers – are necessarily incontrovertible. However, only some direct perceivers and inferential cognizers and no subsequent cognizers fulfil the second qualification of a prime cognizer –

newness. Only the first moment of a continuum of consciousness apprehending an object is considered new.

Thus, the first moment of a direct perceiver is a direct prime cognizer (*pratyakṣha-pramāṇa, mngon sum tshad ma*), for it is both new and incontrovertible; later moments within the same continuum – i.e., knowing the same object and without interruption by a consciousness knowing another object – are still direct perceivers but, no longer prime cognizers, are now subsequent cognizers. Similarly the first moment of an inferential cognizer is an inferential prime cognizer (*anumāna-pramāṇa, rjes dpag tshad ma*) whereas later moments within the same continuum of consciousness are inferential subsequent cognizers.[26] Thus from within the sevenfold division of awareness and knowledge, only the first moments of direct perceivers and inferential cognizers are prime cognizers; all later moments of these two as well as all instances of the other five types of consciousnesses – subsequent cognizers, correctly assuming consciousnesses, awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained, doubting consciousnesses and wrong consciousnesses – are non-prime consciousnesses (*apramāṇa-jñāna, tshad min gyi shes pa*).

The division into prime and non-prime consciousnesses is an exhaustive one for any specific consciousness is one or the other.[27] Limiting the types of prime cognition to two in this way is specifically done to set the Buddhist view off from that of various non-Buddhist systems, which accept many other sources of prime, or valid, cognition such as the Vedas, example, and so forth. The Buddhist assertion is that two types of prime cognizers are both sufficient and exhaustive.

Conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses

This again is an exhaustive division of awarenesses and knowers, the emphasis here being on the manner in which a consciousness gets at its object – either directly or by means of an image. No statement is made as to relative correctness or newness, for included within each are both right and wrong as well as prime and non-prime consciousnesses.

Mistaken and non-mistaken consciousnesses

This division is made in terms of the correctness or incorrectness of consciousnesses with respect to what appears to them – their appearing or apprehended object – as opposed to their object of engagement. Thus, non-mistaken consciousness is a category which includes only correct non-conceptual consciousnesses – i.e., direct perceivers. All conceptual consciousnesses are included within mistaken consciousnesses inasmuch as the image of the object they are comprehending appears to them to be the actual object. A wrong conceptual consciousness such as one conceiving sound to be permanent and a right one conceiving the opposite are both mistaken with respect to their appearing objects, and thus both are classed as mistaken consciousnesses.

The appearing object and object of engagement of *non-conceptual* wrong consciousnesses are the same thing; thus, once such a consciousness is mistaken with respect to its object of engagement, it is also necessarily mistaken with respect to its appearing object whereby it is both a wrong and a mistaken consciousness.

Mental and sense consciousnesses

Again an exhaustive division, these consciousnesses are described in terms of whether the knower of an object is one of the five sense consciousnesses (*indriya-jñāna, dbang shes*) – eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body – or is a mental consciousness (*mano-vijñāna, yid kyi rnam shes*). The difference is one of basis (*āshraya, rten*). Sense consciousnesses are produced in dependence upon an uncommon empowering condition which is a physical sense power – eye, ear, nose, tongue, or body sense power – which is clear matter located within the sense organ – eye, ear, nose, tongue, and throughout the body; mental consciousnesses are produced in dependence on a mental sense power – a former moment of consciousness.

Sense consciousnesses are necessarily non-conceptual; mental consciousnesses can be either conceptual or non-conceptual.

Mental, self-knowing, and yogic direct perceivers are all non-conceptual mental consciousnesses. Inference, correct assumption, doubt, and so forth are conceptual mental consciousnesses. A conceptual consciousness is necessarily a mental and not a sense consciousness.

Eliminative and collective engagers

This division, again exhaustive, resembles the division into conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses and like it is a way of describing how a consciousness gets at its object. All conceptual consciousnesses are eliminative engagers (**apoha-pravṛtti, sel 'jug*); all non-conceptual ones are collective engagers (**vidhi-pravṛtti, sgrub 'jug*). Whereas in the conceptual/non-conceptual division the emphasis is on what the consciousness sees, i.e., whether the actual object or an image of the object appears to it, here the emphasis is on the way in which that consciousness apprehends its object.

A direct perceiver is a collective engager in the sense that all the factors of its object – all those things that are established with the object, abide with it, and disintegrate when it does – such as the individual particles of the object, its impermanence, momentariness, and so forth, appear to that consciousness.[28] It engages its object in a positive manner, without eliminating anything. However, the mere appearance of all these to the consciousness does not mean that they are necessarily ascertained; most are not noticed due to the interference of thought and predispositions. For example, when an ordinary person sees a pot, its momentary impermanence is not noticed due to the force of thick predispositions for apprehending permanence and due to seeing the conjunction of former and later moments of similar type. However, with training, one can come eventually to notice all these factors that appear to direct perception.

Thought on the other hand engages its object in an eliminative manner. Not apprehending all the uncommon features of an object, thought apprehends a general image which is a mere elimination; thus, a thought apprehending pot sees an

image which is the opposite of that which is non-pot. Thought lacks precision – golden pot, copper pot, silver pot and so forth are all seen as 'pot', their shared quality of 'potness' taking precedence over their many dissimilar features. Also thought mixes time, as, for example, when one sees someone and thinks, 'This is the person I saw yesterday.' Because thought operates in a negative, or eliminative, manner it can never come to perceive all the uncommon features of its object as can direct perception, and this is why this system values direct perception so much more than thought. However, this does not make thought worthless or something to be immediately and utterly abandoned, for thought is the means by which direct perception can be trained to ascertain all those things which now appear to it but are not noticed. Left just as it is, direct perception would not naturally improve; however, careful use of thought such as training in the processes of reasoning, can gradually bring direct perception to its full potential in Buddhahood. At such a time thought is no longer necessary, but prior to that point there is no way of progressing without the use of thought.

Minds and mental factors

This twofold division is a way of describing the various functions of consciousness. Mind (*chitta, sems*) here is synonymous with main mind (*gtso sems*) and is that which knows the mere entity of the object being apprehended. Minds are accompanied by mental factors which apprehend various features of that object, affecting the manner in which the mind apprehends its object and so forth. Minds and mental factors have, with respect to any particular object, five similarities (*samprayukta, mtshungs par ldan pa*):

1 They are produced in dependence on the same basis (*āshraya, rten*), and thus if the eye sense power is the uncommon empowering condition of the main mind it is also that of the accompanying mental factors
2 they observe the same object (*ālambana, dmigs pa*)

3 they are generated in the same aspect (*ākāra, rnam pa*), in that if the eye consciousness is generated in the aspect of blue, the accompanying mental factors are also generated in the aspect of blue
4 they occur at the same time (*kālā, dus*), in that when one is produced the other is also produced
5 they are the same substantial entity (*dravya, rdzas*), in that the production, abiding, and cessation of the two occur simultaneously

Main minds are, for example, the five sense perceivers and the mental perceivers. Mental factors are commonly described in a list of fifty-one which are divided into six categories, although this list is not all-inclusive. The six categories are:

1 omnipresent (*sarvatraga, kun 'gro*)
2 determining (**viṣhayapratiniyama, yul nges*)
3 virtuous (*kushala, dge ba*)
4 root afflictions (*mūlaklesha, rtsa nyon*)
5 secondary afflictions (*upaklesha, nye nyon*)
6 changeable (*anyathābhāva, gzhan 'gyur*)

So-called because they accompany every main mind, the five omnipresent factors are:

1 feeling (*vedanā, tshor ba*) – that factor which experiences an object as pleasurable, painful, or neutral
2 discrimination (*samjñā, 'du shes*) which apprehends the uncommon signs of the object
3 intention (*chetanā, sems pa*) which directs the mind to the object
4 mental engagement (*manasi-kāra, yid la byed pa*) which directs the mind to the particular object of observation
5 contact (*sparsha, reg pa*) which serves as the basis for the generation of the feelings of pleasure, pain, or neutrality

The five determining factors are:

1 aspiration (*chhanda, 'dun pa*)
2 belief (*adhimokṣha, mos pa*)

3 mindfulness (*smṛti, dran pa*)
4 stabilization (*samādhi, ting nge 'dzin*)
5 wisdom (*prajñā, shes rab*)

If one of these is present all five are present; however these do not accompany all minds; they accompany all virtuous minds and no others.

The remaining groups of mental factors do not function as a simultaneous unit in the way that the first two do. There are eleven virtuous mental factors:

1 faith (*shraddhā, dad pa*)
2 shame (*hrī, ngo tsha shes pa*)
3 embarrassment (*apatrāpya, khrel yod pa*)
4 non-attachment (*alobha, ma chags pa*)
5 non-hatred (*adveṣha, zhe sdang med pa*)
6 non-ignorance (*amoha, gti mug med pa*)
7 effort (*vīrya, brtson 'grus*)
8 pliancy (*prasrabdhi, shin tu sbyangs pa*)
9 conscientiousness (*apramāda, bag yod pa*)
10 equanimity (*upekṣhā, btang snyoms*)
11 non-harmfulness (*avihiṃsā, rnam par mi 'tshe ba*)

These can never occur at the same time as any of the afflictions – root or secondary. Although it is possible for all eleven to occur simultaneously, it is not the case that they always do; this Sautrāntika assertion differs from the system of Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Knowledge* (*Adhidharmakosha*) which states that if one is present all are necessarily so.

There are six root afflictions:

1 desire (*rāga, 'dod chags*)
2 anger (*pratigha, khong khro*)
3 pride (*māna, nga rgyal*)
4 ignorance (*avidyā, ma rig pa*)
5 doubt (*vichikitsā, the tshom*)
6 afflicted view (*dṛṣhṭi, lta ba nyon mongs can*)

as well as twenty secondary afflictions:

1 belligerence (*krodha, khro ba*)
2 resentment (*upanāha, 'khon 'dzin*)
3 concealment (*mrakṣha, 'chab pa*)
4 spite (*pradāsa, 'tshig pa*)
5 jealousy (*īrṣhyā, phrag dog*)
6 miserliness (*mātsarya, ser sna*
7 deceit (*māyā, sgyu*)
8 dissimulation (*shāṭhya, g.yo*)
9 haughtiness (*mada, rgyags pa*)
10 harmfulness (*vihiṃsā, rnam pa 'tshe ba*)
11 non-shame (*āhrīkya, ngo tsha med pa*)
12 non-embarrassment (*anapatrāpya, khrel med pa*)
13 lethargy (*styāna, rmugs pa*)
14 excitement (*auddhatya, rgod pa*)
15 non-faith (*āshraddhya, ma dad pa*)
16 laziness (*kausīdya, le lo*)
17 non-conscientiousness (*pramāda, bag med pa*)
18 forgetfulness (*muṣhitasmṛtitā, brjed nges pa*)
19 non-introspection (*asaṃprajanya, shes bzhin ma yin pa*)
20 distraction (*vikṣhepa, rnam par g.yeng ba*)

It is not possible for all the root afflictions to be present simultaneously; for example, if desire is present, hatred will not be, and vice versa; similarly for the secondary afflictions, those of the type of desire, such as jealousy, will not be present at the same time as those of the type of hatred, such as belligerence or resentment. However, secondary afflictions and root afflictions of the same type such as hatred and belligerence can be present simultaneously although they do not have to be.

The four changeable factors are:

1 sleep (*middha, gnyid*)
2 contrition (*kaukritya, 'gyod pa*)
3 investigation (*vitarka, rtog pa*)
4 analysis (*vichāra, dpyod pa*)

They are changeable in the sense that they can become either virtuous or non-virtuous depending on the motivation which impels them.

Through study of 'Awareness and Knowledge' one comes to know what the different types of minds are, and moreover, which sorts of minds it is helpful to develop and which should be abandoned. One can understand what the state of one's mind is at present as well as into what it can eventually be transformed. With this as a basis, it is then far more meaningful both to engage in further study of the stages involved in the process of transformation and actually to enter into it.

UNDERSTANDING THE MIND

LORIG
AN EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE AND FUNCTIONS OF THE MIND

Geshe Kelsang Gyatso

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person. From an understanding of the conventional nature of the person we will see that the function of a person is to perform actions, or karma, and to experience their results. Thus, if we accumulate positive karma we will definitely experience beneficial results, and if we accumulate negative karma we will definitely experience unpleasant results. In most cases, the results of karma are experienced in future lives. Although the person of our future life who will experience the results of actions we have committed in this life will not be the person of this life, nevertheless it will be 'us' who experiences those effects. If we deny this, we deny a fundamental principle of Dharma, that the results of an action cannot ripen on another person. Therefore, death and rebirth alone do not protect us from the consequences of our actions. By thinking deeply about this we will make a firm decision to avoid negative actions and perform only positive actions, and we will put this decision into practice in our lives.

By understanding that the person is merely imputed in dependence upon the aggregates of body and mind and is not to be found anywhere within them, we will come to understand the ultimate nature of the person – emptiness. By familiarizing ourself in meditation with the emptiness of persons, and in particular with the emptiness of our own self, gradually we will abandon self-grasping, which is the root of all suffering, and eventually we will attain complete freedom from the sufferings of samsara.

MINDS

DEFINITION OF MIND

The definition of mind is that which is clarity and cognizes.

In this definition, 'clarity' refers to the nature of mind, and 'cognizes' to the function of mind. Mind is clarity because it always lacks form and because it possesses the actual power to perceive objects. Mind cognizes because its function is to know or perceive objects. In *Ornament of the Seven*

Sets, Khädrubje says that thought, awareness, mind, and cognizer are synonyms.

It might be felt that since persons are not form but do cognize objects, they too fit this definition. However, this is not the case, because although persons themselves are not form but non-associated compounded phenomena, they nevertheless possess form because they possess physical bodies. Even persons in the formless realm lack form only temporarily. In previous lives they possessed physical bodies and in future lives they will acquire them again. Mind, on the other hand, always lacks form. Moreover, although persons cognize objects, they do so only through the power of mind. Cognizing objects is the principal function of mind, not of persons.

There are other phenomena, such as uncompounded space and emptiness, that always lack form, but these are not clarity because they do not have the power to perceive objects. If something is clarity it necessarily possesses the power to perceive objects.

Although mind lacks form, it can nevertheless be related to form. Thus, our mind is related to our body and is located at different places throughout the body. We can understand this by considering the following. From the point of view of how it is generated, there are two types of mind: sense awareness and mental awareness. There are five types of sense awareness: eye awareness, ear awareness, nose awareness, tongue awareness, and body awareness. These are generated directly in dependence upon their particular sense powers, which are located within the respective physical sense organs. The eye sense power is located within the eye organ, the ear sense power within the ear organ, and so on. The body sense power is located throughout the body, apart from certain parts such as the hair and the nails. When a sense power meets an appropriate object, a sense awareness is generated. Thus, when an eye sense power, for example, meets a visual form, an eye awareness apprehending that form is generated. Therefore, we can say that the various sense awarenesses are related

to the body and are located at various places throughout the body.

When we die, the mind usually leaves the body gradually rather than immediately. For some people it begins to withdraw from the feet and finally leaves through the crown of the head, or through any of the upper doors such as the mouth or the eyes, whereas for others it withdraws first from the top of the body and finally leaves through the lower doors. If we watch a dying person, we can observe this process. For example, if the mind absorbs upwards, the dying person first loses all awareness in the feet because the body sense power has ceased to exist there, and then this process continues with the dying person gradually losing awareness from the lower parts of the body upwards. By observing this process we can see how sense awareness is related to, but different from, the physical body.

Mental awareness has three levels: gross, subtle, and very subtle. All our normal waking minds are gross minds. Subtle and very subtle minds manifest only during sleep, during death and, for completion stage practitioners, during meditative equipoise. According to Tantra, all minds, including mental awarenesses, are mounted upon inner winds, which are subtle forms. Since these winds have specific locations within the physical body, the minds that are mounted upon them can also be said to have the same locations. In this way, we can identify specific locations for the different types of mental awareness. Thus discursive thoughts, dull minds, and confused minds are said to exist mainly in the region of the crown chakra; love, compassion, hatred, and self-grasping in the region of the heart chakra; and desirous attachment in the region of the navel chakra. With practice, we can learn to identify the movement of these various winds in the different parts of our body as their associated minds manifest.

Subtle minds manifest when the inner winds gather and dissolve within the central channel. A detailed explanation of how this occurs is given in *Clear Light of Bliss*. The very

subtle mind and its mounted wind are located within the tiny vacuole inside the central channel at the centre of the heart chakra. This mind is known as the 'root mind' because all other minds arise from it and dissolve back into it. It is also known as the 'continually abiding mind' because it is the only mind that survives from one life to the next. It is this very subtle mind that finally leaves the body at death and goes to the next life. By focusing on an object such as a seed-letter within the vacuole inside the central channel at the heart chakra, completion stage practitioners are able to bring all the winds into the central channel at this point and thereby cause the very subtle mind to manifest there. This is why the very subtle mind is said to exist at the heart chakra.

To summarize, there are many different types of mind – sense awarenesses, mental awarenesses, gross minds, subtle minds, and very subtle minds – but they are all the nature of clarity and they all function to cognize; and even though none of these minds is form they can all be related to form and can be identified as having specific locations within the body.

DIVISIONS OF MIND

There is a twofold division of mind into conceptual minds and non-conceptual minds; a twofold division into sense awarenesses and mental awarenesses; a sevenfold division into direct perceivers, inferential cognizers, re-cognizers, correct beliefs, non-ascertaining perceivers, doubts, and wrong awarenesses; a twofold division into valid cognizers and non-valid cognizers; and finally another twofold division into primary minds and mental factors. These will be discussed in detail below – the first four divisions here in Part One and the fifth division in Part Two.

GENERATION OF MIND

To understand how mind is generated we first need to understand that mind and body are separate entities that

have separate continuums. Practitioners who have mastered the practice of transference of consciousness know this from their own experience because they are able to eject their mind from their body and go wherever they wish, even entering into different bodies. Moreover, when we fall asleep and dream, our mind leaves our physical body and wanders through dream worlds experiencing dream enjoyments and dream sufferings while our physical body remains in the same place. At present, we cannot witness this separation, but accomplished meditators who can retain mindfulness throughout the sleep and dream state are aware of their mind leaving their gross physical body, travelling through different dream worlds, and later, when the dream is finished, re-entering the physical body. Until we are able to experience this separation of mind and body directly, we need to rely upon the following reasoning to develop conviction that mind and body are separate entities.

One way to realize that mind is non-physical is to consider the differences between what obstructs physical objects and what obstructs mind. Physical objects are obstructed by other physical objects. Thus, a chair cannot exist where there is a table. Even subtle matter such as light or radio waves can be obstructed by physical obstacles. Mind however cannot be obstructed by physical objects. The presence of a wall, for example, does not prevent the mind from thinking about what is on the other side of the wall. Similarly, even though there is a whole planet between Australia and England, nevertheless we can think about Australia from England.

Physical objects take time to travel distances, and the greater the distance the more time is needed, but the mind can think of distant objects immediately. For example, the mind can think of the sun as quickly as it can think of this book. Thus, even though our body remains still, our mind can move immediately to an object, no matter how distant and no matter what physical obstacles might be in the way. Mind is not even obstructed by time. Simply by thinking

of an event that occurred in our childhood our mind goes to the past, and if we had clairvoyance we would even be able to see that event directly. Physical phenomena cannot establish a connection with the past in this way.

Although mind is not obstructed by physical phenomena, it does have its own obstructions – delusions and their imprints. However these are completely different from the things that obstruct matter.

Another characteristic of matter is that it can be reproduced and shown to others. Visual forms can be photographed and sound can be recorded, but mind cannot be reproduced or recorded. We cannot photograph attachment or bodhichitta. Even if we extracted chemicals from one person's brain and injected them into another person's brain, we would not be able to transfer that person's thoughts, memories, or knowledge to the other.

If mind and body were one entity, then whatever developed or increased the body would also develop and increase the mind, and vice versa; and whatever damaged or destroyed the one would also damage or destroy the other. However, this is clearly not the case. Eating large amounts of food, for example, increases the size of the body but it does not necessarily enhance the mind. On the other hand, physical illness harms the body but does not necessarily harm the mind. Indeed illness may even lead to an increase in mental good qualities such as patience, renunciation, and compassion. Moreover, a person who has greatly improved his or her mind through Dharma study and practice does not necessarily show any physical improvement, and a person whose moral conduct and views have degenerated does not necessarily deteriorate physically. Of course there is often a relationship between the quality of our mental state and our physical condition, but this merely indicates that there is a relationship between the body and mind, not that the body and mind are the same entity.

Through contemplating how mind completely lacks form and how it is a separate continuum from the body, we will

understand clearly that forms such as the brain or the central nervous system cannot be mind. We will also understand that mind cannot be produced from physical causes. Mind has two types of cause: substantial and contributory causes. The substantial cause of any mind is its own previous continuum. Thus the substantial cause of the first moment of the mind of this life is the last moment of the mind of the previous life, and the substantial cause of the first moment of the mind of the waking state is the last moment of the mind of the sleep state. The contributory causes of a mind assist the substantial cause in generating that mind. All minds are included within sense awareness and mental awareness. A contributory cause of a sense awareness is its particular sense power, and a contributory cause of mental awareness is the mental power. Eye awareness, for example, is generated from its previous continuum with the assistance of the eye sense power. The generation of the remaining four sense awarenesses can be understood in the same way. Mental awareness is generated from its previous continuum with the assistance of the mental power.

APPLICATION OF OUR UNDERSTANDING OF MIND TO DHARMA PRACTICE

Through understanding the nature, function, and causes of mind mentioned above we will also understand that when we die our mind will leave our present body and go to the next life, and in this way we will develop a clear understanding of the existence of future lives. When this knowledge arises clearly within our mind we should make a strong decision thinking 'I must protect myself from lower rebirth and create the causes of happiness in my next life by sincerely practising Dharma now.' We should meditate on this determination and put it into practice sincerely day and night.

Conceptual and Non-conceptual Minds

From the point of view of how they engage their objects, minds can be divided into two types: conceptual minds and non-conceptual minds. Whereas non-conceptual minds engage their objects directly, conceptual minds engage their objects through the medium of a generic image. Until we become a Buddha we need both conceptual and non-conceptual minds. Even the highest Bodhisattvas, for example, realize the two truths simultaneously only with their conceptual minds.

Some people believe that all conceptual thoughts are bad and should be abandoned. This mistaken view was taught by the twelfth-century Chinese monk Hashang, who misunderstood what Buddha taught in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* and believed that the way to meditate on emptiness was simply to empty the mind of all conceptual thoughts. This view still has many adherents today, but if we hold this view we will have no opportunity to progress on the spiritual paths. For one thing, if we prevent conceptual minds from arising we will not be able to remember anything, and as a result all our spiritual development will cease. Moreover, conceptual realizations are the main causes of the realizations of yogic direct perceivers, and without these the attainment of liberation is impossible.

CONCEPTUAL MIND

DEFINITION OF CONCEPTUAL MIND

The definition of conceptual mind is a thought that apprehends its object through a generic image.

Although other scholars have different explanations, this definition is explained by Khädrubje in *Ornament of the Seven Sets*. When we think of or remember an object, say an elephant, there appears to our conceptual mind an object that is the opposite of non-elephant. This appearance is the generic image of elephant. Even though there is no actual elephant in front of us, nevertheless there is a generic image of elephant appearing to our mind. Thus our conceptual mind apprehends elephant through the generic image of elephant. We can apply this to all other phenomena.

There are five types of object: appearing object, observed object, engaged object, apprehended object, and conceived object. When we see a table with our eye awareness, for example, that table is the appearing object of our eye awareness because it appears directly to our eye awareness. The table is also the observed object, engaged object, and apprehended object of our eye awareness because at that time our eye awareness is focused on the table, understands the table, and apprehends the table. However, the table is not a conceived object of our eye awareness because only conceptual minds have conceived objects. For us, non-conceptual minds cannot conceive an object.

When our eye awareness sees a table we may develop the thought 'This is a table.' This thought is a conceptual mind that apprehends the table through a generic image of the table. For this conceptual mind, the table is the observed object, the engaged object, the apprehended object, and the conceived object. However, it is not the appearing object of this mind because the appearing object of this conceptual mind is a generic image of the table, not the table itself.

The definition of generic image is the appearing object of a conceptual mind. Although other texts give a different explanation, this definition is Khädrubje's intention. A generic image of an object is like a reflection of that object. When we look in a mirror we see directly the reflection of our face, and through this we know what our actual face looks like. In a similar way, conceptual minds know their

object through the appearance of a generic image of that object, not by seeing the object directly. If we speak precisely, we must say that table appears to a conceptual mind apprehending table because the general aspect of table appears to that mind. The general aspect of table and the generic image of table are synonyms. However, table is not the appearing object of a conceptual mind apprehending table. This can be applied to all other objects.

As with other types of mind, the nature of conceptual mind is clarity that completely lacks form and possesses the power to perceive objects. However, its function is different from that of other types of mind. The principal function of conceptual mind is to impute names by thinking 'This is a table', 'This is a chair', 'I am Peter', 'He is John', and so on. All phenomena are merely imputed by conceptual mind in this way.

Another function of conceptual mind is to find the object of meditation. Whenever we meditate we first need to find the object on which we are going to meditate. This means trying to perceive clearly the generic image of the object of meditation, and this is achieved by conceptual mind. Moreover, the root of meditation is to maintain mindfulness, which means to hold the object without forgetting it, and for us this is also a function of conceptual thought because our non-conceptual mind cannot do this.

When we first realize the ultimate nature of phenomena, emptiness, we do so with our conceptual mind. If we then meditate repeatedly on this conceptual realization, eventually we will realize emptiness directly. At that time, our conceptual realization will transform into a yogic direct perceiver realizing emptiness, which is the direct antidote to the delusions. It is through this yogic direct perceiver that we will be released from the ocean of samsaric sufferings.

DIVISIONS OF CONCEPTUAL MIND

There are three types of conceptual mind:

1 Conceptual minds that perceive the generic image of an object mainly through the force of listening or reading
2 Conceptual minds that perceive the generic image of an object mainly through the force of contemplating the meaning of that object
3 Conceptual minds that perceive the generic image of an object mainly through the force of previous imprints

An example of the first type is a thought perceiving an appearance of the opposite of non-yeti that develops mainly through the force of listening to someone else explaining about yetis. Other examples can be understood from this. An example of the second type is a thought perceiving an appearance of the opposite of non-yeti that develops mainly through the force of our own contemplation of yetis after listening to an explanation about them. Again, other examples can be understood from this. Examples of the third type are all natural conceptual thoughts, such as innate self-grasping and other innate delusions.

There is also a twofold division of conceptual mind:

1 Correct conceptual minds
2 Wrong conceptual minds

The first includes all conceptual minds whose conceived objects exist, such as conceptual minds conceiving pen, paper, and so forth; and the second includes all conceptual minds whose conceived objects do not exist, such as a conceptual mind conceiving a reflection of a face to be an actual face, a mind of self-grasping, or a conceptual mind conceiving karma, reincarnation, or enlightened beings to be non-existent.

NON-CONCEPTUAL MIND

DEFINITION OF NON-CONCEPTUAL MIND

The definition of non-conceptual mind is a cognizer to which its object appears clearly without being mixed with a generic image.

DIVISIONS OF NON-CONCEPTUAL MIND

There are two types of non-conceptual mind:

1 Sense awarenesses
2 Non-conceptual mental awarenesses

All sense awarenesses are non-conceptual minds, but mental awarenesses can be either conceptual or non-conceptual. Conceptual mental awareness and conceptual mind are synonymous.

There are three types of non-conceptual mental awareness:

1 Non-conceptual mental direct perceivers
2 Yogic direct perceivers
3 Non-conceptual mental awarenesses that are neither of these two

An example of the first is a mental direct perceiver to which a form appears clearly without being mixed with a generic image, such as eye clairvoyance; an example of the second is any yogic direct perceiver, such as a yogic direct perceiver realizing subtle impermanence; and an example of the third is a dream eye awareness that apprehends a dream mountain as an actual mountain. This is not an actual eye awareness because eye awareness does not exist during sleep. As Chandrakirti says in *Guide to the Middle Way*:

> Because eye awareness is impossible in sleep, it does not exist;
> Only mental awareness exists.

This means that since there can be no sense awareness, such as eye awareness, during sleep, dream objects that are objects of sense awareness do not exist. Only mental awareness exists during sleep. Therefore, dream eye awareness, ear awareness, nose awareness, tongue awareness, and body awareness are mental awarenesses; and because their objects appear clearly to them, without being mixed with a generic image, they are non-conceptual mental awarenesses.

It should be noted at this point that if an object appears clearly to a mind, that mind is not necessarily non-conceptual. For example, some conceptual minds that are clear and strong concentrations perceive their object clearly but, because they are conceptual minds, their object is perceived through the medium of a generic image of that object.

There is another twofold division of non-conceptual mind:

1 Correct non-conceptual minds
2 Wrong non-conceptual minds

A correct non-conceptual mind is a non-conceptual mind whose apprehended object exists. All sense direct perceivers are correct non-conceptual minds. Also, in general, dream eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body awarenesses are correct non-conceptual minds because they are non-conceptual minds and their apprehended objects exist. For non-conceptual minds, apprehended object and appearing object are synonyms. A dream mountain that appears to a dream eye awareness, therefore, exists. It is a form that is a phenomena source, and is like a reflection of a mountain. Dream things cannot be objects of sense awareness but only of mental awareness; therefore they are phenomena sources.

Non-conceptual minds such as an eye awareness apprehending a toy snake as a real snake, or an ear awareness apprehending an echo as the actual sound of speech, are wrong non-conceptual minds because they are non-conceptual minds and their apprehended objects do not exist.

MENTAL AWARENESS

DEFINITION OF MENTAL AWARENESS

The definition of mental awareness is an awareness that is developed in dependence upon its uncommon dominant condition, a mental power.

The definition of mental power is a mentality that principally functions directly to produce the uncommon aspect of a mental awareness. For example, after the last moment of an eye consciousness apprehending blue, we usually develop a mental direct perceiver directly apprehending blue. This is a mental awareness. Its dominant condition, a mental power, is the last moment of the eye consciousness apprehending blue. This eye consciousness is a mentality because it is a primary mind. It directly produces the uncommon aspect of a mental direct perceiver directly apprehending blue, which is its apprehending blue and not non-blue. After the last moment of the mental direct perceiver directly apprehending blue we usually develop a conceptual awareness thinking 'This is blue'. The dominant condition of this conceptual mental awareness is the last moment of the mental direct perceiver directly apprehending blue. All other mental awarenesses can be understood in the same way.

DIVISIONS OF MENTAL AWARENESS

There are two types of mental awareness:

1 Conceptual mental awarenesses
2 Non-conceptual mental awarenesses

Conceptual mental awareness and conceptual mind are synonymous. Examples of non-conceptual mental awareness are dream sense awarenesses apprehending dream objects and a wisdom directly realizing emptiness. According to the Sautrantikas, all mental direct perceivers, self-cognizers, and yogic direct perceivers are non-conceptual mental awarenesses.

Direct Perceivers

As mentioned before, mind can be divided into seven:

1 Direct perceivers
2 Inferential cognizers
3 Re-cognizers
4 Correct beliefs
5 Non-ascertaining perceivers
6 Doubts
7 Wrong awarenesses

All minds are included in this sevenfold division. The main purpose of studying it is to distinguish valid minds from non-valid minds, and to learn the stages by which we attain Dharma realizations.

DIRECT PERCEIVERS

DEFINITION OF DIRECT PERCEIVER

The definition of direct perceiver is a cognizer that apprehends its manifest object.

Examples are non-conceptual minds that apprehend cars, houses, trees, and so on, and conceptual minds that apprehend such objects without depending upon reasons. These are all direct perceivers because they apprehend their object in a manifest way, without relying upon reasons.

The first moment of a valid conceptual mind that realizes emptiness is not a direct perceiver but an inferential cognizer because it realizes its object through the power of reasons, not in a manifest way. However, the second and

subsequent moments of a valid conceptual mind realizing emptiness are direct perceivers because they realize their object in a manifest way, without depending upon reasons. Even so, these minds do not realize emptiness directly because they are conceptual minds.

To realize emptiness in a manifest way is to realize it through experience, without depending upon reasons. Thus, for the second and subsequent moments of a valid conceptual mind realizing emptiness, emptiness is a manifest object; but for the first moment of a valid conceptual mind realizing emptiness, emptiness is a hidden object. In the term 'direct perceiver', 'direct' means 'manifest object', and so any mind that apprehends a manifest object is a direct perceiver. All re-cognizers are also direct perceivers.

The definitions of direct perceiver presented in the Lorig text by Purburchok and in some other texts are given according to the Sautrantika tradition, which is quite different from the Madhyamika-Prasangika tradition.

DIVISIONS OF DIRECT PERCEIVER

There are three types of direct perceiver:

1 Sense direct perceivers
2 Mental direct perceivers
3 Yogic direct perceivers

SENSE DIRECT PERCEIVERS

DEFINITION OF SENSE DIRECT PERCEIVER

The definition of sense direct perceiver is a direct perceiver that is generated in dependence upon its uncommon dominant condition, a sense power possessing form.

Examples of sense direct perceivers are an eye consciousness seeing blue, an ear consciousness hearing a sound, and so on. Although all sense awarenesses are non-conceptual minds, they are not necessarily sense direct perceivers. For

example, wrong sense awarenesses such as an eye awareness that under the influence of the drug dhatura sees the earth as yellow, or one that due to an eye disease sees snowy mountains as having a bluish colour, are not sense direct perceivers.

DIVISIONS OF SENSE DIRECT PERCEIVER

Because there are five types of sense object, there are five types of sense direct perceiver: eye sense direct perceivers, ear sense direct perceivers, and so on. These are distinguished by their uncommon dominant condition and their object. Eye sense direct perceivers for example are produced from an eye sense power as their uncommon dominant condition and have visual forms as their objects, ear sense direct perceivers are generated in dependence upon an ear sense power and have sounds as their objects, and so on. The remaining types of sense direct perceiver can be understood in the same way.

There is also a threefold division of sense direct perceiver:

1 Sense direct perceivers that are valid cognizers but not re-cognizers
2 Sense direct perceivers that are both valid cognizers and re-cognizers
3 Sense direct perceivers that are non-ascertaining perceivers

An example of the first type is the first moment of a sense awareness apprehending any of the five sense objects: forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects. Such minds are not re-cognizers because they realize their object through their own power. All Buddhas' sense and mental direct perceivers are valid cognizers that are not re-cognizers because Buddhas have no re-cognizers. Examples of the second type are the second and subsequent moments of a sense awareness apprehending any of the five sense objects. These are re-cognizers because they realize their object through the power of the first moment

of that awareness. The object of the first, second, and subsequent moments of such a sense direct perceiver is the same, but the way of realizing it is different. Examples of the third type, sense direct perceivers that are non-ascertaining perceivers, are the eye awareness of a newborn baby seeing its father's face, and an eye awareness seeing unfamiliar faces in a crowd.

GENERATION OF SENSE DIRECT PERCEIVERS

All phenomena are included within both the twelve sources and the eighteen elements. The twelve sources are the six object sources – visual form source, sound source, smell source, taste source, tactile object source, and phenomena source; and the six power sources – eye source, ear source, nose source, tongue source, body source, and mentality source. These twelve are called 'sources' because generally they are the sources of consciousness. The first six are objects that are sources of consciousness, and the second six are powers, or uncommon dominant conditions, that are sources of consciousness. Within the six object sources, phenomena source comprises objects that appear only to mental awareness.

The eighteen elements are the twelve sources plus their effects, the six consciousnesses: eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness, body consciousness, and mental consciousness. When a visual form source and an eye source meet, an eye consciousness develops; when a sound source and an ear source meet, an ear consciousness develops; when a phenomena source and a mentality source meet, mental consciousness develops, and so on.

An ear consciousness, for example, develops only when a sound and an ear sense power meet. If someone shoots a pistol in the distance, we do not hear the shot as soon as it is fired because it takes time for the sound to reach us. Thus we do not develop an ear consciousness apprehending that sound until the sound and the ear sense power have met.

Similarly, if we look at the moon, an eye consciousness apprehending the moon develops when light from the moon meets our eye sense power. For mental awareness to develop, it is not necessary for an object and the mental power to meet. Thus, we can think of the moon without the moon being present before us. Distance does not prevent an object from appearing clearly to a mental awareness, but to perceive distant things clearly with a sense awareness we need to use special devices such as telescopes, or to have clairvoyance.

Due to karma, sentient beings have different sense powers and can therefore perceive different objects. Thus, beings of the desire realm have contaminated sense powers with which they experience the five contaminated objects of desire: forms, sounds, and so on. We can enjoy these objects only because we have these sense powers. If we purify our sense powers we can attain certain types of clairvoyance, such as the clairvoyance of the fleshly eye, with which subtle and distant visual forms beyond the range of ordinary vision can be seen with the eyes.

To develop a sense direct perceiver, a non-defective sense power and a non-deceptive sense object must meet. An example of a defective sense power is the eye sense power of a person suffering from jaundice that causes that person to see things as yellow. An example of a deceptive object is a whirling incense stick that appears to be a circle of light. If both the object and the sense power are free from such faults, a sense direct perceiver will be generated when they meet.

APPLICATION OF SENSE DIRECT PERCEIVERS TO DHARMA PRACTICE

Whenever our eye sense direct perceivers see attractive, unattractive, or neutral forms, or our ear sense direct perceivers hear pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral remarks, and so on, we must prevent attachment, anger, and confusion from arising within our mind by not allowing inappropriate attention to develop with respect to these objects. This

is a great Dharma practice that we can practise during our daily activities. It is called 'restraining the sense doors'. It is very important to emphasize this practice if we want to be able to meditate without distractions.

MENTAL DIRECT PERCEIVERS

DEFINITION OF MENTAL DIRECT PERCEIVER

The definition of mental direct perceiver is a direct perceiver that is generated in dependence upon its uncommon dominant condition, a mental power.

DIVISIONS OF MENTAL DIRECT PERCEIVER

There are three types of mental direct perceiver:

1 Mental direct perceivers induced by sense direct perceivers
2 Mental direct perceivers induced by meditation
3 Mental direct perceivers that are induced neither by sense direct perceivers nor by meditation

There are five types of mental direct perceiver induced by sense direct perceivers: mental direct perceivers apprehending forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile objects. For example, after an eye consciousness apprehending blue has developed, we usually develop a mental direct perceiver that thinks 'This is blue'. This mental direct perceiver is a conceptual mind. Although it is induced by an eye awareness, its uncommon dominant condition is a mental power, therefore it is a mental awareness; and because it apprehends its manifest object, it is a direct perceiver.

Examples of mental direct perceivers induced by meditation are deep experiences of Lamrim, the stages of the path, gained through meditation. They are direct perceivers because they realize their objects through the power of experience of meditation and so realize their objects in a manifest way. Examples of mental direct perceivers that

are induced by neither sense direct perceivers nor meditation are conceptual minds that realize their objects simply by our remembering them.

GENERATION OF MENTAL DIRECT PERCEIVERS

Mental direct perceivers induced by sense direct perceivers are generated as follows. For example, an eye sense direct perceiver apprehending a form such as blue generates a conceptual mind apprehending blue that thinks 'This is blue'; an ear sense direct perceiver apprehending the sound of words generates a conceptual mind apprehending sound that understands the meaning of those words; a nose sense direct perceiver apprehending a smell generates a conceptual mind apprehending smell that thinks 'This is a pleasant smell', or 'This is a bad smell'; and so on. The same can be applied to tongue sense direct perceivers and body sense direct perceivers. All these conceptual minds are mental direct perceivers that are induced by sense direct perceivers.

We generate mental direct perceivers induced by meditation by training our mind in meditation and thereby gaining deep experience of the realizations of Sutra and Tantra. We generate the third type of mental direct perceiver by remembering, without relying upon reasons, an object that we previously understood. Such minds are re-cognizers that are mental direct perceivers not induced by either a sense direct perceiver or by meditation.

The explanation of the nature and generation of mental direct perceivers according to the Sautrantika tradition causes many people to develop confusion and leads to many disagreements. By contrast, the supreme tradition of the Madhyamika-Prasangikas is very clear and simple.

APPLICATION OF MENTAL DIRECT PERCEIVERS TO DHARMA PRACTICE

If we are to gain authentic Dharma realizations that have the power actually to remove suffering, we need to develop

mental direct perceivers induced by meditation. In *King of Concentration Sutra*, Buddha says:

> Just as we cannot quench our thirst by listening to the sound of water and watching it flow past, so we cannot overcome our suffering simply by listening to teachings on emptiness and understanding them intellectually, without meditating on them.

The main point of this quotation is that once we have developed some understanding of Dharma through sincere study, we then need to familiarize our mind with this understanding by meditating on it repeatedly. Only then will we be able to gain deep realizations that will enable us to pacify our suffering and overcome our problems.

YOGIC DIRECT PERCEIVERS

DEFINITION OF YOGIC DIRECT PERCEIVER

The definition of yogic direct perceiver is a direct perceiver that realizes a subtle object directly, in dependence upon its uncommon dominant condition, a concentration that is a union of tranquil abiding and superior seeing.

An example of a yogic direct perceiver is a direct realization of any of the sixteen characteristics of the four noble truths in the continuum of a being on the path of preparation, the path of seeing, the path of meditation, or the Path of No More Learning.

Subtle objects are the two truths, the sixteen characteristics of the four noble truths, and so on. Through training in tranquil abiding observing a subtle object, eventually we will realize that object directly, in dependence upon a concentration that is a union of tranquil abiding and superior seeing. When we attain such a direct perceiver observing a subtle object we become a special realized being, a Yogi or Yogini, and that realization is called a yogic direct perceiver.

A yogic direct perceiver is a very special wisdom. By depending upon yogic direct perceivers, we can eventually eradicate the two obstructions: the obstructions to liberation and the obstructions to omniscience. Without gaining this wisdom, however, it is not possible to attain permanent freedom from suffering. Once we attain a yogic direct perceiver, we will never again fall into unfortunate rebirths, and we will never again create throwing karma that impels us into rebirth in samsara.

DIVISIONS OF YOGIC DIRECT PERCEIVER

All yogic direct perceivers are included within two types:

1 Yogic direct perceivers in the continuum of Hinayanists
2 Yogic direct perceivers in the continuum of Mahayanists

There is also a fourfold division of yogic direct perceiver:

1 Yogic direct perceivers that are paths of preparation
2 Yogic direct perceivers that are paths of seeing
3 Yogic direct perceivers that are paths of meditation
4 Yogic direct perceivers that are Paths of No More Learning

There is also a twofold division:

1 Yogic direct perceivers that realize the conventional nature of phenomena
2 Yogic direct perceivers that realize the ultimate nature of phenomena

GENERATION OF YOGIC DIRECT PERCEIVERS

Although yogic direct perceivers are non-conceptual minds, the way they are generated is quite unlike the way other non-conceptual minds, such as sense awarenesses, are generated. For example, a yogic direct perceiver realizing the impermanence of the body is generated as follows.

First we listen to teachings on the impermanence of the body and develop a correct belief that the body is by nature momentary. Then through contemplating conclusive reasons that establish the momentariness of the body we develop an inferential cognizer realizing the subtle impermanence of the body. This is our first valid cognizer realizing the subtle impermanence of the body, and the first mental abiding.

By placing our mind single-pointedly on this subtle impermanence, we then gradually progress through the other mental abidings until we attain tranquil abiding. At this point we have a very vivid and powerful experience of subtle impermanence, but we have still not realized it directly. Our mind is still a conceptual mind that apprehends its object through a generic image. Before we can realize subtle impermanence directly, without a generic image, we first need to attain superior seeing observing subtle impermanence. Thus, we continue meditating on subtle impermanence with a concentration of tranquil abiding until we attain the special wisdom of superior seeing observing subtle impermanence. At this stage our mind is still conceptual and subtle impermanence still appears to our mind mixed with a generic image. If we continue to meditate on subtle impermanence with a union of the concentration of tranquil abiding and the wisdom of superior seeing, the generic image will gradually fade until it disappears altogether and subtle impermanence appears directly to our mind.

This mind directly realizing subtle impermanence that is generated in dependence upon the union of tranquil abiding and superior seeing is a yogic direct perceiver realizing subtle impermanence. All the previous concentrations from the second mental abiding up to just before attaining the yogic direct perceiver are re-cognizers that are mental direct perceivers induced by meditation. The way to generate yogic direct perceivers realizing the remaining fifteen characteristics of the four noble truths can be understood from this explanation.

APPLICATION OF YOGIC DIRECT PERCEIVERS TO DHARMA PRACTICE

Yogic direct perceivers are essential for our spiritual development because without them we cannot realize emptiness directly, and thereby attain liberation. However, since we cannot attain yogic direct perceivers until we become special, realized beings, we may wonder how we can apply them to our present Dharma practice. The way to do this is to meditate on facsimiles of yogic direct perceivers. We do this whenever we engage in correct conceptual meditation on the sixteen characteristics of the four noble truths with the motivation of attaining yogic direct perceivers. Even though to begin with we may attain only a very rough generic image of the object, if we do the meditation repeatedly with a strong motivation to attain a yogic direct perceiver, we will sow the seeds for the object to appear more and more clearly, and create the cause to attain an actual yogic direct perceiver in the future.

According to the Sautrantika and Chittamatra schools, there is a fourth type of direct perceiver – self-cognizing direct perceivers. They say that all minds have two parts: cognizing themselves and cognizing others. According to them, the first are self-cognizers, which do not depend upon an object, and the second are other-cognizers, which do depend upon an object. However, the Madhyamika-Prasangikas deny the existence of self-cognizers. They say that all subjective minds depend upon objects, and all objects depend upon subjective minds. Therefore there are no independent minds, and so there are no self-cognizers. Detailed presentations of the Madhyamika-Prasangika's refutation of self-cognizers can be found in *Meaningful to Behold* and *Ocean of Nectar*.

Inferential Cognizers

DEFINITION OF INFERENTIAL COGNIZER

The definition of inferential cognizer is a completely reliable cognizer whose object is realized in direct dependence upon a conclusive reason.

There are three types of object: manifest objects, slightly hidden objects, and deeply hidden objects. In general, manifest objects are phenomena such as visual forms and sounds that can be perceived directly by ordinary beings; slightly hidden objects are phenomena such as impermanence and emptiness that can be known initially only by depending upon a conclusive reason; and deeply hidden objects are phenomena such as the specific workings of the laws of karma that can be perceived directly only by Buddhas. However, these three types of object are relative. Thus hell beings, for example, are deeply hidden phenomena from the human viewpoint, but manifest objects from the viewpoint of hell beings themselves. Manifest objects can be realized initially by direct cognizers, but both types of hidden object can be realized initially only by inferential cognizers.

Inferential cognizers are very common, and we normally have many during each day. For example, if we see a person go into a room that has only one entrance, and not leave by that entrance, we know with certainty that they are still in the room, even though we cannot see them. Similarly, if we see smoke billowing from the chimney of a house we know for certain that there is a fire in the house, even though we cannot see the fire directly. These are both examples of inferential cognizers that realize their

object in dependence upon conclusive reasons. Most scientific and historical knowledge is based on inferential cognizers. For example, if an archaeologist finds a few bones, broken pots, and stone tools, he can infer many things about the life of the people to whom they originally belonged and, provided that he does not go beyond the evidence, his knowledge will be reliable.

There is one philosophical school, known as the Charvakas, that denies the existence of hidden objects and asserts that everything that exists can be realized directly by ordinary sense awarenesses. Thus they do not accept inferential cognizers, and they deny that we can have reliable knowledge of anything that does not appear directly to one of our five sense awarenesses. This view is obviously incorrect because it is refuted by our everyday experiences. For example, if we stir sugar into tea we can know that the tea will be sweet without having to taste it to find out. Similarly, if we see a car we can know with certainty that there must have been a person, or group of persons, who manufactured it, even though we may never have seen them ourself. We know these facts because we realize them with inferential cognizers.

Inferential cognizers are very important for our spiritual practice. Most of the essential topics explained in Dharma are hidden objects that can be realized initially only through inferential cognizers. Once we have realized these objects inferentially, if we continue to meditate on them we will eventually realize them directly with a yogic direct perceiver; and then they will become manifest objects for us. There are some objects that are not presently manifest for us but that would become manifest for us if we were simply to move to a different position or just wait for something to happen. For example, we can establish that there is a fire inside a house simply by entering the house to have a look, or we can discover that a candle will eventually burn down simply by waiting for it to do so; but we cannot establish the existence of subtle objects such as emptiness or any other of the sixteen characteristics of the four

noble truths in this way. The only way we can gain incontrovertible knowledge of these objects is by generating inferential cognizers in dependence upon conclusive reasons.

Whenever we realize something by means of a conclusive reason we use a special form of logical reasoning known as a syllogism. An example of such syllogistic reasoning is: 'There is a fire in the house because there is smoke.' Like all syllogisms, this has three parts: a subject, a predicate, and a reason. The subject is 'in the house', the predicate is 'there is a fire', and the reason is 'because there is smoke.' The combination of the subject and the predicate is known as the probandum. In this case the probandum is 'There is a fire in the house', and it is this that we realize in dependence upon the reason.

A conclusive reason is a reason that is able to establish a probandum incontrovertibly. A conclusive reason must have a definite relationship with the predicate. Generally there are two types of relationship: natural relationships and causal relationships. A natural relationship obtains between objects that have the same entity, or nature. For example, there is a natural relationship between dog and animal because a dog is an animal. Similarly there is a natural relationship between re-cognizer and valid cognizer because whatever is a re-cognizer is necessarily a valid cognizer. A causal relationship obtains between objects when one is the cause of the other. Thus, causal relationships exist between acorn and oak tree, fire and smoke, and eye sense power and eye awareness. Because there are two types of relationship, there are also two types of reason: those based on a natural relationship (which are known as 'nature reasons'), and those based on a causal relationship (which are known as 'effect reasons'). Examples of the first are the reason in the statement 'This white dog is an animal because it is a dog', and the reason in the statement 'The second moment of an inferential cognizer is a valid cognizer because it is a re-cognizer.' Examples of the second are the reason in the statement

'There is a fire in the house because there is smoke' and the reason in the statement 'A new-born baby's mind must have arisen from its previous continuum of awareness because it is a mind.'

The definition of conclusive reason is a reason that is qualified by the three modes. The three modes are: the property of the subject, the forward pervasion, and the reverse pervasion; and any conclusive reason will be qualified by all three. We can understand these three modes by considering the syllogism stated above: 'There is a fire in the house because there is smoke.'

The first mode is called the property of the subject because for a reason to be conclusive it must apply to, or be a property of, the subject. In this case, the reason is a property of the subject because there is smoke (reason) in the house (subject). The second mode is called the forward pervasion because for a reason to be a conclusive reason it must be pervaded by the predicate. In this case, the reason is qualified by the second mode because wherever there is smoke (reason), there is fire (predicate). The third mode is called the reverse pervasion because if the predicate does not apply the reason must also not apply. In this case, the reason is qualified by the third mode because if there is no fire there is no smoke.

If a reason lacks any of the three modes it is not a conclusive reason. Thus if we were to say 'There is a fire in the house because there is a chimney', the reason would not be a conclusive reason because it would not be qualified by the second and third modes. Similarly the statement 'There is a fire in the house because fire is hot' also does not have a conclusive reason.

By considering examples like the one used here we can learn to identify the different components of a syllogism and to understand the three modes of a conclusive reason. Then once we understand these we can apply them to our Dharma practice. For example, to realize the sixteen characteristics of the four noble truths we must first generate inferential cognizers of them. Thus to realize that our body

is a true suffering we can begin by contemplating the syllogism: 'My body is a true suffering because it is a contaminated aggregate.' This reasoning is correct because the reason used is a conclusive reason. It is qualified by the first mode because our body is a contaminated aggregate, it is qualified by the second mode because whatever is a contaminated aggregate is necessarily a true suffering, and it is qualified by the third mode because if something is not a true suffering it is necessarily not a contaminated aggregate.

Sometimes we might want to deepen our understanding by considering further one or other of the three modes. For example, if we are not sure whether or not our body is a contaminated aggregate, we can use a separate line of reasoning to establish that this is the case. Thus, we can consider the syllogism: 'My body is a contaminated aggregate because it is produced from karma and delusion and because it is conducive to the development of delusions.'

DIVISIONS OF INFERENTIAL COGNIZER

There are three types of inferential cognizer from the point of view of the type of reason upon which they depend:

1 Inferential cognizers through the power of fact
2 Inferential cognizers through belief
3 Inferential cognizers through renown

Inferential cognizers through the power of fact realize slightly hidden objects. Examples are an inferential cognizer realizing that there is a fire in a house because there is smoke, and an inferential cognizer realizing that the body is impermanent because it disintegrates. Most of our inferential cognizers are of this type. We gain initial realizations of impermanence, emptiness, pervasive suffering, and so forth through such inferential cognizers.

Inferential cognizers through belief realize deeply hidden objects such as the specific law of karma that from giving comes wealth and from discipline comes happiness. Sentient beings cannot prove the existence of such deeply

hidden objects through their own direct experience or through inferential cognizers through the power of fact. The only way we can know such objects incontrovertibly is by relying upon Buddha's scriptures, having already ascertained that Buddha is a thoroughly non-deceptive person.

For example, to realize that the scripture 'From giving comes wealth, from discipline comes happiness' is a completely reliable scripture, we need to use the following reasoning: 'This scripture is completely reliable because it is free from contradiction by direct perception, free from contradiction by inferential cognizers through the power of fact, and free from contradiction by inferential cognizers through belief.' In dependence upon this reasoning, we can generate an inferential cognizer realizing that this scripture is completely reliable. Then we can generate an inferential cognizer that realizes that from giving comes wealth and from discipline comes happiness because the scripture that reveals this is completely reliable. This inferential cognizer is an inferential cognizer through belief.

Inferential cognizers through renown realize the suitability of terms on the basis of renown, or convention. In principle, any object is suitable to be called by any name because the suitability of a particular name arises not from characteristics in the object, but simply from convention. Thus the white orb we see in the night sky is suitable to be called 'the moon' because that is how it is commonly known, but it could just as easily be known by any other name. Similarly the term 'moon' could be used to designate any other object. Thus, for example, if we had grown used to referring to the white orb in the night sky as 'the sun' and the yellow orb in the day sky as 'the moon', these terms would be entirely suitable because they would have been established by convention.

Inferential cognizers through renown realize a terminological suitability – that an object is suitable to be called anything because it exists among objects of conception. There is no natural relationship between objects and sounds. Thus we can call a person Patience, even though a

person cannot be patience because patience is a state of mind, not a person. Even so, it is suitable to call a person Patience simply because that name is established by common usage. Moreover, since countless different languages exist, any object of a conceptual mind can be an object of any language; and so any object is suitable to be called anything.

In *Commentary to Valid Cognition*, Dharmakirti says:

> An expressive sound is dependent upon the wish of whoever expresses it.

One person may say 'John is good' because that is his experience of John, but someone else, with a different experience of John, may say 'John is bad'. Thus our speech has no freedom, because what we say depends upon our mind. In the same text Dharmakirti says 'Sound is everywhere', which means that we can express a sound for anything.

There is also a twofold division of inferential cognizer from the point of view of how they are generated:

1 Inferential cognizers arisen from listening
2 Inferential cognizers arisen from contemplation

An example of the first is an inferential cognizer realizing that the body is impermanent simply in dependence upon listening to the statement 'The body is impermanent because it will finally die.' If we generate an inferential cognizer realizing the impermanence of the body principally through the force of our contemplating the meaning of such a statement, this is an example of an inferential cognizer arisen from contemplation.

When we first realize subtle objects such as impermanence in dependence upon inferential cognizers, we attain an intellectual understanding of them, but we should not be satisfied with this. We need to deepen our experience of the object through meditation. In this way we will gradually attain a profound experience induced by meditation, and finally a yogic direct perceiver that realizes the

object directly. Inferential cognizers are seeds of yogic direct perceivers. Until we attain an actual yogic direct perceiver realizing a particular object, we need to continue to meditate on the continuum of the inferential cognizer realizing that object.

GENERATION OF INFERENTIAL COGNIZERS

As mentioned before, we can generate an inferential cognizer either in dependence upon listening or in dependence upon contemplation, but either way it is necessary for us to realize fully the three modes. When it is said that a conclusive reason is qualified by the three modes, this means that for a reason to be conclusive for us we must realize all three modes. For example, if we simply think 'My body is impermanent because it will finally die', without realizing each of the three modes, this reason will not be a conclusive reason, and our understanding will not be an inferential cognizer. The reason will become conclusive and lead to an inferential cognizer only if we fully realize the three modes: that our body will finally die, that whatever finally dies is impermanent, and that whatever is not impermanent will not finally die.

APPLICATION OF INFERENTIAL COGNIZERS TO DHARMA PRACTICE

Most objects of meditation mentioned in the Sutras and Tantras are either slightly hidden objects or deeply hidden objects, and so we must realize them initially by generating inferential cognizers. This initial knowledge obtained through inferential cognizers is like a sprout that will later grow into an abundant crop of Dharma realizations. By repeatedly meditating on the continuum of these inferential cognizers, eventually we will gain deep realizations of Sutra and Tantra, like a crop ripening into a rich harvest. Knowing this, we should make a strong determination to generate these precious inferential cognizers in the way explained here, and then put this determination into practice.

Knowledge and Liberation

Tibetan Buddhist Epistemology in Support of Transformative Religious Experience

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4 Conceptual Thought

Like direct perception, conceptual thought is defined in terms of the types of phenomena that are its appearing objects, generally characterized phenomena or conventional truths, and the way in which it perceives those objects. In Gelukba presentations of Sautrāntika, objects of thought are discussed in detail for the sake of distinguishing what *appears* to thought from what a thought is actually *realizing*. For example, a thought to which an image of subtle impermanence appears is in fact realizing or concerning itself with actual subtle impermanence, not merely the image of impermanence. The overriding message of this presentation of thought and objects of thought is two-fold. First, it indicates that thought does indeed realize actual impermanent phenomena even though these cannot be appearing objects of thought. Second, the discussion of the types of images or abstractions which are appearing objects of thought indicates that, in the Buddhist view, thought itself yields vibrant, psychologically significant experience; it is not limited to a dry and meaningless mental rattle.

OBJECTS OF THOUGHT

Thought differs from direct cognition in both its objects and its mode of perception. It does not take on the aspect of specifically characterized phenomena, nor is it limited in scope to objects within sensory range. Like leading a horse on a tether, thought can bring its objects along with it.[1] Specifically characterized phenomena cannot

become appearing objects of thought because all their individual characteristics cannot fully appear to thought. Thought is said to be prevented or obscured from taking ultimate truths as its appearing objects; it is obscured with respect to ultimate truths and only capable of taking conventional truths (*saṃvṛti-satya, kun rdzob bden pa*) as its appearing objects. For this reason the term 'conventional truth' is more accurately translated as 'truths for the obscured.'

Because generally characterized phenomena do not have their own uncommon specific characteristics they can fully appear to thought. Therefore, in the Sautrāntika system, appearing object of thought, permanent phenomenon, and conventional truth are all mutually inclusive. Whatever is one is all the others.

Even though impermanent phenomena do not appear fully to thought, thought is able to realize impermanent objects incontrovertibly. This is done through the medium of an image of, for example, a table. This image, for reasons to be explained below, is technically known as the "meaning-of-the-term 'table.'" It differs from an actual table that appears to direct perception in several ways. An image lacks the vivid detail of a specifically characterized table and does not function as an actual table. Furthermore, the thought consciousness which has an image or meaning-generality (*artha-sāmānya, don spyi*) of table as its appearing object is said to be mistaken (*bhrānti, 'khrul ba*) with respect to it because (1) that image appears mixed with the actual specifically characterized table and (2) the place, time, and nature of all tables seems to be one with the image of the table. Because it is the nature of thought to operate in this manner, thought itself is the source for its own obscuration.

A basic tenet in the Gelukba formulation of Sautrāntika is that impermanent phenomena cannot be appearing objects of thought. Accordingly, the images which appear to thought are said to be permanent. This means that they are not momentarily changing; it does not indicate that they are eternal. Unlike impermanent phenomena such as tables which disintegrate from one moment to the next, permanent phenomena such as images do not undergo change as long as they exist, whether that be for a long or short time. The fact that past and future as well as present phenomena can appear to thought is considered a sign that the appearing objects of thought are permanent images.[2] Past and future phenomena exist *only* for thought, they cannot be perceived by ordinary direct perception, which apprehends only presently existing impermanent phenomena.

The assertion that mental images are permanent is consistent with the overall Gelukba presentation of Sautrāntika, but is not without problems of credibility. It is a matter of experience that mental images appear to undergo rapid changes. Moreover, taking to mind certain images can have an effect such as stabilizing or heightening the mind, and having an effect is supposed to be a property of impermanent phenomena only. Beyond this, the image does not appear to thought by its own power; it is imputed by thought. Because it is in this sense created, it would seem logical to consider it a product and therefore impermanent. Despite these difficulties, the Gelukbas may have pedagogical reasons for emphasizing that the image is permanent. In terms of a Buddhist path to liberating knowledge, the final purpose of practices involving mental imagery or visualization is not to create a certain type of image, but to generate a specific type of consciousness. By asserting that the image is permanent, the system emphasizes that the purpose of effort is to change the mind, not create a mental picture. For example, one seeks finally to cultivate a direct realization of subtle impermanence rather than just generate a clear image of it; nevertheless, the generation of that image — which of course does involve effort — is an integral part of the process of gaining realization.

Even if one concedes that, in terms of the wider picture of Buddhist practice, it is suitable to emphasize the cultivation of certain consciousnesses rather than of mental images, it still seems strange to insist that such images are permanent, that is, non-disintegrating. After all, as mentioned, experience strongly and easily contradicts this assertion. One way to get around this might be to say that from the viewpoint of a mental image being a functioning thing created by the mind, it is impermanent, and from the viewpoint that an image represents an elimination of what is not that object (for example, an appearance as opposite from non-pot) it is permanent.[3]

Meaning-of-the-Term

There is much to consider in the material on mental images, some of which sheds further light on the problematic assertion that these images are permanent. The image that appears to the thought consciousness apprehending table is a mental picture of table which eliminates from that thought's purview all that is not table. This non-detailed and possibly very abstract image serves as a generality

which applies to or is concomitant with all instances of table. For this reason it can serve as a means of identifying all varieties of tables as tables. (*See chapter eight.*) Jang-gya calls this image the 'meaning-of-the-term' (*śabdārtha, sgra don*) because when a person familiar with the term 'table' hears that word, an image which represents the meaning of the term 'table' appears to her or his mind. Since any instance of thought is said to have such a generic image as its appearing object, Jang-gya defines thought as "a conceptual knower which apprehends a meaning-of-the-term."[4] Strictly speaking, this definition would not include young children and others unschooled in terminology. After all, someone who does not know the term 'table' cannot evoke an image of it on the basis of hearing the word 'table.' Such a person does not have table as the referent of the designation 'table.' The meaning-generality of table, which is an appearance to thought as opposite from non-table — that is, a pictorial elimination of all that is not a table — cannot be evoked by the word 'table' unless one knows to what sort of object the term 'table' refers. Jang-gya himself writes that although untrained children and animals do indeed have thought, they need not be accounted for in the definition of thought. The purpose of a definition, he contends, is to generate understanding; it need not apply to every possible situation.

In making this assertion, Jang-gya openly takes a stand against Jam-yang-shay-ba and by extension against other later Gelukbas. These scholars use a slightly lengthier definition of thought in order to include in their definition persons untrained in terminology. Jam-bel-sam-pel, author of a recent Gelukba text on Awareness and Knowledge (*bLo rig*),[5] accords with Jam-yang-shay-ba when he defines a thought consciousness as "a conceptual knower which apprehends term and meaning generalities in a manner such that they are suitable to be mixed (or associated)." In this longer definition, instead of taking the phrase 'term-meaning' (*śabdārtha, sgra don*) to refer to a single image, which Jang-gya does by reading it as 'meaning-of-the-term', Jam-yang-shay-ba takes 'term' (*śabda, sgra*) as a term-generality (*śabdasāmānya, sgra spyi*) and 'meaning' (*artha, don*) to indicate a 'meaning-generality' (*artha-sāmānya, don spyi*). The resulting definition signifies that these are *suitable* to be perceived as mixed or associated, but are not *necessarily* perceived thus.[6]

These scholars' definition is based on the commonly held view that two types of generalities can be appearing objects of thought: (1) the term-generality which appears to a thought consciousness when for example a person who has never been to India hears the word 'India' and (2) a meaning-generality that appears when someone who has visited India hears the same word. When the name 'India' is stated to one who has been there, a mixture of term and meaning generalities appears to that person's thought. In such a case, these two generalities are not only *suitable* to be mixed, they *are* mixed. The person who has neither seen India nor realized what India is through some other means, cannot have an appearance of a meaning-generality of India. Therefore, for this person, term and meaning generalities are not actually mixed but are only suitable to be mixed or associated. A person who landed there without knowing where he was would afterwards recall only a meaning-generality unassociated with a term-generality.

In a similar way, children who have seen a bulbous thing capable of holding water but do not know that its name is 'pot' cannot take the term-generality as an appearing object of thought in the sense of associating it with its meaning. The meaning-generality or image of pot can appear to them, but the only term-generality which can appear to one untrained in language is the mere internal reverberation of the sound 'pot.' The child would not perceive this sound as having any connection with a remembered image of pot.

'Term-generality' can refer either to the mere internal reverberation of the sound of a term *or* to the image that appears to the mind of a person who has never seen the actual thing represented by that image. Gelukba scholars agree that term and meaning generalities are merely suitable to be mixed for persons untrained in language but are not actually mixed for them; in this context the former meaning of term-generality as an internal reverberation of a term is probably being used, for all agree that the term-generality which is a mere reverberation of sound appears even to children untutored in language.

If a term-generality is understood as an imagined representation of something one has never seen, then whatever is a term-generality is necessarily a meaning-generality but not the other way around. In other words, a mind that apprehends such a term-generality necessarily apprehends a meaning-generality. In this broader framework there is no problem about whether or not the definition of a thought consciousness as apprehending the meaning-of-a-term perceives a mixture of term and meaning generalities.

Term and Meaning Generalities

However, outside the context of this broader relationship between term and meaning generalities, Gelukbas assert that there can be a mind which perceives *only* a term-generality or *only* a meaning-generality, or a mixture of both.[7] In this way, there are three types of appearing objects of thought.

For example, when a person who has never seen a magnolia hears the term 'magnolia,' that person's thought has only a term-generality as its appearing object. In other words, an image corresponding merely to the sound of the term appears to the thought consciousness, but no sense of its meaning. On the other hand, when someone who does not know what a magnolia is — and who thus cannot identify it by name — happens to remember a magnolia blossom seen previously, that person does not remember it *as* a magnolia, but only recalls its shape, color and other features. The image of the flower that appears to such a person's thought consciousness is only the meaning-generality. Finally, when a person who knows what a magnolia is remembers one seen previously, that person's thought consciousness has a mixture of term and meaning generalities as its appearing object. Thus, in terms of their appearing objects, thought consciousnesses are of three types, those to which there appears (1) only a term-generality, (2) only a meaning-generality, or (3) a mixture of both.

This three-fold typology is significant for the presentation of a means for cultivating liberating knowledge. It means that even within the category of conceptual thought a considerable range of experience is possible. In the Buddhist perspective, it is possible to begin with the mere internal reverberation of sound like 'subtle impermanence' and then, through reasoning and contemplation, cultivate a sense of its meaning until the appearing object of thought is no longer a mere term-generality but a mixture of term and meaning generalities. As one cultivates an increasingly profound and deeply felt understanding of the meaning, reliance on words gradually decreases. Once one is truly well accustomed to the meaning of subtle impermanence it is possible for only the meaning-generality of subtle impermanence to appear, without depending on the term or word 'impermanence' at all.[8]

This experience is far removed from mere mental rattling of the words 'subtle impermanence.' Deeply cultivated, it can prove a life-changing experience. Nevertheless, in terms of the Gelukba

presentation, this still falls within the range of conceptual thought. As long as an image of any type is involved, no matter how subtle or psychologically significant it may be, one is dwelling in conceptuality. Direct perception occurs when even the meaning-generality fades away and one is left with the actual, specifically characterized impermanence. As explained below, it is possible for conceptuality to yield to direct perception because the actual impermanence appears through the medium of an image at the time of conceptuality. When the image fades away, the actual impermanence remains as an appearing object of direct perception.

Jang-gya on the Definition of Conceptual Thought

It is significant to the Gelukba presentation of conceptuality and the path that a term or a meaning generality may become the only appearing object of a particular thought. In the case of a mind apprehending only a term or meaning generality, the two are not associated but only *suitable* to be associated. It was to take account of this that Jam-yang-shay-ba and others formulated the longer definition of a thought consciousness as a conceptual knower apprehending term and meaning generalities as suitable to be associated. In this way they claim to have a definition that accounts for the thought of persons untrained in terminology. However, Jang-gya points out that even the more extensive definition of, for example, the thought consciousness apprehending a pot as "a conceptual knower which apprehends in a manner such that the term and meaning generalities of pot are suitable to be associated" would apply only in those areas of the world where the specific term 'pot' (*bum pa* in Tibetan) is used to designate a bulbous thing capable of holding water. It does not take account of those who call such an item a *kailaś* (Hindi). Thus, Jang-gya objects that the purpose of re-casting the definition is thwarted, for there is no way to include all varieties of people and speech in a single definition.

Jang-gya notes that it is not always necessary to separate 'term-meaning' (*śabdārtha, sgra don*) into 'term and meaning generalities.' Sometimes it is appropriate to interpret this as 'meaning-of-the-term.' He cites Tsong-ka-pa to establish that the compound 'term-meaning' (*śabdārtha, sgra don*) can be interpreted as a possessive compound a genitive *tatpuruṣa*,[9] '*śabdasyārtha*' — 'the meaning-of-the-term.' On such occasions, the phrase is not interpreted as a collective compound (*dvandva*) in which case it would indicate two

different types of images and be rendered in full form as 'term [generality] and meaning [generality]' (*śabdo 'rthaśca*).

Jang-gya further cites an apparent contradiction to his own thesis that 'term-meaning' need not be interpreted as 'term and meaning generalities.' He points out that Gyel-tsap, one of Tsong-ka-pa's two main disciples, refers to a child's thought consciousness as a mind for which object of expression and expression (and thus, by implication, meaning — *artha* — and term — *śabda*) are suitable to be mixed.[10] Jang-gya states that this does not signify that the 'term-meaning' (*śabdārtha*) should *always* be interpreted as term and meaning generalities; for example, it is not so interpreted when it occurs in the definition of thought as "a conceptual knower which apprehends the meaning-of-a-term". His point is that the appearing object of thought, in other words, the meaning-of-the-term, is simply the image of an object. It is not necessary that the definition specify whether this image is a term or meaning generality, or a mixture of both. Jang-gya's further point is that treating 'term-meaning' as 'meaning-of-the-term' in this definition emphasizes that the explicit object of expression of a term is an internal image. It does not indicate that it is *never* suitable to treat 'term-meaning' as referring to term and meaning generalities separately.[11] Tsong-ka-pa also points out that there are three types of appearing objects of thought as mentioned above; either one of the two generalities may appear alone or they may appear as mixed.[12] Kay-drup, the other of Tsong-ka-pa's two chief disciples, also writes:

> When someone says, "There is no pot" to a person who does not know that the term "pot" [refers to] a bulbous object, only the term-generality of a lack of pot appears, the meaning-generality does not.[13]

This clearly indicates that in certain contexts Kay-drup also finds it necessary to distinguish between term and meaning generalities. For, when an untrained person sees a flat-based bulbous thing capable of holding fluids, he does not see it as the basis of the term "pot." Only those familiar with the term see a pot this way. Thus, knowledge of the term subtly alters the type of thought induced by direct perception, and training in terminology aids the conceptual superimposition that an object is suitable to be called by a specific name. Yet, even those untrained in terminology see objects as suitable to *be* named and thus as naturally established as bases of names

in general, even though such persons cannot accurately name them.

The problem of including untrained children and animals in Jang-gya's definition arises largely because the meaning-of-the-term "pot" — the image which appears as the elimination of everything except pot — is specified to be an appearance as opposite from the negative of pot (*bum pa ma yin pa las log par snang ba*). Yet, as the statement from Kay-drup above indicates, an appearance as opposite from non-pot cannot appear upon stating the term "pot" to one who does not know the term pot. Nevertheless, a child who has seen a pot can certainly think about a pot through recalling an image of it even without knowing that the name "pot" refers to it. The difficulty lies in determining what this image is. It cannot be a 'meaning-of-the-term' in the sense described above because the child does not know what the term "pot" means. If, however, the 'meaning-of-the-term "pot"' were considered to include not only the appearance as opposite from non-pot but also an appearance as opposite from non-flat-based-bulbous-thing-able-to-hold-fluid, it would be possible to include the conceptuality of those untrained in terminology in Jang-gya's definition of thought as "a conceptual knower that apprehends the meaning-of-a-term."[14] The definition could then apply to those instances when *only* a meaning-generality appears. Opposite-from-non-bulbous-thing can be remembered whether or not one knows that this is called a pot.

Analysis of a Meaning-Generality

The definition of a meaning-generality that appears to the thought consciousness apprehending pot is given by Pur-bu-jok as:

> The superimposed factor which, although not a pot, appears as like a pot to the thought consciousness apprehending a pot.[15]

We have mentioned that this meaning-generality is an appearance as opposite from non-pot. Further, although the appearance as opposite from non-pot which appears to *thought* is a meaning-generality, the opposite-from-non-pot which appears to the *eye consciousness* is not. Whereas the image is permanent and a generally characterized phenomenon, opposite-from-non-pot is a negative phenomenon known as an objective specifically characterized exclusion (*apoha, sel ba*);[16] (*See chapters on exlusions.*) Moreover, the appearance *as* opposite from non-pot is a negative but the appearance of pot to

thought is a positive phenomenon.[17] From the viewpoint that this mental image is an appearance *as* opposite-from-non-pot it is a negative; from the viewpoint of the appearance itself — the mental image — it is a positive phenomenon. From either point of view, this appearance is a means by which the conceptual thought perceiving it does actually or explicitly realize a specifically characterized object.[18]

Opposite-from-non-pot is a negative phenomenon that can appear either to thought or (according to some Gelukba texts) to direct perception. However, the appearance to thought is a meaning-generality; the appearance to direct perception is not.[19]

There is some disagreement among Gelukba colleges about whether opposite-from-non-pot can appear to someone who does not know the name 'pot'. However, all colleges except Gomang agree that opposite-from-the-definition-of-pot, that is, opposite-from-non-flat-based-bulbous-thing-capable-of-holding-fluid can even appear to the thought or direct perception of persons who do not know the term 'pot' but who have seen a pot. By contrast, Gomang College, a division of Drebung Monastic University, maintains that opposite-from-non-pot *never* appears to the eye consciousness; rather, the pot which is opposite from non-pot appears. This means that the pot which is opposite from non-pot is a negative and a specifically characterized object that can appear to direct perception.

The Loseling College of Drebung asserts that opposite-from-non-pot or opposite-from-non-bulbous-thing appears to direct perception because it is one entity of establishment and abiding — that is, infallibly concomitant in place, time, and nature — with the specifically characterized pot perceived by the eye consciousness. Thus, according to Loseling, whether or not one knows the term 'pot,' both pot and opposite-from-non-pot appear to the eye consciousness apprehending a pot. Loseling therefore must find a different way than Gomang's to distinguish between what appears to those who do and do not know the term 'pot.' However, if someone does not know the term 'pot,' then for that person neither an actual pot nor the meaning-generality (*don spyi*) of a pot can be an explicit object of expression of the term 'pot.' For, if a person who does not know the term 'pot' hears this word in conversation, no meaning-generality will appear in his or her mind. The appearance as opposite-from-non-pot to a thought consciousness apprehending a pot is therefore not a meaning-generality in relation to a person who does not know the term 'pot,' even though opposite-from-non-pot does appear to

the direct perception of such a person. The appearance as opposite from non-flat-based-bulbous-thing-able-to-hold-fluid, however, is a meaning-generality for such a person, because even one who does not know the name 'pot' can recall the image of a pot previously seen.

According to Loseling College, both pot and opposite-from-non-pot appear to the eye consciousness apprehending a pot. Opposite-from-non-pot is a negative phenomenon because when *thought* realizes it, it does so by way of the explicit elimination or negation of all that is not pot. Direct perception does not perceive opposite-from-non-pot by way of an explicit elimination of non-pot; it does, however, realize opposite from non-pot explicitly. When one thinks about something such as a pot that is appearing to direct perception, conceptual thought realizes pot explicitly and also realizes opposite-from-non-pot implicitly. In other words, opposite-from-non-pot is realized explicitly by direct perception at the same time that conceptual thought realizes it implicitly.

Gomang College, on the other hand, asserts that negatives such as opposite-from-non-pot are not perceived by direct perception at all. In their view, persons untrained in language recognize objects without perceiving opposite-from-non-that-object. For example, a young child recognizes water to drink or an animal recognizes its own offspring through visual and tactile cues that are impermanent, positive phenomena. Such discrimination involves thought but not words or even term-generalities. Recognition occurs through a type of reasoned correct belief or correctly assuming consciousness (**manaḥ-parikṣa, yid spyod*) on the basis of various cues appearing to the eye, ear, nose, and other directly perceiving consciousnesses.[20]

Loseling College asserts that opposite-from-non-pot appears to the direct perception even of someone who does not know the term 'pot.' However, even for Loseling the opposite-from-non-pot that is understood as pot can only appear to someone who does know the term 'pot.' Similarly, an appearance of opposite-from-non-water can only appear to *be* water to someone who knows the referent object of the term 'water.' In a similar vein, Sera College says that animals — who, of course, do not know the term 'water' — neither see nor drink water; they see and drink what is damp and moistening.[21] In this view, then, opposite-from-non-water, or, more literally, opposite from-not-being-water, does not appear to animals or to persons untrained in language. What appears to either direct perception

or thought in such cases is the definition — the very entity — of water itself, that which is wet and moistening. 'Water' is simply the name given to this substance. In this context, among those trained in language, only English speakers drink water, the French drink *l'eau,* Tibetans, *chu,* and so forth.

In brief, whether or not one asserts that opposite-from-non-pot can appear only to a thought consciousness or to both the thought and direct perception of persons who know the term 'pot,' an appearance *as* opposite from non-pot to a thought consciousness cannot occur unless the term is known. For, a meaning-generality is an image which can be caused to appear when a person who knows the term 'pot' hears that word. Thus, scholars such as Jam-yang-shay-ba argue against the shorter definition of thought as "a conceptual knower which apprehends a meaning-of-the-term" because they say that a person who does not know a given term cannot apprehend the corresponding meaning. Jang-gya disputes neither this nor even the contention that sometimes it is suitable to take the phrase 'term-meaning' as referring to two distinct types of images — term-generality and meaning-generality. He simply finds it unnecessary to take all situations into account when forming a definition. For the purposes of the discussion here, however, the varying opinions on the topic serve to underscore the extent to which the learning of terminology affects conceptual and direct perception.

CONCEPTUAL ERROR

Even correct thought is mistaken in relation to the specifically characterized phenomena which are its referent objects. Its mistake is due to the fact that, whereas impermanent phenomena have their own unique characteristics, thought can perceive only general images. This point, which receives considerable attention in Gelukba, reflects a statement in verse 1007 of Śāntarakṣita's *Compendium of Suchness* (*Tattvasaṃgraha, De kho na nyid bsdus pa*) that for thought an image "is erroneously taken for the particular which is excluded from dissimilar things (*vijatīya-paravṛttaṃ svalakṣaṇaṃ*)."[22] Nevertheless, as elaborated below, the uncommon entity of, for example, an actual impermanent pot does appear to thought. However, it does not have the status of being an *appearing object* for thought because the complete, specifically characterized entity of the object does not appear.

The meaning of the term 'pot' that appears to thought is a generally characterized phenomenon because it is an appearance of the factor of being opposite from non-pot that applies to every instance of a specifically characterized pot. A specifically characterized pot, although it appears to thought and can be realized by thought, is not considered an appearing object of thought. If it were, the pot that appears to thought would, like any impermanent and specifically characterized pot, be capable of holding liquids and so forth. In that case anyone could have a golden pot or anything else just by thinking about it. Moreover, even if the specific pot represented by this image is smashed, the mental image remains unchanged; this of course also signifies that the impermanent pot itself is not the object appearing to thought. The fact that the image is called permanent is another way of drawing attention, not only to the obvious difference between images and objects, but to the limitations of the thought to which images appear. Although correct thought does not actually conceive that 'this image is a pot,' it is mistaken because (1) the actual pot appears as undifferentiably mixed with the image of pot and (2) the image appears to be a pot although it is not. In the *Presentation of Specifically and Generally Characterized Phenomena* Den-dar-hla-ram-ba writes:

> When a meaning-generality appears to thought the following appearances occur:
> 1. just that meaning-generality appears as if it were the entity of that object
> 2. the meaning-generality appears as if it were one with that object
> 3. the meaning-generality appears as if it were opposite from non-that-object.[23]

These are three ways of expressing the basic error of conceptual thought — that an image appearing to it seems to be the actual object it represents. Thought does not *conceive* of image and object as mixed, and thus the error is not due to a fault in reasoning or any other conscious process. It is simply in the nature of thought to operate in this manner. For example, when the image of a chair appears to thought, the image itself appears as — but is not usaully conceived to be — an actual chair. Another way of saying this is that the image appears to be one with a chair, much as a chair reflected in a mirror appears to be one with — that is, really to be — a chair.

Similarly, the image of a chair appears to be opposite from not being a chair, that is to say, to be the actually specifically characterized chair.[24]

The generalizing tendency of conceptual thought can be explained in terms of how it perceives the nature, place, and time of an object such as a tree (not a specific tree, but tree in general). Although trees are not mixed in fact, they appear mixed to a thought consciousness apprehending just tree. All the various specifically characterized instances of trees are the same in appearing as trees but are different in terms of place, time, and nature. A single 'opposite-from-not-being-a-tree' that is common to each individual tree is just something fabricated by thought.[25] Although the appearance of such exists, the natures of individual trees are not actually mixed. Because it is inevitable that thought perceive trees in this way, thought is obscured from fully knowing reality or ultimate truth as designated in the Gelukba formulation of Sautrāntika. Thought cannot perceive specifically characterized phenomena in a manner that accords with the objects' actual way of abiding. The early 19th-century scholar Bel-den-chö-jay, annotator of Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Great Exposition of Tenets*, writes in his *Annotations*:

> The appearance as opposite from non-tree imagined by a mind apprehending a tree-generality does not exist as an ultimate object. For, if it did exist ultimately, then the mind apprehending that generality would not be mistaken with respect to its appearing object. If that were the case, then since the natures of the manifestations of tree appear mixed to the mind [apprehending] the tree-generality, the natures of the manifestations of tree would have to be mixed [in actual fact]. However, the manifestations of tree are not mutually each other and abide with their natures unmixed.[26]

Thought is also obscured with respect to the individual place and time of specifically characterized phenomena. For example, a thought consciousness apprehending just 'tree' pays no attention to the difference of place that pertains to a tree at the west of one's house and another tree to the east. Or, to give a further example, whereas the eye-consciousness observing a rug correctly perceives that all its different colors occupy different areas, for the thought consciousness apprehending the rug it is *as if* all the colors and so

forth are in one place — the rug. Only the general image of a rug appears to thought. This is the confusion of place. With respect to time, when the eye consciousness observes a tree, the individual moments of the tree appear serially to the eye consciousness, but for thought, these appear as mixed.[27] To a thought consciousness apprehending that tree, the tree seen yesterday seems to be the same as the one directly perceived today; in other words, although direct perception views only the present tree, the thought apprehending that tree perceives the present tree as if it were the same as the tree of yesterday. Moreover, despite the fact that the past tree is only an object of thought, direct perception experiences it as if that past tree were fused with the present object of direct perception. This is one significant way in which thought impinges on direct experience.

Although all thought consciousnesses are equally mistaken in that the image or meaning-generality which appears to them seems to be one with their referent object, all thought is not equally mistaken. For example, the inferential cognizer that correctly realizes sound to be impermanent and the superimposing consciousness which erroneously apprehends sound to be permanent are both conceptual and thus equally subject to the mistake that their appearing objects seem to be the corresponding referent object. Nevertheless, the inferential consciousness is unmistaken with respect to its referent object and is also incontrovertible in its correct conviction that sound is impermanent. The superimposing consciousness is neither correct nor incontrovertible. For, through inference one can gain access to the object of operation (*'jug yul*) or referent object (*zhen yul*) — the impermanent sound — and thus refute or controvert the thought consciousness that apprehends sound as permanent. Since permanent sound does not exist, the consciousness that superimposes such (and which probably derives from misinterpreted direct perception) does not have an existent referent object. The thought apprehending impermanent sound does have a referent object — actual impermanent sound — and is mistaken with respect to the appearing object — the image of impermanent sound — but not with respect to the referent object. The thought conceiving permanent sound, however, is not a factually concordant consciousness; it is mistaken regarding its appearing object — the image of permanent sound — and deceived with respect to its non-existent referent object — permanent sound. The difference between these two types of conceptual thought is like the difference between mistaking a jewel's

light for a jewel and mistaking a candle's light for a jewel. Both conceptions are mistaken, but through following the jewel's light to its source one can get at an actual jewel; through following the candle's light, one cannot.[28]

THOUGHT AND DIRECT PERCEPTION

Conceptual thought and direct perception can operate simultaneously, but they are not established or initiated simultaneously with respect to the same object.[29] In the first moment of seeing an impermanent object such as a tree, direct perception — the eye consciousness — is active; then there is a moment of mental direct perception (*mānasa-pratyakṣa, yid kyi mngon sum*)[30] which cannot be noticed by ordinary persons. Following this, conceptuality begins to operate. Thus, in the first period there is only direct, clear perception by the eye consciousness; once conceptuality begins, it operates simultaneously with subsequent moments of direct perception. This means that while the eye consciousness, for example, is apprehending the specific characteristics of its object, the thought derived from that eye consciousness superimposes a meaning-generality onto that object.

Each consciousness has a feeling associated with it. As soon as an object is perceived, some feeling about the object as good, bad, or neutral arises. Such judgments are conceptual. Feeling arises not only on the basis of the eye consciousness, but also on the basis of thought; that is, not just on the basis of the actual presently existing object, but also on the basis of what is remembered about or imputed onto that object. In other words, one's experience of an object as good or bad, enjoyable or abhorrent, depends not only on the actual object but also on the internal image that appears to thought. However, because the meaning-generality appearing to thought is not as strong as the object perceived by direct sense perception, it is not easy to recognize that a meaning-generality is involved — one feels one is engaging in and reacting to only direct perception.[31]

In terms of Sautrāntika tenets it is difficult to establish precisely the status of such judgemental qualities as 'good,' 'bad,' 'large,' 'small' and so forth. When one sees a person one thinks of as bad, for example, the eye consciousness merely sees the color and shape; it is the conceptual mental consciousness that takes as its object the 'badness' of that person.[32] Someone else, seeing the same person, might see her or him as 'good.' In reacting to a person or thing as

good or bad, one is in fact reacting largely to an image in one's own mind, even though there may be no awareness that such an image is present. From this viewpoint it can be argued that qualities such as 'good' or 'too small' or 'too large' are not specifically characterized phenomena and thus that they cannot appear to the eye consciousness. Because such qualities are not one entity of establishment and abiding with the appearing object, there is no contradiction in these not appearing to a mind of complete engagement such as the eye consciousness which must, by definition, observe all factors that are fully concomitant in terms of place, time, and nature with its appearing object. For example, the image of a good car which is an appearance as opposite from non-good car is taken as the appearing object of thought while the object itself — opposite-from-non-car — appears to the eye consciousness.

Sautrāntika however cannot categorically maintain that subjective qualities such as good and bad are *merely imputed* by thought. Such qualities must also be said to exist from their own side. Otherwise the mere assertion that something is good or bad would be enough to create goodness and badness in that object. Further, if goodness and so forth were merely imputed, they would be permanent, and this is unsuitable. Sautrāntika does not have a clear presentation of the status of such subjective qualities; to get a detailed discussion of this it is necessary to study both Cittamātra — where all objects and their qualities are said to arise from the latencies of one's mind — and especially Mādhyamika, where the person as well as any qualities of goodness and so forth are equally seen as merely imputed by thought.[33]

In the Gelukba presentation of Sautrāntika and the higher systems a false superimposition is a case of thinking that the non-existent exists. To think that there is permanence with respect to impermanent objects, or that there is a substantially existent self-sufficient person, are significant cases of superimposition by thought. 'Superimposition by thought' (*āropa, sgro btags*) is sometimes to be distinguished from 'imputation by thought' (*rtog pas btags pa*). An example of something imputed by thought that is not a superimposition is the relationship between a definition and the thing it defines (the definiendum). This relationship is said to be imputed by thought because conceptual thought realizes it in stages, considering first the definition and then the definiendum. Since that relationship does exist, it is not a mere superimposition. (Sometimes, however,

no distinction is made between superimposition and imputation by thought, in which case a superimposition by thought can be either existent or non-existent.)

Phenomena imputed by thought (*rtog pas btags pa*) are necessarily permanent and are appearing objects of thought only, not of direct perception. These are not to be confused with phenomena that are imputedly existent (*prajñapti-sat, btags yod*) and which can be either permanent or impermanent. An imputedly existent phenomenon, according to the second interpretation of this term given in chapter one, cannot be seen without some other phenomenon which is not its own entity being observed. For example, there is no way to perceive a person without perceiving the head or arms and so forth, although a head or arm is not itself the person. It is also true that in order to see a table one must see its legs, top, and so forth, but this does not make a table an imputedly existent phenomenon. For, the legs and so forth of a table are parts (*cha shas*) of the table, whereas the head and so forth of a person are said to be not parts but extensions or limbs (*yan lag*) of the person.[34] Thus, in dependence on seeing head, hands and so on one imputes the existence of a person. The person itself, although impermanent and thus an ultimate truth, exists imputedly and is not an object of the eye consciousness in the same sense that tables and chairs are. From another viewpoint however, it is an object of the eye consciousness because to see a living person's form is to see that person.[35]

Another example of how thought and direct perception are intertwined in experience has to do with mistaken sense consciousnesses. The eye consciousness misperceiving a white snow mountain as blue has only the *shape* of that mountain as its appearing object. If correct direct perception is brought to bear on this, one can come to the conclusion that the blue color is just superimposed. Although both the shape of the mountain and the color blue appear to the eye consciousness, technically only the former can be posited as an actual appearing object.

A blue snow mountain does not exist but the appearance of such does exist. The difficulty in detailing exactly how this is perceived comes because, on the one hand, it seemingly does appear to the eye consciousness and yet, because it does not actually exist one might think that it is merely imputed by thought, in which case it would be a permanent phenomenon and incapable of being perceived by the eye consciousness. Some scholars assert that a mistaken eye consciousness such as the one perceiving a blue snow mountain does not have an appearing object at all.[36] The problem still remains of what exactly is appearing.

In his commentary to the *Chapter on Direct Perception* of Dharmakīrti's *Commentary on (Dignāga's) 'Compendium on Valid Cognition'* Gyel-Tsap asserts that the appearance of a blue snow mountain is an impermanent phenomenon which is of one substantial entity with the consciousness that perceives it (*shes pa dang rdzas gcig* or *shes pa'i rdzas*).[37] This appearance, being an impermanent phenomenon, is suitable to appear to direct perception. In this view, it is therefore not merely imputed by thought. Though one entity with consciousness, the appearance is not itself a consciousness.[38] It is also not a form because if it were it would have to exist out there on the mountain whereas in fact there is no blue on the snow mountain; if the form of a blue mountain did exist, the eye consciousness perceiving it would not be mistaken but affirmed as correct.[39] Thus, the appearance of a blue snow mountain is neither form nor consciousness but a third category — a non-associated compositional factor (*viprayukta-saṃskāra, ldan min 'du byed*). Any impermanent existent which is neither form nor consciousness — such as persons or impermanence — is a non-associated compositional factor.[40]

This assertion on the status of an appearance to a mistaken non-conceptual consciousness is common to Sautrāntika and Cittamātra.[41] The Cittamātrins take the further step of considering all appearances whatsoever to be one entity with the consciousness that perceives them, regardless of whether that consciousness is mistaken or non-mistaken.

Some Gelukba scholars, however, do not consider that the appearance of, for example, a blue snow mountain is one entity with the perceiving consciousness. In this view, such an appearance is merely imputed by thought and, therefore, a permanent phenomenon. The proponents of this position avoid the fault of positing that a permanent phenomenon appears to direct perception because an appearance of a double moon or a blue snow mountain is asserted to appear not to direct perception but to a consciousness that is devoid of conceptuality (*rtog 'bral gyi shes pa*). The perceiving consciousness is not a direct perceiver because it is mistaken and direct perceivers are defined in Sautrāntika as non-conceptual non-mistaken consciousnesses.[42]

The difficulty of determining exactly what types of conscious-

nesses and objects are involved in mistaken direct perception while still remaining within the strictures of Sautrāntika is one more indication that the line between 'actual' impermanent phenomena and phenomena imputed by thought is not always easily or clearly drawn. Yet, as we have noted, this line is the central axis of the system. The hidden premise here is that phenomena imputed by thought, or the appearing objects of thought, are always a category apart from those phenomena which are appearing objects of direct perception. The fact that this premise is sometimes difficult to maintain can be understood to indicate that a more subtle ontological theory, such as in Mādhyamika, is required. In the Buddhist context this is itself a useful insight; in the meantime, the overall purpose of contrasting the spheres of thought and direct perception is also well served. The intention behind highlighting the differences between the two types of valid cognition is to facilitate maximum use of each, and this is a purpose in keeping not only with Sautrāntika but with the higher systems as well.

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HOW THOUGHT REALIZES IMPERMANENT PHENOMENA

In terms of formulating a path to liberation from suffering, thought has special significance. Through training thought in the sense of developing certain conceptual images, such as that of subtle impermanence, one can ascertain truths that would otherwise never be accessible. Thought is thus seen as a vital instrument for the attainment of liberating knowledge.

This knowledge centers around developing a new understanding concerning the status of persons and other phenomena. Because the Sautrāntika system clearly states that impermanent phenomena cannot fully appear to thought, it must establish just how thought *can* get at impermanent phenomena. That it can do so is foundational to the conviction that meditative training which involves conceptual thought will in fact have a bearing on one's understanding of the actual, impermanent phenomena that *fully* appear only to direct perception. This in turn is only possible if thought does in some sense incontrovertibly and explicitly realize impermanent phenomena. The Gelukba discussion of Sautrāntika underscores that it considers such to be the case.

To take a simple example, consider the thought consciousness apprehending a pot. The appearing object of such a consciousness

is an image of pot, an appearance as opposite-from-non-pot. This image or meaning-generality, the appearing object (*snang yul*) is itself permanent in the sense that (1) it does not disintegrate from one moment to the next and (2) although it comes about through the power of thought, it is not produced from thought and thus is not a product of causes and conditions.[43] Although a thought consciousness apprehending a pot does not realize it fully in the manner of direct perception, such a thought consciousness does realize pot explicitly. What does this mean? Jam-yang-shay-ba's *Presentation of Awareness and Knowledge* (*bLo rig gi rnam bzhag*) gives the following definition of an awareness that explicitly realizes an object:

> [An awareness] realizing [its object] from the viewpoint of the aspect of that object appearing to that awareness.[44]

To know an object explicitly is to know it by way of an aspect of that object appearing. An explicit realization can be either conceptual or non-conceptual. This means that both direct and conceptual consciousnesses can know their objects by way of the aspect of that object appearing. In the case of a direct perceiver, the object casts its aspect to the consciousness; in the case of a conceptual explicit awareness, the aspect appears in the sense that the meaning-generality is an appearing object of that consciousness and in the sense that when the image of a pot appears to thought, the actual specifically characterized pot itself appears.[45] Further, although thought does not realize the pot directly (*mngon sum du*), it does actually and explicitly (*dngos su*) realize pot. In other words, even though thought's appearing object is only pot's image, what thought explicitly *realizes* is the actual, specifically characterized pot.[46] In doing so, it has neither the erroneous conception that this image is a pot nor does it articulate the correct conception that "this image definitely is not pot." However, in the sense that there is no clear discrimination between the image and the actual pot, the two are confused, and for this reason thought is said to be mistaken in relation to its appearing object — namely, the appearance as being opposite from all that is non-pot or, in other words, the image's seeming to be a pot. Correct thought, however, does not conceive that this appearance *is* opposite from all that is non-pot; it simply realizes the specifically characterized pot. It does so through understanding that this is something bulbous with a flat base and capable of holding fluids. Thus, although a pot, being impermanent, cannot

The Thirty Stanzas/Trimsika-karika
(On Cognitive Representation-Only/Vijnaptimatrata-siddhi)
By Vasubandhu
http://www.empty-universe.com/yogacara/trimsika.htm

Concepts of atman and dharmas do not imply the existence of a real atman and real dharmas, but are merely fictitious constructions. Because of this, all varieties of phenomenal appearances and qualities arise. The phenomena of atman and dharmas are [all mental representations] based on manifestation and transformation of consciousness.

Consciousnesses capable of unfolding or manifesting themselves may be grouped in **three general categories:**

(1) The consciousness whose fruits mature at varying times (i.e. alayavijnana);
(2) The consciousness that cogitates or deliberates (i.e. manas); And
(3) The consciousness that perceives and discriminates between spheres of objects (i.e. manovijnana and five sense consciousnesses).

The first is the alayavijnana (i.e. storehouse or repository consciousness). It is also called vipakavijnana (retributive consciousness) and sarvabijakavijnana (the consciousness that carries within it all bijas or seeds).

It is impossible to comprehend completely:
(1) What it 'holds and receives' (upadi);
(2) Its 'place' or 'locality' (sthana); and
(3) Its power or perception and discrimination (vijnapti).

It is at all times associated with five mental attributes (caittas), namely, mental contact (sparsa), attention (manaskara), sensation (vedana), conception (samjna), and volition (cetana). But it is always associated only with the 'sensation of indifference' (upeksa).

It belongs to the 'non-defiled-non-defined moral species.' The same is true in the case of mental contact (sparsa) and so forth. It is perpetually manifesting itself like a torrent, and is renounced (i.e. it ceases to be called the alaya) in the state of Arhatship (the state of the saint who enters Nirvana).

Next comes the second evolving consciousness. This consciousness is called manas. It manifests itself, with the alayavijnana as its basis and support, and takes that consciousness as its object. It has the nature and character of cogitation or intellection.

It is always accompanied by four klesas or vexing passions (sources of affliction and delusion), namely, self-delusion (atmamoha) and self-belief (atmadrsti), together with self-

conceit (atmamana) and self-love (atmasneha). It is also accompanied by the other mental associates (caittas), namely mental contact (sparsa) and so forth [attention, sensation, conception, and volition].

It belongs to the 'defiled-non-defined moral species' (neither good nor bad but defiled). It is active in the dhatu or bhumi in which the sentient being is born and to which he is bound. It ceases to exist at the stage of arhatship, in the 'meditation of annihilation' (state of complete extinction of thought and other mental qualities), and on the supramundane path.

Next comes the third evolving consciousness, which is divided into six categories of discrimination. Their nature and character consist of the perception and discrimination of spheres of objects. They are wholesome, unwholesome, and neither wholesome nor unwholesome.

They are associated with the universal caittas, the special caittas, the good caittas, the klesas (vexing passions or mental qualities), the upaklesas (secondary vexing passions or mental qualities), and the aniyatas (indeterminate mental associates). They are all associated with the three sensations (vedanas) [joy, sorrow, and indifference].

First, universal caittas: mental contact and so forth (attention, sensation, conception, volition).

Next, special caittas: desire (chanda), resolve (adhimoksa), memory (smrti), meditation (samadhi), and discernment (prajna). The objects perceived by the special caittas are particular and varied.

The wholesome caittas refer to: belief (sraddha), sense of shame (hri), sense of integrity (apatrapa), the three roots of non-covetousness (alobha) and so forth [non-anger (advesa) and non-delusion (amoha)], zeal or diligence (virya), composure of mind (prasrabdhi), vigilance (apramada), equanimity (upeksa), and harmlessness or non-injury (avihimsa).

The klesas are: covetousness (raga), anger (pratigha), delusion (moha), conceit (mana), doubt (vicikitsa), and false views (kudrsti).

The upaklesas (secondary vexing passions) are: (1) fury (krodha); (2) enmity (upanaha); (3) concealment or hypocrisy (mraksa); (4) vexation (pradasa); (5) envy (irsyr); (6) parsimony (matsarya); (7) deception (sathya); (8) duplicity or fraudulence (maya); (with) (9) harmfulness (vihimsa); (10) pride (mada); (11) Shamelessness (ahri); (12) non-integrity (atrapa or anapatrapya); (13) agitation or restlessness (uddhava); (with) (14) torpid-mindedness (styana); (15) unbelief (asraddha); (16) indolence (kausidya); (17) idleness (pramada); (18) forgetfulness (musitasmrtita); (19) distraction (viksepa); and (20) non-discernment or thoughtlessness (asamprajanya).

The indeterminate mental qualities refer to remorse (kamkrtya), drowsiness (middha), reflection (vitarka), and investigation (vicara); these two couples can be of two kinds.

In dependence upon the root consciousness (i.e. the eighth consciousness, alayavijnana) the five consciousnesses (of the senses) manifest themselves in accordance with carious causes and conditions, sometimes together, sometimes separately, just as waves manifest themselves in dependence upon the conditions of the water.

But the sixth consciousness (manovijnana) manifests itself at all times, except for beings born into the 'heavenly world without thought' (among asamjnidevas in whom thinking has entirely ceased), except also for those in the two mindless samapattis (two forms of meditation in which there is no more activity of thought) and those who are in states of stupor or unconsciousness.

The various consciousnesses manifest themselves in what seem to be two divisions: perception (darsanabhaga) and the object of perception (nimittabhaga). Because of this, atman and dharmas do not exist. For this reason, all is mere consciousness.

From the consciousness which contains all bijas (seeds) (i.e. the alayavijnana), such-and-such evolution or transformation takes place. Through the force of the mutual co-operation of the actual dharmas such-and-such kinds of distinction are engendered.

Owing to the habit-energy (bijas or vasana) of various previous deeds, together with the habit-energy of the two 'apprehensions' (grahas), as previous retribution (karma of previous existences) is exhausted, succeeding retribution (maturing in subsequent existences) is produced.

Because of such and such imaginations, such and such things are imagined, [i.e. conceived by the imagination]. What is conceived by this imagination (parikalpita-svabhava) has no nature of its own.

The self-nature which results from dependence on others (paratantra) consists of discriminations produced by causes and conditions.

The difference between the nature of Ultimate Reality (parinispanna) and the nature of dependence on others (paratantra) is that the former is eternally free from the parikalpita-nature (conception by the imagination) of the latter, that is, the paratantra (dependence on others for manifestation).

Thus, the nature of Ultimate Reality and the nature of dependence on others are neither different nor non-different, just as impermanence is neither different nor non-different from impermanent dharmas.

One does not perceive the nature of dependence on others as long one has not perceived that of Ultimate Reality.

On the basis of the three natures of existence are established the three natures of non-existence (nihsvabhava). For this reason the Buddha preached, with secret intention, that all dharmas have no nature of their own.

(1) The first is non-existence as regards characteristics (laksana-nihsvabhava) [since they are but products of the imagination].

(2) The second is non-existence as regards innate nature or origination (utpattinihsvabhava) [since it is the result of discrimination].

(3) The last is [non-existence as regards the supreme truth about all dharmas (paramartha-nihsvabhava)] which is far removed from the first 'nature of mere-imagination,' in which things are believed to be a real atman and real dharmas.

This supreme truth about all dharmas (dharmaparamartha) is also Bhutatathata (chen-ju, genuine thusness, absolute reality), because it is immutable, remaining constantly thus in its nature. This is the true nature of mere-consciousness (vijnaptimatrata).

As long as the consciousness (of wisdom) has not arisen to seek to abide in the state of vijnaptrmatrata, the 'attachment' and 'drowsiness' (anusayas) arising from the two 'apprehensions' (grahas) cannot, as yet, be suppressed and obliterated.

As long as one places something before himself and, taking it as an object, declares that it is the nature of mere-consciousness, he is really not residing in the state of mere-consciousness, because he is in possession of something.

If, in perceiving the sphere of objects, wisdom (jnana) no longer conceives any idea of the object, then that wisdom is in the state of vijnaptimatrata, because both the object to be appended and the act of apprehending by consciousness are absent.

Without perception, inconceivable and incomprehensible, this is transcendental suramundane wisdom (jnana), because of the abandonment of the crude dross of the two barriers (avarnas), inner transformation (asrayaparavrtti) into perfect wisdom is achieved.

This is the Pure Dhatu (the undefiled realm) which is inconceivable and incomprehensible, good and eternal, where one is in a state of blissfulness with one's emancipated body (vimuktikaya); this is the law of 'Great Silence' (mahamuni), the Dharmakaya, realized by the great Buddha, Shakyamuni.

Buddhist Phenomenology
A Philosophical Investigation of Yogacara Buddhism
and the *Ch 'eng Wei-shih lun*
Dan Lusthaus
Routledge Curzon

Analysis of the Verses

The thirty verses of the *Triṃśikā* can be grouped as follows:

(1) **Verse 1**
Statement of the basic thesis, viz. that what we experience as self and other, me and things, subjective and objective cognitive vectors (*ātman* and *dharmā*), etc., are actually linguistic displacements (*upacāra*) produced by a threefold alteration (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness (*vijñāna*). The Yogācāra theory of Alterity.

(2) **Verses 2-16**
Abhidharmic discussion of the Eight Consciousnesses

(2a) **Verses 2-4**[4]
The ālaya-vijñāna

(2b) **Verses 5-7**
Manas

(2c) **Verses 8-16**
Mano-vijñāna and the pravṛtti-vijñānas

(2c.1) **Verses 8-9**
Mano-vijñāna

(2c.2) **Verses 10-14**
A listing of the caittas, i.e., the General, the Specific, the Advantageous (*kuśala*), the basic and secondary Mental Disturbances (*kleśa* and *upakleśa*) and the Indeterminate (*aniyata*).[5]

(2c.3) **Verse 15**
The Five Sense-Consciousnesses: They depend on the root consciousness (*mūla-vijñāna* = ālaya-vijñāna), and they sometimes work in tandem, sometimes not

(2c.4) **Verse 16**
Conditions in which mano-vijñāna does or does not occur

(3) **Verses 17-19**
Recasting *pariṇāma* (alterity) in terms of discrimination (*vikalpa*) and karmic conditioning (*vāsanā, grāha-grāhya, vipāka*, etc.)

(4) **Verses 20-25**

The Three (non-) Self-natures (*tri-[a-]svabhāva*)

(5) **Verses 26-30**
Descriptions of the five stages of realization

Another way of grouping the verses is to graft them onto the Four Noble Truths.

1. The first Noble Truth is a statement of the problem, i.e., the symptoms. For the *Triṃśikā* that would be the *pariṇāma* (alteration) of consciousness into self and dharmas by means of linguistic, conceptual imprecision (*upacāra*). That is the topic of v.1 of the *Triṃśikā*. Self and dharmas are set up in an appropriational economy, which for Yogācāra is the root problem, namely *grāhya-grāhaka*, grasped and grasper.
2. The second Noble Truth is the diagnosis, the reason for the symptoms. Verses 2-16 provide a detailed categorization of the various consciousnesses, their characteristics, in which conditions they cease to operate, and a classificatory discussion based on the Yogācāra abhidharma system. According to Sthiramati and *Ch'eng wei-shih lun*, vs. 1-16 are themselves *upacāra*, imprecise metaphors or metonymies.

Vs. 17-19 recast the issues raised in v. 1 in a different language, one more focused on logic and analysis than on classification. This comes as a sort of philosophical rupture, an intermission in the trajectory of the *Triṃśikā*'s presentation. Listing and sorting items gives way to thinking about the dynamics underlying them: The discriminative process that sorts, the compulsions and proclivities that motivate the discriminations, etc. Sthiramati and Hsüan-tsang call this section the 'proofs' section. Since the portion of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* dealing with these verses is the most significant philosophically, and the aim of this work is to investigate Yogācāra philosophy, the analysis and discussion of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* beginning in chapter sixteen will concentrate largely on this section, drawing in other parts of the *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* that have bearing on the issues dealt with there.

3. The third Noble Truth offers the prognosis, i.e., a decision about whether what was diagnosed can be cured. The prognosis, according to Buddhism, is good. Vs. 20-25 deal with the trisvabhāva theory. By applying the proper antidotes (*pratipakṣa*), the problem of svabhāva can be emptied when recognized for what it is. In the jargon of trisvabhāva, pariniṣpanna is the antidote to the parikalpic pollution of paratantra; pariniṣpanna empties parikalpita from paratantra.
4. The fourth Noble Truth is the treatment plan, the prescription. Vs. 26-30 each deal with one of the five stages of Yogācāra practice.

The *Triṃśikā*, and consequently the entire *Ch'eng wei-shih lun* seeks to discuss one thing: *vijñāna-pariṇāma*, the alterity of consciousness.

Treatise in Thirty Verses on Mere-consciousness

A Critical English Translation of Hsüan-tsang's Chinese Version of the Vijñaptimātratātriṃśikā with notes from Dharmapāla's commentary in Chinese

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attainment of final realization (*bodhi*) which is also the cessation of the ideas (*sarvanimittoparama*).

7. ANALYSIS OF THE THIRTY VERSES IN THE *WSSSLS*

After introductory comment on the three aspects of the *Wei-shih*, Hsüan-tsang raises the opponent's question that the people and scriptures speak about the existence of the self and the elements, hence how can one say that there is only consciousness? In answer the *Triṁśikā* Verse 1 says that the self and the elements are only fictitious constructions of mind and have no existence of their own. The idea of the self and the elements assumes many forms with specific characteristics (*svalakṣaṇa*). These various phenomena appear as the result of the manifestations or evolution of consciousness (*vijñāna-pariṇāma*).

Verse 2 speaks of three kinds of evolution of consciousness—retribution (*vipāka*), deliberation (*manana*), and perception of the world of sense-objects (*viṣayavijñapti*). Retribution is called the *ālayavijñāna*, deliberation is called the *manas*, and perception of sense-objects is called the *pravṛttivijñāna*. Considered as effect the *ālayavijñāna* is named as 'maturing consciousness' (*vipāka*), as it is the maturation of good and evil deeds. Considered as cause, the *ālayavijñāna* is named as 'that which has all the seeds' (*sarvabījaka*) as it holds and retains the seeds of all elements.

Verse 3 in its first section describes the mode of activity (*ākāra*) and the object (*ālambana*) of the *ālayavijñāna*. The mode of activity is perception (*vijñapti*) because it is in perception that the *ālaya* has its mode of activity. The object of the perception of the *ālaya* is twofold—(i) its 'place' (*sthāna*), i.e. the external world, the place that supports living beings, and (ii) 'What it holds and receives' (*upādi*), i.e. the *bījas* and the physical body, both held and received by the *ālayavijñāna*. The second section mentions the associated mental activities (*caitta*) of the *ālaya*. The *ālaya* is associated with five mental activities, i.e. touch (*sparśa*), attention (*manaskāra*), sensation

(*vedanā*), thought (*saṃjñā*), and volition (*cetanā*). These are detailed in the *CWSL*.[75]

The first section of Verse 4 states the sensation of the *ālaya*. The *ālaya* is always associated with the sensation of indifference (*upekṣā*) only. The remaining section of Verse 4 explains the moral species of the *ālaya* and its *caittas*. From moral viewpoint, the *ālaya* is defiled and undefined because it is 'retribution' in its nature. Regarding the nature of the stream of the *ālaya* consciousness as to whether it is permanent or impermanent, it is said that since the *ālaya* consciousness continuously flows like the current of a stream, it is neither permanent nor impermanent. From the beginningless time it is born and perishes from moment to moment in an everchanging manner. As cause it perishes, so it is not permanent; as effect, it is born, so it is not impermanent. Thus this consciousness is in 'perpetual evolution like a torrent'. The verse also states that in the state of an *arhat*, when the obstacle of the *kleśas* is completely removed, it is then only the stream of the *ālayavijñāna* is arrested.

Verse 5 describes the characteristics of the *manas*, the second evolving consciousness. The *manas* manifests itself with the *ālayavijñāna* as its basis and takes that consciousness as its object. The *manas* has the nature of cognition (*manana*).

Verse 6 elaborates the associates of the *manas*. As it always clings with the self, it is closely related with the four fundamental defilements (*kleśas*), i.e. self-ignorance (*ātmamoha*), self-belief (*ātmadṛṣṭi*), self-pride (*ātmamāna*), and self-love (*ātmasneha*). The *manas* is also associated with other *caittas* which are eighteen in number according to Dharmapāla. These are elaborated in the *CWSL*.[76]

Verse 7 describes the nature of the *caittas* or associates of the *manas* as belonging to the defiled-undefined category. The four *kleśas* obscure the mind; hence they are defiled. However, they are neither good nor bad, so they are undefined. The mental associates of the *manas* work along the *dhātu* or *bhūmi* in which the sentient being is born and to which he is confined. Defiled *manas* ceases to exist in the state of *arhatship*. However, in

the case of the *śaikṣas* the defiled *manas* is subdued in the state of 'meditation of annihilation' (*nirodhasamāpatti*), and while the *śaikṣas* are on the supramundane path.

In Verse 8, the characteristics of the third development of consciousness is explained. It has six different categories in accordance with the six sense-organs (*indriya*) and their sphere of objects (*viṣaya*). The six consciousnesses are the knowledge of matter (*rūpa*), sound (*śabda*), smell (*gandha*), taste (*rasa*), tactual data (*spraṣṭavya*), and the ideas (*dharma*, non-sensuous). All these six consciousnesses have the perception and discrimination of objects as their essential nature. As to the moral species of the six consciousnesses, they are good (*kuśala*), bad (*akuśala*) and undefined (*avyākṛta*).

Verses 9-14 describe fifty-one mental associates of the six consciousnesses. These *caittas* are divided into six different classes—1. Universal *Caittas*—mental contact, attention, sensation, thought and volition. 2. Special *Caittas*—desire, resolve, memory, meditation, and wisdom. 3. Good *Caittas*—belief, sense of shame, sense of integrity, non-coveteousness, non-anger, non-delusion, zeal, composure of mind, vigilance, equanimity and harmlessness. 4. Six major defilements—coveteousness, anger, delusion, conceit, doubt and false views. 5. Twenty minor defilements—fury, enmity, hypocrisy, vexation, envy, parismony, deception, duplicity, harmfulness, pride, shamelessness, non-integrity, restlessness, torpid-mindedness, unbelief, indolence, carelessness, fogetfulness, distraction and non-discernment. 6. Indeterminate mental factors—remorse, drowsiness, reasoning and deliberation. All these *Caittas* are explained in detail in the *CWSL*.[77] These *Caittas* are also associated with three sensations (*vedanā*)—joy, sorrow and indifference.

Verses 15 and 16 describe the conditions in which the six consciousnesses are manifested. The first five consciousnesses take the *ālayavijñāna* as their support and manifest in accordance with the combining of the conditions like the act of attention, the sense-organ (*indriya*) and the object (*viṣaya*). Depending on conditions, sometimes they arise together, sometimes separately like the waves of water, which, depending

on conditions, are sometimes numerous, sometimes few. Verse 16 gives the conditions when the thought-consciousness (*mano-vijñāna*) no longer occurs—in the existence of the *asaṃjñidevas* in which the mode of existence is 'destruction of thought' (*saṃjñānirodha*), in the two states of highest meditation (*samāpatti*), the extreme form of stupor (*acittakaṃ middhaṃ*) and states of unconsciousness (*acittakaṃ mūrchā*).

On Verse 17 Hsüan-tsang comments that the three evolutions of consciousness along with their associates which are capable of manifestation have already been explained in verses 1-16. Verse 17 elaborates the point that those are called manifestations or developments (*pariṇāma*) as they are capable of development which appears to have two aspects—the perceiving part (*darśanabhāga*) and the perceived part (*nimittabhāga*). The last part of the verse 'all is Mere-consciousness' means that 'apart from what is thus developed from consciousness, there are no real *ātman* or *dharmas*; because, besides what apprehends or is apprehended, there exists nothing as real excepting these two aspects. Therefore all the phenomenal, all the noumenal, or all appearing as both real and false is nothing but consciousness.'[78]

Verse 18, as observed by the *WSSSLS* provides an answer to the opponent's question as following—if there is only consciousness and no external causation, from what are produced the manifold distinctions? Verse 18 explains causation from the standpoint of consciousness. Because of the differing developments of the pure and impure seeds present in the *ālayavijñāna* and by the force of the mutual influence of the eight consciousnesses, the different kinds of distinctions are produced. So there is no need to assume an external cause to explain their generation.

In his introductory comment to verse 19, Hsüan-tsang in the *WSSSLS* asks that if only internal consciousness exists, then in the absence of external conditions, how the uninterrupted succession of births and deaths can be explained? Verse 19 says that various actions (*karma*) impress the various seeds on the *ālayavijñāna*. These seeds which are capable of producing fruits are called *vasanas* or 'forces of habit' (Chinese *hsi-ch'i*).

Again, the two concepts (*grāha*) as *pudgala* (subject) and *dharmas* (object) leave their impressions on the *ālayavijñāna* as the potentials capable of engendering the two *grāhas*. The seeds derived from the actions and the seeds derived from the two *grāhas* help each other to produce fruits of retribution. In this way the continuous process of births and deaths, i.e. the *saṃsāra*, is due to the operation of various forces of habit.

Verses 20-22 briefly explain the Three-nature theory. To reconcile the Three-nature theory preached by the Buddha with the theory of Mere-consciousness advocated by the *Vijñānavādins* the *WSSSLS* mentions that the three natures are not separable from consciousness. The nature of imagination (*parikalpitasvabhāva*) is the form of knowledge in which things are imagined to exist where in fact there is no such thing. The *WSSSLS* translates Verse 20: 'from such and such imaginations, various things are imagined, what is apprehended by this imagination has no self-nature'.[79] The nature of dependence on others (*paratantrasvabhāva*) is the form of knowledge with which we analyse the existence. Everything depends on others for its existence, as things arise only as neutrally conditioned and there is no substantiality of any individual object. Thus *paratantrasvabhāva* is 'the act of discriminations produced by causes and conditions'. In the second part of the Verse 21, the nature of ultimate reality (*pariniṣpannasvabhāva*) is described. It is the knowledge of things as they are, the complete and perfect real nature of all *dharmas*. The translation goes 'the nature of ultimate reality is different from this (i.e. *paratantrasvabhāva*), as the former (*paratantra*) is perpetually free from the former (*parikalpita*) nature'. Verse 22 mentions the relationship of the *paratantrasvabhāva* and the *pariniṣpannasvabhāva* as neither different, nor non-different. Hsüan-tsang explains in the *CWSL* that if *pariniṣpanna* or *tathatā* were different from the *paratantra*, *tathatā* would not be the real nature of the *paratantra*. If it were not different, *tathatā* would not be eternal. In fact, such is the relation of *dharmatā* or *tathatā* with *dharmas* which are *Paratantra*, because the absolute (*paramārtha*) and relative (*saṃvṛti*) mutually support each other.[80] Verse 22 further says: 'as long as this (nature of ultimate reality)

is not perceived, that (nature of dependence on others) is also not perceived'. The *CWSL* elaborates: 'If one has not realized *pariniṣpanna*, one cannot discern the 'nature of *paratantra*', because if one has not understood that *parikalpita* is non-existent, one cannot truly know the manner of existence of *paratantra*. Only when the pure intuition (*nirvikalpakajñāna*) has realized *tathatā*, the subsequent wisdom (*pṛṣṭhalabdhajñāna*) is capable of penetrating (*pratividh*) *paratantra*, and understanding it as an illusion.[81]

Verse 23 finds a reconciliation between the doctrines of three natures of existence and the doctrine of the naturelessness or emptiness of the *dharmas* as preached by the Buddha. The verse explains that on the basis of the three natures of existence, the three natures of non-existences (i.e. non-existence regarding characteristics or *lakṣaṇaniḥsvabhāvatā*, non-existence regarding origination or *utpattiniḥsvabhāvatā*, and non-existence regarding ultimate reality or *paramārthaniḥsvabhāvatā*) are established. The second part of Verse 23 explains that because of this, the Buddha preaches that all *dharmas* are without self-nature. Verse 24 mentions the three natures of non-existence in detail.

Verse 25 explains the real nature of Mere-consciousness. The translation in the *WSSSLS* goes: '*pariniṣpanna* is the *paramārtha* of all *dharmas* because it is their *paramārthasatya*'. It adds: 'this *paramārtha* of all *dharmas* is also the *bhūtatathatā* (*chen-ru*). *Chen* means real. It indicates that *pariniṣpanna* is not false. *Ru* (suchness) means always such. It indicates that *pariniṣpanna* does not change. Therefore *pariniṣpanna* is called *chen-ru* (*bhūtatathatā*) with the idea that it is not changeable and not false. Finally the verse says that *pariniṣpanna* is the real nature of the *vijñaptimātratā*.'[82] The *CWSL* explains that the *vijñaptimātratā* is of two kinds—(1) false, i.e. *parikalpita*, and (2) real, i.e. *pariniṣpanna*. To indicate this difference, it is said that *pariniṣpanna* is the real *vijñaptimātratā*.[83]

Verses 26-30 explain the five stages of the realization of the Mere-consciousness. Verses 21-4 have already suggested that from the beginningless time the *bījas* or the potentials, pure

or impure, exist and together with other conditions mature in the *ālayavijñāna* engendering actual *dharmas*, pure or impure. As only pure *bījas* can produce pure *dharmas* that lead to the realization of the ultimate reality, i.e. the Mere-consciousness, the path of the attainment of Truth must be practised by the individuals possessing the special *bīja*-natures (*gotra*) prescribed in the *Mahāyāna*. The *WSSSLS* elaborates: 'What are the two *bija* natures of the *Mahāyāna*? They are: (1) the original or natural *bīja*-natures, i.e. the *bījas* or the causes of pure *dharmas* which exist naturally and from the beginningless time have found their abode and support in the eighth consciousness, and (2) the *bīja*-nature which results from perfuming (*vāsanā*). That is to say, on the basis of the bearing of the doctrine which 'flows in equal currents from the *dharmadhātu*', this *bīja*-nature has triple wisdom. All possessing these two *bija*-natures are capable to be awaken to and enter *vijñaptimātratā*.'[84]

The first stage of the holy path is the stage of 'moral provisioning' (*sambhārāvasthā*). This is the cultivation of the *mokṣabhāgīyas* of the *Mahāyāna* i.e. the spiritual qualities leading to liberation from delusion. The period extends from the production of the profound and firm 'mind of *bodhi*' (*bodhicitta*) up to the production of the *nirvedhabhāgīyas* (*uṣmagata* etc., see n. 170). In this stage, the *bodhisattva* has as yet not been able to suppress the *anuśayas* or *bījas* produced by the two graspings (*grāha*), so that these *anuśayas* do not produce the two actual graspings. The translation of Verse 26 goes: 'until the consciousness to seek to reside in the nature of Mere-consciousness has not arisen, the attachments from the twofold graspings cannot be suppressed'.[85] In this stage the *bodhisattva* is capable of acquiring deep faith and understanding with regard to the nature and characteristics of consciousness as described in Verse 26.

With reference to Verse 27, the *WSSSLS* says that the second is the stage of 'intensifying action' (*prayogāvasthā*). This is the cultivation of the *nirvedabhāgīyas*, i.e. the selection between the true and the false. The period extends from the cultivation of four 'good roots' (*kuśalamūla*) etc. to the end of first kalpa, i.e. the end of the *adhimukticaryābhūmi* (the *bhūmi* of mental

resolution). The translation goes: 'One who takes something before him as an object and declares it as the nature of consciousness only, since he has something in his possession he is not really residing in the Mere-consciousness.'[86] In this stage the *bodhisattva* can gradually get rid of the concepts of 'what is grasped' (object) and 'what grasps' (subject).

The third stage is the stage of penetrating understanding (*prativedhāvasthā*). It refers to the 'thought of entrance into the first *bhūmi*.' The *WSSSLS* comments in the introduction to Verse 28: 'this is the position of insight into the supramundane Truth acquired by the *bodhisattva*. In this stage he penetrates and understands Reality.'[87] Verse 28 describes the characteristics of this stage. In this stage when the *bodhisattva* with respect to an object (*ālambana*) attains the non-discriminating wisdom (*nirvikalpakajñāna*) which does not cognize anything as object in perception then it is said that he resides in the true nature of the *vijñaptimātratā*, i.e. *bhūtatathatā*. His wisdom and *bhūtatathatā* are on the same level, both being devoid of two aspects of discrimination—the subject (*grāhaka*) and the object (*grāhya*). This stage is also called *darśanamārga* (the stage of insight into truth) because it is the first intuition of the ultimate truth.

The fourth stage is called the stage of practising cultivation (*bhāvanāvasthā*). This period extends from the 'thought of residence in the first *bhūmi*' up to the diamond *samādhi*. In accordance with the principles of insight which he has acquired in the *darśanamārga*, the *bodhisattva* cultivates the non-discriminating wisdom 'suppressing what remains of as *kleśāvaraṇa* and cutting off what remains of as *jñeyāvaraṇa*.' Verse 29 says that in this stage the ascetic continues to cultivate *darśanamārga* with a view to remove that two obstructions (*āvaraṇas*) and to experience the 'revolution of the substratum' (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*). The non-discriminating knowledge is incomprehensible as it is devoid of all objects. As its mysterious function is incomprehensible, it is called 'inconceivable' (*acintya*).

The fifth stage is the stage of the attainment of the final realization (*bodhi*). With reference to Verse 30 that describes

this stage, the *WSSSLS* comments: 'this stage means abiding in the *anuttarasamyaksaṃbodhi* (supreme enlightenment). Getting out of the *āvaraṇas*, he attains complete enlightenment and is capable of striving for the transformation of all sentient beings until the end.' The revolution of the basis achieved in the previous stage produces two fruits—*nirvāṇa* and *mahābodhi*. Verse 30 says that these two fruits are the pure *dhātus* of the final attainment. These are pure in contrast to the *dhātus* of the preceding four stages and to the *dhātus* of the two vehicles. It is 'inconceivable' because it is beyond mind and expression. It is good because it is of the true nature of the good *dharmas*. It is eternal because it never exhausts itself. It is blissful because it is the cessation of all ideas. The great Buddha possessed of the great qualities of *muni* (tranquillity) obtained the two fruits which are designated as the *dharmakāya*, as they are completely dissociated from the two barriers, *kleśāvaraṇa* and *jñeyāvaraṇa*.

8. VIJÑAPTIMĀTRATĀ: PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION (Résumé of the *Vijñaptimātratāsiddhiśāstra, CWSL*)

From *vijñānavāda* point of view, all sentient beings suffer due to two false beliefs: belief in the real existence of self (*ātman*) and belief in the real existence of things (*dharma*). The understanding of *vijñaptimātratā* destroys these beliefs by demonstrating that both self and things are unreal. They are only constructions based on wrong views and designations and do not have any reality of their own. Their various characteristics (*lakṣaṇa*) appear on the basis of the evolution (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness.

A. *Non-existence of the Self*[88]

The *Vijñānavādins* hold that the real existence of self admitted by different systems of philosophy is impossible. Among the theories on the existence of self the three main theories are examined here. The first theory (of the *Sāṃkhya* and the *Vaiśeṣika* schools) holds that the substance of the self is eternal.

Mahāyāna Buddhism

The doctrinal foundations

Second edition

Paul Williams

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Substratum consciousness, consciousness and immaculate consciousness

All the phenomenal world depends in some sense on consciousness. However, the Yogācāra tradition was not content to leave the matter at this point. Rather, it distinguished eight types of consciousness: the five sense consciousnesses plus the mind (*manovijñāna*) – a sense which on the one hand apprehends psychic events, and on the other synthesizes experiences supplied by the other five senses – together with the 'tainted mind' (*kliṣṭamanas*), and the substratum consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*).[32] The tainted mind takes the substratum consciousness as its object and mistakenly considers the substratum consciousness to be a true Self.[33] These eight forms are the working out of the discrimination into subject and object. The substratum consciousness can be explained as this working out seen from the subjective perspective, the cause (when viewed subjectively in terms of one's own mind) responsible for or implicated one way or another in the whole cosmic manifestation. It is likened by Vasubandhu to a great torrent of water or a river (*Triṃśikā* v. 5, see Vasubandhu 1984; cf. *Saṃdhinirmocana* 5: 5, see Lamotte 1935; Waldron 2003: 97–101, 138), which is changing every moment but which nevertheless preserves a certain identity. According to Sthiramati it is actually the same 'thing' as the construction of the nonexistent (on *Madhyāntavibhāga* 1: 3, see Maitreyanātha 1937; cf. *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* 1: 61, see Maitreyanātha 1970). Elsewhere, as we might expect, the *ālayavijñāna* is also identified with the dependent nature (see Kiyota 1962: 21; but cf. Griffiths 1986: 95). However clearly that cannot be strictly correct. This is because in discussing the Three Natures we saw that the dependent nature in its various forms is ontologically the one real and truly nondual flow of consciousness. The substratum consciousness, on the other hand, is spoken of as a psychological factor concerning each sentient being, one of eight (or possibly nine) types of consciousness. Clearly, as one of eight the substratum consciousness cannot be strictly identical with the one nondual flow of consciousness.

In actual fact the substratum consciousness can be seen under a number of facets. One of its chief functions is to serve as a repository for the 'seeds' (*bīja*) which explain phenomenal existence in general and personal experiences which result from previous deeds in particular. 'From whence do all things arise', asks Kambala, 'and in what do they dissolve?' The answer, he tells us, is that they arise from their own seed-impressions which are stored in the substratum consciousness.[34] The substratum consciousness is an ever-changing stream which underlies the experience of saṃsāric existence. It is said to be 'perfumed' by phenomenal acts (the 'perfumings' are *vāsanās*, impressions, or tendencies), and the seeds which are said to be the result of this perfuming reach fruition at certain times to manifest as experiences of good, bad or indifferent phenomena (see Griffiths 1992: 119–20). Hence, as Hattori (Williams 2005b: 36) observes, among other things '[t]he doctrine of *ālaya*-consciousness (*vijñāna*) is a theory which accounts for the formation of mental images without dependence on external objects'. The substratum consciousness, seen as a defiled form of consciousness (or perhaps sub- or unconsciousness), is personal, individual, continually changing and yet serving to give a degree of personal identity and to explain why it is that certain

karmic results pertain to this particular individual.[35] The seeds are momentary, but they give rise to a perfumed series which eventually culminates in the result including, from seeds of a particular type, the whole 'inter-subjective' phenomenal world.[36] This inter-subjective world is the product of seeds which are common to all relevant substratum consciousnesses, the results of appropriate common previous experiences stretching back through beginningless time. Note, therefore, that for Yogācāra there are multiple substratum consciousnesses – indeed, one for each sentient being – not just one only. It thus makes sense, it is held, to speak of the minds of other people. One need not argue, on Yogācāra grounds, that there exists only the one flow of consciousness currently and indubitably experiencing in a first-person manner (i.e. *my* consciousness). In this way Yogācāra seeks to avoid solipsism, the view that the only thing which exists is *one's own* mind.[37]

There was, however, some dispute over whether all seeds were the results of perfuming, or whether there were some seeds which were latent from all eternity in the substratum. According to Dharmapāla, followed by Xuanzang in the *Chengweishilun*, there were seeds of both types in the substratum consciousness, so that not all seeds were the results of karma (Hsüan-tsang 1973: 117–21; Cook 1999: 48–53). One interesting result of all this, to be noted in passing, is that at least some within the Yogācāra tradition seem to have maintained that certain people possess seeds only for Arhatship or Pratyekabuddha-hood, and not for full Buddhahood, so that some sentient beings would never become full Buddhas.[38] More radically, there are some beings (known as *icchantikas*, 'decadents') who lack the requisite good seeds altogether, so that by the very nature of things those beings can never become enlightened (Hsüan-tsang 1973: 123–5; cf. Cook 1999: 55–6). This view, out of step with the widely-held position that emerged in Mahāyāna that every sentient being possesses the potential for Buddhahood (associated with the Buddha-nature teachings; see Chapter 5 below), was held in East Asia by the Faxiang school that developed on the basis of Xuanzang's *Chengweishilun*.

The substratum consciousness is said to be the actual level of consciousness that transmigrates, carrying with it all its karmic seeds and producing the linkage between one life and the next.[39] Its presence in the body is also held to be what renders the body a living body and not a dead one. Hence even when we are 'unconscious' we do not die.[40] Although it apparently performs some of the functions of a Self, Yogācāra tradition denied vehemently that with the substratum consciousness it had smuggled in a Self by the back door. In the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra* the Buddha forcefully states that he had not taught the substratum consciousness to the immature since they would only conceive it to be a Self (Lamotte 1935: 5: 7; Waldron 2003: 101, 120; cf. 223, n. 43). It is indeed the substratum consciousness which for this tradition is the conventional self, the referent of the word 'I', and is misapprehended by the tainted mind and taken as a real substantial Self, a permanent and stable 'I' or 'Me'. This is incorrect, however. The substratum consciousness is an ever-changing stream (e.g. *Chengweishilun*, in Hsüan-tsang 1973: 171–3; Cook 1999: 75–6), no doubt an attempt to explain the evolution of the world as experienced from consciousness, and certain problems of personal identity, but in no way something to be grasped

or attached to as a Self. According to Asaṅga and Vasubandhu it 'ceases' at enlightenment.[41] Since the substratum consciousness (with the reservations expressed above) appears to be identical in substance, i.e. the same 'thing', with the construction of the nonexistent, that is, effectively the tainted dependent nature, its cessation in the Mahāyāna context need not necessarily entail a complete cessation of consciousness or experience.[42] There has simply been a 'reversal of the basis' (*āśrayaparāvṛtti*, or *āśrayaparivṛtti*). Indeed, Asaṅga speaks in the *Mahāyānasaṃgraha* of the cessation of the personal, individual, falsifying constructions of consciousness, but not of the common, inter-subjective world, which becomes the object of a purified vision for the enlightened yogin (1938; 1: 60; cf. Waldron 2003: 160 ff.). Otherwise, of course, it might be felt that an enlightened Buddha would be incapable of helping anyone. What happens at the point when the substratum consciousness 'ceases' was, however, the subject of an intense debate, particularly in China.

According to the Indian missionary Paramārtha (499–569), who founded in China the Shelun school of Yogācāra, when the substratum consciousness ceases there remains, shining in its own purity, a ninth consciousness, the 'immaculate consciousness' (*amalavijñāna*). This consciousness is the permanent, ultimate, true reality. According to the later Faxiang school of Yogācāra, founded by Xuanzang following Dharmapāla, however, the cessation of the substratum consciousness is only a cessation of the substratum consciousness inasmuch as it is tainted. The pure consciousness which remains is the same substantial 'thing' as the flow of the substratum consciousness, but under a different name.[43] This dispute seems, as such, to have been little known in India, although the seventh-century Korean commentator Wŏnch'ŭk[44] in his commentary on the *Saṃdhinirmocana Sūtra* identified Paramārtha with the tradition of Sthiramati, and portrayed the dispute as one of those arising from the split between the school of Valabhī and that of Nālandā (Demiéville 1973: 43–4). Since the substratum consciousness, inasmuch as it is the construction of the nonexistent, to all intents and purposes here equals in substance the tainted dependent nature, it follows that the purified consciousness is a purified version of what was, when tainted, the substratum consciousness. This appears to correspond with Xuanzang's tradition. We can either speak of this purified consciousness as the purified substratum consciousness or, keeping 'substratum consciousness' for tainted consciousness, refer to it as an 'immaculate consciousness' (*amalavijñāna*). But they are effectively the same thing. Nevertheless, in Paramārtha's tradition there seems to have been a strong desire to emphasize the pure immaculate consciousness as an Absolute, the ultimate reality in the fullest possible sense, and therefore literally itself an ontologically ultimate perfected nature standing in radical opposition to the conceptualized and dependent natures.[45] From this perspective the immaculate consciousness must be quite different in substance from the substratum consciousness since, whatever it might be, the substratum consciousness is clearly not the perfected nature. Also, as a flow capable of being tainted and then purified, the substratum consciousness would seem to lack the qualities necessary for a true immaculate Absolute Reality. It is known that Paramārtha (unlike, as far as we can tell, Sthiramati) was associated with the doctrine of the *tathāgatagarbha*, the Buddha-nature, which will be

the subject of the following chapter, and it seems that this doctrine provided a basis for his teaching of the absolute and immutable *amalavijñāna*.[46]

Yet more disputes within the Yogācāra tradition

It appears from the *Chengweishilun* that Dharmapāla's tradition took very seriously and literally the *Triṃśikā* teaching of the transformation (*pariṇāma*) of consciousness. Indeed within this tradition consciousness as the flow of perceptions appears to have been thought of as a kind of substance or almost a subtle stuff which can be divided into parts. Consciousness, it is said, genuinely transforms itself into two parts (*bhāga*). The first part is the subjective awareness, called the 'seeing part' (*darśanabhāga*). The other part is that which is apprehended (*nimittabhāga*), effectively the objectified image. These correspond to experienced subject and object. The consciousness itself, which undergoes this transformation, is called the 'reflexive' or 'self-aware' part (*svasaṃvittibhāga*), or sometimes the 'essential part' (*svabhāvikabhāga*). This third part is what consciousness is in itself – all consciousness for the Yogācāra tradition is self-aware, it knows itself, reflexively knows that it knows, at the same time as it knows objects. An image often used in Yogācāra sources is that consciousness is like a lamp that illuminates itself in the very same act in which it performs its function of illuminating or making known others (cf. Hattori in Williams 2005b: 55–7). The *Chengweishilun* comments that if this dimension of consciousness did not exist there could be no memory, since one cannot remember experiences that were not formerly themselves actually experienced as such (in addition to experiencing subject and objects). If we do not *know that* we see blue at the same time as actually seeing blue, how could we remember that we saw blue, since we remember not just blue but that we *saw* blue. Thus all consciousness is also reflexive, or self-aware, and this is indeed the very feature that distinguishes consciousness from insentient things like matter.[47] According to Dharmapāla's tradition there is also a fourth part, which knows this self-aware part, although he seems to have avoided an infinite regress by stopping at this point (Hsüan-tsang 1973: 137–45; Cook 1999: 60–4). Since these are genuine transformations of consciousness the primordial mistake lies not in the notion of subject and object as such, but rather in considering them to be intrinsically separate entities when really they are the same substance, consciousness. Duality is false, not the world seen through nondual perception. Thus the conceptualized nature is the conception of duality. The actual subjects and objects themselves, seen as nondual images of consciousness, are true and make up the dependent nature in its various guises.

For Sthiramati, however, it appears that from the final point of view none of this has taken place. There is no real transformation of consciousness. It is all the result of mistaken apprehension. In reality, meaning from the point of view of an enlightened being, there is only the nondual flow of pure and presumably contentless consciousness. Sthiramati quotes from a text which states that in nonconceptual awareness (*nirvikalpajñāna*) all *dharmas* (i.e. all things) are experienced as like the surface of an empty sky (Schmithausen 2005: 54). There is no actual partition of consciousness into different parts – this is only our way of

speaking from an unenlightened perspective. There are, therefore, no subjects and objects. The very notion of subject and object is duality, and thus erroneous perception (Frauwallner 1956: 396; May 1971: 299).

These disputes may also relate in some way to the 'with-form/without-form' (*sākāra/nirākāra*) debate.[48] Dimensions of this theme were a major topic of contention in late Indian Yogācāra. But we should first note an ambiguity. The 'with-form/without-form' distinction is used in two slightly different contexts: (i) with reference to everyday perception; (ii) with reference to the perception of a Buddha. As regards (i), normal everyday cognition, many Yogācāras were inclined to a 'with-form' perspective.[49]

Starting with normal everyday cognition, in general the problem centred on the issue of whether consciousness took the form (*ākāra*; 'phenomenological content') of the object or not.[50] In seeing blue there is a blue image in one's awareness. The blue image is a sense-datum, a perception which (it was argued) must be 'awareness of blue'. As awareness it is hence consciousness in the form of blue. Precisely because consciousness has itself taken the form of blue it was argued that there is no longer any need to posit a further external object outside the processes of consciousness. In seeing blue there is no need for anything other than awareness of blue, a state of consciousness. That is enough. Why posit an external extra-mental object over and above the form, the mental objective-image, which consciousness has taken?

But if consciousness takes the form of the object then an awareness which perceives that form is not mistaken, in at least one major respect. If consciousness does take the form 'blue', say, then an awareness which perceives blue is correct inasmuch as it perceives blue, although it is mistaken, of course, in thinking that blue (or a blue object) is an independent external reality.

It is true for many if not all Yogācāras that, from the point of view of deluded everyday cognition, consciousness has taken the form of the object. But the problem arises when we consider enlightened cognition, particularly that of the Buddha. A Buddha has no delusion, but constantly enjoys a pure nonconceptual awareness. If the form which consciousness takes as blue is genuinely true, albeit in reality free from duality in terms of the substance, the 'stuff' involved (a 'with-form' position) then it could in some way be seen even by the Buddha's nonconceptual awareness (see Urban and Griffiths 1994: 17–21). If, however, it is false and truly there is only a pure radiant flow of contentless consciousness which is like a mirror free of all images ('without-form' position) then the Buddha would not see forms such as blue at all. Yogācāras who hold that truly, ultimately, consciousness is nonconceptual, radiant and completely pure would hence incline towards a 'without-form' perspective from the point of view of the final truth, as seen by a Buddha. As ultimate, a Buddha's radiant pure nonconceptual consciousness simply cannot be stained at all by forms or images of objects.[51]

There remains however a problem in understanding how, granted the 'without-form' perspective, an enlightened Buddha can therefore aid sentient beings in their spiritual and mundane welfare. The commonly-stated position, in Yogācāra and in later Mādhyamika,

is that a Buddha enjoys five types of direct unmediated gnosis (*jñāna*). There is his perfect and constant understanding of all things as they truly are (*dharmadhātujñāna*), his 'mirrorlike' unperturbed impartial reflection of all things (*ādarśajñāna*; see Griffiths 1990, sect. 5), and his insight into the equality or sameness of all things (*samatājñāna*), while also discerning each thing clearly in all its aspects (*pratyavekṣaṇajñāna*), and cognizing exactly what is appropriate in each situation in order to act as a Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings (*kṛtyānuṣṭhānajñāna*). But on the 'without-form' perspective, continually immersed in contentless nonconceptual awareness, it might be surmised that an enlightened Buddha would not even see the common world, let alone beings which inhabit it.[52] The Buddha's omniscience would be aware of no more than its own nature.

Well, it is not easy to know what it is actually like to be a Buddha.[53] But plausibly partisans of the 'without-form' position may have answered this problem with reference to the pure spontaneity of the Buddha's activity. As a result of intense vows and the development of compassion while following the Bodhisattva path to full Buddhahood, upon achieving the state of a Buddha it is no longer necessary actually to apprehend beings themselves in order to help them. Through aeons of practice compassion has become automatic, in fact spontaneous. In achieving Buddhahood the ability to help has been perfected too. None of this requires actually apprehending any person who is helped, or indeed any situations requiring help. As we have seen in looking at the Perfection of Wisdom literature, a Bodhisattva who sees a being who is actually helped is roundly declared by the Buddha to be no true Bodhisattva at all.

LIVING YOGĀCĀRA

AN INTRODUCTION TO
CONSCIOUSNESS-ONLY BUDDHISM

TAGAWA SHUN'EI

TRANSLATION AND INTRODUCTION
BY CHARLES MULLER

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SURFACE MIND AND DEEP MIND

We lead our lives surrounded by all sorts of things. When annoyed, we may try to escape them by moving to the quiet and simple life in the middle of the mountains, but the fact of our being surrounded by many things does not change at all. As long as we are alive, there is no way that we can ever sever ourselves from our environment. In managing our daily lives, we have no recourse but to proceed while maintaining some kind of relationship with all those things that surround us. At such a time, there will always be things, people, and events. Rather than seeking to escape from them, what we need to do is examine the way we cognize these things, and the way we understand their content.

In Yogācāra Buddhism, unusually deep consideration was undertaken in regard to the nature of cognitive function and the objects of cognition. As a result of their investigations, Yogācāra thinkers came to the conclusion that although as a matter of convention we perceive the things of the external world as if they were directly apprehended by us, and although we furthermore think that we correctly interpret their meaning based on this direct apprehension, these objects do not in fact exist in this way. Rather, the Yogācārins said that these cognitive objects are actually transformed by our own minds, and then are reflected onto our minds as *images that resemble those things.*

Since an image that resembles the thing is conjured through transformation and floated on the mind, it is natural that some of its distinctive aspects will be sufficiently transmitted such that we can recognize it. However, we have good reason to doubt the extent to which this manifestation actually

reflects the appearance of the thing as it is. Despite this reasonable suspicion, we proceed along with our lives thinking that we are accurately seeing, hearing, judging, and understanding the objects that impinge on our awareness. Since none of us are intentionally trying to change the appearance of these objects, wanting to distort their shape, or alter their appearance, we unthinkingly live out our lives believing that we are cognizing everything accurately.

An important implication of coming to terms with this observation is that our daily life is not lived only in the mental domains of conscious awareness. The regions of mind which we can reflect on and regulate are known in Buddhism as the six consciousnesses: the visual consciousness, auditory consciousness, olfactory consciousness, gustatory consciousness, tactile consciousness, and thinking consciousness. However, these six kinds of awareness alone cannot account for the full range of our thoughts and activities. For example, standing in front of the same mountain, the seasoned veteran mountain climber and the raw novice see the face of that mountain with a dramatically different understanding. Our ordinary thinking consciousness has accumulated a great number of years' experience, for which it lacks the capacity to contain fully.

It was in regard to this observation that the Yogācārins, deliberating on the composition of our mind and its functions of conscious awareness, came to be convinced that there had to be an additional, deeper layer of mind, which, while continuously imposing its influence on everyday conscious awareness, also served as its underlying basis. Thus, they posited a subconscious region of the mind, comprised of the two deep layers of consciousness of *manas* and *ālaya-vijñāna*.

The custom of numbering the major distinct faculties of consciousnesses was in place from the time of early Indian Buddhism, and was still retained as a basic standard in the lesser vehicle Buddhism taught in texts such as the *Abhidharmakośa-bhāsya*. Yogācāra Buddhism, in its earliest stages, took this traditional scheme as its point of departure, but its thinkers gradually began to develop their own distinct model, having come to the conclusion that these six could not account for the entire mind, and represented nothing more than its surface aspect.

Within these six consciousnesses, the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, and tactile consciousnesses each operate specifically in response to

colors and shapes, sounds, odors, tastes, and tactile objects. They correspond to what we know as sight, hearing, sense of smell, taste, and sense of touch—in other words, the five senses, each sensory activity occurring through its corresponding sense organ. These five consciousnesses all share the feature of only being able to cognize a presently existing object as it is.

For example, in the case where the visual consciousness arises based on the presence of a red flower, the material object that constitutes the objective aspect of the visual consciousness is nothing more than the direct perception of a red-hued object with a certain shape. At this point, it is a type of cognition which lacks any intermediary, such as language, to apply meaning. This is what we call direct perception. At this stage, there is no understanding that says, "This is a bright red flower, and this flower is a lotus." The object of cognition at this time is an object as it is in itself—a raw sensate appearance among the three kinds of objects described in chapter 1. Since the lotus flower has an incredible fragrance, the olfactory consciousness naturally arises, creating a scent that is known exclusively by the olfactory consciousness.

The cognition that "this is a bright red flower, this flower is a lotus, and it has a very good smell" is something that occurs on the next level, that of the function of the thinking consciousness *(mano-vijñāna)*. The thinking consciousness, the sixth, accounts for the mental functions of perception, emotion, deliberation, and volition, and is essentially equivalent to what is referred to as "the mind" in everyday language. Expressing this with the present-day idiom of "information processor," the information gathered is that which is perceived by the five consciousnesses, gathered through the five sense faculties.

The method of processing this information is a problem of the function of the thinking consciousness. The five consciousnesses of eyes, ears, noses, tongue, and body all constitute relatively simple cognitive functions. Since these consciousnesses are understood to operate "prior" to the thinking consciousness, they are usually subsumed as a group under the rubric of *prior five consciousnesses*.

The sixth, thinking consciousness, functions concurrently with the prior five consciousnesses. Taking the pure cognition of the object as it is, and

recognizing that "this is a bright red lotus flower, which has a wonderful fragrance" is the function of the thinking consciousness. While the prior five consciousnesses are limited in only being able to directly perceive a presently existent object as it is, the sixth thinking consciousness, while functioning in the framework of the present, can also reflect back upon the past as well as anticipate the future.

Since the cognition of present objects by the prior five consciousnesses just as they are occurs through the sense organs, a temporary interruption (such as when one shuts one's eyes) will lead the cognitive function of that consciousness to be terminated. While the cognition by the prior five consciousnesses is limited to a particular place—the thinking consciousness—the mental activity concerning the lotus flower that has been seen up until then can be continued. It is precisely because of this ability to maintain continuity that one may reflect afterward on the lotus flower repeatedly and from various perspectives, giving one's imagination free reign. Recollecting the past, anticipating the future, or carrying out a variety of calculations and comparisons, and then gathering and synthesizing all of these—these are the functions of the thinking consciousness.

In considering the prior five consciousnesses and the thinking consciousness, we can easily imagine the numerous differences in terms of the range of their function, or the objective referent that they discern. Nonetheless, since the prior five consciousnesses and the sixth consciousness share in common the general function of discerning and distinguishing the content of their respective objects, Yogācāra Buddhism categorizes the prior five and the thinking consciousness together as the *consciousnesses that discern objects*. However, for Yogācāra these six consciousnesses are far from being all there is to the mind, since these object-discerning consciousnesses do not suffice to explain the full gamut of our mental life.

The Ālaya-Vijñāna and the Manas

1. The Limitations of the Six Consciousnesses

As distinguished from the view of the six consciousnesses in place since early Indian Buddhism, the Yogācāras hypothesized that our mind was

composed of eight consciousnesses. The eight consciousnesses include the six object-discerning consciousnesses, plus the *manas* (fundamental mentation consciousnesses), and *ālaya-vijñāna* (store consciousness).

If we attempt earnestly to ascertain the true aspect of our human existence—to whatever degree it is knowable—we must assume that there is a subconscious mind that, while serving as the basis for our existence, is ceaselessly exerting great influence on our conscious daily lives. It is precisely the proof and definition of this subconscious mind that the Yogācāras took up as their central focus of their investigations. Above, we explained that the accumulation of long years of experience is something that cannot be accounted for within the function of the thinking consciousness. To test this, let's reflect on our own past for a moment.

Despite its vast range of function beyond that of the sense consciousnesses, if we consider the sixth consciousness from the perspective of the full range of our past experiences, it turns out to be something quite shallow and limited. Obviously, we forget many of the things we have done over our lifetimes. However, imagine if there were no retention whatsoever of the traces of those events that have occurred within ourselves? If this were the case, no matter what we might apply ourselves to do, it would be impossible for us to improve at anything. However, we know that with even a small amount of practice, we are going to become better and more skilled. For the time being, then, we have to acknowledge that there has to be a mental region where such experiences are accurately retained. But what becomes of the thinking consciousness when we are sleeping soundly? Since its mode of existence is thinking, and thinking has ceased, practically speaking, that consciousness has ceased to exist. There is a complete interruption in the function and existence of this consciousness. This notion of interruption is critical in the Yogācāra theory of the mind.

The thinking consciousness is not something that is operating continuously—it has intervals. This is something that is readily understandable in commonsense terms, but there is a special problem in this fact for Buddhism, since unlike other religions that assume the existence of an enduring soul, or self *(ātman)* that grounds the being and holds it together in times of mental inactivity, one of the basic tenets of the Buddhist teaching is that any such assumed self cannot be anything other than a fiction.

This being the case, there is nothing to unite these interruptions, and even a provisional self as a unifying entity cannot be posited. Having come to this conclusion, they decided that there has to be a latent area of the mind that is uninterrupted, firmly retaining the aftereffects of all we have done. Yogācāra Buddhism argued for the existence of such a mind, and called it *ālaya-vijñāna* (store consciousness).

2. The Ālaya-Vijñāna and the Manas

In Yogācāra, the mind called the *ālaya-vijñāna* is hypothesized to be the most fundamental mind, the mental region that accounts for the unbroken continuity extending from the past to the future.

Practically speaking, there has to be an "I" that is changing on a daily basis. But we know from experience that the I of yesterday is virtually the same as the I of today, and there is not so much difference between the I of a year ago and the I of today. We naturally feel like this. This changing-but-unchanging so-called self is what we take to be our basis, that upon which the stability of our life is maintained. And that basis is the *ālaya-vijñāna.*

In a Buddhist framework, although we say "changing yet unchanging self," we are not talking about an unchanging essence, but something that is fundamentally impermanent in its nature. We nonetheless end up grasping this aspect of continuity and misconstrue it to be an unchanging, reified self. It is said that in addition to the *ālaya-vijñāna,* we also have within us an aspect of mentation that is carrying out this "I-making" function. The Yogācāras first posited this aspect of mind, which they called the *manas,* proposing that there is a function of mind that is secretly, ceaselessly attaching itself to the notion of a continuous and unbroken self. Since the *manas* is also engaged in a rudimentary kind of thought, some of its functions also overlap with those of the thinking consciousness.

It was already stated that the task of gathering and determining how to process information was one of the functions of the thinking consciousness. But it is unlikely that the thinking consciousness would be capable of fully operating in an independent manner during this information processing. Concerning this, Yogācāra hypothesizes that the thinking consciousness has the *manas* as its support (Skt. *āśraya*).

The "I-making" function of the *manas* also has an outward-going influence, since Yogācāra Buddhism understands that no matter how accurate a judgment we endeavor to make, we are essentially incapable of going beyond the purview of a judgment that we believe would be good for our own situation. This is taken as evidence of the pervasive and unbroken function of the *manas*. The *manas* in turn takes the *ālaya-vijñāna* as its underlying basis. Thus, in Yogācāra Buddhism the *ālaya-vijñāna* is understood to be the most basic form of mind.

3. The Three Subjective Transformations

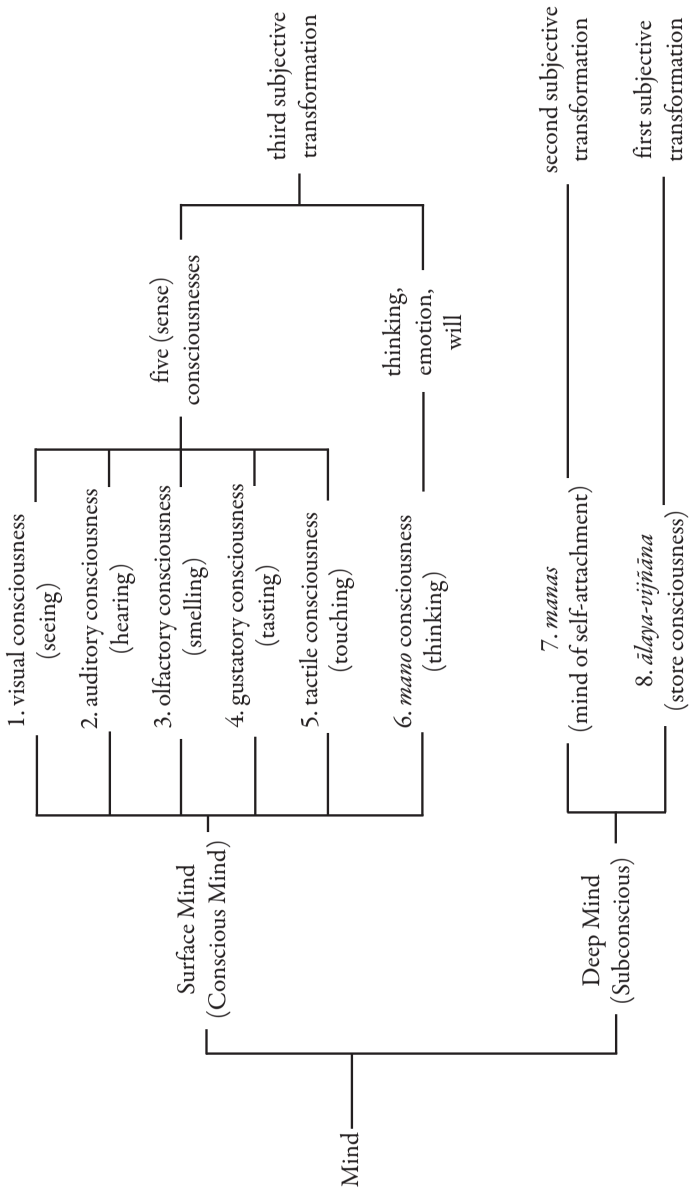
Thus, the Yogācāras began to conjecture the structure of mind as being composed of eight consciousnesses, distributed in two deep levels of mind as the *manas* and *ālaya-vijñāna,* followed by the six surface levels including the visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and thinking consciousnesses. As we have also noted, our mind has the function of manifesting the object of cognition on the mind as an "image." In this very important sense, the mind is not simply seen as mind, but as a mind that carries out transformations. This *mind as subjective transformer* consists of three layers.

The first mind as subjective transformer is the *ālaya-vijñāna.* The *ālaya-vijñāna* flawlessly retains all of our past experiences, and recognizes and contextualizes things as we cognize them. Our experiences, according to their depth and significance upon our lives, are difficult to remove.

The second subjective transformer is the *manas*. In this case, objects of cognition are transformed by a deep attachment to the self, and the resulting tendencies to protect and further that self.

Then, already subject to these subconscious influences, the cognitive function of the thinking consciousness and the five sense consciousnesses—that is, the discrimination of things—arises. When one is focused on seeing or hearing, what is seen and what is heard are naturally different from each other. Since these consciousnesses are aware only of their own objects, the only things that are transformed are their own objective images. Thus, the six object-aware consciousnesses together constitute the third subjective transformer.

From this we can begin to understand the profound difficulties involved in knowing the actual way of being of any given thing as it really is.



Chapter Three: The Functions of the Mind

The Mind-King and Mental Functions

In the course of our everyday lives, we casually refer to the psychological aspect of our existence as *mind* without giving it special thought. Yogācāra Buddhists saw the mind as being distinguishable into eight kinds of aspects (eight consciousnesses), and furthermore saw them as dynamically constituting the three subjective transformations.

In East Asian Yogācāra Buddhism, the eight consciousnesses are known collectively as the *eight consciousnesses mind-king (citta)*. While mind is usually regarded as a single entity, when it is analyzed into its substance and its functions, the term mind-king is used to connote the sense of "master," or "main part." In contrast to this are the functions that occur based within this substantive mind-king, which are called *mental factors* (Skt. *caitta*).

In Yogācāra, the essence of the substantive mind-king is first understood to cognize the essential, or general aspects of things, after which it gives rise to discriminating, discursive knowing. The mind-king-as-substance first executes a general type of cognition, and as it begins its activity, the mental functions arise and begin to scrutinize the object in greater detail, at the same time generating various thoughts.

For instance, when we are presented with a blue box, the general recognition that it is a blue box is made by the mind-king. After that, the detailed cognition that the main part of the box is deep blue, and the lid only is light blue, is the work of mental factors. And of course, the further thought that "I want this box" also occurs within the mental factors. Whether it is a thing, a person, or an event, according to Yogācāra we are completing our cognitive function through this process.

Yogācāra posits fifty-one of these mental factors, which are categorized into six general types. As explained in the *Lucid Introduction to the One Hundred Dharmas,*[2] they are arranged in this manner:

(1) *omnipresent factors:* attention, contact, sensation, perception, intention.
(2) *object-contingent factors:* desire, resolve, mindfulness, concentration, intelligence.
(3) *wholesome factors:* faith, zeal, conscience, shame, not coveting, no anger, no folly, pliancy, no laxity, indifference, not harming.
(4) *afflictions*: craving, ill-will, pride, ignorance, doubt, incorrect views.
(5) *secondary afflictions:* anger, enmity, anxiety, concealing, deceit, flattery, arrogance, hostility, jealousy, parsimony, unscrupulousness, shamelessness, unbelief, indolence, negligence, slackness, agitation, forgetting, incorrect cognition, distraction.
(6) *four uncategorized factors:* drowsiness, regret, discovery, scrutiny.

These technical terms for our mental functions were developed as the result of the work of a long tradition of Buddhist scholasticism examining human behavior, and precisely identifying the variety of modes of our mental functioning in daily life. This terminology was further developed into its final form by the Yogācāra school.

For instance, the wholesome group consists of good mental functions that improve one's spiritual condition. Basic Buddhist teachings state that if we continually maintain these kinds of mental functions, we will eventually arrive to the states of a buddha or bodhisattva. Conversely, the mental functions that bring unremitting suffering to our bodies and minds are listed in the category containing the twenty-six items of the *afflictions* and *secondary afflictions*.

These mental factors are concrete mental functions that we all experience. The clear presentation of the concrete functions of the mind are just the first indication of the precision with which Yogācāra Buddhism attempts to scrutinize the actual condition of the human mind. It is a view

of humanity that, while focusing on human behavior as the intersection of goodness and affliction, tries to realize suffering, regardless of its depth. Yogācāra also tells us that it is precisely within the subtle intertwining of these mental functions that that intense suffering is brought to body and mind, and only based on sincere reflection in the course of our everyday living can the religious world be established.

Since we will be taking up the wholesome factors, the afflictions, and secondary afflictions categories for detailed examination in chapter 6 and chapter 7, I will here treat the groups of omnipresent, object-contingent, and uncategorized.

Omnipresent and Object-Contingent Factors

1. Omnipresent Factors

Omnipresent factors are the most basic psychological functions active in all situations, concomitant with the mind-king and all mental factors. The five omnipresent factors include: attention, contact, sensation, perception, and volition.

No matter the situation, for cognition to be established, the mind must first be awakened and arouse concern for the object. Attention (Skt. *manaskāra*) is the name of the function of arousing concern for an object, the function that initially stimulates the mind. Once the stimulated mind has come into association with its object, the conditions for establishing cognition are gradually established. Contact (Skt. *sparśa*) puts the mind into such a state, and is the support for the ensuing functions of sensation, perception, and volition.

A problem now arises: In its relation to "me," is the cognitive object that is being taken in something good, something bad, or neither? The reception of the cognitive object is called the mental function of sensation (Skt. *vedanā*). In the case where the object brings about displeasure or pain, it is called *sensation of pain.* Pleasurable sensations are called *sensation of pleasure* and experiences of objects that are neither pleasurable nor painful are called *sensation of indifference.* These are classified together as the three sensations.

Within the process of cognizing an object, our mind becomes entwined in the sensory awareness of liking and disliking at a very early juncture. And since there is such thing as indifferent sensation, we know that not every instance of perception of objects is involved with affectivity. There are numerous objects that we experience in our daily lives that do not result in pleasant/unpleasant, painful/satisfying sensations and emotions. For instance, we can consider the way reception of cognitive objects is changed when such objects overwhelm us by exceeding our present cognitive capacity.

Perception can be understood as the process of taking in a copy of an image of something into the mind and associating it with words. This mental factor functions in such a way that it takes that thing received as the object of cognition and fits it into the framework possessed by the "I" who receives it. It is at that time that one clearly apprehends exactly what the cognized object is.

Each person has their own frame for apprehending things as a matter of necessity. Yet while an individual's own framework might be unique, each one is deeply influenced by one's society, race, and culture. Why? Because the ultimate frame of perception is none other than language itself. This reception is described as being carried out at the level of the sixth consciousness, meaning that that which is actually digesting information is none other than the framework known as language.

However, speaking of this frame presents another type of restriction, and whether or not the distinct cognition formed upon the basis of language is a valid cognition is another problem. The function of further clarifying the object of cognition by applying language skillfully is understood to be a problem that appears not at this present stage of perception, but rather falls under the purview of the mental factors known as *discovery (vitarka)* and *scrutiny (vicāra),* which are among the uncategorized factors that will be discussed below. The image of the thing that is to be cognized is clearly copied onto the mind, where it is absorbed. Perception then occurs as the mental function that fits it into one's own behavioral and thought patterning.

The mental factor of volition is understood to be comprised of three sequential stages: (1) evaluation, (2) decision-making, and (3) initiation of action. Evaluation is the basic psychological function taken in regard to

the cognition of an object based on the prior phases of attention, contact, sensation, and perception, where the various options involved regarding the taking of action (karma) are contemplated in regard to the object. Decision-making is a mental function wherein one decides whether or not to take a certain type of action in regard to the object. Initiation of action is a mental activity of receiving the content of the decision, and initiating a concrete action.

As for concrete action, our daily activities are completed through three general modes: bodily activity (deeds), verbal activity (speech), and mental activity (thought). *Bodily activity (kāya-karman)* is any action in which bodily function is included, *verbal activity (vāk-karman)* refers to linguistic behavior, and *mental activity (manas-karman)* is the deliberation that occurs in the mind. Mental activity is also understood in a positive sense in Buddhism as the mysterious activity that occurs within our own minds that is inaccessible to others.

Because volition is the mental function that constitutes the mainspring of our concrete behavior, the essences of the three karmas of deed, speech, and thought are to be found within these three stages of volition. The karmas of deed and speech have initiation of action as their essence, and mental activity (thought) has evaluation and decision-making as its essence.

2. Object-Contingent Factors

Object-contingent mental factors differ from the prior omnipresent factors in that they function only in regard to specific objects rather than being operative in every situation. The five object-contingent mental factors include *desire, devoted interest, mindfulness, concentration,* and *intelligence*.

Concerning the karmic moral quality of the objects of these object-dependent factors, it is assumed that these five are not directly associated with either wholesomeness, unwholesomeness, or indeterminacy. While this is similar to the case of the omnipresent factors, object-dependent factors tend to be explained with a focus on wholesome mental functioning. This is the way Yogācāra Buddhism schematizes the mind, but it must be remembered that in the final analysis, the ultimate goal lies in nothing other than entry into Buddha-mind.

Desire (chanda) is a mental function wherein one sees an object for which it holds interest and concern, and hopes to attain it, or at least to see, hear, or perceive it more deeply. When this mental factor of desire operates in a wholesome way, it has the ability to offer us a foothold into the religious world, as it becomes the basis for the positive mental function of *zeal*. The basic mental function that leads us to take the Buddha-way as a single path from which we do not deviate is desire in a positive mode—wholesome desire.

Devoted interest (adhimukti) is a mental function that acknowledges the object and retains it according to a clearly identifiable way of thinking. This can also function with wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate karmic moral quality, but as with the basic nuance of correctness seen in the term *devoted interest,* there is already the anticipation of wholesomeness associated with the term. Indeed, it is explained that it is only in this place that a single, firm, excellent understanding can be established, and where there should be no distraction. In terms of devoted interest, no distraction means that the content of cognition is something that is not easily corrupted.

The mental factor of *mindfulness (smṛti)* preserves the previously cognized object such that is it not forgotten. Because we possess the mental function of being able to powerfully engrave an impression in our minds without forgetting, we can pour our minds into a specifically cognized object. The mental factor that allows us to deeply concentrate feelings on this object without distraction is called *concentration (samādhi)*. This mental factor of *concentration* has the factor of *mindfulness* as its support, and *concentration* in turn serves as the support for the ensuing factor of intelligence.

In Buddhism, concentration is commonly referred to as one of the basic three Buddhist disciplines: moral discipline, concentration, and wisdom. In this case, the term refers specifically to the practice of (seated) meditation, and it is further understood that true wisdom is derived from the mental state produced in this kind of meditative concentration. The object-contingent mental factor of concentration is normally understood in terms of its operation in a wholesome mode, but in terms of its basic potential, it is understood to be capable of operating in all three morally qualitative modes of wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate.

Therefore, the form of concentration under discussion here is neither equivalent to *meditative absorption (samāpatti)* nor the concentration listed among the three Buddhist disciplines. Here, concentration refers to a general psychological function of focus, wherein we naturally find ourselves focusing on a single thing in everyday daily experience. This is known technically in Yogācāra as *inherent concentration*.

There are two kinds of concentration understood in Yogācāra Buddhism; the first is this inherent concentration, and the second is *cultivated concentration,* the latter being attained in the course of continuous diligent practice of the Buddhist path. The development of true wisdom is dependent upon the degree to which a practitioner is able to cultivate concentration. However, we cannot but be powerfully encouraged when we consider that there is somehow an intimate connection between the difficult-to-attain cultivated concentration and the general mental function of inherent concentration that is possessed by all of us.

Intelligence (prajñā) is the function of the mind that makes the choice of selecting or rejecting the object of cognition. For example, even though a handbag may look like a genuine Gucci, one's intelligence can discern that it is clearly a fake. Based on this decision, the state of uncertainty as to whether or not it is genuine can be removed. This kind of mental function is labeled intelligence.

The mental factor of intelligence can also work in the modes of wholesome, unwholesome, and indeterminate karmic moral quality. Among these, since intelligence functioning in an unwholesome mode would indicate a mistaken judgment in regard to the object, it is classified under a separate heading as the mental factor of *incorrect view* within the category of afflictions. Mistaken views have incredible power to lead us astray from the Buddha-path. Thus, the role of intelligence as a mental factor is rather prominent as compared with other functions.

While the object-contingent factors are, generally speaking, mental functions that operate within the manifest six consciousnesses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind, this final factor of intelligence is understood as operating not only within the sixth consciousness, but in the subconscious region of the *manas*. As explained above, the *manas* pursues its unbounded obsession with the self without lapse, even at the times when

the activity of the sixth consciousness has stopped. In the *manas*' function of deep attachment, it is first necessary to either select or reject the object of attachment. The mental function that offers up the object for attachment by the *manas* is none other than the factor of intelligence from among the object-dependent factors. Therefore, the factor of intelligence as explained in Yogācāra is concomitant not only with the sixth consciousness, but the seventh as well.

Uncategorized Mental Factors

The group of uncategorized mental factors includes the four of *drowsiness, regret, discovery,* and *scrutiny*. These four mental functions have features that problematize their categorization into the groups of omnipresent factors, object-contingent, wholesome, afflictions, or secondary afflictions, and so they are collectively grouped under the rubric *uncategorized*.

For instance, these mental activities all operate in the sixth consciousness, and therefore, they can't be categorized in the group of omnipresent factors, which necessarily occur in any situation of the mind-king and mental factors. And, unlike the wholesome and the afflictive factors, their karmic moral quality is indeterminate.

Drowsiness (middha) does not refer to sleep itself, but to the function that occurs at the time we are falling asleep. Drowsiness is that which makes us foggy-minded, as when, in a condition of dull-mindedness or confusion, we cannot accurately cognize things, much less perceive their underlying nature and meaning. It is only when we enter the state of the sound sleep (called extreme drowsiness) that the mental factor of drowsiness is inoperative. This is because at the time of deep sleep, the thinking consciousness has ceased to operate.

Recognition of one's errors (kaukṛtya) is also known by the term *regret*. Such mental attitudes that arise when we reflect on previous actions and experience thoughts of regret are called *recognition of errors*. We may struggle over why we said or did something, and no matter the specifics of related actions and consequences, they cannot result in anything but a state of unease.

This mental factor can function in either wholesome, unwholesome, or morally indeterminate modes. When it functions wholesomely, its basic character is to reflect on our prior wrongdoings, and even though this is not necessarily a bad thing, the mind in this state is not calm. Since a calm response cannot be made, the potential exists to cause problems.

"Reflect, but don't regret."

There are people who engrave this maxim at their places of study. Human beings are surrounded by regret wherever we go in our lives.

As described in the passages on perception and omnipresent factors, *discovery (vitarka)* and *scrutiny (vicāra)* are functions that rely on language to further clarify the cognitive object and deepen investigation of it. These mental factors, based on their function, are said to be aspects of volition and intelligence, but since their function lies within the sixth, thinking consciousness, they cannot be strictly categorized as being either omnipresent or object-contingent.

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Chapter Four: Building Up Experience in the Latent Area of the Mind

The First Subjective Transformer—The Ālaya-Vijñāna

After carrying out a detailed analysis of the mind, the Yogācāras became convinced that it was comprised of eight specific regions constituted by the prior five consciousnesses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body that handle the five senses, along with the thinking consciousness, *manas,* and store consciousness. The Yogācāras posited that these eight kinds of mind-king possessed the ability to subjectively transform everything that surrounds us in the process of three stages, which are known as the three subjective transformations. Among these, the most important is the first subjective transformer, the eighth consciousness, the *ālaya-vijñāna.* In this chapter, we will first take a look at the *ālaya-vijñāna* in its role as the subject that transforms the objects of cognition. *Ālaya* is a Sanskrit word that can be translated as store (or storehouse), and *ālaya-vijñāna* is often rendered into English as the "store consciousness," with the implication that it accumulates and preserves information. What exactly *is* put away in this store consciousness? As a way of getting around to answering this question, we need to first inquire as to which region of consciousness we should regard as being the real center of the mind-kings of the eight consciousnesses. From the perspective of the actual experiences of everyday life, we might well consider the sixth, the thinking consciousness *(mano-vijñāna)* as the center of the mind. We manage our daily lives through the variety of functions governed by the thinking consciousness. However, as we have already mentioned, this thinking consciousness is subject to interruptions—it does not operate continuously.

For example, both fainting and deep sleep bring our thinking consciousness to a halt. While one could argue that the case of fainting is

problematic based on the fact that it is such a rare occurrence, deep sleep is a nightly certainty for most people. We understand that even if the thinking mind seems to operate continuously, it is something that is in fact frequently interrupted, existing only as discontiguous fragments. If there were no mental framework to pull these pieces together, we could not exist as integrated beings. The *ālaya-vijñāna* is necessary to serve as the "backup" for intentional, conscious life.

Our actions and behavior are directly related to our interaction with others. After we complete these actions, we can be certain that they will always be evaluated in some way, and we can be sure that the reverberations of these acts will imprint society to one extent or another, whether it be labeled as an "excellent achievement" or a " crime." In both cases we are clearly subjected to, and imprinted with, a social evaluation; yet this social evaluation is only made possible by our actions being seen through the eyes of others.

So what happens when our negative actions are not seen by others? Since no one is watching, the perpetrator of some nasty business assumes that he will never be subject to public evaluation. Afterward, he may hear people say things like "there are really some bad people hanging around, aren't there." Playing dumb, he sticks out his tongue at them behind their backs, and that's the end of it. From the perspective of society, the case is closed. But what ends up happening to such a person on the inside?

Among the three karmic modes of body, speech, and thought, it is only thoughts that are not accessible to others, as they occur inside our mind as mental karma. However, as explained above in the discussion of the mental factor of volition, in Buddhism, even the thoughts that occur within the mind are understood to have a marvelous function.

It is at this point that the Yogācārin asks what, exactly, is the nature of this that we call our actions. The conclusion is that the dispositions of every act end up leaving behind impressions in the *ālaya-vijñāna,* where the after-effects of our activities are retained.

> Although we are careful when we know we are being watched by others, we should not forget that we are also watched by spiritual beings.

These are the words of the Great Japanese Yogācāra master of the Kamakura period, Gedatsu Shōnin (Jōkei; 1155–1213), from his *Gumei hosshin shu (Awakening the Mind From Delusion)*. We are automatically cautious in our actions and speech—the objects of evaluation by others—when we are in the presence of people, but less so when we think we are not being observed, or when the activity is taking place hidden within our minds. Our world of thought that is unknown to others has an amazing proclivity to fall into dissoluteness. However, Gedatsu Shōnin is telling us that this place is perfectly visible to the eyes of the gods and buddhas, meaning that our negative actions never go unwitnessed.

Our world of thought, where we are secretly at ease, is indeed an untidy place. According to the Yogācāras, everything that occurs here turns into a burden which we must carry in a future life. The *ālaya-vijñāna* retains all of our memories up to the present, and all of the dispositions of activities and behavior have been secretly accumulated in the basis of our minds. These are in turn re-manifested and naturally exude from our being. The Yogācāras take this as the most fundamental underlying operation of our minds.

This kind of automatic exuding of the dispositions of our past experiences in the midst of our cognition is called the *first subjective transformation.* The *ālaya-vijñāna* that retains the impressions of all of our past experiences first acts to transform the objects of cognition. We have utterly no conscious control over what we exude. We cannot help but taking that which is first subjectively transformed as a cognitive object, and this subjective transformation is a reflection of our entire past—which is none other than ourselves. When we discuss the store consciousness as the first subjective transformation, we are talking about this fundamental—and somewhat frightening—point.

To the extent that we deepen this kind of contemplation of the ramifications of the store consciousness, we cannot but end up coming to the conclusion that from this moment forward, we must try to orient our lives in some positive direction. Yogācāra Buddhism is asking us to seek out a way of life grounded in such a recognition and awareness. By positing the existence of the *ālaya-vijñāna,* Yogācāra Buddhism strongly suggests that a life of careless behavior won't do.

The Perfuming of Seeds

Consider a famous novelist who is known for revealing his personal thoughts by taking his own life as his subject matter. This doesn't necessarily mean that he has revealed everything there is to know about himself. There is no one who does not have something within himself that he keeps hidden from others. At the same time, we may assume that because our actions were witnessed by others that the case is karmically closed. Indeed, though the case may be closed on the level of society and human interaction, the ramifications of the negative activity do not disappear, and the impressions are long retained.

We then turn to consider by what kind of process, and in what kind of form, our actions and behavior could possibly be retained, and then accumulated, in the mind's innermost depths of the *ālaya-vijñāna*? It is explained in Yogācāra that "manifest activity *perfumes* the seeds in the *ālaya-vijñāna*." "Manifest activity" can be understood as our concrete activities, and these concrete actions and behaviors end up being "perfumed" into the store consciousness in the form of metaphorical "seeds."

Perfuming means that in the same way that an odor is transferred to and adheres to clothing, one's actions create impressions and dispositions that become planted in the deepest regions of that person's mind where they are retained. These impressions impregnate the store consciousness, and as planted actions, they are called "seeds" as they have the power to give form to the subsequent self.

These seeds, which are secretly impregnated and retained in the *ālaya-vijñāna,* will again generate visible phenomena when the right set of circumstances arises. Since this is exactly the kind of function associated with the physical seeds of plants, they are so named metaphorically. We should not, however, go so far as to construe them as material, substantial seeds.

Seeds are explained as "the power within the eighth consciousness to produce an effect." That is, they represent the causative power to manifest activity as fruit from within the *ālaya-vijñāna.* Seeds represent the momentum of impressions, and also be understood from the perspective of the almost synonymous technical term, *karmic impressions* (Skt. *vāsanā*). Karmic impressions have the connotation of "dispositions caused by per-

fumation." The notions of seed and perfumation are seminal in Yogācāra Buddhism, and although they may seem to be rather arcane concepts, they are necessary to understanding the operation of karma and consciousness in Yogācāra.

In *The Oriental Ideal (Tōyō no risō),* Okura Tenjin wrote: "Surely the shadow of the past exists as the promise for the future. No tree can grow larger than the potential contained in its seed." Here the word *seed* is being used in its basic biological sense, rather than as a Yogācāra term, and it can be understood as a general truth. However, truth understood by Yogācāra Buddhism is that what we call "the past" exerts an influence on the formation of the future, and the future is something that cannot be so easily changed. This will be covered in depth in the following section.

I have heard that the former *kyōgen* (a form of traditional Japanese theater) master Miyake Tōkurō, who was famous for the severity of discipline he imposed on himself while practicing, had a saying to the effect that "there is no such thing as luck on the stage," considering "luck" to refer to the case where one performs with good technique by mere coincidence. While some may say that things are "by chance" going well, in truth there is no reason why they should, or continue to do so. A first-rate stage performance depends completely on self-discipline through consistent practice.

That which has not been stored up in the *ālaya-vijñāna* won't suddenly appear at the moment one steps up in front of the footlights. No matter how hard one tries, if the requisite potentiality has not been accumulated in the store consciousness, it cannot be manifested upon demand. The same applies for those of us who do not perform on the stage. And what sort of thing, exactly, is perfumed in our *ālaya-vijñāna*? It is on the answer to this question that we now embark, but replacing the word "stage" with the words "human life," and reinterpreting this saying as "there is no such thing as luck in life."

Beginningless Perfuming

In Yogācāra, it is not the case that our actions, being finished, are simply over with, or that we are no longer responsible for them. After the event,

the perfuming seeds, accumulated in the eighth consciousness as potentialities, are keeping record of everything. If we accept this, then the *ālaya-vijñāna* becomes understood as being the accumulated totality of life experiences—nothing other than the present "I." When we think seriously as to how every one of the actions and behaviors after receiving birth in this world are impregnated without loss into the mind's innermost depths, and that this influence continues to extend into our present selves, we cannot but end up being deeply concerned.

Additionally, in regard to the matter of perfuming, Yogācāra posits something called *beginningless perfuming.* This means that perfuming has continued from time immemorial, without beginning, and that the seeds in the store consciousness are not simply produced beginning with birth into this present life.

This brings us to consider our attachment to this life—a desire to keep living. No matter how disappointing or complicated we feel our life has become, we still want to continue in it for as long as possible. Buddhist philosophy states that suffering is produced from this attachment to life, and it is because of this ardent attachment to life that we can continue to struggle through our daily lives.

Most of us firmly maintain this mental state of ardent attachment right up to the moment before death. It is quite likely that the thought "I want to live" that appears at our final moment is the most strongly held feeling in all of life. Buddhism teaches us that it is precisely because we are so strongly attached to life down to its very final moment that we cause ourselves to be reborn into the next life. This is called *transmigration*.

This means that the kind of life we are living here and now is precisely due to the ardent attachment we held for our existence in our former life. And our former life must be something that was brought about by an "attachment to life" in the life before that. This being the case, we can trace our present existence back infinitely into the past. Our store consciousness is not only comprised of all of the actions, dispositions, and impressions beginning with our birth in this present lifetime, but it is also perfumed by the seeds of our actions and behavior from all of our lifetimes in the immeasurable past. This is the meaning of "beginningless perfuming."

Being exposed to this kind of teaching, we naturally become awed at the apparently limitless depth and capacity of this *ālaya-vijñāna,* and concerned about what might be perfumed and contained within us. However, even while wincing at the notion of the vastness of this *ālaya-vijñāna,* we should calmly think, what on earth this "I" is that has been traversing through lifetimes since time immemorial? At such a time, we become newly aware of our ardent attachment to life. With this expression "attachment to life" to replace Yogācāra technical terminology, we may begin to further deepen our mindfulness. In Yogācāra, the cause of reincarnation is assumed to be mental disturbances, which consist more precisely of the mental factors of afflictions and secondary afflictions enumerated in the lists of mental factors in the preceding chapter. It is not explicitly stated in the Yogācāra source texts, but understanding the function of the store consciousness the way it is taught, we can assume that it might, unbeknown to us, be retaining something that reaches all the way back to the very origins of human existence, and life itself. This awareness cannot but give the feeling in each individual that each and every life should be respected as a member of the universe of sentient beings. And, at the same time, each one of us individually needs to be deeply aware of the perspective wherein an attempt is made to live life based on this awareness of respecting every kind of life form.

Three Meanings of Store

There are three connotations identified in the earliest Yogācāra texts related to the *ālaya-vijñāna:* (1) the storer (i.e., storing agent); (2) that which is stored; and (3) the appropriated store. Taking these as the fundamental approaches for considering the *ālaya-vijñāna,* we now move to take another look at what we have discussed regarding the *ālaya-vijñāna* and show how it fits into the framework of these three.

(1) The *storer* indicates that this deep mind is something that possesses the basic quality of being able to preserve our experiences in its seeds. It is the "mind that is able to store all seeds." When this is considered from the perspective of the seeds, these are the things that are stored by the *ālaya-vijñāna.* But if the seeds are looked at by themselves, regardless of their

container, the seeds are that which give rise to manifest activity. They are the main causes of the formation of a self. When the *ālaya-vijñāna* is seen from the causal aspect of such a potentiality, it is called the "consciousness containing all seeds."

(2) *That which is stored* connotes the store consciousness as the recipient of perfuming. The seeds that are the impressions and dispositions of our various concrete activities are able to perfume the *ālaya-vijñāna.* If we take this as storer, the *ālaya-vijñāna* that is the recipient of perfuming becomes that which is stored. In this way, that which is stored becomes the recipient of perfuming. But if this is seen from the perspective of actions and behavior, the *ālaya-vijñāna* that undergoes the perfuming also exists as the result of these activities.

The eighth consciousness seen from this aspect of effect is called the *ripening consciousness* (Skt. *vipāka-vijñāna*). The *ālaya-vijñāna* continues without break from the past to the future, and serves as a backup for the intermittently functioning thinking consciousness. In Yogācāra Buddhism, this eighth consciousness that serves as the basis for human existence is originally of neither wholesome nor unwholesome karmic moral quality, and thus it is said to be of indeterminate (or neutral) karmic moral character.

If this very fundamental source of our existence were intrinsically bad, we would end up cycling again and again through a world of suffering, unable to obtain a foothold to Buddha's world throughout all eternity. On the other hand, if our fundamental basis was intrinsically good, and all people's minds were connected to the buddha-mind, it would be difficult to reconcile this with our everyday experiences in society.

It is also not the case that the variety of our daily activities and behaviors clearly tend in one direction or the other. This is made clear by merely looking at the fifty-one mental factors considered above in chapter 3. Even while we lust after something, we may at the same time reflect strongly on our lust. While diligently devoting ourselves to the Buddha-path, we may inadvertently give rise to anger. Our basic nature is not disposed toward either goodness or evil, but is of indeterminate moral karmic quality.

We are, without doubt, planting the seeds of goodness in the store consciousness with our wholesome activities, and impregnating it with bad impression-potential with our unwholesome activities. This is possible

precisely because the eighth consciousness has no fundamental predisposition toward good or evil—it is of indeterminate karmic moral quality. Depending on the seeds of good or evil that have already been planted, various real and concrete good and evil activities occur. Nevertheless, the eighth consciousness does not incline toward good or evil. Individual actions taken by themselves, along with the perfuming from their impressions, can be wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate in karmic moral quality, but if the *ālaya-vijñāna* as the result of activities is viewed as a whole, it is neither good nor evil.

Just as wholesome causes bring wholesome effect and unwholesome causes bring unwholesome effects, cause and effect are understood to be imbued with the same karmic moral quality (in Yogācāra, this condition is denoted with the technical term *continuity of sameness,* or *natural outcome;* Skt. *niṣyanda*). But in the *ālaya-vijñāna*-as-effect, whether or not it is produced by a good or bad seed, the end result of the action is always understood to be of indeterminate or neutral moral quality. This kind of cause-effect relationship is called ripening, and because the *ālaya-vijñāna* as the aspect of effect is seen in this way, it is called the *ripening consciousness.* In other words, in its ripened state it has a different karmic moral quality than its causes. When one thing produces another, the next thing that is produced, while having a direct and close relation to its cause, must also be something different from its cause. Common metaphors include that of the ripening of a fruit, or a baked loaf of bread, which are both quite different in character from their causal stages, and have exhausted their potential for further development.

This aspect of the *ālaya-vijñāna* of being of intrinsically indeterminate moral quality is vitally important from a religious perspective. Although we humans are greatly influenced by our own past, we are at the same time endowed with the potential of creating an entirely different future, starting right here and now, no matter how deeply our past is filled with evil karma. But on the other hand, even if our days were filled with efforts toward cultivating buddhahood, we can never assume that we have safely achieved a level of perfection.

(3) *Appropriated store* refers to the attachment to self-love. We have the feeling that we are spending every day living in a conscious manner. However,

as we have already seen, the operations of the thinking consciousness and prior five consciousnesses are intermittent and are broadly supported by the basis of human existence, the *ālaya-vijñāna*. In Yogācāra Buddhism, it is thought that the only reason we are able to live such a unified existence is because of the store consciousness.

The *ālaya-vijñāna* is a mental region which has arrived to the present in a continuous unbroken stream while receiving uninterrupted beginningless perfuming from the past. And it will continue unbroken into the future. The great Indian master Vasubandhu, who is accorded the bulk of the credit for the foundation of Yogācāra Buddhism, described the *ālaya-vijñāna* in his *Triṃśikā ("Thirty Verses on Consciousness-only")* as "constantly coming forth, like a raging current." Our deep *ālaya-vijñāna* is like a great river, which, while roiling in turbulence from the eternal upstream, rolls without stopping on its way downstream. This store consciousness has always been in a state of continuous alteration.

However, while it is not something immutable, it has the character of being *changeless but changing.* The seventh consciousness, the *manas,* functions in a way of trying to see the unchanging aspect of the store consciousness as an immutable essence. The *manas* takes this ostensive immutable essence as its object and adheres firmly to it, believing it to be a self. This kind of misconstrual and reification of the *ālaya-vijñāna* on the part of the *manas* constitutes the third connotation of store: *appropriated store.*

While in Yogācāra Buddhism the *ālaya-vijñāna* is interpreted with these three connotations of storer, that which is stored, and appropriated store, it is the meaning of appropriated store that tends to be paid the greatest attention. The aspect of existence that is reified by the *manas* is the characteristic of the *ālaya-vijñāna* itself. The Yogācāras argue that the very core of suffering is to be found in the place where the *manas,* the mind of attachment to the ego—engages itself in the activity of attachment, taking the *ālaya-vijñāna* as its object. Thus we can say that the meaning of the appropriated store defines the relation between the eighth, *ālaya-vijñāna,* and the seventh, *manas,* consciousnesses.

Continuity of Sameness

So the relation of the *manas* to the *ālaya-vijñāna* is that the *manas,* the mind of ego-attachment, taking the deep store consciousness as its object, misconstrues it to be the reified essence of the self, and strongly clings to it, and within this relationship, Yogācāra Buddhism sees the causes of all human problems. Therefore, among the three connotations—storer, the stored, and appropriated store—the connotation of appropriated store is the most fundamental from a religious perspective.

The store consciousness that undergoes beginningless perfuming is taken as the object of attachment of the *manas* because of the existence of a mental region—a psychological basis—that appears as changing-but-unchanging, and functions to maintain something that resembles a self-identity. This special characteristic of the *ālaya-vijñāna* is called *continuity of type* or *continuity of identity*. Continuing in a single type means that an unchanging character continues without interruption.

Within the store consciousness there exists a characteristic of continuity in sameness that has continued changelessly and without interruption from the distant past. And the store consciousness, with its indeterminate karmic moral character, is that which takes our daily behaviors and activities that are riddled with interruptions, binds them together, accumulates them, and unifies them.

Dealing with Impermanence and No-Self

The three most fundamental principles that are said to specially identify the Buddhist teachings are (1) impermanence of all phenomena; (2) the selflessness of all phenomena; and (3) the quiescence of nirvāṇa. These are three distinctive characteristics that mark a given set of teachings as being authentically Buddhist, and any teaching not based on these three can be said to be non-Buddhist. Within ourselves and the natural world, all things arise, cease, and change. That such arising and cessation occurs every single instant is the meaning of the impermanence of all phenomena. This is the most fundamental concept in Buddhism.

At first glance, we may be inclined to regard this fact as being patently obvious. No doubt we all understand that all things are constantly changing. Nonetheless, we may not be comfortable with things that are always in a state of flux, as it makes us ill at ease. We struggle to take things that are in flux and continually force them into our framework, reifying and trying to grasp them, while at the same time reifying the understanding gained through this process. Isn't this the way we are functioning every day?

Without a doubt, we are enriching our lives as we accumulate new experiences daily. However, as we age we become increasingly aware of the falloff in our ability to recover from physical fatigue. If at this point we reflect back on our twenties and thirties, we become newly aware of the subtle changes in our physical strength. And we recall that people tried to warn us, but we were too young and proud to take heed. Yet even while we come to understand that our bodies and minds are always changing, we also retain a distinct sense of being thoroughly penetrated by the changing-yet-unchanging.

Some philosophical schools of ancient India were convinced that this changing-but-unchanging aspect existed in people as an immutable essence, and they called it *ātman* ("I," self, soul). This *ātman* was understood to be the subject of transmigration, something immortal, running through the past and future repeatedly through our life and death. But if all things are transient, how can we acknowledge the existence of this kind of invariable, immortal *ātman*? This kind of substantial self was clearly denied by the Buddha, and this idea is the meaning of selflessness of all phenomena.

Even though we understand intellectually that our ego can't be an immutable essence, we still seek such an essence in ourselves and grasp to it, and as a result bind ourselves. The Buddha Śākyamuni called on us to turn against this unfortunate urge, and try to bravely manage our lives based on the realities of impermanence and no-self. He taught that a life lived in accordance with these kinds of realities leads us to a state that is spontaneously and genuinely free of restrictions, and completely pure. This is the quiescence of nirvāṇa, a state of calm manifested in body and mind, within which one harmonizes with reality.

There is a problem here, though, since in addition to the three seals of the dharma, Buddhism includes the notion of reincarnation as one of its basic tenets. Given the doctrine of no-self, what should we understand to be the subject that repeatedly undergoes this birth and death? In ancient India, it was thought that we undergo repeated reincarnation with a substantial, immortal self as subject. But because the Buddha categorically denied such a thing as an eternal *ātman,* Buddhism had to locate a subject of transmigration without undermining the theory of no-self. After the Buddha's death, various theories about this were tendered by a number of Buddhist groups. The most well thought-out resolution of this problem is that of the *ālaya-vijñāna,* as posited by the Yogācāras. As an answer to the nonexistence of an enduring essence, they saw a latent mind that continues with the same morally indeterminate karmic quality, storing and accumulating the impressions of past experiences as seeds of potentiality for the production of effects. This, they posited as the subject of reincarnation.

Summary: If Things Can't Be So Simply Washed Away, Then What?

In the thinking consciousness *(mano-vijñāna),* the experiences of our daily lives are quickly forgotten. We may read a novel with great passion, but undoubtedly after the passage of several years, it will be difficult to recall portions of its plot. However, even if it is completely forgotten on the side of the thinking consciousness, it is properly stored in the subconscious region.

We can say that in having this kind of store consciousness that preserves our entire past, our present selves exist atop that same storehouse, which serves as our foundation. In this sense, our past actions and experiences cannot be so easily washed away. But within the range of our memory we may tend to try to wash away the recollection of inconvenient events, to act as if they never existed.

The notion of "washing away" is well understood among the Japanese people in particular. Perhaps there may even be some sense in which consciously dealing with the past is related to a particular cultural ethos. Whether or not this is true, if light is shed on the matter from a Yogācāra

perspective, the mere mutual agreement to forget about an incident only amounts to being the most superficial manner of handling a past problem. Our present existence is constituted by the things we have done in the past, no matter how ugly they may be. The problem is what, exactly, we are perfuming into our *ālaya-vijñāna.*

In the world of Buddhism, cultivation of a particular aspect of our spirit and body is often carried out in a traditional format within a set period of time, and we call this "practice." But when we exert ourselves in the effort of valuing our daily life as it is, trying not to be sloppy in the three karmic activities of body, speech, and thought, this is not simply called "practice"; rather, it is labeled with the Buddhist technical term *applied practice* (Skt. *prayoga*). This means that, when, on the other hand, practice is not "applied," we are doubtlessly carrying out our daily life in a sloppy way.

Applied practice refers to this kind of maintenance of continual mindfulness. For instance, in the *Avalokiteśvara Sūtra*[3] the term *constant mindfulness* appears often, advising one to be continuously mindful of the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara. As a result, the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara is gradually impressed strongly into the mind's innermost depths, and the mindfulness of Avalokiteśvara is accumulated in the *ālaya-vijñāna.* We develop a focused spiritual power, which becomes a support and foundation for future practices.

The past cannot be altered, or brushed off by excuses. We are nothing but a vast, unerring receptacle of our past. And regardless of our past experiences, it is our past in its totality that is the basis of our being. Yet we can, taking this totality as our basis, from this moment forward align ourselves with the Buddha's teaching with a view toward tomorrow. This is the beginning of a life based on the wisdom of Yogācāra.

The possibility for this lies in none other than the fact that the *ālaya-vijñāna* is an ever-ripening consciousness. Although we are standing on an inescapable past, we are existing here and now, in a present state of neither good nor evil—indeterminacy. The Buddha warned us how ill-will can instantly incinerate the forest of merit built with great effort, and thus we should strive to focus and rise above our past indiscretions. In the wonderful words of the *Sūtra of the Deathbed Injunction:*[4] "The one who practices forbearance is a great man possessed of power." However, even if one

Chapter Five: The Production of Things

The Consciousness Containing All Seeds

If the only function of the *ālaya-vijñāna* were to secretly preserve and accumulate all the impressions of all the activities in our entire past experiences without the slightest bit of loss, it would not act as a source of pain or irritation for us. The problem lies in the fact that the dispositions of past experiences go on to become the major causal factors in the formation of the subsequent "I."

The term "seeds" refers to nothing other than the potential energy, under the right conditions, to produce subsequent manifest activities related to those that preceded. Seeds can be characterized as "the potential within the eighth consciousness to produce an effect." Yesterday's conduct and today's activity produce what will end up being the self of tomorrow, and the function and power that brings about such a result is called "seeds."

The *ālaya-vijñāna* is called "consciousness containing all seeds" *(sarva-bījaka-vijñāna),* signifying that the impression-dispositions of the past actions and behavior saved in the eighth consciousness end up being the primary causes for the production of *dharmas* of the future. The term *all dharmas* (Skt. *sarva-dharma*) is very common in Buddhist discourse, and so we should provide a very basic explanation of its connotations. Although the range of meanings of *dharma* is extremely broad, I would like to focus here on the two most important meanings that relate to our present discussion.

The first usage is like that seen in the case of the term *buddha-dharma*. The teachings given by the Buddha are called the buddha-dharma, which is commonly expressed simply as *dharma*. When we see such expressions as "seek the dharma" or "for the purpose of the dharma," this is a reference to dharma as *teaching*.

The second major connotation of the term *dharma,* which is being invoked in the expression *all dharmas,* is the sense of *existence* or *thing*. The term *all dharma*s has the meaning of *all things* or *all phenomena,* referring to all existing things and phenomena. As you may recall, above we introduced the name of the East Asian transmission of the Yogācāra school as the "Dharma-Characteristics" School (in Chinese, Faxiang School, in Japanese, Hossō School), and the usage of dharma there also implies this meaning of *all existences* and *everything*. The Dharma-Characteristics School tended to take a special interest in ascertaining and explaining the true character of these dharmas.

Further, the *production of all dharmas* refers to the appearance of all phenomena in our daily lives, and included within this is the formation of our own selves. The causal power for the occurrence of such dharmas is the seeds that are stored in the *ālaya-vijñāna*. Within the function of these seeds, according to the presence of the right conditions, phenomena are manifested before our eyes. Our own behavior also becomes a manifest actuality, and is no longer mere potentiality.

Seeds and Manifest Activity

The term *manifest activity perfuming seeds* refers to seeds that represent the momentum of the impressions of manifest activity that is impregnated into the *ālaya-vijñāna*—those same manifest activities originally produced by seeds. This process of seeds giving rise to manifest phenomena is called *seeds generating manifest activity*.

In Yogācāra Buddhism, these two functions are never conceived of as operating as two distinct processes, but are always understood to be linked as one—seeds generating manifest activity / manifest activity perfuming seeds. The continuous cycle operates in such a way that the seeds that are the disposition-impressions of past experiences give rise to present actualities and activities, and the impressions of those activities are again stored in the *ālaya-vijñāna*.

To express this, there is the concept of "three successive processes

simultaneously bringing about cause and effect." These three processes are: (1) the creation of seeds from manifest activity; (2) the production of manifest activity from seeds, and (3) the perfuming of those seeds already contained in the *ālaya-vijñāna* by manifest activities. The fact that these three phenomena, while acting as mutual causes and effects, continuously operate one after the other, and that furthermore all of this happens simultaneously, is called *three successive processes bringing about cause and effect simultaneously*.

This is said to happen instantaneously, and according to Yogācāra, in less than an instant the manifest activities produced from the seeds of the reverberations of past activities are again stored into the *ālaya-vijñāna* as their seeds and dispositions. Since this phenomenon has continued without interruption since the immeasurably distant past, it is identical to the beginningless perfuming mentioned previously. The occurrence that we call three successive processes bringing about cause and effect simultaneously gives us a rich sense of a flawlessly functioning system that accepts no excuses.

It is easy for us to dismiss our habitual conduct as just something that everyone else does, and thus not worthy of special reflection. Certainly, our everyday selves are nothing other than part of our everyday scenery, and self-reflection is a uncomfortable and difficult mode to remain in. Nonetheless, being based on three successive phenomena bringing about cause and effect simultaneously and beginningless perfuming, what we will come to be in the future is deeply rooted in the everyday behavior we have been engaged in up to now. And while taking a thorough look at ourselves is of vital importance in any circumstance, it is nothing less than indispensable in the religious world. It is only through this process that a firm foundation may be built for the attainment of liberation. Real self-reflection can only happen in the context of everyday, normal activity.

Although I have no formal training in the martial arts, the traditional art of *kyūdō* (traditional Japanese archery) has always moved me. *Kyūdō* requires that an incredible level of mindfulness be exercised up to the moment of the release of the arrow, a level of mindfulness impossible for the impatient. And once the arrow is released, excuses are meaningless. One concentrates the mind and body fully on a single point: the distant target.

In *kyūdō,* there is an incredible level of fine-tuning involved in focusing body and mind, to the extent that one feels a moment of unity between one's mind, body, and the target. Even if the arrow that is boldly released after this fine-tuning does not hit the target, one still feels a sense of calm, a feeling that stems from the fact that one still retains the mental and physical harmonization with the target. Using this analogy, we can clearly perceive the meaning of the mechanism of the seeds and manifest activities operating through the three successive dharmas. By handling the affairs of our daily life with the same attitude, we are removing the necessity for excuses in not hitting the target in archery.

Compared to other religious and philosophical systems, Buddhism pays a considerably greater amount of attention to the matter of the inseparability of cause and effect. It is reiterated that all dharmas do not occur other than their basis in cause and effect, making it impossible to imagine that things have evolved by some sort of accident. This is one of the most fundamental aspects of the Buddhist way of thinking. Tradition says that the Buddha, when delivering his first sermon at the Deer Park in Benares, instructed his students with the *Four Noble Truths* and *Noble Eightfold Path,* with the concepts of cause and effect seminal to this teaching. The Four Noble Truths are: the (1) truth of suffering, (2) truth of arising, (3) truth of cessation, and (4) truth of the path.

(1) The truth of suffering clarifies the most fundamental view of Buddhism—that human life is fundamentally unsatisfactory. But can we all not attest that there exists much great joy within our daily living? Our happiness often acts as our daily target, the only thing getting us through days otherwise filled with anger and frustration. But we have come to understand that this enjoyment is transitory. It is too often our experience that when we continue to do something to excess because of the pleasure it brings, that feeling of enjoyment will eventually turn into pain. This is because our existence is based on suffering, even the pleasurable parts.

The Buddha taught that there are eight kinds of suffering. In addition to the four basic types of birth, aging, sickness, and death, we also suffer from separation from pleasurable things (or the people we like); association with undesirable things (or the people we dislike); not getting what we desire; and we suffer from existing within the unstable flux of the five

aggregates. This last kind of suffering is a bit of catch-all for various kinds of suffering, but mainly refers to the suffering we experience in relation to our inability to determine, locate, and account for who we really are, given the fact that we are composed of a wide range of unstable physical and mental factors that are roughly categorized into five groups, known as the "five aggregates." For example, we have the strong desire to maintain eternal youth, despite gradual weakening and aging, and this conflict between our desire and the actuality cannot but bring about discomfort.

(2) The truth of arising identifies mental disturbances (afflictions) or actions and behaviors (karma) as the causes of human suffering. Since suffering occurs because of mental disturbances and karma, it is called *suffering from afflicted activity.*

(3) The third truth, that of cessation, tells us that if we sever the mental disturbances and karma that are the causes of suffering, we can obtain nirvāṇa (peace of mind). The truth of cessation is identified as the true purpose of human existence.

(4) Finally, the truth of the path indicates the method and process by which tranquillity is attained. This path is presented as a list of eight items to be practiced in daily life: right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

Within these four truths, we can see the significance of cause-and-effect within Buddhist philosophy. In the first two truths, there is (1) the suffering of human existence (effect) and (2) the mental disturbances and karma that bring it about (cause). In the second two truths, (3) the liberation that is the true goal of human life (effect) is brought about by (4) the daily practice of the eightfold path (cause). The former pair represents an analysis of the actual present human condition, while the latter pair is related to the attainment of liberation. These are known respectively as *tainted cause-and-effect* and *untainted cause-and-effect.*[5] Buddhist philosophy strives to first try to fully comprehend the cause and effect relationships that bring about the actual human condition before progressing further down the path.

The classical Buddhist scholastic text *Abhidharmakośa-bhāsya* elaborates upon the topic of cause and effect as the theory of *six causes, four conditions,*

and *five kinds of effects.* In that text, a detailed and precise examination was carried out regarding the causes and conditions involved in the production of all dharmas. Within these causes and conditions, four general categories were posited, which include: (1) direct causes; (2) causation through similar and immediately antecedent conditions; (3) objective referent as cause/condition; (4) contingent factors as causes and conditions.

Yogācāra Buddhism took this set of four and further elaborated them in this way: (1) A *direct cause* is an immediate cause that produces all the phenomena we experience in our everyday lives. The seeds stored in the *ālaya-vijñāna* function to produce manifest activities. From this perspective, the causes are the seeds. Then, the manifest activities that were produced by the seeds immediately perfume the impression-momentum seeds in the *ālaya-vijñāna* and in this way those manifest activities are the direct causes of those seeds. Thus there are two kinds of direct causes: seeds as direct cause, and manifest activity as direct cause. With these two as condition, all dharmas are produced, an effect that we call *seeds producing manifest activity, manifest activity perfuming seeds.*

(2) *Causation through similar and immediately antecedent conditions* refers to a situation wherein a certain type of mental function (mind-king or mental factor) occurs continuously, with the antecedent mind-king/mental factor becoming the condition for the succeeding mind-king/mental factor. There is no interruption between past and present, leading to what is called a similar and immediately antecedent condition.

(3) The *objective referent as cause* refers to the causative power of the objects of cognition. If an object of cognition is not present as a condition, cognitive function cannot occur, since the projected image (objective aspect) that is manifested in the mind fails to appear. Raw sensate appearances (the things of the external world) both give rise to objective aspects and are indirect cognitive objects, and as such they are included in the category of objective referent as cause.

(4) *Contingent factors as causes and conditions* refers to the ancillary causes and conditions that function in the production of all dharmas, lying beyond the scope of the three causes and conditions introduced above. While the primary requirement in the production of effects is the direct cause, cooperative factors are also necessary—there has to be a

friendly, supportive environment in order for things to occur—or at least an environment that does not *prevent* the occurrence of something. These are the contingent causes. The former case has an active connotation which is called *supporting contingent factors,* and since the latter case is merely a lack of obstruction, it is called *non-obstructing contingent factors.*

The dharmas (in this case, often rendered into English as *elements* or *factors*) are divided into two broad categories: mind dharmas (mental factors), and form dharmas (material factors). Mind dharmas occur based on all four kinds of causes and conditions, while form dharmas are produced by two kinds of causes and conditions (direct causes and contingent factors). Material things are established based on seeds in the store consciousness.

By now we can see how Yogācāra Buddhism explains the occurrence of things mainly through the concepts of *seeds* and *manifest activity*. Since use of the term *all dharmas* has a tendency to depersonalize this process, we should reiterate that point that what is being referred to is nothing other than the content of our daily activities. And the fact that these daily activities occur based on nothing other than the seeds amassed in our *ālaya-vijñāna* means that the responsibility for what occurs in our life is entirely our own. When we are handling things well, we tend to see the causes for success as coming from within ourselves. But when things are not going well, we tend to shift the responsibility and blame to someone else, or to some external factor. The fact that such shenanigans are utterly in vain is due to the fact of the seeds and the manifest activity being direct causes.

In the meaning of "non-obstructing" we can see the breadth of the Buddhist vision in its taking into account ancillary conditions in the production and establishment of each thing. Even the little mundane features of our lives that are passed by and ignored contribute to the constitution of the present "I" at that moment. This realization makes it more difficult to ignore the consequences of all of our daily interactions. And when thinking about supporting causes beyond those of immediate motivation, we can think of ourselves as profoundly situated on top of a vast and fertile ground of production.

Although the manifest activities produced from the seeds plant new impressions back into the *ālaya-vijñāna* as seeds simultaneously with their own production, it is not necessarily the case that seeds perfumed to the

ālaya-vijñāna immediately re-generate new effects. There are, in fact, an overwhelming number of circumstances in which manifest activity cannot be directly attained. This means that the necessary conditions must be anticipated and prepared in order for any event to occur.

Here a problem arises: if the necessary conditions are absent, what happens to those seeds? Eishun (1518–1596) of Kōfukuji Temple in the Muromachi period had this to say:

> Whatever the experience may be, it cannot avoid being retained by the reliable and incorruptible seeds.

In a diary entry from the twenty-ninth day of the twelfth lunar month in the sixteenth year of Tenshō (1588), he wrote:

> This means simply that seeds do not decompose.

In this way, the impressions and dispositions that are retained in the depths of our minds do not disappear simply because there is no suitable environment for their manifestation. The seeds in the *ālaya-vijñāna* that are the causes for the production for the fruit as manifest activity are, in a latent condition, repeatedly produced and extinguished from moment to moment, while simultaneously transmitting and continuing their character, awaiting the proper environment for their manifestation.

This process is called *seeds generating seeds.* These two kinds of seeds—those that produce and those that are produced—exist in causal relation to each other. The preceding seeds (cause) produce the subsequent seeds (effect). Because cause and effect are temporal, it is not a simultaneous relationship as in *seeds generating manifest activity and manifest activity perfuming seeds,* and so it is called *diachronic cause and effect.*

The process of seeds bringing about the continuity in type while repeatedly being extinguished and reproduced is precisely what is meant by *seeds generating seeds.* Earlier we described the *ālaya-vijñāna's* aspect of preserving the continuity of a single type of quality, but this was only one characterization of the aspect of the *ālaya-vijñāna* as essence. From the aspect of its function, it is characterized as *seeds generating seeds.* Thus,

the relationship between the *ālaya-vijñāna* and the seeds can be described as that of the relation between essence and function—aside from seeds, there is nothing in the *ālaya-vijñāna* that we can really speak of.

This further clarifies the point that since seeds generate further seeds in this way, it would be foolish to imagine that the seeds planted by our actions, behavior, and past experiences will naturally fade away over time. The past is something from which we may not escape. We are, no matter what, nothing other than the receptacle of our own past. By keeping keen awareness of the mental processes of *seeds generating manifest activity, manifest activity perfuming seeds* and *seeds generating seeds,* we can begin to behave accordingly and start to follow the Yogācāra way of life. This entails paying continual attention to the fact that our activities proceed through the three karmic processes of bodily activity, speech, and thought, and that every thought passing through our mind has its implications for the future.

Innate Seeds and Newly Perfumed Seeds

The manifest activities produced from seeds have a single clear result, and manifest activities that appear as effects on the surface have a clearly discernible moral quality to their content. Our daily life is composed by the proliferation of such manifest activities, which develop variously.

Seeds are a way of describing the causal power that will produce results. Since these seeds exist in a latent, unmanifest condition, and are said to be the result *beginningless perfuming,* we have no way to discern their contents. Being unknowable, they defy any sort of observation or evaluation. Since they are unknowable, that means that there is virtually nothing that we can consciously do about them—despite the primacy of their role as the causes of the production of all experienced phenomena.

This means that if I want to try to live from tomorrow according to a Buddhist lifestyle, I have no other recourse but to start not with the unknowable seeds, but the *manifest activities* that are their tangible effects. One voluntarily reflects on one's own manifest activities while receiving the evaluation of others, and based on that creates new behavior. This gradual progression provides us with the opportunity for self-examination within manifest activity.

However manifest activity is something that is characterized by interruptions, which means that no matter how carefully we observe our manifest activity, we cannot come near to knowing the true manner of our own existence by this alone. The seeds both give the main form to our life and serve as its "backup." The main "interactive" processes are those of *seeds generating manifest activity* and *manifest activity perfuming seeds*. But in terms of the problem of bringing about changes in our being, we need to pay special attention to the process that preserves the continuity of sameness in kind, which is the mechanism of *seeds generating seeds.* When we discuss a person's character or basic personality, we must learn to go beyond the range of externally expressed manifest activity and proceed to take into account the latent, unmanifest seeds. Otherwise, we can never gain a sense of the person in his or her entirety.

Manifest activities are nothing more than the behavior constituted by individual actions. That which unites a person's separate manifest actions into an integrated whole is the extent to which they "seem like him" or reflect his individual potential. If we miss this aspect, then even if we have gained a certain sense of the person by accurately observing his separately apparent actions, and even if this sense may seem to tally with what that person really is in his integrated totality, in the final analysis, it has to be different. In order to approach the true aspect of a human being, great consideration needs to be given to the seeds, or the *ālaya-vijñāna,* even though we have no conscious access to them.

The factors that form the totality of someone's character, or personality, are usually distinguished—in all ages and all cultures—into those that are inherent and those that are acquired. Thus, when discussing a person's personality, we often refer to her or his "nature." By *inherent* we mean something that is inborn and not readily changeable—which lacks room for the effects of education and training. As distinguished from the inherent, the *acquired* is that which is assimilated into the person after birth, such as influences stemming from familial environments or social norms that are naturally ingrained; or that which one gains based on one's own application of effort. Psychological theories regarding the formation of personality have shown a tendency to incline in one of these two directions (i.e. the timeless debate regarding *nature* vs. *nurture*). Nowadays, it seems to

be generally understood that personality formation happens through the course of a dynamic relationship of various mutual influences between the innate and the acquired.

Yogācāra presents a classification in seed theory that separates types of seeds in a way that resembles this nature vs. nurture paradigm. This is the division between what are known as *innate seeds* and *newly perfumed seeds*. The concept of *innate seeds* (or *originally existent* seeds) expresses the potentiality for the production of all dharmas naturally included since the beginningless past in the *ālaya-vijñāna*. Since the term *inherent* indicates original peculiarity, innate seeds can be seen as being analogous to the notion of an inherent tendency. However, since they are possessed "originally, from the beginningless past," it is important to realize that this is something with significantly more complex connotations than those of simply *inborn* or *innate,* as is understood in present-day psychological discourse.

*Newly perfumed seed*s are seeds that were not originally present in our bodies and minds at birth. These are the impression-dispositions that are newly impregnated from various manifest activities. From the perspective of the classification of personality-forming factors into "acquired" and "inherent," it is possible to think of these newly perfumed seeds in terms of those that are acquired. Since their perfuming is seen to be something that has continued from the beginningless past, the newly perfumed seeds can be understood as included in the category that we normally consider as *inherent*.

It is often said by those comparing modern psychology with Yogācāra that innate seeds are like inborn nature, while newly perfumed seeds are akin to acquired conditioning. In Yogācāra, however, the distinction between innate and acquired is not simply a matter of whether or not the qualities are "inborn," but a question of whether they are naturally accumulated in the basis of our existence from the eternal past. It is thought that these inherent qualities and the non-inherent newly perfumed qualities produce all dharmas based on their mutual relationships, bringing forth the actuality of our life. While this kind of distinction may be hypothetically made, actually identifying distinct seeds as differing along these lines is somewhat problematic. We may say, in a general sense, that innate seeds are originally equipped in the "I," and newly perfumed seeds are newly planted

in the *ālaya-vijñāna* based on the activities our daily life, but it is in fact impossible to make a concrete distinction between those that are inherent and those that are newly perfumed. Only the buddhas have the ability to discern this sort of thing.

Instead of getting tangled up in this matter, it is more worthwhile to earnestly contemplate how our present daily actions and behavior are planting newly perfumed seeds in the *ālaya-vijñāna*. So here, again, we return our attention to manifest activity. It is also not helpful to merely (and perhaps, fatalistically) regard our manifest appearance and behavior as the generated effects of seeds; rather, it is more important to see our manifest behavior as the causes for the perfuming of seeds which bring influence on all of our subsequent actions and behavior, as well as our entire future destiny.

The character of such a moment in the linking between manifest activity and (newly perfumed) seeds is well expressed in the following short passage from the *Tale of the Vegetable Roots* (1602) by Hong Zicheng of the Ming period. It contemplates the weaknesses of human beings who retrogress after gradually reaching to a certain kind of level.

> While on the path of desire, you should not be so quick to stick your finger in the pot to get a taste. Once you stick your finger in, you fall down a thousand fathoms. While on the path of principle, you should be on guard not to hesitate and retreat. Retreating once, you fall back the distance of a thousand mountains.

The interpretation of this sentence by Usaburo Imai, included in his translation of the text, is as follows:

> Don't temporarily put out your hand thinking to grab an easy opportunity to satisfy yourself. Trying to snatch one time, you end up falling into the depths of ten thousand fathoms (in other words, once you get a taste and remember that taste, you'll end up being drowned in it). (On the contrary), when it comes to the path of principle, even if you find the difficulty bothersome, don't shrink back for a moment. If you shrink back just once, you'll end up being

> separated by a thousand mountains' distance which can never be recovered (because once you regard the task as bothersome, it will only become more and more bothersome).[6]

Who can disagree?

We all have the tendency, whatever the situation, to opt for the easiest way out. By repeatedly continuing in this activity we become habituated. At length, coming to an awareness of this, we realize that it shouldn't be, and the mental factor of regret (Skt. *kaukṛtya*) begins to take hold. Is this not our most authentic mode of being? Yet still, even though we are aware that we shouldn't do such-and-such a thing, we gradually slide back into an easy direction. While one can always make the excuse that we are "only human," the awareness brought about from the Yogācāra perspective should help to prevent us from becoming fully immersed in pleasure and ease.

Six Connotations of Seeds

As we have now come to realize, the Yogācāra view is that the two processes of seeds and manifest activity, while serving as mutual cause and effect, produce all appearances, events, and actions. Our daily lives revolve through the chain of links of *seeds generating manifest activity* and *manifest activity perfuming seeds*. In considering the fact that each one of our activities in daily life perfumes its impression into the mind's innermost depths, and these are accumulated as a potential energy for the subsequent production of all dharmas, we shouldn't be able to engage so lightly in careless activity.

On the other hand, this should not be taken as an excuse for not taking action. We can gain greater awareness of the state of mind that bends the bow toward the distantly-placed target. In the final analysis, what is most important is to simply have a target. In his research on the *Vimalakīrti-sūtra,* Dr. Hashimoto Hōkei has said, "the target is that which serves to gather all the power that a person has." Since this is an expression of his own experience in pulling the bow, it is not mere word play. He also said, "Every person should always have a destination."[7]

It doesn't matter whether we call it a target or a destination. In life, if one has a goal, and one fixes one's gaze on it from afar, one will, as a human being, naturally strive for it.

The Six Connotations

The seeds that represent the *potential within the eight consciousnesses to produce an effect* are understood as operating governed by six different conditions, which are (1) momentariness; (2) simultaneity with their manifestations; (3) functioning in tandem with the appropriate consciousness; (4) having the same karmic quality as their manifestations; (5) production of their manifestations only after the necessary associated causes are present; (6) each seed produces its own peculiar manifestation and no other. These are known as the *six conditions of seeds.* We need to take a moment here and briefly discuss the connotations of each of these distinctive properties in terms of the explanation of seeds given above, especially in terms of the relationship between seeds and manifest activity.

(1) *Momentariness* means that seeds, representing the potentiality for the production of all things, arise, cease, and change without interruption. If it were the case that seeds were something eternal and unchanging, causation would be rendered impossible. The fact that seeds cannot be something eternal and unchanging, but must arise, cease, and change from moment to moment, is the meaning of momentariness.

Next we move to the condition of simultaneous cause and effect as an aspect of the causes and effects in the production of all phenomena, which is the relationship between seeds and manifest activity. This is the meaning of (2) *simultaneity of seeds with their manifestations.* This means that seeds, as the causes for the production of all dharmas, simultaneously contain their effect *qua* manifest activity. This idea was already touched upon in some detail from the perspective of the *three successive phenomena bringing about cause and effect simultaneously* in the context of *seeds generating manifest activity* and *manifest activity perfuming seeds.*

(3) The meaning of *functioning in tandem with the appropriate consciousness* is that the seeds are continuous in their function without interruption, and that they bring about the continuity of the same qualities

without altering them. If that which we understand as cause disappears before it produces its intended effect, then it has lost its meaning. In order for seeds to function as the causal power for the production of all phenomena, they cannot be something that readily disappears. They must continue without interruption. Seeds, as they bring about the continuity of a certain type over a long period of time, act as *seeds generating seeds,* discussed at length above. By "long period of time" here, we are discussing a period of time lasting until the attainment of the final stage of enlightenment, which will be discussed in chapter 10.

(4) *Having the same karmic quality as their manifestations* means that the seeds are of the same quality as the manifest activities they produce. In other words, wholesome manifest activities are caused by wholesome seeds and unwholesome manifest activities are caused by unwholesome seeds. Thus, the meaning of seeds having the same karmic quality as their manifestations means that the quality of a certain behavior or appearance automatically resonates with the wholesome, unwholesome, or indeterminate karmic moral quality of the seeds that produced it.

Seeds are again used as a metaphor for the latent potentiality to give rise to each thing, and we have repeatedly seen them described as *the potential within the eight consciousnesses to produce an effect.* However, in reality, the establishment of all phenomena is attributable not only directly to these seeds. In order for things to occur, various kinds of conditions must also be present. This is indicated by the fifth connotation, (5) *seeds produce their manifestations only when the necessary associated causes are present*. This is stating that the occurrence of events awaits the assembly of myriad conditions.

Finally, (6) states that *a seed produces its own particular manifestation and no other,* meaning that the seeds naturally bring about effects that are homogeneous with their own character.

At a first look, the implications of numbers (4) and (6) may be hard to distinguish, but they do refer to two distinct aspects. In #4, *having the same karmic quality as their manifestations,* the issue is one of the *karmic character* or *moral quality* of the seed. In condition #6, that of production of its own peculiar manifestation and no other, the problem is one of *type* or *kind*. We tend to end up referring to *all dharmas* as if they were just one set of

things, but all of the phenomena that are produced by causes and conditions (known as *conditioned dharmas*) can be broadly categorized into three groups, which include: (1) mental phenomena (including the mind-king and mental factors), (2) material phenomena (called *form dharmas*), and (3) phenomena that can be classified as neither material nor mental (called factors not directly associated with mind; including such things as time, direction, quantity, etc.). In a very general sense, it would not be incorrect to say that seeds are the causes of the production of all dharmas. However, specifically speaking, it is understood that material phenomena are produced from the seeds of form dharmas, and psychological phenomena are produced from the seeds of mind dharmas. This is the meaning of each seed producing its own peculiar manifestation and no other. It is from these conditioned dharmas that our daily life takes its form. When we consider each seed producing its own particular manifestation and no other, we are shown that an "I" cannot be established based solely on a single type of cause. Any phenomenon that is not defined by all six of these conditions cannot be a seed.

Among these six meanings of seeds, I would like here to stress the special importance of the two connotations *production of their manifestations only after the necessary associated causes are present* and *each seed's production of its own peculiar manifestation and no other.* This entails another look at the *four causes and conditions.* From the very start, Buddhism pays great attention to the matter of cause and effect, and within this notion of cause and effect, it places special stress on the notion of causality through a multiplicity of causes and conditions.

In other words, it is impossible to think that all the things that go into the composition of our actual daily lives occur on their own and without due cause. Rather, it is precisely in the midst of a dynamic assembly of manifold causes and conditions that things come into being, while we go about managing our daily lives. Buddhism assumes this way of thinking to be fundamental, and this approach is clarified and elaborated with far greater precision by the Yogācāra notions of *seeds producing their manifestations only after the necessary associated causes are present* and *each seed producing of its own peculiar manifestation and no other.*

The Profound Inner Principles

by Rangjung Dorje, the third Karmapa

With Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye's Commentary
Illuminating "The Profound Principles"

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AND INTRODUCED BY
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1) THE EXPLANATION OF THE NATURE OF MIND

The cause is beginningless mind-itself. 1.1
Although neither limited nor partial, . . .

What is the cause, or ground, of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa? What are the conditions for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa to appear from that [ground]? **The cause**, or ground, of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa **is mind-itself**, which has **no beginning** or end. Because it is liberated from the conceptual elaborations of unity or separateness, it is **not limited**. It is **not partial** in the sense of being something permanent or being an annihilation, being something to be abandoned or being a remedy, and so forth.* Saying that identifies the dharmadhātu, suchness, and sugatagarbha as the ground without which nothing would arise. [24]

Here the *Autocommentary* says that the term "ālaya" is used for thusness, or dharmatā, which is the ground for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa.[159] Its subdivisions are presented by referring to its pure state as ālaya wisdom and by calling it the ālaya consciousness in terms of it [containing] all seeds.† With [references to] the particularities of the higher and lower yānas, [the *Autocommentary*] teaches that categorizing mind as pure and impure establishes how saṃsāra appears from the ālaya consciousness and nirvāṇa appears from the ālaya wisdom.

Thusness, or dharmatā, the ground for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, is discussed using numerous terms: "the great, primordial indestructible bindu," "prajñāpāramitā," "mahāmudrā," "intrinsic wisdom," "ordinary mind," and so forth. When it is animated by the wind that moves mentation, it engages with the concepts of other. From the perspective of the appearances of

*_Annotations_ (6.3–4) states:

> The **cause**, or ground, of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa is the thusness of **mind**. They have no other **beginning**. [Mind-itself] is **neither limited** in the sense of belonging [only] either to buddhas or to sentient beings, nor is it **partial** in the sense of being either something existent or something nonexistent.

†The *Autocommentary* (383.4–5) explains that the ālaya consciousness is considered maturational because everything collects within it, like an ocean formed from rain water. It is considered to contain all seeds in terms of it being the cause that produces all manifest conditions.

Note that Rangjung Dorje himself does *not* use the term "ālaya wisdom" anywhere in his *Autocommentary* (or in any of his other works), although the term is found in most *Profound Inner Principles* commentaries, starting with the *Oral Teaching of the Great Lotsāwa* (20.2).

dualistic phenomena, the conventional terms "ālaya wisdom" and "ālaya consciousness" are used.

Ālaya Wisdom

Ālaya wisdom is the aforementioned sugatagarbha. The Prajñāpāramitā [sūtras]* and the *Highest Continuum* teach that this is the nature of mind. The *Dohā [for the People]*[160] speaks of mind that is like a wish-fulfilling jewel.† The *Abhidharma Sūtra* says:

> The dhātu of beginningless time
> is the source of all phenomena.[161]

The referent of those statements is this very [ālaya wisdom]. It is explained to be wisdom since *The Name-Chanting of Mañjushrī* proclaims:

> Transcending the nature of consciousness
> [he] holds wisdom in a nondual manner.[162] [25]

This [ālaya wisdom] is a cause of the same category as nirvāṇa, and it is the empowering or dominant cause for saṃsāra.[163] [Ālaya wisdom] is present in the sense of being mixed with ālaya consciousness, like milk mixed with water. Those who are ignorant of the definitive meaning and who do not recognize ālaya wisdom assert that there are only six modes of consciousness, or if they assert eight modes of consciousness, they take ālaya to be only consciousness. Nevertheless, it is said in the *Compendium of the Mahāyāna:*

> As for what are the latent tendencies for listening ([which] are contingent upon the awakening of the buddhas), what source they enter, and that they enter the maturational consciousness

*The *Autocommentary* (382.2) says:
The *Eight-Thousand-Stanza Prajñāpāramitāsūtra* [Dg.K. 3.3] states:
Mind is not mind: the nature of mind is luminosity.

†The *Autocommentary* (382.1) says:
Saraha's *Dohā for the People* proclaims:
Mind-itself alone is the seed of everything,
from which existence and nirvāṇa radiate.
Homage to the mind, which, like a wish-fulfilling gem,
bestows all our desired results.

> in the sense of coexisting with it, [we should know that] they are like milk [mixed] with water.[164]

Accordingly, it is explained that consciousness operates in the sense of being the support and wisdom as being the supported.

Ālaya Consciousness

Nowadays, the ālaya consciousness is well known among abhidharma [scholars]. It is the direct cause for saṃsāra, not the cause for nirvāṇa. For an extensive presentation of this we should refer to the *Autocommentary* and other texts.[165]

Here [the *Autocommentary*] explains the meaning of **without beginning** or end.[166] From the perspective of consciousness, what appear as delusion and as liberation do indeed have a beginning and end; nevertheless, temporal beginnings and ends are conceptual superimpositions. In essence, neither delusion nor liberation has ever existed. The natures of the stained mind and the unstained mind, which are dependently arisen, cannot be said to be the same or different. Since there is no other beginning than that [of dependent origination], they are said to be "of a time without beginning." Alternatively, since they are free from arising, abiding, or ceasing, they are said to be "without beginning or end."

[The *Autocommentary* also says that this mind] cannot be said to be the same as or different from that of the buddhas or of sentient beings and, therefore, it is **not limited** [in the sense of being one or the other].[167] Since it does not assume any position—such as being permanent or an annihilation, something to be abandoned or a remedy—it is **not partial**. That is a description of the nature of the abiding state [of mind].

Here [Dak Rampa remarks that] those who explain the causal continuum to be the ālaya consciousness, and those who maintain that the noble father and son [Nāgārjuna and Āryadeva] do not assert an ālaya consciousness, have simply made the mistake of not studying such texts as the *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* and the *Commentary on Bodhichitta*.* [26]

*This is a paraphrase of Dak Rampa (99–100). In support of his first point, he quotes Asaṅga's *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* (chapter 1, sections 45–48), the key line of which is:
Those [latent tendencies for listening] are not the ālaya consciousness because they are the very seeds that are its remedy. (note continues on next page)

The word "**although**" [in the root verse] connects [these lines] to the following ones.

2) The Explanation of the Manifestation of Mind

. . . this [mind] displays freely: 1.3
it is empty in essence yet clear in nature,
and its manifestations appear unimpededly as anything at all.

If mind-itself is the ground of everything in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, how is it that saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear individually from that [one ground]? **This** mind-itself **displays** its brilliance **freely**—that is the expressive power of wisdom, mind-itself. While [mind-itself] never moves from its essence, **emptiness**, its **nature** manifests **clearly**: it is the inseparability of emptiness and clarity. **Its manifestations**, or modes of apprehension, **appear unimpededly as anything at all**.* As names for those three, the terms "mind," "mentation," and "consciousness" are used in the context of saṃsāra, and, in the context of nirvāṇa, the terms "dharmakāya," "saṃbhogakāya," and the "nirmāṇakāya arising as anything" are used.*

Regardless of whether the mind is pure or impure, since its essence is unborn emptiness and its nature is luminous clarity, it is the ground of everything. A distinctive feature of the Mantra tradition is its statement that everything is one in being great bliss. In either case, with its display that is an unimpeded manifestation [of emptiness-clarity, or great bliss], anything at all can appear. An additional sense derived from the previously mentioned "although" is that the various manifestations that appear seem to assume positions as the specific phenomena of percepts and perceivers in saṃsāra and nirvāṇa. From the ālaya, afflictive mentation arises unimpededly; from that, the six modes of consciousness; from those, the fifty-one mental factors and so forth; and from those, the appearances of the environment and its inhabitants. The Mantra tradition explains that the various appearances of the winds and channels and external and internal forms arise unimpededly from luminosity or the connate state.

As for [the relationship between mind-itself's] essence and its manifestations, the exalted Gampopa said, "Connate mind-itself is the dharmakāya. Connate appearances are the light of the dharmakāya."

The explanation in the *Treasury of Abhidharma* that mind, mentation, and consciousness are the same represents the Hīnayāna tradition. [27] Here in the Mahāyāna tradition, the understanding is that mind refers to the ālaya consciousness, mentation to the seventh mentation, and consciousness to the six operative consciousnesses.†

(The *Autocommentary* also quotes chapter 1, sections 45–48, of the *Compendium of the Mahāyāna*; see Brunnhölzl 2009, 136–37). To refute the second assertion, Dak Rampa (100–101) says:

Nāgārjuna's *Commentary on Bodhichitta* [verse 35; C.T. 18:112] states:

Ālaya consciousness
seems to be real and yet it is not.
When it moves back and forth,
it holds existence.

*The *Autocommentary* (391.4–5) comments:

This mind-itself, the very essence of momentary cognition, with its quality of **displaying freely**, is in its nature **emptiness** and is **naturally clear**—it is the ground of everything. **Its manifestations**, in the form of the individual modes of the mental factors and the seven modes of consciousness, **appear unimpededly** and momentarily from that [empty-clear mind-itself].

Annotations (6.4–7.2) explains:

The manifestations of **this** mind **display freely**. Since [mind-itself] is **empty in essence**, or nature, yet **clear in nature**, or essence, it is the unification of clarity and emptiness, like a moon [reflected] in water. It is called ordinary mind, dharmadhātu, heart of the victors, prajñāpāramitā, mahāmudrā, dharmakāya, great bliss, connate wisdom, original protector, luminosity, and naturally abiding gotra. It is noted that the *Lamp That Summarizes Conduct* provides ninety-three names for the ultimate: "First, luminosity, total emptiness, wisdom of the buddhas," and so forth.

The evolving gotra is not something that newly arises: it is the cause that evolves into the two rūpakāyas and the wisdoms that are the stainless natures of the eight modes of consciousness. What awakens the gotra is the correct conceptuality that is the latent tendencies for listening. That depends upon the [buddha] heart, not the ālaya consciousness. Nevertheless, the latent tendencies for listening and the ālaya consciousness abide as one continuum, like water [mixed] with milk.

From that [mind-itself], the **manifestations** of mind and mental factors, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, **appear unimpededly as anything whatsoever**. This [mind-]itself is the pure mind, sugatagarbha.

*Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche (March 1999) commented that emptiness (mind's essence) correlates to mind (that is, ālaya consciousness) and the dharmakāya. Clarity (mind's nature) correlates to mentation (that is, afflictive mentation) and the saṃbhogakāya. Mind's unimpeded manifestation correlates to consciousness (that is, the six sense consciousnesses) and the nirmāṇakāya.

†Ngo-tro Rabjampa (79.3–6) remarks:

The *Treasury of Abhidharma* [chapter 2, verse 34ab; C.T. 79:11] states:

Mind, mentation, and consciousness
are equivalent. (note continues on next page)

B) The Way Delusion Occurs

This has two parts:

1) The Presentation of the Ālaya and Its Supported Mentation and Mental Afflictions
2) The Presentation of the Six Modes of Consciousness and the Sequence of the Five Skandhas

1) The Presentation of the Ālaya and Its Supported Mentation and Mental Afflictions

This [mind] is itself ignorant of itself 1.6
and is stirred by the motions of formative mentation,[168]
just as water is by waves.

With its unimpeded display seeming to appear as [discrete] objects and perceiving subjects, **this** naturally pure, unborn mind **is ignorant of itself**, of its own essence. **Just as water is** [stirred] **by waves**, [the ālaya] **is stirred by the motions** of the seventh **mentation**, which causes mind to **form** objects.*

The *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* [chapter 1, section 13; C.T. 76:11] refutes that by saying:

> Some consider mind, mentation, and consciousness to be equivalents, that [just] the words are discrete. This is not feasible because it has been observed that mentation and consciousness are discrete referents. Therefore, mind is also a discrete referent.

*_Annotations_ (7.2–6) states:

> **This** mind **is itself ignorant** of **its own** essence: the inseparability of appearances and emptiness, the unification of the two truths. This is analogous to not realizing an illusion to be an illusion. The impure mind, ālaya consciousness, is the support, or base, for all afflictive phenomena. Since it arises from the accumulated latent tendencies of the seven modes [of consciousness], it is the resultant maturational ālaya. Since it serves as the cause for the arising of the seven modes [of consciousness], it is the causal seminal ālaya. And because it appropriates [or takes] birth in the three realms, it is called "the appropriating consciousness."
>
> The feeling tone of the ālaya consciousness is indifference; its essence is that it is unobscured and neutral, like the clarity of a mirror; and it is always accompanied by the five omnipresent [mental factors]. Additionally, when this [ālaya consciousness] meets with the conditions of unclear and varied latent tendencies, [various appearances] manifest, just as when a cloth [impregnated] with various paints is dipped in dyes, it will appear with a variety of colors. [The ālaya consciousness] is embraced by

> On the basis of that, [mind] becomes afflicted with [the dualistic notions of] percepts and perceivers, and, being deluded by that condition [that is, by afflictive mentation], the imagination of what is unreal experiences the appearances of saṃsāra.
>
> Of what is [mind] ignorant? It is ignorant of mind-itself, the heart of the buddhas, the display of the three kāyas. Why is it ignorant? Mind-itself is itself ignorant because its unceasing expressive power appears to be objects and perceiving subjects. It is ignorant because, even though its essence does not exist as anything, it conceives of its unified qualities—its unborn basic nature and its unceasing brilliance—as self and other, respectively.
>
> How is it ignorant? The seventh mentation, which causes mind to form objects, stirs the ālaya. Like the movement of waves on water, its motions produce the afflictive mentation, which is constantly embraced by four afflictions: the associated apprehension of "me"; attachment to a self; the belief in the perishing collection [that is, the skandhas, as being a self]; and ignorance.* Furthermore, when mind-itself—uncontrived ordinary mind beyond identification—is connected to [the delusion of] sentient beings and under the power of dependent origination, it is stimulated by the wind of mentation (the creator of movement). With that [movement], the seventh mentation surfaces and conceives of self and other. Focusing on the unborn basic nature of mind-itself and taking it to be "me" and a self, afflictive mentation is produced. [28] [Afflictive mentation] and the ālaya continue to animate each other: like waves and water, they move and condition each other. This is the imagination of the unreal. Because of that, even though saṃsāric

---

> the imagination of the unreal, the mind, and the mental factors; it is like a flowing river.
>
> As for the conditions that [create] the way that [mind] is ignorant: When the seven modes [of consciousness] arise and cease, their latent tendencies are placed within the ground [that is, the ālaya consciousness]. Such actions are **the motions** of the **formative** seventh **mentation**, which create ignorance by **stirring** the ālaya, **just as waves stir water.**

*"This is analogous to not realizing an illusion to be an illusion": note that I am reading *Annotations* (7.2) *sgyu ma la sgyu mar rtogs pa* as *sgyu ma la sgyu mar ma rtogs pa*.

*Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso (March 1999) explains that these first movements of the seventh mentation (also referred to as the immediate mentation) are nonconceptual and that the ensuing afflictive mentation is conceptual. To begin with there is simply mental movement, as when we first wake up in the morning. Then there is the conceptual identification of self, such as when we think, "I am awake," and begin thinking about our day using words and terms.

phenomena do not exist inherently, they become established as seemingly real appearances. This is the way mind is ignorant.

Here, connate ignorance is identified by referring to mind-itself's quality of clarity with the term "the seventh mentation" and explaining that the quality of not recognizing its own essence is ignorance.

The formation of positive karma by the movements of the seventh mentation is correct imagination. The essence of that [mentation] itself being without stains is the stainless mentation, which is included within the evolving gotra and, in the context of the ground, is the wisdom of equality. We should understand that this [presentation] is identical to what is explained in chapter 6.

The discussion here of the seventh mentation (which causes mind to form objects) is of a mentation in which no distinction is made between afflictive mentation and stainless mentation. Because [the *Autocommentary* presents mentation as] that which places within the ālaya the potentials [created] when the six modes of consciousness arise and cease, it explains, drawing from the *Ascertainment of Valid Cognition,*[169] that [mentation] is the mental consciousness: it is the mentation that is the immediate condition for the six modes of consciousness, as will be explained below.* For these reasons, the *Autocommentary* repeatedly uses "immediate mentation" as an alternative term [for the seventh mentation].

The exalted seventh [Karmapa, Chödrak Gyatso,] asserts that [mentation] has the following three aspects.

- From the perspective of being immediate, it is regarded as the seventh mentation.
- From the perspective of being embraced by four afflictions, it is designated as the afflictive mentation.
- From the perspective of being embraced by positive qualities, it is considered to be the stainless mentation.

*The *Autocommentary* (393.1–3) says:

> This [mentation] abides within the ālaya and emerges from it. When the six modes of consciousness arise and cease, [mentation] places their potentials within the ālaya and is, therefore, called "the mental consciousness." The nature of this mental consciousness is described by Dharmakīrti [in his *Ascertainment of Valid Cognition*] as follows:
>
> > The mental consciousness generated by an immediate condition (which is an associated sense consciousness that operates in conjunction with its own immediate object) is a valid form of cognition.

In brief: Within the ocean of the ālaya, the wavelike mentation moves and creates, thereby producing saṃsāra. The ālaya consciousness is the ground or cause of saṃsāra, and mentation is the condition.

The *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* presents [mentation] as twofold: first, it is the immediate mentation, the locus for the development of the consciousnesses; second, it is the afflictive mentation, which afflicts those [consciousnesses].* Dak Rampa summarizes the meaning of that detailed explanation, in which mentation is divided into two, [with the following explanation].[170] [29] The first mentation is the base from which the six modes of consciousness arise from the ālaya, and, through association with positive qualities, it becomes the cause for a buddha's excellent qualities of separation. The latter mentation is not a valid form of cognition since it produces all mental states involving noncomprehension, wrong conception, and doubt, and is the root of delusion in saṃsāra. We should be aware that when the consciousnesses are classified as eight, these two [aspects of mentation] are counted as one.

*The *Autocommentary* (394.1–4) states:

> The *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* [chapter 1, section 6; C.T. 76:8] says:
>
> > Mentation is twofold. It is the base, acting as the immediate condition, and, therefore, it is called the "mentation that is a just-ceased consciousness," the base for the arising of consciousness. Second, it is the afflictive mentation, which is always associated with four afflictions: the belief in the perishing collection [that is, the skandhas, as being a self], taking pride in "me," attachment to a self, and ignorance. That is the base for consciousness being afflicted.
> >
> > The first [form of mentation] is the base for generating consciousness, and the second [form] afflicts it. [Mentation] is consciousness because it cognizes objects. Because it is immediate and is self-oriented, mentation is twofold.
>
> *Annotations* (7.6–8.2) explains:
>
> > The seventh mentation is twofold: it is the immediate mentation that produces the six modes [of consciousness] on the basis of the ālaya; and it is the afflictive mentation, which causes those [consciousnesses] to be deluded. These two modes are analogous to seeing a rope and seeing that [rope] as a snake.
> >
> > Afflictive mentation is confused about the nature of the ālaya and mistakenly takes it to be a self. It views the ālaya as a self, takes pride in its self, is attached to its self, and takes pleasure [in that self]. Since it is always accompanied by these four afflictions, it is obscured and neutral.
> >
> > It is explained that when mentation is embraced by the four afflictions, it is afflictive mentation; and, when it is embraced by virtuous qualities (such as realizing the absence of a self), it is stainless mentation.

2) The Presentation of the Six Modes of Consciousness and the Sequence of the Five Skandhas

This has two parts:

a) The Explanation of How the Six Modes of Consciousness Are Deluded about Objects
b) The Explanation of the Sequence of the Five Skandhas

a) The Explanation of How the Six Modes of Consciousness Are Deluded about Objects

Referents and perceivers appear as two: 1.9
[mind] itself projects to itself and perceives that.
Because there are appearing aspects—mentation moving outward—
the consciousnesses that perceive objects as referents arise.

Ground luminosity, the great, primordial indestructible bindu, is stimulated by wind (the creator of movement), and mind and mentation stir [each other], like water and waves. Because of that, even though **referents** (apprehended objects) **and perceivers** (apprehenders) are not, in fact, discrete [entities], the force of our beginningless latent tendencies causes them to **appear as two**. The mind **itself** expressly **projects images to itself, and perceives that** as self and other. Illumination occurs, then radiance, and then the imminent attainment of objects. **Because there are appearing aspects—which are mentation moving outward—perceptions** of external **objects as referents** occur, from which **the six modes of consciousness arise.** That is the way mind is deluded.

What are deluded? Ordinary beings' six modes of consciousness, which fixate on appearing objects, are deluded. About what are they deluded? They are deluded about the myriad objects that appear. How are they deluded? Being ignorant of their own basic mistake of apprehending themselves dualistically, [the consciousnesses] are deluded in that they conceive of themselves as referents that are other, that is, as perceived objects. [30]

What are the causes and conditions of delusion? [Delusion is created] by the movements of mentation. [To elaborate] on this: Because, as just described, mind and mentation stir each other, there is confusion about the unification [of appearances and emptiness]. The appearing aspects are

taken to be the perceived referents, the six types of objects, such as forms. The empty aspect is taken to be the perceiving mind, the six consciousnesses, such as the visual consciousness. There are no percepts that are other than [mind] itself—[mind] **itself** (the perceiver) expressly **projects to itself and** conceives and **perceives** [referents] to be other, thereby becoming involved with dualistic appearances. That is the delusion of conceiving of nondual appearance-emptiness as a duality.

From the interdependence of the triad of objects, sense faculties, and consciousnesses (whose relationship develops because of that [delusion]), there arises cognition that is illumination, such as forms. Next, the illumination of objects (forms and so forth) becomes radiant. Once conceptual mentation becomes involved, since that causes referents (such as forms) to be seen, it is called "the attainment of illumination." For that reason, the instantaneous appearances of the six modes of consciousness, in terms of their very nature, are not deluded. Nevertheless, since those [moments of consciousness] continue to occur, **mentation** mistakenly takes its own appearing aspects to be **external** referents. **Because there are appearing aspects** (which are the **movements** of the various deluded thoughts), the six **objects** (such as forms) are perceived to be outer **referents**, and **the consciousnesses perceiving** them **arise.** That is delusion with respect to the myriad causes and conditions.

The way in which the dharmakāya manifests following the absorption of illumination, radiance, and attainment into luminosity, and the way the delusive appearances of saṃsāra arise following the rising of illumination, radiance, and attainment from ground luminosity are profound key points within the Vajrayāna.

The way the six consciousnesses arise with delusion is described from the perspective of the inner potentials manifesting as the twelvefold dependent origination.* This is the reason that the *Autocommentary* speaks of "the dependent origination that is the differentiation of the nature [into phenomena]."[171] On the basis of that dependent origination, there occurs the twelvefold dependent origination of the happy states—which are distinguished as pleasant—and the twelvefold dependent origination of the negative states—which are distinguished as unpleasant. [To state this] again, the power of movement causes the defiled karmic formative forces to arise from

*Drupon Khenpo Lodro Namgyal (March 2012) commented that the inner potentials are the karmic latent tendencies.

ignorance, like waves within water. Those formative forces, as conditions, cause the consciousnesses that see the six types of objects (such as forms) as referents to arise. Because they occur solely on the basis of the condition of fundamental ignorance, all the appearances of the consciousnesses are delusive appearances. [31]

b) The Explanation of the Sequence of the Five Skandhas

Feelings arise from embracing or rejecting [objects]. 1.13
Discriminations are the apprehension of those [objects'] characteristics.
Formative processes label the appearances of objects as other,
and through fixating [upon them], the skandha of forms is established.

The consciousnesses are the starting point for the production of coarse delusive appearances from the heightened appearances of latent tendencies. Therefore, in this context, the first of the five skandhas to be presented is that of the consciousnesses.

The force of objects appearing to the consciousnesses as either pleasing, displeasing, or neutral causes us to think that they are either to be embraced, rejected, or treated with indifference. Thus, there are three types of feelings that arise. Then, based on the skandha of feelings and the apprehension of those objects in terms of their characteristics (which pertain either to their natures or to their attributes), the skandha of discriminations is produced. Following that, along with those discriminations, we distinguish objects individually and variously as pleasing or displeasing, thereby subjecting appearances to the formative processes, and labeling the assorted appearances of objects as something other than our own [mind]. That establishes the collection of mental factors appearing in that way. Next, because of the formative forces and their stabilization of the latent tendencies for labeling objects as other, we fixate on the natures and characteristics of forms, thereby establishing the skandha of forms.* [In this presentation] that is

Annotations (8.5–9.1) comments:

Next, the skandha of feelings arises from embracing pleasure (which is a feeling we wish to encounter and from which we do not wish to be separated) or from rejecting suffering (which is the opposite of that [pleasure]). Then, through the force of conceptualizing objects (which is the radiance of illumination), there is the skandha of discriminations, which are the apprehension of the characteristics of objects, such as blue and yellow. By subjecting causes and conditions to the formative processes, those appearing objects are labeled as being something other than cognition. Through fixating on the stabilized continuum of latent tendencies, the skandha of forms is established. That [skandha of forms] is similar to a resultant skandha in that it is produced by the aggregation of many causes and conditions related to the ālaya and the seven modes [of consciousness].

[Given that the skandha of forms] is connected to mentation, when referents are seen, that is the attainment of illumination.

Könchok Yenlak (*Heart of the Sun*, 319.6–322.6; hereafter cited in the footnotes and glossaries as "Könchok Yenlak") discusses the skandha of forms' two divisions: causal forms and resultant forms. Resultant forms are the five physical sense faculties, the five sense objects, and forms that are objects for mentation. Causal forms are the major elements (earth, water, fire, and wind).

the last skandha. This sequence [of the skandhas] is one of arising [in which resultant skandhas arise from causal ones]; it is referred to as "the actual sequence of causes and results."*

C) The Presentation of the Divisions of the Causes and Conditions

This has two parts:

1) The Presentation of Six Causes
2) The Presentation of Four Conditions

1) The Presentation of Six Causes

"The causes are the five dhātus and consciousness as the sixth" [32] 1.17
is stated as a convention by conceptual [mind].

"The five dhātus of earth, water, fire, wind, and space and the sixth dhātu of consciousness are the causes of all phenomena, which are subsumed within the external and internal, saṃsāra and nirvāṇa" is stated as a convention for those with concepts. Those without concepts have pacified conceptual elaborations concerning causes and their results.

*Karma Tinle (72.5–6) says that the *Treasury of Abhidharma* presents forms as the first skandha (followed by feelings, discriminations, formative forces, and the consciousnesses) because it explains the sequence of the skandhas from coarse to subtle and in terms of the generation of mental afflictions. See the *Treasury of Abhidharma*, chapter 1, verse 22b.

The defining characteristics of those dhātus are, respectively, that which is solid and hard; wet and moist; hot and burning; light and moving; and empty and creates room.* The defining characteristics of consciousness are as explained above.†

2) The Presentation of Four Conditions

This has four parts:

a) The Causal Condition
b) The Dominant Conditions
c) The Object Conditions
d) The Immediate Conditions

a) The Causal Condition

The ālaya, in which such latent tendencies
are stored, is called the causal condition. 1.19

The **latent tendencies**, or seeds, that mistakenly regard saṃsāra and nirvāṇa as separate **are stored in the ālaya**. The ālaya **is called the causal condition** for those delusive appearances because without the ālaya [consciousness], which [contains] all seeds, there is nothing that can be considered to be the cause of sentient beings.‡

*The *Oral Teaching of the Great Lotsāwa* (24.1) adds:

> Being solid, [wet, hot, light, and empty] are the natures of the elements of earth, [water, fire, wind, and space]. The functions of those elements are that they are hard, [moist, burning, moving, and room creating].

†This paragraph is drawn from the *Autocommentary* (401.4–5). Earlier, the *Autocommentary* (383.3) says:

> A consciousness is that which sees an object.

‡*Annotations* (9.2–3) remarks:

> **Such latent tendencies**—that is, the imagination of the unreal (or incorrect mental engagement), which regards that which is not a self to be a self—**are stored within the ālaya**. That ālaya, which [contains] all seeds, **is called the causal condition** because appearances and mind are inseparable and, in particular, because the dhātus, or elements, are inseparable from consciousness.

b) The Dominant Conditions

The dominant conditions are the sense faculties—
the visual and the others—which appear as intermediaries. 1.21

The dominant conditions for the consciousnesses of the five sense doors **are the** five transparent physical **sense faculties, the visual** faculty, which is [shaped] like a flax flower, **and the others**. They **appear** as the **intermediaries** between objects and consciousnesses. The dominant condition for the mental consciousness is a faculty that is a consciousness.

[The five sense faculties] are said to have transparent physical forms. They have physical forms because, having been created by the four elements, they consist of particles. They are transparent because, through their connection with the consciousnesses, objects appear clearly [to their respective consciousnesses]. [33]

The āchārya Dignāga and others explain that the visual faculty is the particular potential of the eye, based upon the previous [moment of] visual consciousness, to engage forms. The other [four sense faculties] are described in a similar fashion.*

The mental faculty is the āyatana of mentation. It is the potential that serves as the door for the arising of the mental consciousness. Because it is explained that way, the mental faculty is the same as the immediate mentation, which will be described below.

c) The Object Conditions

The object conditions are what is cognized,
that is, what appear as objects: forms and so forth. 1.23

*The *Autocommentary* (402.5–6) states:

> [Dharmakīrti's] *Examination of Connections* says that [the faculties] are inner seeds or potentials, while the *Compendium of the Mahāyāna* says that perceived aspects of the ālaya appear as the five sense faculties.

Karma Tinle (75.4–6) remarks:

> [Dignāga's] *Examination of Objects of Observation* explains that the faculties are inner seeds or potentials. The Madhyamaka teaches that they [reflect] the laws (*dharmatā*) of interdependence. Those explanations are not contradictory because the Vajrayāna says that all phenomena are simply appearances of mind.

The object conditions for the six consciousnesses are what is cognized, that is, what appear as the specific objects for the consciousnesses: forms, sounds, smells, tastes, tangible objects, and phenomena. The object conditions of the other two [that is, the ālaya consciousness and the afflictive mentation] are implied [here]. The object conditions for the ālaya are the worlds, which are abodes and environments, and the five sense faculties, which appear physically. The object [condition] for the afflictive mentation is the ālaya itself.

d) The Immediate Conditions

What are called "immediate conditions" 1.25
are immediate to whatever has [just] ceased,
including the sixth mentation.

What are called the "immediate conditions" for the six modes of consciousness, including the sixth mentation [or mental consciousness], are as follows. Whatever one of the previous [moments of] the six modes of consciousness has [just] ceased is immediately followed by a potential that gives rise to a subsequent [moment of] consciousness. This potential is a powerful latent tendency within the ālaya. The consciousness described as being the same as the dhātu of mentation is the immediate condition for a subsequent moment [of consciousness]. This is because it is the condition that produces a subsequent [moment of one of] the six modes of consciousness upon the cessation of that specific [consciousness] without any other [kind of] cognition interrupting. [34] Therefore, it is taught that the immediate condition is the potential that gives rise to any one of the consciousnesses and is mentation that is based on the ālaya.*

*Karma Tinle (76.5–77.5) presents the major points of the *Autocommentary* (404.2–405.4) as follows:

The *Autocommentary* [404.2–4] states:

> Here [I follow] what the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intention* says [about the immediate condition]. When [any one of] the six modes of consciousness has [just] ceased, the consciousness described as being the same as the dhātu of mentation carries it into the ālaya. Immediately, from [the ālaya containing] all seeds, the mentation present within that ālaya stirs and emerges, just like the condition of waves [arising] in water. Thus, the immediate mentation emerges, as explained above.

It [405.5] also says:

At this point the scholar-siddha Dak Rampa provides explanations of the skandhas, dhātus, and āyatanas in terms of the four modes, the pith of which can be summarized as follows.[172]

The amassment of many phenomena is called "skandhas" ("aggregates"). That which have no other creator and bear their own characteristics are referred to as "dhātus" ("constituents"). The doors for the arising of the consciousnesses are known as "āyatanas" ("sense spheres"). What are observed,

> The immediate [mentation] is asserted to be a particular instance of the mentation that abides within the ālaya.

As for the meaning of "immediate to whatever has [just] ceased": it is not that the cessation of a previous [moment of any of] the six modes of consciousness is the immediate [condition] for a subsequent [moment]. The immediate condition is that once a previous moment of [any one of] the six modes of consciousness ceases, the condition for the second moment is immediately triggered. The *Autocommentary* [404.1–2] refutes the Vaibhāṣhikas' assertion that the immediate cessation of [any one of] the six modes of consciousness is itself the immediate [condition] by applying the reasoning that cessation cannot be a cause [since it is an unconditioned phenomena, and unconditioned phenomena cannot be causes]. [The *Autocommentary* (404.4–5)] states:

> "Whatever has [just] ceased" means that when a previous [moment of any one of] the six modes of consciousness ceases, immediately the condition for a subsequent [moment] is triggered. That is what is immediate. Therefore, it would not be contradictory to also describe [this condition] as "immediate to whatever is arising."

The *Autocommentary* (405.4–5) discusses the reason for the line "including the sixth mentation" by stating:

> Here, "including the sixth mentation" [indicates that] there is immediate mentation for the sixth mentation [or consciousness]. What is immediate is asserted to be a particular instance of the "mentation that abides within the ālaya" [that is, of the seventh consciousness]. Because there are others who assert that what is immediate is a particular instance of the sixth mentation, this line [specifically] points out that what is immediate to the arising of all six consciousnesses is the same.

Annotations (9.6) states:

> Immediate conditions are the seventh mentation. The sixth mentation is not included with the seventh mentation, the immediate condition. This [line] obviates the assertion that the immediate condition is a particular instance of the sixth mentation.

Könchok Yenlak (332.4–5) clarifies the difference between the immediate condition and the dominant condition as follows:

> Although it may seem that the immediate conditions and the dominant conditions are the same, the dominant conditions reflect the seed, or dhātu, quality of the potential, and the immediate conditions reflect the instantaneous production quality of the potential.

or perceived, by the six modes of consciousness are "objects." Such explanations are of word-meanings.

The skandhas are five: forms, feelings, discriminations, formative forces, and consciousnesses. There are eighteen dhātus, which consist of [the six] objects, [the six] faculties, and [the six consciousnesses] arising [from those]. There are twelve āyatanas [that is, six sense faculties and their six objects], which arise from contact and feelings. Forms are categorized in terms of color, shape, and so forth. Sounds have eight divisions, such as [sounds arisen from elements] conjoined [with consciousness]. There are four kinds of smells, such as fragrant. There are six types of tastes: sweet, sour, and so forth. Tangible objects are of eleven types: softness, roughness, and so on.[173] There are two kinds of phenomena: conditioned and unconditioned. Those explanations are of general meanings.

All the phenomena of the skandhas, dhātus, and āyatanas have a quintessence (or wisdom) quality and a dreg (or consciousness) quality. The collection of the quintessences and dregs is considered the basis of purification, and the dregs are what are to be purified. The means of purification—maturation and liberation—correspond to the gradations of the bases of purification. The results of purification are the manifestations of the three kāyas. Those explanations are of hidden meanings.

There is no external or internal phenomenon that is part of the skandhas, dhātus, and āyatanas that is not included within the eight modes of consciousness. The eight consciousnesses, in turn, are contained within the ālaya consciousness. Since the ālaya consciousness is the expressive power of ālaya wisdom, all phenomena come down to, or merge with, ālaya wisdom, the dharmadhātu, suchness. Such explanations are of ultimate meanings.

It is important to be aware, as those explanations of the four modes demonstrate, that other [topics] can be extensively correlated [to the four modes].

D) The Explanation of the Divisions of the Three Phases

This has three parts:

1) The Impure Phase
2) The Dual Phase
3) The Utterly Pure Phase

1) The Impure Phase

This has three parts:

a) The General Presentation
b) The Detailed Explanation
c) The Summary [35]

a) The General Presentation

Thus it is that the phenomena of saṃsāra and nirvāṇa appear because of dependently originated causes and conditions. 1.28

Thus, having been produced by the six **causes** and four **conditions**, **the phenomena of saṃsāra appear** on the basis of the twelve links of **dependent origination** arising in their forward sequence (when ignorance is followed by formative forces and so on), and in their reverse sequence (when the presence of aging and death [results in] the presence of birth, and so on). The phenomena of **nirvāṇa** appear when the six causes and four conditions are purified and the natures of the twelve links of dependent origination are realized. [At that point] both the forward and reverse sequences [of the twelve links] have ceased: once ignorance ceases, mental formations cease, and so on, and once aging and death are absent, birth is absent, and so forth.*

b) The Detailed Explanation

This has three parts:

i) The Common Presentation of the Way Cyclic Existence Is Produced
ii) The Explanation of the Specific Discriminations of the Three Realms
iii) The Explanation That Correlates the Causes and Results of the Three Realms

*_Annotations_ (9.6–10.1) comments:
Thus it is that, in the Chittamātra system, **the phenomena** of dependently originated saṃsāra (ignorance and the rest) **and nirvāṇa** (the cessation of ignorance and the rest) **appear because of dependently originated causes and conditions** that are mental factors. In the Madhyamaka system, all phenomena appear because of dependent origination (mere conditionality) that is satisfying only when unexamined.

i) The Common Presentation of the Way Cyclic Existence Is Produced

Craving and grasping form a link, producing existence. 1.30

What are the stages through which saṃsāra (which is to be deluded within the three realms) arises from the twelvefold dependent origination? The thought of the *Autocommentary* can be expressed [in verse] as follows:

> Ignorance, formative forces, consciousness,
> names-and-forms, āyatanas, contact, and feelings [arise].
> **Craving and grasping form a link, producing existence.**
> From birth and change come aging and death.[174]

I will explain [this line] with the following supplemental information. Since ignorance is [the state of mind's] being confused about its own objects, it creates the compelling force for karma.* [36] Formative forces are the defiled virtuous and unvirtuous [actions] that, compelled by that [ignorance, propel us into] subsequent existences.† The ālaya consciousness is tainted by the latent tendencies of those [actions]. Those three are called "the three projecting links."

Next, there are names-and-forms, which consist of [the skandha of] forms and the four [skandhas of] names that are produced immediately with the subsequent existence. Then the āyatanas (that is, the six sense faculties) form. Contact, which distinguishes objects, occurs from the gathering of the three [object, faculty, and consciousness]. Those are followed by feelings: the various types of experiences, which may be pleasing, displeasing, neutral, satiating, or agonizing. Those four are known as "the four projected links."

There is the **craving** and desire to connect with those objects and not to separate from them. The wish and longing to obtain desired objects causes **grasping**, which pursues the causes of [pleasurable] feelings. When those two [craving and grasping] **form a link**, there is the powerful karma that

*Ngo-tro Rabjampa (126.3) notes that ignorance can be divided into two types: confusion about karmic causes and their results, and confusion about suchness. Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche (2004, 216–17) comments that those are confusion about conventional reality and ultimate reality, respectively.

†Ngo-tro Rabjampa (126.4) defines formative forces as the defiled karma that propels us into subsequent existences.

produces the subsequent **existence**, which is [the link called] existence [or becoming]. Those three are known as "the three producing links."

Birth, which immediately connects us with our next existence, is produced by the projecting and producing [links]. Aging and death are the change and disintegration of the continuum of those skandhas. Those two are called "the produced links."

To summarize: Ignorance causes the accumulated karma of the formative forces to be deposited in the ālaya. That is followed by the development of the consciousnesses up through feelings. Then **craving** (which generally produces birth) **and grasping** (which specifically produces it) **form a link, producing** saṃsāric **existence**.

ii) The Explanation of the Specific Discriminations of the Three Realms

[The beings in] the formless, form, and desire realms 1.31
apprehend the characteristics of objects
to lesser, middling, or greater degrees, respectively.

Since existence is composed of three realms, I will explain it by correlating those [three realms of] existence with their respective discriminations. [Beings in] **the four formless** states of existence **apprehend the characteristics of objects to a lesser** degree because the appearances and obstructiveness of the desire and form [realms] are blocked. [Beings in] the sixteen states of existence within the **form** realm apprehend characteristics to a **middling** degree because they are free from the desires present in the desire [realm] and [only experience] the appearances of forms that are generated by the force of their samādhi, [one of] four meditative concentrations. [37] [Beings in] the eleven states of existence within the **desire realm** apprehend the characteristics of objects to a **greater degree** because they are attached to sense pleasures and have all concepts.

iii) The Explanation That Correlates the Causes and Results of the Three Realms

All [realms are created] by thoughts of adopting or rejecting: 1.34
the conditions of the three types of formative forces—
virtuous, unvirtuous, or unspecified—

Tibetan Buddhism in Western Perspective

Collected Articles of

Herbert V. Guenther

Dharma Publishing

The Concept of Mind in Buddhist Tantrism

Insufficient information about the meaning and purpose of the Tantras and the misconceptions that were the inevitable result have been responsible for dismissing the study of Tantric thought in a rather high-handed way. Yet it is precisely this dismissal of Tantrism, fortified by a refusal even to consider its claim, that has jeopardized a better understanding of Buddhist philosophy, because it has failed to realize that a philosophy which begins with and insists on immediate experience is naturally different from a philosophy which starts with a hypothesis and remains essentially speculative. This failure, first to ascertain the starting-point and then to evaluate the subsequent presentation from the initial standpoint of immediate experience, has succeeded in watering down Buddhist philosophy till it looks like some other more or less 'rational' system that could be swallowed with but little discomfort. Nevertheless, the fact remains that immediate experience is the key-note of Buddhism. Experience, however, is a term belonging to the group of process-product ambiguities: the same word stands for the process and the product of that process. But while ambiguous words which are closely related in their meanings are most apt to be misleading, 'experience' should prove an exception precisely because of this 'ambiguity' of process-product. Taken as proc-

ess-product, experience is symbolific activity, and the symbol itself is always the product or the end-phase of the process, never its beginning. Bearing this point in mind we should be able to avoid the fallacies of both phenomenalism and idealism which make the end the beginning.[1] Since experience has the quality of knowledge and knowledge seems to have to do with that which we are accustomed to call mind, mind is of paramount importance.

Although it is assumed that we know pretty well what is meant by 'mind' and 'mental', we should have considerable difficulties in giving a clear definition of the meaning of these terms. Actually, no satisfactory definition has ever been given. It will, however, be admitted by most people that such occurrences as thinking, feeling happy or sad, believing, wishing, doubting and such experiences as seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and perceiving, generally are mental. In this way 'mental' would be a term designating a common quality of events which would be said to be states of a certain mind. But from here the ways part, and several conceptions about what a mind is are possible, none of them being able to claim absolute validity, though each of them has a certain amount of plausibility.

If it is already difficult to know what we mean by these terms 'mind' and 'mental' in our own language, it will be readily admitted that it is still more difficult to ascertain the meaning of what is translated by 'mind' or 'mental' from Eastern texts. The question, whether the authors of the original texts actually meant the same as we do by those words about whose meaning we ourselves are not quite clear, should always be present, not only

[1]It is unfortunate that 'idealism' should have become the name of what actually is some form or other of 'mentalism'. As C. D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature*, p. 654, has shown, mentalism is no guarantee of idealism. Traditional mentalism as represented by Berkeley, Leibniz, Hegel, and M'Taggart–Ward and Bradley may also be mentioned–is untenable. In addition to Broad's analysis see also F. S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West*, p. 114 *seq*. Nor can phenomenalism be said to be an improvement of mentalism or to have solved the difficulties which mentalism encountered. The introduction of sense data seems more a regression to realism.

when translating texts but still more when dealing with a systematic presentation of Eastern philosophies.[2] Otherwise the already existing ambiguity will only serve as an admirable means to misrepresent Eastern ideas.[3] Although we cannot dispense with language, language is a treacherous instrument which very often creates problems where there are no problems at all.[4]

It has been customary to translate the terms *sems* (Skt. *citta*) and *sems-las byung-ba* (Skt. *caitta*) by 'mind' and 'mental event' respectively. But this translation, however philologically correct, does not tell us much until we know what is meant by these terms in their relation to each other. At first sight, the relation is comparable with that which common sense assumes to exist between the 'thing' and the 'states of the thing'. In this particular case, mind (*sems, citta*) would be the 'thing' and mental event (*sems-las byung-ba, caitta*) would be the 'state of the thing'.

[2]Edwin A. Burtt, "Basic Problems of Method in Harmonizing Eastern and Western Philosophies," *Essays in East-West Philosophy*, ed. by Charles A. Moore, University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu: 1951, p. 115 has said: ". . . a number of specific studies of rather limited problems need to be carried out before we will be in a position to formulate hypotheses of significant comparative relationships that will have any chance of proving more than premature and superficial." It is very deplorable that his advice should have remained unheeded. In the field of Sanskrit, Pali, and Tibetan studies not a single study of the meaning of the technical terms has been performed. The only exception is Wilhelm and Magdalene Geiger's *Pali Dhamma* in 1923! But translations of Eastern texts are produced by the ton.

[3]Even so distinguished a scholar as W. T. Stace, *Time and Eternity, An Essay in the Philosophy of Religion*, Princeton: 1952, is apparently not aware of the fact that "The nihilism of the Buddhist is a curiously distorted and eccentric version of the genuine religious intuition" (p. 20) is a statement on the basis of insufficient information.

[4]This statement is fully endorsed by Buddhist philosophers. Padma-dkar-po says in his *Phyag-rgya-chen-po'i man-ngag-gi bshad-sbyar rgyal-ba'i gan-mdzod*, fol. 22*b*:

> If at the time of instructing those who are to be taught and to be brought to spiritual maturity, words and letters or symbols and signs are not made use of, no mutual understanding (between teacher and disciple) is possible. Hence Saraha has said:
>
> If the Guru does not express his instruction in words,
> The disciple will not understand anything.
> How else could the flavor of Sahaja
> Be communicated to another individual?

Mind (*sems, citta*) is considered to have an inherent tendency to assume a certain state of such and such determinateness when conditioned in such and such a way, so that properly speaking we know the state of a certain mind rather than this mind itself, although we tend to continue speaking of a mind since the states are states *of* this mind: "This mind under consideration, when it has been changed by conditions such as traces and dispositions, should be known as only a state of mind."[5]

But mind also has the inherent tendency to assume its 'natural' state when left alone: "Mind, in the absence of conditions, is without memory and association and is *śūnya*."[6] This tendency is compared with what happens when we allow disturbed water to become calm and transparent again: "Like muddy water which becomes pure by itself when it is not interfered with."[7] This characteristic of mind, to assume a certain state when subjected to certain conditions and to pass back into its

On fol. 23*b* of the same work he states:

> In the *De-kho-na-nyid-la 'jug-pa* is said "According to the diverse interests and mental capacities of those who are to be taught, the teaching is diversified only as to the words used so that those who are to be taught may attend to the instruction." This means that according to the words they have heard individuals follow Reality. Therefore by such and such words the mind of such and such individuals is brought to such and such doctrine. But although in Reality there cannot obtain any differentiation, the Buddhas impart their instruction as if there were some differentiation.

Language serves the function of 'drawing attention', as may be seen from Saraha's words (*De-kho-na-nyid-kyi man-ngag-rtse-mo do-ha'i glu = Tattva-upadeśa-śikhara-dohā-gītā, bsTan-'gyur, rgyud*, vol. zhi, fol. 127*a* [Derge ed.]):

> In what I, Saraha, say
> There is not so much as an atom of Being.

Wittgenstein would have liked Saraha if he had known him.

[5] *Doha-mdzod-kyi snying-po-don-gyi glu-'i 'grel-ba = Dohākoṣa-hṛdaya-artha-gīti-ṭīkā*, by gNyis-med-avadhūti, *bsTan-'gyur, rgyud*, vol. zhi, fol. 74*b*, (Derge ed.). In the following this work will be referred to only by folio number.

[6] Fol. 76*a* śūnya (*stong-pa*) is mostly translated by 'void', 'empty', and the noun Śūnyatā (*stong-pa-nyid*) by 'insubstantiality'. Such translations are utterly wrong. Śūnya and Śūnyatā mean 'nothing' in the sense of 'not standing for any conception at all'. Śūnyatā has nothing to do with the philosophically antiquated concepts of substance and its negation.

[7] *bSre-'pho'i lam-skor-gyi thog-mar lam-dbye-bsdu*, fol. 81*b*.

original state when the conditions have been removed, may be called the causal characteristic of mind.[8] The causal characteristic does not belong to any of the states of mind, though they are caused by it, but only to mind itself.

In this connection it is even possible to distinguish various orders of causal characteristics. We may say that it is a first-order causal characteristic of mind to pass into a certain state when conditioned in a certain way and to pass back into its natural state when the conditions do not obtain any longer. Conditioning may happen in such a way that mind loses the first-order causal characteristic of changeability and acquires the second first-order causal characteristic of staying in the particular state into which it has been brought by certain conditions. This feature of losing the first first-order causal characteristic and gaining the second first-order causal characteristic may be termed a second-order causal characteristic. Since this process is assumed to be reversible, mind may be said to possess also the second second-order causal characteristic of losing the second first-order causal characteristic and regaining the first first-order causal characteristic. This is evidently implied in the statement that mind has to be tanned like a hide in order to make it flexible again.[9]

We further notice the following characteristics. This mind is sometimes 'pure', sometimes 'muddy and having the determinable characteristic *d*' and sometimes 'muddy and having the determinable characteristic d_1' and so on. As is stated: "When mind is not pure it is given the name of 'sentient being' and when it is pure in itself it is given the name of 'Buddha'."[10] Or, it is said:

> When there is no mind, no minding, no intellect, no sensation, no perception, no memory and association, what then is the mind of a sentient being?—Sentient being can be spoken of only as long as these function-events operate.[11]

[8] I owe this term to C. D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature*, p. 432.

[9] *Phyag-rgya-chen-po'i man-ngag-gi bshad-byar rgyal-ba'i gan-mdzod*, fol. 52*b*.

[10] Fol. 104*b*.

[11] Fol. 94*a*. Cf. also fol. 81*a* and 82*a*.

The designation 'sentient being' is just a particular determinable characteristic as are the other forms of being, viz., denizens of hell, spirits, animals, gods, demons. All these classes are so many determinable characteristics of mind in its 'impure' state. They are not causal and may be said to belong to the mind in the sense that they belong to all the successive states of a mind.

Finally there is the completely determinate form which these determinable characteristics assume in the various statuses of mind and which is defined more precisely as 'memory and association' (*dran-pa*), 'discursiveness' (*bsam-pa*) or covering the whole field of sentient life, 'Saṃsāra' (*'khor-ba*):

> What ordinary people understand by concentrative meditative attention is discursiveness, discursiveness is memory and association, memory and association are creative activity, creative activity is Saṃsāra.[12]

Inasmuch as memory and association are of primary importance in all our mental operations, the term for them, *dran-pa*, has been used to include all other operations as well.[13] Memory and association are characterized as 'fleeting' (*yal-ba*): "Memory and association are fleeting like mist,"[14] or they are termed 'accidental' (*glo-bur*): "Memory and association appear accidentally,"[15] and since they dim the clear light and radiance of mind they are spoken of as "the stain of accidental memory and association."[16] As completely determinate occurrences they belong to the states of a mind rather than to the mind itself. Hence these completely determinate events are linguistically distinguished from mind (*sems, citta*) by the term *sems-las byung-ba* (*caitta*) 'that which has originated from mind'.

To sum up: Like a material thing and its changing states, mind (*sems*) under certain conditions assumes a certain state and returns to its 'natural' state as soon as the conditions that brought

[12]Fol. 95*a*.

[13]Almost synonymous are *yid, sems, rig-pa, blo, rnam-par-shes-pa*. See note 10 where the passages in which this enumeration occurs, have been mentioned.

[14]Fol. 75*a*.

[15]Fol. 93*b*. The Tibetan term *glo-bur* is also synonymous with our terms 'incidental', 'adventitious', and 'fortuitous'.

[16]Fol. 74*b*.

about the change or deviation from the natural state, are no more. By dividing up the history of a mind into successive adjoined slices, it is found to have certain determinable characteristics which belong to all the slices and which are termed 'sentient being' (*sems-can*) and it is further found to have even the more determinate or primary characteristics of 'having a state which is memory and association' (*dran-pa*). That is to say, mind having assumed a certain determinable status of, say, a human being, and retaining this status throughout its history of a human mind, has completely determinate occurrences of these determinable characteristics, viz., memory and association. This analogy of mind with a material thing has important consequences. Just as there are many things in our world (so at least common sense asserts), so there are also many minds, each individual being a certain 'mind'. But not only does such a conception of mind account for the differences that exist between individuals or individual minds, it also allows for the variety of mental operations, because every event of memory and association may be a different determinable event of the determinable characteristic 'human being', without ever failing to be a state of this mind under consideration. Moreover, it allows for the variety of all life. Just as memory and association in a human being have a man-ish or woman-ish determinateness, so also an animal's mental operations have a distinctly animal-ish determinateness. So far the analogy of mind with a material thing has worked out very well. It can be advanced one step further.

When a thing changes from one state into another its primary characteristics, a definite color or a definite shape, may be different, but since these states are states *of* the thing, we say that the thing has changed. At the same time we tacitly assume the thing to persist through its changes, and so we seek for causes producing changes. There are three causes which produce changes of what is termed mind. They are appearance (*snang-ba*), traces and dispositions (*bag-chags*), and symbolism in the widest sense of the word (*brda*):

> While the Sphere of Mind, being pure, is not stained by the dirt of perception against the apperceptive mass of memory and association as background which is only accidental, under the conditions of appearance, traces and dispositions, and symbolic expression, it emerges as anything.[17]

'Appearance' (*snang-ba*) is a term which, when left unspecified, is apt to mislead us into the assumption that it refers to a three-term relation of appearance which stood at the beginning of modern science and subsequent philosophy. Although this theory presented many difficulties to the modern mind, it remained hardly unchallenged until recent times.[18] Since the Buddhist conception of appearance does not presuppose a doctrine of absolute space as the common matrix of all objective constituents of perceptual situations, a three-term relation theory is not implied by 'appearance'. Nor is 'appearance' equivalent with illusion which may be said to be a stronger term for the denial of the reality of the world.[19]

The Buddhist conception of appearance begins with an analysis of perceptual situations which contain a sense-field with an outstanding sensum (*yul*). This is apprehended (*'dzin*) by entering into a certain specific relation with feeling and expectation (*zhen*). The apprehension together with feeling-emotions and expectations gives the situation the specific external reference: all of which is the perception of an external object and termed 'appearance' (*snang-ba*). It is a complex phenomenon of mental activity and in the widest sense of the word it expresses the ordinary dual mode of cognition involving a perceiving subject which owns the specific perceptual situation (*yul-can*) and the perceptual situation with its sense-field and sensum therein (*yul*). Being constructive activity, symbolific in creating the symbols of subject and object as its end-phase or product, appearance is a deviation from mind in its 'natural' state or, to

[17]Fol. 77*b*, Three causes are also mentioned, fol. 96*b*.
[18]C. D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature*, p. 161 *seq.*
F. S. C. Northrop, *The Meeting of East and West*, p. 78 *seq.*
[19]W. T. Stace, *Time and Eternity*, pp. 122, 77.

put it more precisely, since the 'natural' state is also an occurrence, appearance is a relinquishing of pure sensation (*rang-rig*).

> Although as far as instantaneous experience is concerned there does not obtain any duality, by not recognizing it as such, there is no emergence of pure sensation. Due to this failure a first instant is born as a sense-field (*yul*), and a subsequent one as apprehension and feeling-expectation (*'dzin-zhen*). The perception of an external object is the rising of constructive mental activity (*rtog-pa*) or 'appearance' (*snang-ba*). But by cognizing whatever arises as what it is, there is Śūnyatā, perception being pure and leaving no trace because of the non-origination of apprehension and feeling-expectation. While these two topics, appearance and Śūnyatā, on the side of appearance seem to be different from each other, on the side of immediate experience (*so-so-rang-rig*) they are not different, hence the primary characteristic (of mind) is the non-duality of appearance and Śūnyatā.[20]

This passage contains a number of terms which will be explained later on. Here it is important to note that while we have no difficulty in recognizing 'appearance' as an occurrence, a change of a thing, it is more difficult to recognize persistence in a state as an occurrence. But this is what the Buddhist texts make clear. By terming mind 'instantaneous' (*skad-cig-ma*) it is pointed out that there is no logical justification for distinguishing between the two cases of mind *having* a certain state such as designated 'sentient being' or *being in* a certain state such as is termed 'Buddha'. Both states have primary characteristics: 'sentient being', 'ignorance' on the one side and 'Buddha', 'knowledge' on the other. Apart from the fact that there is no logical justification for assuming the two cases to be absolutely different, any differentiation (differentiating evaluation) would destroy the unity of 'mind'. Hence Saraha declares:

> Although the manner of pointing out a Buddha or a sentient being may be different,
> They (i.e., sentient being and Buddha) are born together,
> as are knowledge and ignorance.[21]

[20]*bSre-'pho'i lam-skor-gyi thog-mar lam-dbye-bsdu*, fol. 119*b*.
[21]*sKu'i mdzod 'chi-med rdo-rje'i glu = Kāyakoṣāmṛtavajragīti, bsTan-'gyur, rgyud*, vol. zhi, fol. 109*b*.

The next point to note is that 'appearance' is tied up with feeling-expectations. They are causally dependent on 'traces' left by past experiences (*bag-chags*) which are mentioned as the second condition favoring a change of mind. However, if the apprehension of the sensum (*yul*) fails to excite these traces which cause specific modifications in the general mass of feeling and thereby evoke the specific external reference, then we have a case of pure sensation (*rang-rig*), as is clearly stated: "Unchanging, without an external reference, free from a specific feeling-tone, of the nature of (unchanging) bliss."[22] These traces are not experiences themselves, either conscious or unconscious, nor are they themselves mental events or processes, but are just certain qualities of the mental events of a total state of mind. Since Buddhist philosophers scorn the idea of a Pure Ego, there is no stuff to be the matrix of traces in the literal sense of the word.[23] The relation between our ordinary conscious experiences and the qualities of them may simply be called 'mental relation and qualities'. Every experience modifies the relation and qualities by being imposed on the content and structure of each successive state. Thus there are 'traces' as regards relations (*'dzin-pa'i bag-chags*)[24]and 'traces' as regards qualities (*nyon-mongs-pa'i bag-chags*).[25]

The third condition is 'symbolic expressiveness' (*brda*). It is of three types: expression by body or overt activity (*lus-kyi brda*), expression by speech or language (*ngag-gi brda*), and the formulative activity of the covert level, the inner forum of thoughts and images, mind (*yid-kyi brda*).[26] This term *brda* has

[22]*Phyag-rgya-chen-po'i man-ngag-gi bshad-sbyar rgyal-ba'i gan-mdzod*, fol. 31*a*.

[23]To a certain degree the Vijñānavādins are an exception. They consider the *ālayavijñāna* as the container of all possibilities. However, they insist that their *ālayavijñāna* must not be confused with the Ātman or Pure Ego of the non-Buddhist schools, because this *ālayavijñāna* is a Central Event. For the analysis of Pure Ego theories and Central Event theories in Western philosophy and psychology see C. D. Broad, *The Mind and Its Place in Nature*, p. 558 *seq*.

[24]*rTen-'brel kho-bo lugs-kyi khrid chos thams-cad-kyi snying-po len-pa*, fol. 4*a*.

[25]*bSre-'pho'i lam-skor-gyi thog-mar lam-dbye-bsdu*, fol. 8*a*.

[26]Fol. 93*ab*.

not so much the meaning of 'sign' indicating anything in our actual surrounding, but that of 'symbol' representing things and ideas; it takes the place of things that we have perceived in the past or that we can merely imagine by memories and creative phantasies or that might be in future experience. At whatever level of expressive life it may be found, *brda* is fraught with connotations, denotations, or other meanings. We act, we speak, we think—and all this is symbolific activity of that which we are wont to call 'mind', and all this appeals as much to the intellect as to feeling and emotions. But mind itself is a symbol, and a symbol invites us to a quest for meaning and quest for meaning is philosophy. While for all practical purposes we may divide and classify symbolific activity into bodily gesture, vocal expression, and thought, the quest for meaning leads us to the symbols of 'appearance' (*snang-ba'i brda*), of 'Śūnyatā' (*stong-pa'i brda*), and of 'unoriginatedness' (*skye-ba-med-pa'i brda*).[27] As a matter of fact, "The whole of reality is subsumed under Appearance, Śūnyatā, and Unoriginatedness."[28]

Every move we make, every word we speak, and every thought we harbor, is expressive formulatedness and falls under the symbol of 'appearance'.[29] Appearance, however, as has been shown above, is activity of mind or more precisely, a state of mind, but as a state of mind appearance cannot be separated from mind. This is expressed in the formula that 'appearance and mind are indivisible' (*snang-sems-dbyer-med*).[30]

This leads us back to the initial premise of the causal characteristic of mind: "The root of all and everything is mind."[31] Taken at its face value this assertion seems to point to some sort of mentalism which may be termed 'subjective mentalism' or

[27]Fol. 93*ab*.

[28]Fol. 81*a*. Cf. fol. 98*b*.

[29]Fol. 83*a*: "Appearance and the symbolic expression of body, by speech, and by mind are all the symbol of appearance."

[30]*Phyag-rgya-chen-po'i man-ngag-gi bshad-sbyar rgyal-ba'i gan-mdzod*, fol. 34*a*.

Phyag-chen-gyi zin-bris, fol. 6*a*.

[31]Fol. 76*a*, 92*b*.

even 'solipsistic mentalism' on account of such statements as the following ones: "The whole of reality is one's own mind"[32] or "Apart from one's own mind there does not exist any other entity."[33] But certainly, even if it should be conceded that it is mind which gives us knowledge of reality, it is still a tremendous leap to the conclusion that mind is the true and only reality. And as the statement stands, it is easy to see that the problem of the whole of reality being mind is a pseudo-problem. Hence it has to be rejected, as it was rejected by the Tantrics and Mādhyamikas. Mentalism is as little an answer to man's perennial problem as is realism. The rejection of mentalism is contained in the words that "Mind is no mind at all,"[34] or as Saraha expressed it:

> He who understands that from the very beginning there has been no mind,
> Realizes the Mind of all Buddhas in all three times.[35]

Hence it is impossible to point out the 'root' of all and everything: "Since mind is not found as an entity, there is also no root to be shown,"[36] and more comprehensively: "Since the foundation of sentient beings is without roots, the foundation of Buddha-knowledge is equally without roots. This rootlessness is the root of enlightenment."[37] Or, it is said that "Mind, in the absence of conditions, is without memory and association and is *śūnya*."[38]

To understand what is meant by *śūnya* or mind and Śūnyatā,

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[32]*Do-ha-mdzod ces-bya-ba phyag-rgya-chen-po'i man-ngag = Dohākoṣa-nāma mahāmudrā-upadeśa, bsTan-'gyur, rgyud*, vol. zhi, fol. 122*b*.

[33]Fol. 98*b*.

[34]*Lam-zab-kyi rnam-par-bshad-pa zab-lam-gyi snye-ma*, fol. 8*a*.

[35]*Do-ha-mdzod ces-bya-ba phyag-rgya-chen-po'i man-ngag*, fol. 122*b*. 'Mind' with a capital letter is used to distinguish it from mind as a term holding a variety of mental events together. The Tibetan language uses for 'Mind' two terms: *dgongs* and *sems-nyid*. The former is almost always combined with *sangs-rgyas* = Buddha. Both terms are synonymous with Śūnyatā in the sense of 'unconceptualizable'.

[36]Fol. 76*a*.

[37]Fol. 76*b*.

[38]Fol. 76*a*.

The Philosophical Foundations of Classical rDzogs chen in Tibet

Investigating the Distinction Between Dualistic Mind (*sems*) and Primordial knowing (*ye shes*)

David Higgins

defilement". Primordial knowing is always a nirvāṇic phenomenon: it is like a fire because it burns away the karma and latent tendencies and it is of the nature of clear and empty sky, being free from all discursive notions.[146]

From the foregoing, it is evident that the rDzogs chen sNying thig analysis of consciousness reflects an innatist strain of Buddhist soteriology that draws on Tathāgatagarbha and tantric currents of thought, but introduces much that is original as well. On this syncretistic account, the conditions for spiritual awakening and delusion are both located within the heterogenous structure of human experience itself. From the viewpoint of classical rNying ma exegetes, the nature of Mind (*sems nyid*, *ye shes*) which they explicitly identify with buddha nature (*tathāgatagarbha*, **sugatagarbha*) refers to the undifferentiated and invariant structure of the experiential continuum, whereas 'mind' (*sems*) serves as a cover term for the adventitious reflective and thematic differentiations that arise within this continuum. Soteriology is seen as a task of recovery or retrieval, a clearing process (*sbyong byed*) that brings to light what is already present though temporarily and adventitiously obscured. It is an approach that emphasizes, in the words of Paul Ricoeur, "mind's attempt to recover its power of thinking, acting and feeling – a power that has, so to speak, been buried or lost – in the knowledge, practices, and feelings that exteriorize it in relation to itself."[147] In summarizing classical sNying thig views on the nature of Mind and primordial knowing and the difference between them, my philosophical aim is to provide a framework for understanding this tradition's distinctive approach to Buddhist soteriology.

§2. The rDzogs chen sNying thig Analysis of Mind (*sems*)

It will be observed that the opening passage explicitly identifies mind (*sems*) with a complex variety of phenomena that Buddhism has traditionally held to be causes of error, suffering and saṃsāra itself. 'Mind' is here associated with ignorance (*ma rig pa*), actions

[146] *Tshig don mdzod*: 938.3 f.: *sems gang yin 'khor ba'i chos te las dang bag chags kyi rang bzhin dri mar skyes pa'i skyon de rig pa la ldan dus sems can zhes btags shing| sems des 'gro drug so sor 'khrul par byed la| rig pa de sems dang bral dus glo bur dri bral gyi sangs rgyas zhes bya'o| ye shes gang yin mya ngan las 'das pa'i chos te las dang bag chags bsregs pas me dang 'dra zhing kun tu rtog pa thams cad dang bral ba stong gsal nam mkha'i rang bzhin can te||*

[147] Ricoeur and Changeux 2000: 4. Ricoeur is here defining reflexive/reflective philosophy, a branch of French existential philosophy associated with Jean Nabert that is concerned with the subject's attempt, through interpretation, to recapture itself through the expressions of life (signs) that objectify it.

(*las*) and their conditioning imprints (*bag chags*), error (*'khrul pa*), subject/object dualism (*gzung 'dzin*), discursive elaborations (*spros pa*), adventitious mistaken concepts (*glo bur 'khrul rtog*), delusive perceptions, the Yogācāra substratum consciousness (*ālayavijñāna*) with its eightfold ensemble of cognitions, and the karmic energy currents (*karmavāyu*) and their energetic pathways as these are detailed in rDzogs chen tantric physiology. In short, mind comprises all that is constructed and conditioned (*'dus byas rkyen dbang*) and constitutes the sum total of obscurations to be eliminated (*spang bya'i sgrib pa*) as all these were codified in the various Indian Buddhist doctrinal systems. While a detailed analysis of these points in light of their historical-doctrinal contexts would far exceed my abilities and the scope of this thesis, it may be worthwhile to briefly summarize how rDzogs chen scholars have defined and characterized mind in relation to some of the more important aspects, before turning our attention to the gnoseological current of thought that is more distinctive of this tradition. Specifically I will consider how mind is viewed in relation to three interrelated factors that Buddhist tradition has regarded as primary sources of obscuration: dualism, ignorance and reifying conceptuality.

2.1 Dualism

According to Klong chen pa, "mind constitutes adventitious defilement. It functions as the fundamental cause of saṃsāra. It depends on latent tendencies of the three realms. As it creates the conditions of worldly life, it is that from which we should be emancipated."[148] These elements are all deemed to be consequences of the complex dual structure that is said to be constitutive of mind. Basing himself on accounts of mind presented in the seventeen tantras, Klong chen pa states:

> [1] As for the essence [of mind]: it is any cognition arising as object and subject, the apprehended and apprehending, such that ignorance is present as the pervader. [2] As for its etymology, it is called 'mind' because it thinks (*sems pa*) in terms of object (*yul*) and object-possessor (*yul can*) given that it arises as both the apprehended and apprehending. Mind belonging to the two higher [realms] also consists in the apprehending and apprehended [aspects] to which one is attached in the one-pointed

[148] *Zab don gnad kyi me long*, in *Zab mo yang tig* vol. 2: 281.3 f.: *sems ni glo bur gyi dri mar gyur ba| 'khor ba'i rtsa ba'i rgyu byed pa| khams gsum pa'i bag chags brten pa| gson pa 'du byed pa bral bya yin pa ste||*

meditative absorptions. In the desire [realm, mind] consists of coarse conceptualizations.[149]

This portrayal of mind is clearly indebted to the Cittamātra view that mind (*citta*), under the influence of defiled ego-mind (*kliṣṭamanas*), has both intentional (object-intending) and reflexive ('I-intending') operations that structure experience in terms of an 'I' (subject) and 'mine' (object). Mind's activities in the three realms are shot through with dualism, the only difference being whether the reifications are coarse (as in the desires realm) or subtle (as in the formless realm). Elsewhere, Klong chen pa characterizes mind as encompassing act, object and agent in a manner reminiscent of Nāgārjuna's analysis of mind in MMK 23.15.[150] The author proceeds, however, to claim that the source of this tripartite intentional structure is the efflugence of primordial knowing (*ye shes kyi gdangs*) as it is explained in sNying thig tantric physiology: "The source of [dualistic] mind is the effulgence of primordial knowing: the cognition of objects resulting from the stirring by the energy currents is the expressive energy of primordial knowing, while the wild proliferation of thoughts is the aspect of the energy currents. They [viz. the energy current and effulgence of primordial knowing] are similar to a blind horse with legs and a crippled rider with eyesight [respectively]."[151] From the foregoing, it is clear that the rDzogs chen understanding of dualistic mind is syncretistic, combining analyses of its act-object structure that are known from traditional Cittamātra and

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[149] *Theg mchog mdzod* vol. 1: 1050.4 f.: *...ngo bo ni| yul yul can gzung 'dzin du skyes pa'i shes pa gang zhig ma rig pa khyab byed du yod pa| nges tshig ni| gzung 'dzin du skyes pas yul dang yul can du sems pas sems zhes bya'o| gong ma gnyis kyi sems kyang ting nge 'dzin rtse gcig la chags pa'i gzung 'dzin no| 'dod pa na kun rtog rags pa'o||* In his *Chos dbyings mdzod 'grel* (495.3 f.), Klong chen pa specifies the role these two aspects of mind play in initiating and perpetuating the illusion of dualism: "From object-oriented mind, apprehended objects, non-existent but clearly apparent, manifest as the five aspects of forms, sounds, smells, tastes and tactile sensations. From subject-oriented mind, actions, their maturation, and afflictive emotions manifest in limitless ways. Saṃsāra which consists in grasping an object where there is no object and grasping a mind where there is no mind, appears before sentient beings like a dream, having arisen from the manifesting of aspects of subject- and object-oriented mind." *de'ang gzung ba'i sems las gzung yul med pa gsal snang gzugs sgra dri ro reg lngar snang la||'dzin pa'i sems las las dang rnam smin nyon mongs pa dpag tu med par snang ste| yul med yul du 'dzin pa dang| sems med sems su 'dzin pa'i 'khor ba sems can la rmi lam ltar snang ba sems gzung 'dzin gyi rnam par shar ba las byung ba'o||*

[150] *Zab don snying po*, in *Zab mo yang tig* vol. 1: 452.1 f.: "Concerning the reason for using the term ['mind']: Because of the three factors of what is 'minded', by what means it is minded, and what does the minding, we speak of 'mind'." *sgra 'jug pa'i rgyu mtshan ni| gang la sems| gang gis sems| gang sems par byed pa gsum gyi phyir na sems so||* This analysis resembles the phenomenological analysis of intentional experience in terms of an intentional act (*noesis*), intentional object (*noemata*) and what Merleau-Ponty called the intentional arc (*l'arc intentionel*).

[151] *Zab don snying po*, in *Zab mo yang tig* vol. 1: 452.1 f.: *de'ang sems kyi rtsa ba ye shes kyi gdangs te| rlung gis bskyod pa las yul rig pa ye shes kyi rtsal| mi 'gyu dgu 'gyu rlung gi cha ste| rta long ba rkang can dang| mi 'phye bo mig can bzhin no||*

Madhyamaka sources with accounts of the psychophysical genesis of this dual structure that are specific to sNying thig tantric physiology.

2.2 Ignorance

But these accounts leave unclear how and why dualistic mentation arises? The short answer to this question is 'ignorance'. Ignorance is understood in rDzogs chen thought to be the necessary condition of dualistic experience. According to the *mKha' 'gro yang tig*: "Mind is ignorance; it serves as the basis of the latent tendencies for bright and dark deeds (*karman*). It it is therefore the cause or essence of saṃsāra that is like a [spinning] wheel. Primordial knowing transcends all [these] obscurations."[152] Mind is elsewhere said to be closely associated with fundamental ignorance and analogous to clouds that obscure the sun that is primordial knowing.[153] According to the commentary on the *sGra thal 'gyur*, ignorance is what obscures authentic reality. It is called 'ignorance' because it does not recognize this abiding mode of the actual ground as naturally occuring, naturally free and naturally pure."[154]

If ignorance is construed as an event of fundamental obscuration that is identified as the source of dualism, the starting point of saṃsāra (*'khor ba'i thog ma*) and the cause of error (*'khrul pa'i rgyu*)[155], it remains to be explained precisely how this occurs. The rDzogs chen sNying thig account of ignorance builds on the Indo-Tibetan Buddhist analysis of *avidyā* (*ma rig pa*) as co-emergent ignorance (*lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa*) and conceptually elaborated ignorance (*kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa*).[156] Tibetan thinkers of the

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[152] *mKha' 'gro yang tig* vol. 2: 233.2 f.: *sems ni ma rig pa dkar nag gi las bag chags ki rten byed pas 'khor lo ltar 'khor ba'i rgyu'am ngo bo yin la| ye shes ni sgrib pa thams cad las 'das te||...*

[153] *Theg mchog mdzod* vol. 1: 1027.6 f.. See under "Texts and Translations": 303.

[154] *sGra thal 'gyur 'grel pa* vol. 2, in NyKs, vol. 111: 179.1 f.: *ngo bo ni yang dag pa'i don ni sgrib par byed pa'o| nges tshig ni ma gzhi yin te| de ltar gzhi dngos pa'i 'dug tshul de| rang byung rang grol| rang dag tu ma rig pas ma rig pa zhes bya'o||*

[155] See mKhas pa nyi 'bum's *rDzogs pa chen po Tshig don bcu gcig pa*: 32.8 f.. Klong chen pa identifies a number of synonyms of this ignorance which include delusion (*gti mug*), not knowing (*mi shes*), not realizing (*ma rtogs*), not seeing (*ma mthong*), error (*'khrul pa*) and erroneousness (*phyin ci log*). *Zab mo yang tig* vol. 2: 241.1: *ming gi rnam grangs ma rig| gti mug| mi shes| ma rtogs| ma mthong| 'khrul pa| phyin ci log ces pa ste|*

[156] These two types of ignorance may have developed from the two kinds of personalistic false views (*satkāyadṛṣṭi*| *°darśana*) – viz. *sahajasatkāyadṛṣṭi* and *parikalpitasatkāyadṛṣṭi* – or false views of self (*ātmadṛṣṭi*/*°-darśana*) that are distinguished in *Yogācārabhūmi* and *Abhidharmakośabhāṣya*. See Eltschinger (2009: 67) where this typology is discussed in the context of examining Dharmakīrti's identification of ignorance with personalistic false views. For

dGe lugs tradition view co-emergent ignorance as an innate or congenital tendency to reify phenomena that is present in all sentient beings, whereas conceptually elaborated ignorance is a language-dependent formulation of a realist view. Klong chen pa, however, interprets this two-fold schema as consisting in two kinds of misapprehension: *lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa* carries a sense of not seeing things as they are, whereas *kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa* connotes seeing things as other than they are. He explains that ignorance is classified as (a) co-emergent ignorance on account of not recognizing the factor of open awareness to be primordial knowing in and as oneself and (b) conceptually elaborated ignorance that grasps what comes from oneself as 'other'.[157] In short, ignorance comprises not only an innate type of *non-recognition* but also an acquired type of *mis-recognition*, viz., an active, distorted intelligence (*kliṣṭaprajñā*) that reifies persons and entities, thus creating the conditions for the arising of attachments, aversions and delusions that perpetuate cyclical existence.

rDzogs chen sNying thig sources introduce a third and more fundamental kind of ignorance termed 'ignorance of single identity that is the cause' (*rgyu bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa*)[158] that is regarded as the foundation of all error.[159] According to the 12th century

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Dharmakīrti, ignorance is equated primarily with the innate personalistic false view, and not the reifying personalistic false view which was used to characterize non-Buddhist (Brahmanical, Jain) doctrines of the self.

[157] *Zab mo yang tig* vol. 2: 240.5 f.: *dbye na rig pa'i cha la rang nyid ye shes su mi shes pa'i chas lhan cig skyes pa dang| rang las gzhan du 'dzin pa kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa gnyis so|*

[158] The locus classicus for the three types of error is a cryptic passage in the *sGra thal 'gyur*, Ati vol. 1: 141.6 f.; Tk vol. 10: 483.1 f.; Tb vol. 12: 118.4 f.: "Ignorance is of three kinds:| [Ignorance of] the single identity lays the foundation for error.| Co-emergent [ignorance] consists in dualistic concepts.| Conceptually elaborated [ignorance] engenders objects.|" *ma rig pa ni rnam pa gsum| bdag nyid gcig*[a] *pas 'khrul rtsa*[b] *byas| lhan cig skyes pas rtog pa gnyis| kun tu brtags pas yul du gyur||* [a]Ati,Tb *gcig* : Tk *cig* [b]Ati,Tb *rtsa* : Tk *brtsa.*

[159] The three modes of ignorance are sometimes presented as deviations within the three *ye shes* that are aspects of the ground-manifestation (*gzhi snang*): essence, nature and responsiveness. See for example *Thod rgal gyi rgyab yig nyi zla gza' skar*, in *Bla ma yang tig* vol. 1: 422.3 f.: "[Ignorance] serves as the first cause of errancy: [1] Ignorance of single identity [comes about] by failing to directly recognize the essence (*ngo bo*), i.e. the nonconceptual aspect [of experience]. [2] Co-emergent ignorance [comes about] by failing to recognize the nature (*rang bzhin*), i.e. its own nature as the radiant clarity of the [five coloured] rays of light (*'od du gsal ba*). [3] Conceptually elaborated ignorance comes about by failing to recognize responsiveness (*thugs rje*) as one's [prereflective] self-awareness." *ngo bo mi rtog pa'i cha ngo ma shes pas bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa| rang bzhin 'od du gsal ba rang bzhin du ma shes pas lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa| thugs rje rang rig tu ma shes pas kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pas 'khrul pa'i dang po'i rgyu byas|* On the term *gzhi gnas ma rig pa* or 'ground-based ignorance', see Tk vol. 8: 203.1 f.. These three types of ignorance are transcended in open awareness itself. In the *gZhi snang ye shes sgron ma*, *Bla ma yang* tig vol. 2 (158.1 f.), Klong chen pa states: *de'i tshe rang snang du rig pas rig par skyes pa'i chas lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa bcom| rig par shar bas ma rig pa med de bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa bcom| rang snang du rang rig pas gzhan zhes gzung 'dzin med pas kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa bcom nas dbyings nas phyir gsal du nyug tsam byung bas| gdod ma'i ngang las cung zad phud tsam snang zhing g.yos kyang de ma thag tu rang rig pas rig mkhan nyid kyang grol nas| 'dzin pa med pas gzung 'dzin gyi blo stong dus phyir snang 'od kyi snang ba sems po ltar snang ba*

rDzogs chen sNying thig master mKhas pa Nyi ma 'bum, this primary kind of ignorance consists in not recognizing the single cause of both awareness and ignorance (*ma rig rig rgyu cig pa*) as being in reality nondual (*don gyis gnyis med*), like two sides of the same coin.[160] This 'single identity' (*bdag nyid gcig pa*) refers to the common ground (*gźhi*), i.e. human reality in its most ontologically primitive condition, which, as open awareness, antedates the distinction between error and non-error. The possibility of dualism and error lies in a fundamental failure to distinguish the ground as it is (*gzhi nyid*) from the ground as known (*gzhi shes*).[161] This is another way of saying that ignorance has its inception in nascent capacities within the process of auto-manifestation (*rang snang*) or ground-manifestation (*gzhi snang*) – i.e. the most rudimentary taking place of self-experience – to both reflect on itself and not recognize itself as it is (the ground simpliciter). In the words of Klong chen pa:

> How does the process [of errancy] arise? During the arising of the ground-manifestation, the clear and knowing cognition as the expressive energy of compassionate responsiveness (*thugs rje*) [i.e. the dynamic aspect of the ground] manifests in close affiliation with the three kinds of ignorance because it fails to directly recognize that it itself is what appears as able to discriminate amongst objects. These three aspects are as follows: [A] ignorance of single identity as the cause consists in not recognizing that all cognitions are of the same identical nature; [B] co-emergent ignorance consists in the fact that this non-self-recognition (*rang ngo ma shes pa*) and cognition (*shes pa*) arise together; and [C] conceptually elaborated ignorance consists in discriminating self-manifestation as something other [than oneself].[162]

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rig pa ye shes kyi dgangs su shes te| rig pa dang rig gdangs shan phyed pa'i skad cig la ma rig pa sangs nas rtag chad sgro sdur dang bral te| gdod ma'i ngang du grol ba nam mkha' lta bu'o||

[160] The *Tshig don bcu gcig pa* (31.19) reads "like the front and back of one's hand": *lag pa'i lto rgyab ldog pa lta bur*.

[161] *Tshig don bcu gcig pa*: 30.17 f.: *rang snang ngo ma shes pas 'khrul te| ji ltar 'khrul na| gzhi dang gzhi shes kyi khyad par las 'khrul te| gzhi dang gzhi shes zhes bya ba khyab pa spyir stong pas gang du yang ma phye bas 'khrul ma 'khrul gyi rtsis med shes pa'i khyad par 'dod pa rang gzhung du bstan pas rig pa'o||* ...

[162] *Tshig don mdzod*: 829.1 f.: *tshul ji ltar shar na gzhi snang du shar dus thugs rje'i rtsal shes pa gsal rig yul dpyod nus su rang shar ba de rang ngo ma shes pa la ltos nas ma rig pa gsum dang mtshungs ldan du shar te| rgyu bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa shes par skyes pa de nyid du ma shes pa dang| lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa rang ngo ma shes pa de dang shes pa de gnyis lhan cig skyes pa dang| kun brtags pa'i ma rig pa rang snang la gzhan du dpyod pa'i cha dang gsum mo||* Klong chen explains these three in terms of the onset and development of reifying cognition in *Theg mchog mdzod* vol. 1: 743.4 f.: *de yang dang po 'khrul pa'i rgyu ma rig pa gsum ste| rang ngo ma rig pa'i cha tsam las| gzung 'dzin du ma skyes pas don gyis ma 'khrul zhes bya ba der 'khrul par song ste| ming med ming du song pa lta bu ni rgyu bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa'o| de nyid ngo ma shes tsam ldog de lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa ste 'khor 'das gnyis kyi snang char byung ba'o| de ltar yul 'od snang la blos gnyis snang tsam du phye ba'i cha nas ming don bdag tu rtog pa'i char song bas kun brtags pa'i ma rig pa zhes bya'o||*

Ignorance thus marks that juncture in the unfoldment of world-experience where an experiencer first emerges as both the dative and genitive of manifestion. And it is to this nascent level of reification wherein auto-manifestation gives way to hetero-manifestation that the genesis of subject/object dualism can be traced.

For Klong chen pa, the three kinds of ignorance consitute progressive phases of error: "these three types of ignorance are each named from the standpoint of non-self-recognition (*rang ma rig pa*) as it occurs [1] in the phase of primordiality (*ye ldan*) of the single identity ignorance, [2] in the phase of simultaneity (*dus mnyam*) of the co-emergent ignorance, and [3] in the phase of posteriority (*phyis 'byung*) of the conceptually elaborated ignorance."[163]

The rDzogs chen analysis of ignorance can be schematized as follows:

Table B: Three Kinds of Ignorance in Rdzog chen sNying thig System

Three kinds of ignorance	**Ignorance of Single Identity** ***bdag nyid gcig pa'i ma rig pa***	**Co-emergent ignorance** ***lhan cig skyes pa'i ma rig pa***	**Conceptual Ignorance** ***kun tu brtags pa'i ma rig pa***
Definition	Not recognizing single cause of awareness and ignorance	Coemergence of non-recognition and cogniton	Auto-manifestation (mis)taken as subject-object 'appearances'
Phases	Primordiality (*ye ldan*)	Simultaneity (*dus mnyam*)	Posteriority (*phyis 'byung*)
Implication	Inception of dualism from nondual pre-errant condition	Development of subject/object dualism	Hypostatization and symbolic ascription of self and world
Deviation	Non-recognition of empty essence (*ngo bo stong pa*)	Non-recognition of radiant nature (*rang bzhin gsal ba*)	Non-recognition of dynamic responsiveness (*thugs rje*)

It is worth pausing to consider how the rDzogs chen theory of ignorance both develops and diverges from earlier Buddhist views. It can be seen that this account differs from the influential Abhidharma analysis in a number of ways. First, the Abhidharma account of ignorance interprets the privative *a-* in *avidyā* in the specific sense of an antonym or opposite, akin to the opposites friend (*mitra*) and enemy (*amitra*).[164] In the rDzogs chen

[163] *Bla ma yang tig* vol. 2: 161.3 f.: *ma rig pa gsum ni| bdag nyid gcig pa ye ldan gyi tshul| lhan cig skyes pa dus mnyam gyi tshul| kun tu brtags pa'i phyis 'byung gi tshul du rang ma rig pa'i cha las so sor btags so||*

[164] AK 3.28c-d (pp. 88-89). "The non-friend or enemy (*amitra*) is the opposite (*vipakṣa*) of a friend and not (1) the not-friend, that is to say, anyone other than a friend, or (2) the absence of a friend." In the same way, ignorance is neither (1) non-knowledge (i.e. different from knowledge) nor (2) the absence of knowledge but rather "the opposite of clear knowledge (*vidyā*), a real, separate factor (*dharmāntara*)." It is further said to be "a cause or condition

account, *ma rig pa* is a derivative quality of *rig pa* (*rig pa'i cha*) that is characterized as the non-recognition of *rig pa* that is one's basic nature. This relation of structural asymmetry expressed in the statement "*ma rig pa* depends on *rig pa* but *rig pa* does not depend on *ma rig pa*" in our opening passage precludes construing the relation as one of simple opposition, as is done in the *Abhidharmakośa* 3.28.

This asymmetrical entailment relation also sets the rDzogs chen view apart from Buddhist Abhidharma and *Pramāṇavāda interpretations of ignorance as a mental factor associated with the mind.[165] In rDzogs chen, ignorance is most certainly not a mental factor alongside other mental factors (*caitta*) but is the basic precondition of dualistic mind (*citta*) itself. Leaving aside the varying interpretations of what is meant by the relation of 'association' (*samprayukta* : *mtshungs par ldan pa*) between something primary (e.g. *citta*) and concomitant (e.g. *caittas*)[166], what deserves notice here is that the rDzogs chen account reverses this priority relation, making mind subsidiary to ignorance (where ignorance is in turn subordinate to *rig pa*).[167] Mind is said to be associated with the fundamental ignorance (*sems ni rtsa ba ma rig pa dang mtshungs par ldan pa*) in the sense of having it as a condition of its possibility. This appears to be supported by rDzogs chen statements to the effect that mind entails fundamental ignorance: "Ignorance pervades mind", says Klong chen pa, "but it does not pervade open awareness."[168] A number of justifications and implications of this asymmetrical entailment relation are examined in the next chapter.

(*pratyaya*) of the *saṃskāras*, from which it follows that it is not a mere negation." See Mejor 2002 for a study of the seven interpretations of the privative particle (*nañ*) according to Vasubandhu's *Pratītyasamutpāda-vyākhyā*.

[165]According to the *Vibhāṣā* 42, 17, there are 5 defiled permeating mental factors (*akuśalamahābhūmika*): (1) ignorance (*avidyā*), (2) lethargy (*styāna*), (3) excitedness (*auddhatya*), (4) shamelessness (*ahrī*), (5) disregard (*anapatrāpya*).

[166] See Eltschinger 2009: 66. See Tillemans 1990, vol. 2: 285 and n. 427.

[167] Klong chen pa was aware that this interpretation ran counter to the Abhidharmic analyis of ignorance as one of the primary six *kleśas* (and therefore as one of the concomitant *caitta*). In his *Theg mchog mdzod*, Klong chen pa seeks to resolve this apparent discrepancy by arguing that ignorance is included on the Abhidharmic list of six basic emotions because it is "that which pervades the other five poisons" (*dug lnga thams cad la khyab*). It should therefore be explained separately from the delusion (*gti mug* : *moha*) which is one of the five emotions." *Theg mchog mdzod* vol. 1: 831.1 f.: *nyon mongs pa drug ni ma rig pa dang 'dod chags dang zhe sdang dang gti mug dang nga rgyal dang phra dog go| de'ang ma rig pa ni dug lnga thams cad la khyab la gti mug ni drug lnga'i ya gyal yin pas so sor bshad do||* In other words, if ignorance is what gives rise to dualism, it cannot be reduced to a mental factor that is counted among the many derivative expressions of this dualism.

[168] *Theg mchog mdzod* vol. 1: 1042.2 f.. See under "Texts and Translations": 306.

The crucial difference between Abhidharmic and rDzogs chen conceptions of ignorance comes down to their divergent views on the kind of knowledge that ignorance is held to counteract or obstruct. In Buddhist epistemology and Abhidharma, it is correct cognition or discernment (*prajñā/vipaśyanā*), a mode of cognition which affords the best epistemic purchase on things. Ignorance is considered to be the opposite of this clear knowledge (*vidyā*). The principal difference between *vidyā* and *avidyā*, then, is that they grasp contradictory aspects: the former grasps the real aspects, the latter grasps erroneous ones.[169] They are thus distinguished on the basis of how well their respective representations match up with objects. But on this account, both *vidyā* and *avidyā* belong to a representational epistemology according to which knowledge typically consists in the grasping of external objects by means of internal representations. From the rDzogs chen perspective, it is this mediational inner/outer structure itself that needs to be abandoned, both on the level of theory and contemplative praxis. This adventitious structure, in fact, is what defines ignorance and mind, while its transcendence characterizes true knowledge (*vidyā*). It seems to me that it is precisely this rejection of mediational epistemology that underwrites the rDzogs chen sNying thig emphasis on overcoming subject-object dualism, on 'transcending mind'. The distinction provides an interpretive framework for overcoming epistemology in theory and practice. Stated succinctly, what ignorance *primarily* obstructs or overlooks is not better or truer representations but a primordial, nondual mode of knowing that is prior to and a precondition of all representational thinking.

2.3 Reification

We can finally observe that in rDzogs chen thought, dualistic mind is closely linked with the complex mechanisms of discursive superimposition (*samāropa* : *sgro 'dogs*) and elaboration (*prapañca* : *spros pa*) that shape each agent's specific world-interpretation (*srid pa*). In this regard, it is worth mentioning that virtually all Indian philosophical schools in one way or another accepted a basic distinction between nonconceptual (*nirvikalpaka*) and conceptual (*savikalpaka*, *vikalpa*) modes of cognition.[170] There was also widespread agreement that conceptual cognition is based on language use, specifically the ascription of

[169] See Etschinger 2009: 48.

[170] See Bronkhorst 2010 and 2011.

names and universals to experience. The idea of nonconceptual cognition figures both in epistemological and soteriological contexts of Indian philosophy, the first centering on the ascertainment of valid epistemic instruments (*pramāṇa*), the second on the articulation of conditions for liberating knowledge. It is the latter construal that is foregrounded in classical rDzogs chen discussions of the nature and function of conceptualization. According to Klong chen pa: "Since 'mind' involves conceptual and analytic factors of mental continua belonging to the three realms, it is that which grasps erroneous superimposed aspects together with the all-ground [comprising] the eightfold ensemble [of cognitions]."[171] The *sGra thal 'gyur* tantra similarly equates mind with conceptual error and defines it as the basis of all discursive reflections.[172]

All that said, it would be a mistake to conclude, as Sa skya Paṇḍita (1182-1251) and a great many of his successors did, that rDzogs chen practitioners advocated the kind of nonconceptual meditation that became associated in Tibet with the Chan system of Heshang Mohoyen. A more complex picture emerges when we consider the four major approaches to nonconceptuality that were current in Tibet at the time gNubs chen Sangs rgyas ye shes wrote his *bSam gtan mig sgron* (late 9th early 10th centuries).[173] While all are considered by gNubs chen to be viable paths to awakening, they are nontheless arranged in sequence from lowest to highest, following a pattern already well-established in Indian, Chinese and Tibetan doxographies by this time. According to gNubs chen, this hierarchical classification reflects the degree to which they represent 'deviations' (*gol sa*) in doctrine and praxis from a higher standard, in this case the rDzogs chen system.[174] Thus, in successive chapters, gNubs chen examines: (1) the step-by-step (*rim gyis*) Indian approach represented by Kamalaśīla which only comprehends the nonconceptuality of appearances (*snang ba mi rtog pa*), (2) the 'all at once' (*cig char*) Chinese approach represented by Mohoyen emphasizing the nonconceptuality of non-appearance (*mi snang ba mi rtog pa*), (3) the Indian Mahāyoga

[171] *Sems dang ye shes kyi dris lan*: 383.2 f.. See under "Texts and Translations": 274.

[172] Ati vol. 1: 129.3.

[173] For a structural analysis of this work, see Meinert 2003. On the importance of this work see Karmay 1988: 86 f..

[174] See for example *bSam gtan mig sgron*: 55.2 f.: *stong pa'i ngo bor snang la mi rtog pa ni| rnal 'byor spyod pa'i yongs su grub pa bsgom pa'o| dbu ma'i lam sgom pa'i shes pa lhag mthong ste| de la gong gi mi dmigs pa tshang ngo| de las khyad du gnyis su med pa'i mi rtog pa ma ha yo ga'o| lhun gyis grub pa'i mi rtog pa chen po a ti yo ga'o|de dag ni gol sa ngos bzung ba'i phyir rim par bkod pa'o||*

approach advocating nondual nonconceptuality (*gnyis su med pa'i mi rtog pa*) and finally (4) the rDzogs chen approach of naturally and correctly recognizing spontaneously present nonconceptuality (*lhun gyis grub pa'i mi rtog pa*). According to gNubs chen, all four approaches aim at realizing nonconceptual suchness but the first three remain bound up with willful deliberation (*ched du 'tshol*) and striving (*'bad rtsol*) and therefore overlook spontaneity[175], a natural way of being and acting that confounds intellectual appropriation.[176] For gNubs chen, spontaneity is 'nonconceptual' precisely because it occurs in the absence of intentions and preconceived plans. For this reason, gNubs chen characterizes spontaneity as a fundamental mode or dimension (*ngang*) of human existence.[177] At its most basic level, our experience of the world is natural, nonreflective and charged with meaning – we grasp the world concretely and nonconceptually before we move on to the more sophisticated acts of conception and belief. We all too easily lose touch with this originary dynamism and

[175] In his *bSam gtan mig sgron*, gNubs chen introduces spontaneity as one of the nine key principles of rDzogs chen. See below Table E on p. 167. gNyag Jñānakumāra similarily takes up the question "What is spontaneity?" as the second of nine queries concerning rDzogs chen in his *'Phrul gyi me long*, in NyKs vol. 82: 964.2, 974.6 and 988.6. Van Schaik 2008 has noted the importance of the concept of *lhun grub* in Mahāyoga Māyājāla scriptures such as the *Guhyagarbha*. It also forms a central theme of an early Dunhuang Mahāyoga manuscript IOL J Tib. 454 in which the idea of spontaneity, or effortlessness, is used to characterize the basic nature of one's own mind as nothing other than perfect buddhahood replete with all capacities for altruistic activity by body, speech and mind. A commentary on the ancient *Rig pa'i khu byug* from the *bKa' ma shin tu rgyas pa* defines "spontaneity" in a section consisting in instructions on the effortless conduct (*spyod pa*) of a rDzogs chen practitioner: "[In] the instruction on conduct, absence of effort (*brtsal ba med pa*) is the very essence of conduct [characterized as] spontaneity, great compassion, great skillful means, unpremeditated and unobstructed."

[176] For example, the main section (part two) of one of the earliest available rDzogs chen texts, the *sBas pa rgum chung*, opens with a criticism of the tendency to take nonconceptuality as a thematic focus or as an experience: "To what extent does the profound nonconceptual appear as an object of the intellect? Because the experience of nonconceptuality is an experience, it is not that [nonconceptual suchness]." IOL 594, pt. II, vol. 1b: line 2: *ji tsam rtog myed zab mo zhig| blo'i yul du snang zhe na| myi rtog zab mo nyams myong ba| myong ba yin phyir de nyid myin|* Compare with … *ji ltar rtog med zab mo zhig| blo yi yul du snang zhe na| mi rtog zab mo nyams myong ba| myong ba yin phyir de nyid min||* See Karmay 1988: 74. The text goes on to specify how suchness defies representation and remains untouched by goal-directed soteriological activities. Ethical activities of accumulating merits and knowledge as well as meditative activities such as contemplation (*samādhi*) and purifying latent tendencies are all tethering pegs (*'dzin pa'i phur*). gNubs chen clarifies the sense of "tethering peg" in his *bSam gtan mig sgron*: "To try to make improvements and efforts in body, speech and mind is a tethering peg and an obscuration" and "to modify the unmodified is to [try to] tether it and pin it down conceptually." *bSam gtan mig sgron* 443.6: *…sgo gsum ched du 'chos shing rtsol ba ni| 'dzin pa'i phur pa dang sgrib pa yin||* and ibid. 444.2 *…bcos su med pa la bcos pa nyid| rtog pa'i 'dzin pa dang phur pa'o||*

[177] On this great dimension of spontaneity (*lhun gyis grub pa'i ngang chen po*), the *bSam gtan mig sgron* (323.6 f.) states: "Since this dimension of spontaneity that is great bliss is free from all spheres of activity (*spyod yul* : *gocara*) throughout the three times and no time, it is devoid of any scrutinizing agent or object of thought. Thus, it is also great nonconceptuality [i.e. without premeditation]. It [nonetheless] responds to the aims of all wayfarers and trainees, satisfies their needs, and brings about their desired spiritual attainments according to their intentions." *bde ba chen po lhun gyis grub pa'i ngang ni dus gsum dus med par spyod yul thams cad dang bral bas| brtag pa po dang| rtog pa'i yul med pas| mi rtog pa chen po*[a] *yang yin| lam pa dang gdul bya'i ril gyis don bya ba dang| dgos pa'i re ba yang skong| ji ltar bsam pa'i dngos grub kyi 'dod pa yang byung||* [a]text has *pa*

spontaneity in the drive to rationalize our every act and thought, to render reasons for what is in reality mostly unpremediated.

What becomes abundantly clear in examining early rDzogs chen responses to the debates over nonconceptuality is the tradition's vehement rejection of nonconceptuality pursued either as an *end* arrived at by conceptual means (Mahāyāna gradualism) or as a *means* to its own end (Chan subitism). Nonconceptuality is instead taken as a fundamental condition of being and awareness *simpliciter*, one that eludes the instrumental (means-end) framework common to conceptual and nonconceptual deliberations. It is on the basis of such a critique that gNubs chen Sangs rgyas employs the 'figurative expression' (*bla dwags*) 'great primordially present nonconceptuality' (*ye mi rtog pa chen po*)[178] to distinguish the rDzogs chen view of human reality as primordially nonconceptual and spontaneously present from Chan traditions that seek to suppress thoughts and Mahāyāna traditions that seek to instrumentalize them within a means-end framework. Rong zom pa went so far as to declare that because both conceptuality and nonconceptuality are fundamentally equal by nature, there is no need to try to improve things by means of deliberate effort.[179]

The critical point for gNubs chen and the Sems sde tantras he comments upon is not whether the practitioner has concepts or not but whether his or her activity – and especially mental activity which is considered the source of verbal and bodily activities – is contrived or spontaneous, deliberate or unpremeditated. With this account, the soteriological focus has shifted from *how we know* (conceptually or nonconceptually) to *how we act* (contrivedly or uncontrivedly), where acting is seen to include thinking.

As gNubs chen sees it, action is primary and belief derivative. It is difficult to overestimate the impact this reframing of the problem of nonconceptuality in terms of spontaneity exerted on the development of rDzogs chen thinking and praxis. By shifting the

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[178] *bSam gtan mig sgron* 60.4 f.: "In this clear yet vibrant primordial lucidity that is one's self-awareness - non established, not moving, not vitiated and not dwelling – what is there to meditate on? What is there to reflect upon? Nothing. There is only this state of absence. Who would ever concern themselves with that!? Within the great primordial nonconceptual state (*ye mi rtog pa chen po*), one does not supress appearances nor conceptualize them. Even this 'nonconceptuality' is only a figurative expression." *rang rig pa ma bzhag ma g.yos ma bslad ma zhugs par lhan ne lhang nge ye gsal bar ci zhig bsgom| ci zhig dran par byar yod de med| med pa'i don de nyid kho na yod| de dang du len pa su zhig ste| ye mi rtog pa chen po la| snang ba bkag pa yang med la| de la rtog*[a] *pa med de| mi rtog pa nyid kyang bla dwags so||* [a]text has *rtogs*

[179] *Theg pa chen po'i tshul la 'jug pa*, in *Rong zom bka' 'bum*: 262.2: *rnam par rtog pa dang rnam par mi rtog pa gnyi' ga'ang rang bzhin gyis mnyam pa'i phyir| rtsol bas bcos mi dgos pa ni||* ...

soteriological focus from mediational epistemology - the view that we can only know things and beings *through* our representations of them - to engaged agency, it restores primacy to living praxis over theoretical reflection, and spontaneous activity over willful deliberation. On this reading, the 'through-structure' that characterizes mediational epistemology is seen to have a thoroughly derivative and adventitious character. It is from the more originative order of life as it is prereflectively and spontaneously lived that all thinking, sense-making, truth-making and planning originates.

For these and other reasons to be considered in sections to follow, rDzogs chen authors were inclined to distance themselves from the debates over conceptuality and nonconceptuality that had figured so prominently in the history of Buddhist thought. In an illuminating passage from the *Zab don gnad kyi me long* (*Mirror of the Key Points of Profound Meaning*) Klong chen pa considers it ambiguous if not misleading to characterize the distinction between mind and primordial knowing merely in terms of their having or not having concepts. It is, in his estimation, a way of thinking characteristic of the ordinary vehicles that is inclined to overlook the enactive dimensions of these modes of experiencing:

> When ordinary vehicles distinguish mind and primordial knowing merely on the basis of the conceptual (*savikalpa* : *rtog bcas*) versus nonconceptual (*nirvikalpa* : *rtog med*), [the distinction] is unclear. Here, however, we shall elucidate their difference. Since primordial knowing has always been spontaneously present (*ye nas lhun grub*), it is unconditioned and nonconceptual. It has [therefore] been established as the ground of arising of undefiled *dharmakāya* of the buddhas, as the condition of suchness possessing defilement, as the nature of spiritual embodiment and primordial knowing, and as the condition for the aspects of [both] the ground of emancipation and the goal of emanciption.[180]

§3. The rDzogs chen Analysis of *Ye shes* and Related Concepts

If much of what one encounters in the sNying thig exposition of mind (*sems*) has been drawn from traditional Abhidharma and Cittamātra psychology, the descriptions and explications of *ye shes* and related gnoseological concepts reflect strongly indigenous

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[180] *sNyan rgyud gyi rgyab chos chen mo Zab don gnad kyi me long*, in *Zab mo yang tig* vol. 2: 280.5 f.: *...theg pa thun mong pas rtog bcas rtog med la sems ye shes su phye ba tsam las gsal po med kyang| 'dir khyad par gsal bar byed bstan te| ye shes ni ye nas lhun grub kyis| 'dus ma byas| rnam par mi rtog pa| sangs rgyas ki chos sku dri ma med pa'i 'char gzhi| dri bcas de bzhin nyid kyi gnas skabs| sku dang ye shes kyi rang bzhin| bral gzhi bral 'bras kyi char gnas skabs kyi bzhag pa can yin te||...*