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A Drop from the Ocean of Consciousness

A Compendium on Awareness and Knowers

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by Tenzin Dongak



Happy Monks Publication

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From *The Debate between Wisdom and Ignorance*:

The reflection of illusory appearance arises
Within the mirror of the empty mind.

Preface

I put this booklet together because I wanted to offer an alternative to a normal literal translation from a Tibetan monastic text book and out of my desire to share dharma information that I have access to because of knowing Tibetan, and which may otherwise perhaps be hard to come by.

This text is primarily based on different parts of the *Collected Topics* by Yongdzin Purchok Ngawang Jampa, who was a tutor of the thirteenth Dalai Lama.

The section on the three conditions according to the Mind Only comes from the *Ornament of the Seven Valid Cognitions, Dispelling Mental Darkness*, which was composed by Khedrub Je, one of the two main disciples of Lama Tsong Khapa. The section on direct and indirect realization is based on the same text.

The section on the substantial cause of the eye sense power comes from the *Ornament of Reasoning* by the first Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gedun Drub, as does the main part of the section on fake direct perceptions. There are also many other smaller parts based on Gyalwa Gedun Drub.

A tiny part is my own but still hopefully based on the above mentioned texts. I apologise for any mistakes in this text, which are entirely mine. If you feel there are mistakes please do not hesitate to contact me.

Concerning the debates:

Debates 1, 2, 10, 11, 13, 15, 16 I have composed. Debates 3 through 7 are from Purbu Chok's *Middling Collected Topics*, the *Greater Cause and Effect* chapter. Debates 8, 9, 12, 14, 17, 18, and 19 are from Purbu Chok's *Awareness and Knower*. Debates 1 through 8 concerning the substantial cause of the eye sense power are from the *Ornament of Reasoning*.

When you study Buddhism you are studying yourself, the nature of your body, speech and mind, with the main emphasis being on the nature of your mind and how it works in everyday life. Why is it so important to know the nature of your own mind? Since we all want happiness, enjoyment, peace and satisfaction, and since these things do not come from ice cream but from wisdom and the mind, we have to understand what the mind is and how it works.

Lama Thubten Yeshe

Consciousness

Confusing Relationship With Being

In Western thought there is a tendency to confuse consciousness with the physical sense powers. One reason is probably the obsessive preoccupation with physical objects, but another reason is confusing the relationship with an object with being that object.

Because we can observe a relationship between the physical eye and our visual perception we assume that the eye is that which perceives. Similarly, because we observe a relationship between certain parts in the brain and certain emotions, we assume that these emotions are parts of the brain: A change in the chemistry of the brain causes an emotional change.

However, observing that a change in A (the brain) brings about a change in B (parts of the mind) is only proof that parts of the mind are related to the brain.

It is logically incorrect to say that A is B because one can observe that A changes if one changes B. For example, if one breaks down the wall, the graffiti on the wall also crumbles. This shows that the existence of the graffiti is linked to the existence of the wall, but that does not make the wall the graffiti.

The direct perception of an object depends on the object. As the object changes, also our perception of the object changes, but that does not make the object our perception.

Likewise it is incorrect to say that e.g. attachment is a part of the brain because I can observe a relationship between attachment and certain parts of the brain. Modern science has certainly established a profound relationship between the brain and parts of the mind, but that does not proof that the brain is the mind.

The findings by modern science about the relationship between the physical body and parts of the mind do not contradict Buddhist thought.

Rather they complement it, since in Buddhism it is taught that different types of consciousness do indeed need a physical basis for their generation, such as the eye-consciousness needing the eye sense power.



Food For Thought

Invalid syllogism: Consider the subject 'visual perception' - it is the physical eye - because I can observe a change in the visual perception directly proportional to a change in the physical eye.

Valid syllogism: Consider the subject 'visual perception' - it is related to the physical eye - because I can observe a change in the visual perception directly proportional to a change in the physical eye.

Our Own System

Definition

The definition of consciousness is clear and knowing.

Clear refers to the ability of consciousness to arise in the aspect of the object.

Knowing refers to the primary arising of consciousness in the aspect of the object, i.e., the apprehension of the object.

The definition of awareness is knower. Awareness, consciousness and knower are synonymous.

A consciousness arises in the aspect of its object. If one imagines the clear wide sky seen from a high mountain pass while being in a dark room, the mind will take on the aspect of the clear wide sky and become expansive and relaxed.

While there are neurotransmitters and other chemicals and electrical impulses racing around the neural pathways in our brain while we are visualising, none of these nor their collection has the aspect of the clear wide sky.

The aspect of the clear wide sky that one sees with one's mental eye, the perception of that sky, is consciousness.

Some Other Important Characteristics Of Consciousness

Consciousness Is A Creature Of Habit

Consciousness is a creature of habit, which one can observe for oneself. The same mental patterns arise again and again when they meet the triggering condition. This is true for the wholesome as well as for the harmful mental patterns.

The circling of the mind in the same old harmful patterns may as well be called the true samsara.

Once Consciousness Has Taken On A Habit It Becomes Effortless

This characteristic strongly sets consciousness apart from the coarse physical body and highlights the limitations of the coarse physical body. No matter how much the body is trained, its actions will never become effortless. Even the most highly trained athletes have to exert strenuous effort to achieve their best.

A mental action on the other hand, once habituated, will arise effortlessly. One only has to think of the object of one's aversion and anger arises, often against one's will. The same happens also with attachment and the other afflictions.

On the positive side, love and compassion arise also effortlessly, once the mind is habituated. One only needs to think of a suffering sick child and immediately the wish to help arises. Calm abiding is another example: once the mind is well trained it will abide without effort single-pointedly on the object in a clear and vivid state.

There Is No Limit To How Much A Mental State Can Be Increased

This characteristic of consciousness makes enlightenment possible. Once a mental state has been trained to the degree that it becomes effortless, it can be increased.

For example, once one has managed to have love and compassion for one hundred sentient beings, one can then move on to generate love and compassion one thousand, then for ten thousand and so on.

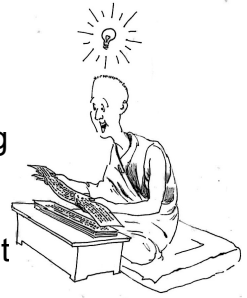
There is no barrier in the mind that would make it all at once impossible to generate love and compassion for that one more additional sentient being. In this way one can generate love and compassion for infinite sentient beings.

In a similar way all qualities of consciousness can be increased limitlessly.

Food for Thought

Take the definition of consciousness: clear and knowing

- + Consciousness is a creature of habit
 - + Once consciousness has taken on a habit it becomes effortless
 - + There is no limit to how much a mental state can be increased
- = The possibility of limitless self-improvement, i.e., the possibility of becoming enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings



Refuting Objections Relating To The Definition

Debate 1

Opponent: Since clear and knowing is the definition of consciousness, it follows that every consciousness is clear and knowing. This follows because the eight doors of pervasion apply between a definition and its definiendum. If this is agreed to, then it follows that every consciousness knows, which would lead to the fault of a wrong consciousness knowing its object.

Answer: There is no such fault - because the *knowing* in clear and knowing refers to the apprehension of the object, and not to the elimination of superimpositions with regard to the object. It is not a knowing in the sense of realising or understanding, but in the sense of apprehending.

Debate 2

Opponent: The meaning of *clear* is to be formless and the meaning of *knowing* is to apprehend.

Answer: Take the subject 'person' - it follows that the person is consciousness - because of being clear and knowing - because of being formless and apprehending objects.

Affirming And Eliminating Consciousnesses

Divisions

One initial division of consciousness is into awareness engaging through elimination and awareness engaging through affirmation

Definition

The definition of an awareness engaging through elimination is a knower that engages its object in a selective manner.

The definition of an awareness engaging through affirmation is a knower that engages its object without selection from its parts.

This division of consciousness is important because awareness engaging through elimination is synonymous with conceptual consciousness and awareness engaging through affirmation is synonymous with non-conceptual consciousness. They provide the basis for inferential cognition and direct cognition.

A conceptual consciousness, i.e., a conceptual thought, engages its object by eliminating everything that is not the object. For example, the conceptual thought apprehending sound engages its object sound by eliminating everything that is not sound. In that process it also eliminates characteristics of sound that are not sound but are of one indivisible nature with sound, such as the impermanence of sound, which will then not appear to it.

This process of engagement through elimination is reflected in the approach of eliminating all impossibilities to arrive at the possible.

An awareness engaging through affirmation on the other hand engages its object not through a process of elimination, but through the object appearing to it in the raw, with all its characteristics. Not only sound appears to the ear consciousness apprehending sound, but also everything that is of indivisibly one nature with sound, such as the impermanence of sound.

That is why a non-conceptual newly non-mistaken knower is called a direct prime cognition. There stands nothing between it and the object, the object appears to it in the raw.

The Three Conditions

In General

Every consciousness needs three conditions for it to arise:

- The focal condition¹.
- The uncommon empowering condition.
- The immediately preceding condition.

For both conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses the uncommon empowering condition refers to one of the six sense powers and the immediately preceding condition to a preceding moment of consciousness. The focal condition of a non-conceptual consciousnesses is one of its objects, but for a conceptual consciousness it is a karmic imprint on the immediately preceding condition.

The first Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gedun Drub, said that there are three parts to a sense perception apprehending blue:

- Mere experience.
- Generation in the aspect of the object.
- The ability to apprehend objects.

The part of mere experience, i.e. clear and knowing, is generated due to the immediately preceding condition, but this alone is not enough to distinguish the sense direct perception apprehending blue from other consciousnesses. Every consciousness is endowed with this part of mere experience.

The part of being generated in the aspect of the object is due to the focal condition, but this is also not enough to distinguish the sense direct perception apprehending blue from other consciousnesses. Mental consciousness can also generate in the aspect of the object.

That it is generated in direct dependence on the eye sense power distinguishes the sense direct perception apprehending blue from other consciousnesses.

Focal Condition

Definition

That primarily generating directly the aspect of the consciousness, or that primarily generating directly the consciousness as possessing its aspect.

The definition of the focal condition of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue is that primarily generating directly the blue aspect of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, or that primarily generating directly the eye-consciousness apprehending blue as possessing its aspect.

Example: Blue

If it is of one simultaneous substance with blue regarding place, time and nature then there is a pervasion that it is the focal object of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, e.g., like the impermanence of blue².

Debate 3

An opponent who does not understand the difference between the focal object of eye-consciousness and a conceptual thought:

It follows that it is incorrect to posit blue as the focal condition of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue - because it is incorrect to posit blue as the focal condition of the conceptual thought apprehending blue.

Answer: There is no pervasion. Even though one posits the form source, i.e., the visual stimuli, that is its object of comprehension, as the focal condition of a valid eye-consciousness, it is not the same for conceptual thoughts. For conceptual thoughts a karmic imprint on their immediately preceding condition is posited as the focal condition.

The karmic imprint on the immediately preceding condition of the conceptual thought apprehending blue is the focal condition of the conceptual thought apprehending blue, because it is that primarily generating directly the blue aspect of the conceptual thought apprehending blue.

Food For Thought

- Even though blue is a focal condition of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, it is not a focal condition of the conceptual thought apprehending blue.
- The definition of focal condition explicitly demands it to be a direct cause of the consciousness, and blue is not a direct cause of the conceptual thought apprehending blue, but an indirect cause.
- The conceptual thought apprehending blue is a result of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue, which is in turn a result of blue. That is why the conceptual thought apprehending blue is an indirect effect of blue.



Debate 4

Someone who does not understand the difference between the focal condition of a valid consciousness and a distorted consciousness:

It follows that it is valid to posit for all direct perceptions their object of apprehension as their focal condition - because from primary valid eye-consciousness to primary valid body consciousness the apprehended object is posited as their focal condition.

Answer: There is no pervasion to the reason, but it is not possible to accept the thesis because:

1. For prime yogic cognitions the union of calm abiding and special insight that is their cause is posited as their focal condition.
2. For omniscient consciousness the accumulation of three countless great eons of merits that is its cause is posited as its focal condition.
3. It is different for sense consciousnesses.

Further: According to you it would follow that all distorted consciousnesses do not have a focal condition because your way of positing the focal condition is correct.

This thesis is however unacceptable because if it is consciousness there is a pervasion that its focal condition is an existent.

It follows it is like that because:

For conceptual distorted consciousnesses one posits an imprint on their immediately preceding condition as their focal condition, and for non-conceptual distorted consciousnesses there are multiple ways of positing their focal object.

For the eye-consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons the one moon is posited as its focal condition.

For the eye-consciousness to which a mirage appears as water the white sand and the sunlight are posited as its focal condition.

For the eye-consciousness to which an illusion appears as horse and elephant the illusory mantra-substance is posited as its focal condition.

There are countless different cases of focal conditions.

¹ Object condition

² Burbu Chok, *Middle Collected Topics*, Chapter on Greater Cause and Effect:

In short, if it is of one substantial establishment with blue regarding place, time and nature then there is a pervasion that it is the focal object of the direct perception apprehending blue.

The Empowering Condition

Definition

The definition of the empowering condition of a consciousness is that directly generating the consciousness primarily in an empowering manner.

The definition of the empowering condition of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue is that directly generating the eye-consciousness apprehending blue primarily in an empowering manner.

Examples

The eye sense power that is the uncommon empowering condition of the direct perception apprehending blue and the mental sense power that is the common empowering condition of the direct perception apprehending blue.

The eye sense power is the uncommon empowering condition of the eye-consciousness because, out of the six sense powers, it is the one that directly causes the eye-consciousness to apprehend colours and shapes. The mental sense power is the uncommon empowering condition of the mental consciousness because out of the six sense powers it is the one that causes the mental consciousness to apprehend the phenomena source.

Debate 5

Concerning the difference between sense consciousness and mental consciousness:

An opponent says: Take the subject 'eye-consciousness' - it follows it is a mental consciousness - because it is a consciousness that depends upon its uncommon empowering condition of a mental sense power.

If 'reason not established'; take the subject 'eye-consciousness' - it follows it is a consciousness that depends upon its uncommon

empowering condition of a mental sense power - because it is a consciousness that depends upon its empowering condition of a mental sense power.

Answer: There is no pervasion to your reason. However, your reason is established. Take the subject 'eye-consciousness' - it follows it is a consciousness that depends upon its empowering condition of a mental sense power because it is consciousness.

Debate 6

An opponent who does not understand the difference between the focal condition and the empowering condition:

Take the subject 'eye sense power that is the empowering condition of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue' - it follows it is the condition that primarily generates the eye-consciousness apprehending blue as being in the aspect of blue - because it is the condition that, out of the six sources, specifically generates the apprehension of blue by the eye-consciousness apprehending blue.

Answer: There is no pervasion to your reason. However, your reason is established because - the eye sense power is the condition that specifically generates the eye-consciousness as apprehending form source.

It follows it is like that because the fact that each of the six consciousnesses apprehends only one of the six sources comes about through the influence of the uncommon empowering condition.

Debate 7

An opponent who does not know the difference between empowering condition in general and empowering condition as part of the three conditions of consciousness:

It follows it is incorrect that the six types of consciousness are classified through their uncommon empowering condition - because it is possible for a taste sense power to become the uncommon empowering condition of the ear consciousness apprehending sound.

If 'reason not established', it follows that it is possible for a taste sense power to become the uncommon empowering condition of the ear consciousness apprehending sound - because it is possible for a taste sense power to become the empowering condition of the ear consciousness apprehending sound.

Answer: There is no pervasion to your reason. However, your last reason is established - because there is an ear consciousness apprehending sound that hears words spoken in dependence upon the empowering condition of the taste sense power.



Food for Thought

- In general, condition and empowering condition are synonymous.
- In the particular context of being the empowering condition that is part of the three conditions of consciousness it has to be a direct cause of that consciousness.
- The sense power of the tongue is not a direct cause of the ear consciousness.
- If it is consciousness there is a pervasion that it depends on its empowering condition of a mental sense power.
- Even though the mental sense power is a shared empowering condition between all six types of consciousness it is the uncommon empowering condition of the mental consciousness

because out of the six sources it exclusively directly causes the mental consciousness to apprehend phenomena source. For example, the eye sense power is the uncommon empowering condition of the eye-consciousness because out of the six sense powers it is the one that causes the eye-consciousness to apprehend primarily shapes and colours

The Immediately Preceding Condition

Definition

The definition of the immediately preceding condition of a consciousness is a knower primarily generating directly the consciousness as mere clear and knowing experience.

The definition of the immediately preceding condition of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue is a knower primarily generating directly the eye-consciousness apprehending blue as mere clear and knowing experience.

Example

The consciousness that arises immediately before the direct perception apprehending blue, and that pays attention to blue [brings blue to mind].

The immediately preceding condition does not have to be of the same type. Conceptual consciousness can be the immediately preceding condition for a sense consciousness and vice versa. A sense consciousness apprehending white can also be the immediately preceding condition for a sense consciousness apprehending yellow.

Summary

1. In short, if it is a sense consciousness there is a pervasion that it has all three conditions and if it is consciousness there is a pervasion that it has an immediately preceding condition and an empowering condition.

2. If it is a sense consciousness there is a pervasion that a physical sense power is its uncommon empowering condition.

From the *Sutra of Prime Cognition*,

‘Its name came because of the sense power.’

3. If it is a mental consciousness there is a pervasion that its uncommon empowering condition is a mental sense power because from the statement in the *Sutra on Prime Cognition*,

Knowledge of form takes two aspects,
Depending on the eye and the mind,

the statement ‘depending on the mind’ is a valid statement.

Objects

General

Definition

The definition of object is that known by awareness

Divisions

According to Purbu Chok's *Awareness and Knower* there is a threefold division into:

- Appearing object
- Determined object (object of one's clinging)
- Engaged object

To these can be added the object of the mode of apprehension¹, focal object and held object.

The apprehended object of direct perception is synonymous with the engaged object of direct perception and the apprehended object of conceptual consciousness is synonymous with the engaged object and the determined object of conceptual consciousness. The held object of an awareness is synonymous with the appearing object of that awareness.

There is also a fourfold division of objects, as mentioned by the first Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gedun Drub, in his *Ornament of Reasoning*:

- Appearing object
- Held object
- Engaged object
- Determined object

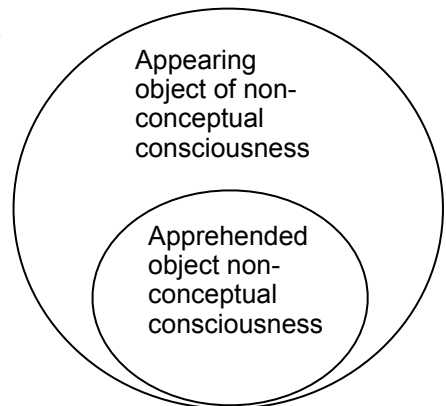
Appearing Object

If it exists there is a pervasion that it is an appearing object - because if it is a functionality there is a pervasion that it is the appearing object of direct perception, and if it is permanent there is a pervasion that it is the appearing object of conceptual thought.

Appearing Object Of Non-conceptual Consciousness

If it appears to a non-conceptual consciousness then it is its appearing object, regardless of whether that consciousness is a direct perception or wrong consciousness. Since non-conceptual consciousnesses are affirming engagers, when an impermanent object appears to a non-conceptual consciousness then everything that is of indivisibly one nature with that object will also appear to that consciousness.

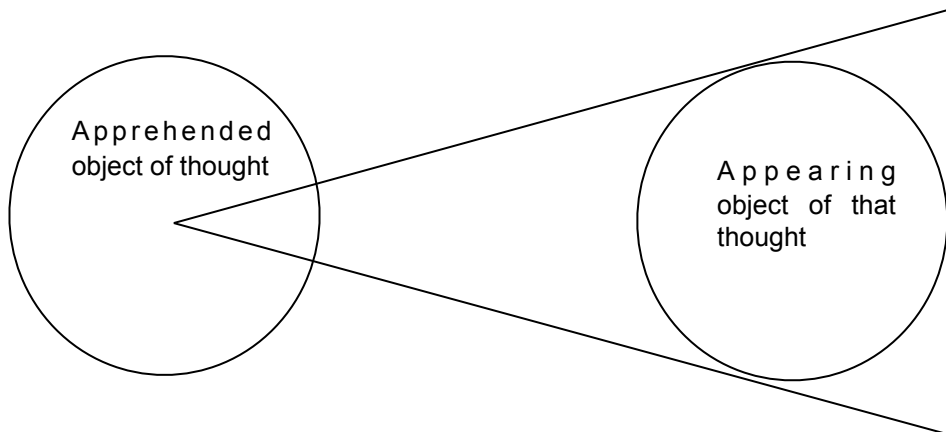
This makes the appearing object of non-conceptual consciousness more inclusive than the apprehended object. For example, the appearing object of the direct perception of blue also includes the impermanence of blue and the reversal of non-blue.



Appearing Object Of Conceptual Consciousness

The appearing object of conceptual consciousness is the meaning generality of the apprehended object, e.g., the appearing object of the conceptual thought apprehending vase is the meaning generality of vase.

If it appears to a conceptual consciousness there is no pervasion that it is the appearing object of that conceptual consciousness, e.g., flower appears to the conceptual thought apprehending flower, but it is not the appearing object of that thought.



Meaning Generality

Definition: A conceptual elaboration that, while not being the apprehended object, appears as the apprehended object.

The meaning generality of the object is the mental image of the object. It is the appearance of the apprehended object to conceptual consciousness.

The appearing object of conceptual thought is synonymous with permanent phenomena.

Held Object

The held object of a consciousness is synonymous with the appearing object of that consciousness. Therefore the held object is not always apprehended, similar to the appearing object.

Determined Object (Object Of One's Clinging)

The determined object refers to the main object, i.e. the apprehended object, of conceptual thought. That the apprehended object of conceptual thought is called the determined object is a reference to the particular way these consciousnesses engage their object.

If it is the apprehended object of the thought perceiving it then it does not necessarily follow that it is the apprehended object of thought - because the horns of a rabbit are not the apprehended object of thought - because they are not the object of thought -

because they are not the object of awareness - because they are not suitable to be the object of awareness.

However, they are the apprehended object of the thought thinking of them - because they are selfless.

Since the definition of an object is that to be known by awareness, one cannot say that the horns of a rabbit are the object of thought because this would imply they are the object of awareness, which would mean that they are known by awareness. Therefore one makes a distinction between being the object of thought and being the object of a thought thinking of it.

The determined object of thought is synonymous with the apprehended object of thought. Therefore it always exists.

Engaged Object

The engaged object of a consciousness is a valid object that is engaged for the purpose of acceptance or rejection.

- Temporary day to day object of engagement, e.g. the car.
- Ultimate object of engagement, e.g. the truth of cessation free from all stains.

The engaged object of prime direct perception is synonymous with the apprehended object of prime direct perception. But the engaged object of a distorted direct perception is not synonymous with its apprehended object.

For example, the white colour of the snow-mountain is the engaged object of the eye-consciousness to which the snow-mountain appears as blue, but it is not the apprehended object. The apprehended object of that consciousness is the blue snow-mountain.

The engaged object of factual conceptual thought is synonymous with the determined object of factual conceptual thought and the apprehended object of factual conceptual thought.

Focal Object

The focal object acts as the basis for the mode of apprehension of the awareness. Sound is the focal object of the grasping at permanent sound, but not the apprehended object.

Apprehended Object

The apprehended object of a consciousness is the main object of that consciousness.

As such one can give the definition of the apprehended object as the object in the aspect of which the consciousness arises primarily in. The main aspect that the consciousness arises in is the aspect of the apprehended object.

There can be the apprehended object of non-conceptual consciousness and of conceptual consciousness as well as the apprehended object of factual consciousnesses and non-factual consciousnesses.

Non-factual consciousnesses are also known as wrong consciousnesses.

- The apprehended object of non-conceptual consciousness is synonymous with the engaged object of non-conceptual consciousness.
- The apprehended object of conceptual consciousness is synonymous with the engaged object and determined object of conceptual consciousness.
- The apprehended object of a factual consciousness always exists and the apprehended object of a non-factual or wrong consciousness is always non-existent.

Debate 9

An opponent that does not understand the difference between the appearing object of conceptual thought and the apprehended object of conceptual thought:

The conceptual consciousness apprehending vase apprehends the meaning generality of vase as vase.

Answer: Take the subject 'conceptual consciousness apprehending vase' - it follows that it is a wrong consciousness - because it is an awareness that apprehends the meaning generality of vase as vase.

You accept the reason. If 'yes' to the thesis, then take that very subject - it follows it is not a wrong consciousness - because it is an awareness concordant with reality - because it is a conceptual consciousness concordant with reality - because it is a correct assumption.

If 'reason is not established', then take the subject 'vase' - it follows that the conceptual consciousness apprehending it is a correct assumption - because it exists.

Debate 10

An opponent argues that if it is the object of a consciousness then it follows that it is an object.

To that we respond: Take the subject 'pink elephant with green spots' - it follows that it is an object - because it is an object of a consciousness.

If 'reason not established', then: Take the subject 'pink elephant with green spots' - it follows that it is an object of a consciousness - because it is the object of the thought thinking 'pink elephant with green spots'.

If again 'reason not established', then: Take the subject 'pink elephant with green spots' - it follows that it is the object of the

thought thinking 'pink elephant with green spots' - because it is the apprehended object of that thought.

If the main thesis is accepted, then: Take the subject 'pink elephant with green spots' - it follows it is known by awareness - because it is an object. This follows because that known by awareness is the definition of object.

Appearing Object But Not Apprehended Object

Non-conceptual

According to Burbu Chok, *Awareness and Knower*,

... If it appears to it, then it follows that it needs to be its appearing object - because it is a non conceptual consciousness.

Also, Burbu Chok, *Middle Collected Topics*, Chapter on Greater Cause and Effect:

In short, if it is of one substantial establishment with blue regarding place, time and nature then there is a pervasion that it is the focal object of the direct perception apprehending blue.

Non conceptual consciousness are affirming engagers, meaning that the object appears clearly to it in its entirety. For that reason everything that is of one indivisible substantial establishment with the focal object regarding place, time and nature, becomes the focal object as well. Given this nature of non conceptual consciousness, and because the focal object also appears, everything that is of indivisible one substance with the focal object regarding place, time and nature, also appears.

In this way the impermanence of blue becomes the appearing object of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue.

Conceptual

The appearing object of conceptual consciousness is always the meaning generality of the apprehended object.

Burbu Chok:

The conceptual elaboration that, while not being vase, appears as vase to the conceptual thought apprehending vase is the definition of the meaning generality of vase.

The meaning generality is however never the apprehended object of the conceptual consciousness it is the appearing object of:

Debate 8

An opponent who does not understand that the meaning generality of vase is not the determined object of the thought thinking of vase: The meaning generality of vase is all four objects of the conceptual consciousness apprehending vase.

Answer: Take the subject 'meaning generality of vase' - it follows it is the determined object of the conceptual consciousness apprehending vase - because it is all four objects of that consciousness.

You accept the reason. If 'yes' to the thesis, then take the same subject - it follows it is the object of comprehension of the conceptual consciousness apprehending vase - because of being the determined object of that consciousness.

If 'yes', then take the subject 'conceptual consciousness apprehending vase' - it follows it is not an awareness that is mistaken with regard to the meaning generality of vase.

If 'yes', then it follows that the meaning generality of vase does not appear to it as vase.

¹ Apprehended object

Object possessors

General

Definition

A functionality that is endowed with any object.

Divisions

- Person
- Awareness
- Expressive sound

Person

Definition

The definition of person is the 'I' that is labeled in dependence on any of its five aggregates. The 'I' is the mere apprehended object of the mere thought thinking 'I'.

Person is synonymous with self, I and being. Out of matter, consciousness and non associated compounded phenomena the self is regarded as a non associated compounded phenomenon, i.e. it is impermanent but is neither matter nor consciousness.

Out of being a substantial existent and being an imputed existent it is an imputed existent because it can only be made an object of mind in dependence on bringing the aggregates to mind.

Debate 11

A Non-buddhist Skeptic asserts:

If the self is synonymous with person then it follows the self exists. This contradicts the fourth seal of Buddhism: All phenomena are empty and selfless.

Answer: We accept that the self exists. There is no contradiction - because the statement that all phenomena are empty and selfless refers to the absence of a permanent, unitary and independent self and a self that is established in the nature of the aggregates.

Awareness

Definition

Awareness is defined as knower. It is synonymous with consciousness but not with mind, which is synonymous with primary mind. Awareness includes both mind and mental factors, while mind does not.

Divisions

Awareness can be divided in different ways such as into prime cognition and non prime cognition, mind and mental factors, conceptual and non conceptual and more.

One major part of the chapter on object possessors is the explanation of prime cognitions and non prime cognitions, which leads to the seven types of awareness and knowers:

- Direct perception
- Inferential cognition
- Subsequent cognition
- Correct assumption
- Awareness to which the object appears but is not ascertained
- Doubt
- Wrong consciousness

The first two are prime cognitions and the remaining five are non prime cognitions. Out of the remaining five, subsequent cognition is a non prime cognition because of being non prime. Correct assumption and so forth are non prime cognitions because of being non cognitions.

The sequence in which they are explained is from the most valid to the most invalid. The most valid mental state one can have is a yogic direct perception and the most invalid state one can have is the ignorance regarding the existence of past and future lives, the law of cause and effect and the ultimate nature of reality.

As it is stated by Vasubandu in the *Abhidharmakosha*, the three biggest obstacles to the attainment of liberation are the view of the transitory collections, which is self-grasping at person, the view holding wrong moralities and disciplines as supreme, and doubt:

Not wishing to go and mistaking the path
And any doubt regarding the path
Obstruct the ascendance to liberation;
Therefore three are shown.

The first two are wrong consciousnesses and the third is doubt, and together they obstruct the attainment of liberation. The direct antidote against them is the prime yogic direct perception realising selflessness and the subsequent yogic direct perception realising selflessness.

Because of the subtlety of the object it is impossible to attain this profound wisdom immediately. It needs to be preceded by the inferential prime cognition of selflessness and the subsequent conceptual cognition of selflessness.

These in turn need to be preceded by a correct assumption understanding selflessness. The investigative meditation into emptiness of a beginner is usually always a correct assumption.

Even though awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained are awarenesses concordant with reality they are ineffectual. If one is doing one's Dharma practices, e.g., listening, contemplating and meditating, with a distracted mind, their power to transform the mind will be at best greatly reduced.

Prime Cognition

Valid Or Prime?

The Situation:

In Sanskrit it is called *pramana*, in Tibetan *tse-ma*, and in English there is some debate whether *pramana* should be translated as prime cognition or valid cognition.

Mana means mind. The *pra* in *pramana* has various meanings such as first, strong, main and so forth. The Prasangika, proponents of entity-lessness, who have taken main as the meaning of *pra*, assert that the meaning of *pramana* is a knower that is incontrovertible with regard to its main object or a knower that is incontrovertible with regard to its apprehended object. All other tenets take first to be the meaning of *pra*. Having translated this into the meaning of first understanding, the meaning of *pramana* for them is newly incontrovertible knower.

It is good to keep in mind that here the term valid has been introduced by western translators, and that is neither explicitly part of the Sanskrit or Tibetan term. If it can be found in the Sanskrit then in the *mana*, which implies cognition, and not in the *pra*. As such, talking of a valid cognition is redundant, as a cognition is inevitably valid, and confusing, because it inevitably opens the door to an invalid cognition.

The only situation where it would make sense to talk of a valid cognition would be in the context of differentiating a real cognition from the cognition by a correct assumption.

The Problem:

Regardless of which lower tenet, if *pramana* is translated as valid cognition, then this opens the door to all kinds of fallacies, e.g.:

Subsequent cognitions would have to be called invalid cognitions, which is a contradiction in terms

The subsequent cognitions would be non valid. This would mean, for example, that out of the sixteen aspects of the path of seeing only the first moment is valid and the remaining fifteen become invalid. That means one would have invalid yogic direct perceptions. Also, as the non-dual transcendental wisdom that makes up the sixteen moments of the path of seeing are the actual truth of the path one gets invalid truths of the path.

Subsequent cognitions are regarded as cognising consciousnesses. If only the first moment is valid then the person could never cognise anything, as the first moment is too short to be recognised by an ordinary individual

Solution:

The *pra* in *pramana* can mean main and also new. The Prasangika take the meaning to be main and all the other tenets take it to be newly. For both cases *prama* fits very well and does not create any confusion with regard to the validity of subsequent cognitions.

The validity of a consciousness is determined by its incontrovertibility, i.e., its non-deceptiveness, and not by whether that understanding is new or not.

Rule: The apprehended object of an incontrovertible consciousness always exists, and the apprehended object of a distorted consciousness never exists.

Definition And Divisions (According To Sautrantika)

The Need For Prime Cognition

The meaning of being an existent object is to be the object of prime cognition. Being the object of prime cognition is the dividing line between reality and the imagined, and it is reality that needs to be understood to free oneself from suffering.

The source of all our suffering is ignorance and to overcome ignorance one needs to generate wisdom. The most effective wisdom is a cognising wisdom and to overcome the root of cyclic existence one needs the wisdom cognising ultimate reality.

Debate 12

An opponent asserts: The definition of prime cognition is an incontrovertible knower.

Answer: Take the subject 'subsequent cognition' - it follows that it is a prime cognition - because it is an incontrovertible knower.

If 'reason not established', then: Take that subject - it follows it is an incontrovertible knower - because it is a knower that gets at the meaning of its analysed object.

If 'no pervasion', then: It follows there is a pervasion - because a knower that gets at the meaning of its analysed object is the definition of an incontrovertible knower.

If the root is accepted, then: Take the subject 'subsequent cognition' - it follows it is a knower that newly realises its object - because it is a prime cognition. You accepted the reason.

If 'accept', then: Take that subject - it follows it is not a knower that newly realises its object - because it is a knower that realises an object that has already been realised - because it is that very subject.

The opponent here may very well be a Prasangika tenet holder, for whom all subsequent cognitions are prime cognitions.

Definition

The definition of a prime cognition is a newly incontrovertible knower

Definition Key

- Newly - not induced through the power of previous realization
- Incontrovertible - has arrived at the meaning that it analysed
- Knower - clear and knowing

The reason to include in the definition:

- Newly excludes subsequent cognitions as prime cognitions.
- Incontrovertible excludes correct assumptions as prime cognitions.
- Knower excludes physical sense powers as prime cognitions.

The Prasangika regard subsequent cognitions as prime cognitions and the Vaibashika assert a common basis between physical sense powers and prime cognitions.

Incontrovertible Or Non-Deceptive?

The Tibetan term *mi-lü-wa* means literally non-deceptive, but is popularly translated as incontrovertible. According to Purbu Chok, a knower that has arrived at the meaning that it analysed is the definition of a non-deceptive consciousness. A knower that has eliminated all superimpositions with regard to its object has arrived at the meaning of its object, and in this way becomes incontrovertible.

One can meditate that for as long as one has no cognition of reality one will be deceived by one's perceptions because one has not yet gotten a hold onto reality and will thus continue to circle in cyclic existence.

Divisions

- Direct prime cognition
- Inferential prime cognition

Direct Prime Cognition

The definition of a direct prime cognition is a newly incontrovertible knower free from conception.

Divisions

- Sense direct prime cognition
- Mental direct prime cognition
- Self-knowing prime cognition
- Yogic direct prime cognition

Purbu Chok: To understand the fourfold division of direct prime cognition it is necessary to understand the fourfold division of direct perception first.

Direct perception

General

Definition

An unmistakable knower free from conceptuality.

Definition Key

- Unmistaken: No discrepancy on the appearance level
- Knower: It is clear and knowing
- Free from conceptuality: No meaning generality

Divisions

- Sense direct perception
- Mental direct perception
- Self-knowing direct perception
- Yogic direct perception

Sequence

The yogic direct perception is listed last because it exists only in the continuum of superior beings. The other three direct perceptions exist both in the continuum of ordinary individuals and superior beings and are therefore listed first.

Out of these three, the sense and mental direct perceptions are that which is experienced by the self-knower. That is why sense and mental direct perceptions are listed first and the self-knower after them. The sense and mental direct perceptions are that which is experienced and the self-knower is that experiencing them.

Sense direct perception is listed first and mental direct perception second, because sense direct perception is the cause and mental direct perception the effect.

Sense Direct Perception

Definition

An unmissaken knower free from conceptuality that is generated in dependence on its exclusive empowering condition of a physical sense power.

Divisions

- Sense direct perceptions that are primary cognitions.
- Subsequent cognitions.
- Awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained.

Examples

- The first moment of a sense perception apprehending form.
- The second moment of a sense perception apprehending form.
- The sense direct perception of a person whose mental attention is diverted by attachment to a pleasant sound.

There is also a fivefold division into:

- Sense direct perception apprehending form.
- Sense direct perception apprehending sound.
- Sense direct perception apprehending smell.
- Sense direct perception apprehending taste.
- Sense direct perception apprehending tactile sensations.

Sense Direct Perception Apprehending Form Etc.

Definition

An unmistakable knower free from conceptuality that is generated in dependence on its exclusive empowering condition of the eye sense power and the focal condition of form source.

The same definition format is applied to the other four sense consciousnesses.

Debate 13

An opponent that does not understand the significance of the word unmistakable in the definition of direct perception, says: The definition of eye sense direct perception is a knower generated in dependence on its exclusive empowering condition of the eye sense power.

Answer: Take the subject 'eye-consciousness apprehending a pink elephant with green spots' - it follows that it is an eye direct perception - because the definition fits.

If 'accept', then: Take that subject - it follows that it is either a prime cognition, subsequent cognition or an awareness to which the object appears but is not ascertained.

Eye-Consciousness

Definition

A consciousness generated in dependence on its exclusive empowering condition of an eye-sense power.

The same definition format is applied to the other consciousnesses, e.g., the definition of the ear consciousness is a consciousness that is generated in dependence on its exclusive empowering condition of an ear sense power, and so forth.

Definition key

- A consciousness - that which is clear and knowing; the 'clear' eliminates form, e.g. the eyeball, chemical reactions in the brain , etc., as eye-consciousness.
- Generated in dependence - shows cause/effect relationship.
- Exclusive - not shared with the other five types of consciousnesses.
- Empowering condition - that primarily generating directly in an empowering manner.
- Eye-sense power - a clear subtle form residing in the container of the eyeball.

Example

The eye-consciousness apprehending blue.

Food for Thought

While the eye sense direct perception has to be always concordant with reality, a mere eye-consciousness can also be mistaken and therefore also wrong. The cause for the distortion can lie in the basis, the place, the object or the immediately preceding condition.



Mental Direct Perception

Definition

A non-mistaken knower free from conceptuality that is generated in dependence on its exclusive empowering condition of a mental sense power.

Divisions

- Mental direct perceptions that are prime cognitions.
- Mental direct perceptions that are subsequent cognitions.
- Mental direct perceptions that are awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained.

Examples

- The first moment of the clairvoyance knowing the mind of others.
- The second moment of the clairvoyance knowing the mind of others.
- The mental direct perception apprehending sound in the continuum of a person whose mind is strongly distracted by attachment to a beautiful form.

Self-knowing Direct Perception

Definition

The definition of being a self-knower is: being the aspect of the apprehender; the definition of being a self-knowing direct perception is: being the aspect of the apprehender that is non-mistaken and free from conceptuality.

Divisions

- Self-knowing direct perceptions that are prime cognitions.
- Self-knowing direct perceptions that are subsequent cognitions.
- Self-knowing direct perceptions that are awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained.

Examples

- The first moment of the self-knowing direct perception that is experiencing an eye-consciousness.
- The second moment of the self-knowing direct perception that is experiencing an eye-consciousness.
- The self-knower in the continuum of a Samkya experiencing that happiness is consciousness.
- The self-knower in the continuum of a Vaisheshika experiencing that happiness is consciousness and the self-knower in the continuum of a Materialist experiencing an inferential valid cognition.

The first and the second are clear. Regarding the third, both the Samkya as well as the Vaisheshikas assert that happiness is not consciousness, and the materialist school does not accept the existence of inferential cognition.

Therefore the self knower experiencing the inferential prime cognition in the continuum of a materialist is an awareness to

which the object appears but is not ascertained. They do not accept prime inference even though they generate prime inference in their continuum.

Yogic Direct Perception

From the *Sutra on Prime Cognition*,

Shown by the supreme of yogis,
One sees the mere unmixed meaning.

Having realised the natures of the four noble truths as shown by the supreme of all yogis, the Buddha, one meditates on them and thus attains through continual familiarity the consciousness that clearly sees their mere meaning, unmixed with a meaning or sound generality.

Definition

A non-mistaken transcendental other-knower free from conceptuality in the continuum of a superior that is generated in dependence on its exclusive empowering condition of a union of calm abiding and special insight.

Divisions

- Yogic direct perceptions that are prime cognitions.
- Yogic direct perceptions that are subsequent cognitions

There are no yogic direct perceptions that are awarenesses to which the object appears without being ascertained, because if it is a yogic direct perception then it necessarily ascertains its object of comprehension.

From the *Commentary on Prime Cognition*,

Those of great wisdom ascertain
All aspects merely by seeing.

From the point of view of basis there are the yogic direct perceptions of the hearer, the self liberator and the Mahayana superior. For each of these there are again the yogic direct perceptions on the path of seeing, on the path of meditation and on the path of no more learning.

From the point of view of object one can say there is the yogic direct perception realising suchness, and the yogic direct perception realising the world of multiplicity.

The Four Noble Truths

From the *Uttaratantra*,

Sickness is to be known,
The cause of sickness to be abandoned,
Abiding in happiness is the aim
And the medicine is to be relied upon.

Likewise, suffering is to be known, the cause of suffering is to be abandoned, the cessation of suffering is to be experienced and the path is to be relied upon.

For those aspiring towards liberation the four noble truths are the most important subject to understand. The resultant truth of suffering and the causal truth of origin contain everything that has to be abandoned to attain liberation.

The truth of the path, the method to become free from cyclic existence, and the truth of cessation, which is in the nature of that liberation, make up the purified side gone beyond, i.e., that to be attained.

Truth Of Suffering

One is mistaken with regards to the truth of suffering by grasping at purity, happiness, permanence and self.

Understanding the four aspects of the truth of suffering, which are impermanence, misery, empty and selfless, counteracts this.

Take the subject *the contaminated aggregates*

- They are impermanent - because are generated adventitiously.
- They are misery - because they are controlled by karma and afflictions.
- They are empty - because there is no separate controlling self.
- They are selfless - because there is no self that is established in their nature.

Truth Of Origin

One is mistaken with regards to the truth of origin by grasping at sufferings to be without cause or to have a discordant cause. Regarding the latter there is the grasping at suffering being produced by only one cause, being produced by a creator the intention of whom preceded the result and grasping at suffering to be changeable adventitiously but being essentially permanent.

Understanding the four aspects of the truth of origin, which are cause, origin, intense generation and condition, counteracts this.

Take the subject *craving*

- It is the aspect of cause - because it is the root of its resultant suffering.
- It is the aspect of origin - because it generates its resultant suffering again and again.
- It is intense generation - because generates its resultant suffering strongly.
- It is the aspect of condition - because it is the concurrently acting condition of its resultant suffering.

Truth Of Cessation

One is mistaken with regards to the truth of cessation by grasping at liberation to be non-existent, by grasping at certain contaminated dharmas to be liberation, by grasping at certain sufferings to be supreme liberation and by thinking that even though one can exhaust the sufferings one could reverse from that state.

Understanding the four aspects of the truth of cessation, which are cessation, peace, supremacy and definite emergence, counteracts those misconceptions.

Take the subject *complete freedom from suffering achieved through the power of the antidote*

- It is the aspect of cessation - because it is the freedom having abandoned suffering.
- It is peace - because it is the freedom having abandoned the afflictions.
- It is supreme - because it is liberation with benefit and bliss.
- It is the aspect of having definitely emerged - because it is irreversible liberation.

Truth Of The Path

One is mistaken with regards to the truth of the path by thinking that a path to liberation is non-existent, thinking that meditation on selflessness is not suitable to be the path, holding certain meditative absorptions alone to be the path to liberation and holding a path reversing suffering to be non-existent.

Understanding the four aspects of the noble truth of the path, which are path, suitable, accomplishment and definitely liberating, counteracts those misconceptions.

Take the subject *wisdom directly realising selflessness*

- It is the aspect of path - because it is a path progressing towards liberation
- It is the aspect of suitable - because it is the direct antidote against the afflictions, which are unsuitable
- It is the aspect of accomplishment - because it establishes without mistake the nature of the mind
- It is the aspect of definitely liberating - because it is the antidote irreversibly eliminating the afflictions.

The yogic direct perception realising selflessness is synonymous with the truth of the path. It is the only antidote that possesses the four aspects of path, suitable, accomplishment and definitely liberating.

From the *King of Concentration Sutra*,

If one investigates the dharma of selflessness
If one analyses and meditates on it,
This is the cause for the result of attaining liberation
Through no other cause will one be pacified.

Boundary

Yogic direct perceptions are first realised on the path of seeing and exist up to the state of complete enlightenment. The first instance of the path of seeing is the first instance of a yogic direct perception, a yogic direct prime cognition. The subsequent moments of the path of seeing realising directly selflessness in meditative equipoise are yogic subsequent cognitions.

The yogic direct perception realising subtle selflessness is the truth of the path and the instances of cessation that are attained through it are the truth of cessation.

Even though there are yogic direct perceptions that are subsequent cognitions in the continuum of sentient beings, if it is omniscient consciousness then it is always a prime cognition.

From the *Illumination of the Path to Liberation*,

No matter how much I contemplate upon having turned inward, I do not feel that there is no pervasion that omniscient transcendental wisdom is not a new realiser.

Also from *Dispelling Mental Darkness*,

If merely having been held by a preceding prime cognition makes for a subsequent cognition, then there are limitless contradicting arguments such as the second moment of omniscient transcendental consciousness upwards becoming subsequent cognitions and so forth.

Direct prime cognition

Definition

A newly incontrovertible knower free from conceptuality.

Divisions

- Self-knowing direct prime cognition
- Sense direct prime cognition
- Mental direct prime cognition
- Yogic direct prime cognition

Self-knowing Direct Prime Cognition

A newly incontrovertible knower free from conceptuality that is solely focussed inward and is a separate apprehender.

Sense Direct Prime Cognition

A newly incontrovertible knower free from conception that is generated in dependence on its exclusive empowering condition of a physical sense power.

There is the fivefold division of sense direct prime cognition into sense direct prime cognition realising form, sound, smell, taste and tactile sensations.

Mental Direct Prime Cognition

A newly incontrovertible knower free from conception that is generated in dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of a mental sense power.

There is the sixfold division of mental direct prime cognition into mental direct prime cognition realising forms, sounds, smell, taste, tactile sensations and phenomena source.

Yogic Direct Prime Cognition

A newly incontrovertible other-knower in the continuum of a superior that directly realises subtle impermanence, coarse selflessness of person or subtle selflessness of person in dependence on its empowering condition of a concentration that is a union of calm abiding and special insight.

There is a threefold division into yogic direct prime cognitions realising subtle impermanence, coarse selflessness of person and subtle selflessness of person.

Subtle impermanence is synonymous with impermanence and refers to the momentary changing of the object, the coarse selflessness of person is the absence of a permanent, unitary, independent self and the subtle selflessness of person refers to the absence of a person that is a self-sufficient substantial existent.

Substantial Or What?

It is not quite correct to classify the subtle selflessness of person as the absence of a self-sufficient substantially existent self, as many translators have done, because all lower tenets accept a substantially existent self. They assert that all impermanent phenomena exist substantially. For them there is a difference between existing substantially and being a substantial existent.



Substantial existent here means that the phenomenon can be made an object of awareness without depending on making another phenomenon an object of awareness; e.g. the table.

The self does not exist in such a way. To make the self an object of awareness one always needs to make another phenomenon, the

aggregates, an object of awareness. It is impossible to think of a person without thinking of the aggregates of that person. Hence the self is not a substantial existent.

Rather it is an imputed existent: A phenomenon that, to be apprehended by awareness, depends on another phenomenon being apprehended by awareness as well.

Explicit And Implicit Realization

Here we have what might seem to be two instances of an oxymoron:

- An implicit realization by a direct cognition
- An explicit realization by an inferential cognition

The division of prime cognition into direct and inferential is made from the point of view of being non-conceptual or not; i.e. the 'direct' in direct cognition means cognition without the medium of a mental image. The 'explicit' in explicit realization means that the object appears to the realiser; i.e. the realising awareness arises in the aspect of the realised object.

The *implicit* in implicit realization means that the object is realised without the realising awareness arising in the aspect of the object; i.e. an embedded subliminal understanding that is arrived at without any additional effort, simultaneously with the realization of the explicit object.

An implicit realization can only happen as part of an explicit realization.

That is why an inferential cognition, which is not a direct cognition, can still explicitly cognise impermanent sound; i.e. it eliminates superimpositions regarding sound through arising in the aspect of impermanent sound.

Debate 14

An opponent asserts: Take the subject 'selflessness of person' - it follows it is a functionality - because it is the appearing object of direct perception - because it is the appearing object of the yogic direct perception that realises selflessness of person - because it appears clearly to that consciousness.

It follows it is like that - because it is possible to attain the clear appearance of the object of meditation by meditating on the continuity of the inferential cognition that realises the selflessness of person.

There is no pervasion - because through meditating on the continuity of the inferential cognition realising selflessness of person, the yogic direct perceptions attains a clear appearance of the compounded phenomena that are devoid of a self of person - because by realising explicitly the compounded phenomena that are devoid of a self of person it realises implicitly the selflessness of person.

In the Sautrantika school of thought the appearing object of direct perception is synonymous with impermanent phenomena, because the appearing object is also the focal condition of direct perception.

The selflessness of person is permanent and therefore cannot be the focal condition for the yogic direct perception, and therefore also not the appearing object. The yogic direct perception realising selflessness realises the aggregates that are devoid of a self of person explicitly, and implicitly it realises the selflessness of person.

Realising the object explicitly: The prime cognition is directed at the object and eliminates superimpositions regarding the object through the power of arising in its aspect.

Explicit And Implicit Realization In General

Realising the object explicitly: The prime cognition is directed at the object and eliminates superimpositions with regard to the object through the power of its aspect.

Realising the object implicitly: The prime cognition is directed at the implicit object by being directed at the explicit object, and through explicitly realising its explicit object of comprehension has eliminated superimpositions to the implicit object at the same time, but without arising in the aspect of the implicit object.

Explicit And Implicit Realization By Prime Direct Perception

Explicit Realization By A Prime Direct Perception:

The non-conceptual elimination of superimpositions on the object of comprehension by arising in its aspect.

For example: The elimination of superimpositions on blue by the direct prime cognition apprehending blue through arising in the aspect of blue.

Implicit Realization By A Prime Direct Perception:

Non-conceptual subliminal elimination of superimpositions on an object, but without arising in the aspect of that object, through the force of the explicit realization of the object of comprehension. The implicit realization is embedded in the explicit realization.

For example: Eliminating the fiction of vase existing on a place devoid of vase through the force of explicitly realising place devoid of vase, without arising in the actual aspect of no-vase. No-vase is ascertained implicitly subconsciously, merely by directing the awareness to the place devoid of vase.

The prime direct perception of a place without vase has the ability to induce through its own force the ascertainment of no-vase on that place. However, the prime direct perception apprehending

place without vase is not an explicit perception with regard to no-vase, because the place without vase and no-vase are of different character and it does not arise in the aspect of no-vase. It also is not an inferential cognition because the mental image of no-vase does not appear to it. But it is still a prime cognition of no-vase.

Explicit And Implicit Realization By An Inferential Cognition

Explicit Realization By An Inferential Cognition

An inferential cognition's explicit realization: The elimination of superimpositions through the appearance of the mental image of the object of comprehension.

For example: The elimination of the superimposition grasping sound to be permanent by the inferential cognition Realising impermanent sound through the mental image of impermanent sound appearing to it

Implicit Realization By An Inferential Cognition

An inferential cognition's implicit realization: The elimination of superimpositions with regard to objects the mental image of which does not appear to the inferential cognition, through the force of explicitly realising the object of comprehension.

For example: To the inferential cognition realising impermanent sound, the mental image of 'lack of permanence on sound' does not appear, but it still eliminates the superimposition of permanence on sound.

The realization of the lack of permanence on sound is embedded in the realization of impermanent sound. The lack of permanence on sound is ascertained implicitly, merely by directing the mind to the object, without depending on another prime cognition.

Fake Direct Perception

Introduction Based on Ornament of Reasoning by the first Dalai Lama Gyalwa Gedun Drub:

Seven Fake Direct Perceptions

Dignaga lists six conceptual fake direct perceptions and one non-conceptual fake direct perception in his *Sutra on Prime Cognition*,

Mistaken and consciousness of the illusory
Inference and arising from inference
Memory and aspiring, thus are they called.
Fake direct perception having vitreous humour.

- The thought apprehending a mirage as water is a mistaken conceptual consciousness.
- The thought thinking 'this is a vase' is a conceptual consciousness of illusory reality.
- The mind apprehending the reason is an inferential thought.
- The inferential cognition is a conceptual consciousness arising from inference.
- The conceptual consciousness remembering yesterday is a memory.
- The thought wishing for tomorrow is a conceptual consciousness aspiring to the future.

These six plus the non-conceptual fake direct perception make seven fake direct perceptions.

The Purpose Of Showing Seven Fake Direct Perceptions

The purpose of showing seven direct perceptions is twofold: The six conceptual fake direct perceptions are to show that a direct

perception needs to be free from conceptuality. The one non-conceptual fake direct perception is to show that direct perceptions need to be non-mistaken.

From Dignaga's *Sutra on Prime Cognition*,

The purpose of showing seven fake direct perceptions:
I showed six conceptual fake direct perceptions to realise what is negated by 'free from conceptuality' and one non-conceptual fake direct perception to realise what is negated by 'non-mistaken.'

The Purpose Of Six Conceptual Fake Direct Perceptions

The Rigpa-chen assert that some conceptual consciousnesses are direct perceptions. They assert that the conceptual consciousness grasping at the mirage as water is a sense consciousness and they assert that conceptual consciousnesses of illusory reality are sense direct perceptions.

The first two, mistaken conceptual consciousness and conceptual consciousness of illusory reality, are therefore listed as the subjects for debate. To establish these as conceptual fake direct perceptions the last four conceptual fake direct perceptions are listed as corroborating examples.

The Purpose Of One Non-conceptual Fake Direct Perception

The non-conceptual fake direct perception is to show that non-mistaken is part of the definition of direct perception. Dignaga did not explicitly include non-mistaken in his definition of direct perception when he wrote:

Direct perception - that free from conceptuality
Which combines name with type and so forth.

By referring to the mistaken eye-consciousness that arises due to vitreous humour as fake direct perception in the line 'fake direct

perception having vitreous humour' he refutes mistaken non-conceptual consciousnesses as direct perceptions.

Thus he first establishes that a direct perception has to be non-conceptual with the first six fake direct perceptions and the counteracts the notion that all non-conceptual consciousnesses are direct perceptions by excluding mistaken non-conceptual consciousnesses. In this way he establishes the definition of direct perception as a non-mistaken knower free from conceptuality.

Definition And Divisions Of Fake Direct Perception From Purbu Chok's *Awareness And Knowers*

Definition

A knower that is mistaken with regard to its appearing object; fake direct perception is synonymous with mistaken consciousness.

Non-conceptual wrong consciousness, non-conceptual fake direct perception and consciousness to which a non-existent appears clearly are synonymous.

Divisions

There is a sevenfold division because there are six conceptual fake direct perceptions and one non-conceptual fake direct perception.

Six Conceptual Fake Direct Perceptions

- Mistaken conceptual consciousness: Like the conceptual consciousness grasping at permanent sound.
- Conceptual consciousness of illusory reality: Like the inferential cognition realising impermanent sound.
- Conceptual consciousness of inferential cognition: Like the conceptual consciousness that becomes the mind apprehending the reason.

- Conceptual consciousness arising from inferential cognition: Like the conceptual consciousness arising subsequent to an inferential cognition.
- Conceptual consciousness that is memory: Like the conceptual consciousness recalling today what happened yesterday.
- Wishing conceptual consciousness: Like the conceptual consciousness that wishes today for tomorrow to come.

Non-conceptual Fake Direct Perceptions

There are various non-conceptual fake mental direct perceptions and non-conceptual fake sense direct perceptions.

Example were explained above.

The cause for the distortion lies in the base, place, object or immediately preceding condition.

- In the base: Like an eye tainted by vitreous humour, which causes the eye-consciousness to which falling hairs appear.
- In the place: Like being in a boat, which causes the eye-consciousness to which moving trees are appearing.
- In the object: Like a whirling firebrand, which causes the eye-consciousness to which a wheel of fire appears.
- In the immediately preceding condition: Like a mind disturbed by anger, which causes the eye-consciousness seeing the place as red.

Inferential Prime Cognition

Definition

A newly incontrovertible knower that is generated directly in dependence on a valid reason that forms its basis.

Definition Key

- *Newly incontrovertible knower* indicates that it is a prime cognition.
- *Generated directly in dependence on a valid reason* indicates that it is an inferential, i.e. conceptual, knower.
- *Valid reason* is a reason that possesses the three modes.

Divisions

- Inferential cognition through the power of fact.
- Inferential cognition through renown.
- Inferential cognition on the basis of belief.

Examples

- The inferential cognition realising impermanent sound from the reason of it being produced.
- The inferential cognition realising that the moon can be called 'marked by a rabbit' because of being an object of thought.
- The inferential cognition realising that the statement 'wealth from generosity, happiness from virtue' is infallible with regard to its meaning because of being a quote purified by the three types of analysis.

The Need For Inferential Cognition

The yogic direct perception realising selflessness depends on the inferential prime cognition realising selflessness. Initially the practitioner realises suchness with an inferential prime cognition in direct dependence on a valid reason. This happens before or on the path of accumulation.

Then the practitioner familiarizes themselves with the object by meditating with calm abiding on that emptiness. They also train themselves to be able analyze emptiness while in calm abiding. This is to be able to induce the bliss of pliancy derived from analyzing emptiness while in calm abiding, to then combine this bliss with the analyzing wisdom, and to thus attain the union of calm abiding and special insight. This would mark the attainment of the path of preparation.

This special insight is still conceptual, but has already great power to reduce manifest ignorance. Then, through continued meditation the realization deepens and the practitioner progresses along the heat, peak, forbearance and supreme dharma levels of the path of preparation. When they then first generate a direct realization of selflessness the yogic direct prime cognition realising suchness has been generated.

Manifest Phenomena

It is a manifest phenomenon if it can be realised initially non-conceptually by an ordinary being, someone who has not realised emptiness directly. For example, one can cognise blue just by blue appearing to the eye-consciousness, without depending on a valid reason.

Hidden Phenomena

A hidden phenomenon is a phenomenon that an ordinary person has to realise initially with an inferential cognition, i.e. in direct dependence on a valid reason.

Impermanence, for example, cannot be initially realised directly by an ordinary person. One has to rely on valid reason and inference, and only through familiarization with the continuum of the thus attained inferential cognition is one able to attain a clear appearance of the object later.

There are three parts to the definition of a hidden phenomenon: the realising person being an ordinary being, realising it initially, and having to do that with inference.

Examples of hidden phenomena are impermanence, emptiness, liberation, the existence of past and future lives and so forth.

The valid reason needed to generate an inferential cognition realising a hidden phenomenon belongs to the category of factual proof, and the inferential cognition generated is an inferential cognition through the power of fact.

Factual proof can be either a manifest phenomenon or itself also a hidden phenomenon.

Very Hidden Phenomena

A very hidden phenomenon is a phenomenon that one has to realise with an inferential cognition generated through belief.

It is a phenomenon that is stated in the scriptures and that is initially beyond direct perception or inferential cognition generated through the power of fact.

Examples: Karmic relationships such as wealth coming from generosity and a higher rebirth from morality; the physical sense powers.

These can be initially only realised by relying on scripture with an inferential cognition through belief; e.g. the inferential cognition realising that the quote 'Wealth through generosity and happiness from morality' is infallible with regard to its expressed meaning in dependence on the reason that it is a quote purified by the three types of analysis.

Three types of analysis:

- Direct perception
- Inferential cognition through the power of fact
- Inferential cognition through the power of belief

If the quote is not contradicted by direct perception, inferential cognition through the power of fact and through other scriptural statements then it is incontrovertible.

Nonprime Cognitions

General

Definition

A knower that is not newly incontrovertible.

Debate 15

An opponent asserts that the definition of a nonprime cognition is a knower that is mistaken with regard to its apprehended object.

Answer: Take the subject 'second moment of direct perception' - it follows it is a knower that is mistaken with regard to its apprehended object - because it is a nonprime cognition - because it is a subsequent cognition.

If 'reason not established', take that subject - it follows it is a subsequent cognition - because the distinction that the first moment of direct perception is a prime cognition and the second moment a subsequent cognition is a valid distinction.

If the root is accepted: take the subject 'second moment of direct perception' - it follows it is a wrong consciousness - because you accepted it. But this is unsuitable to accept - because if it is an established base then it is realised by the second moment of direct perception - because if it is an established base there is a pervasion that it is realised by omniscient consciousness.

Divisions

- Subsequent cognition
- Correct assumption
- Awareness to which the object appears but is not ascertained
- Doubt
- Wrong consciousness

Subsequent cognition is a non prime cognition because of being nonprime and the remaining four are non prime cognitions because of being non-cognitions.

Debate 16

Opponent confusing prime and valid: If it is subsequent cognition then it is non valid because of being a nonprime cognition.

Answer: Take the subject 'second moment of the uninterrupted path of seeing' - it follows it does not have the power to counteract its measure of self-grasping - because of not eliminating superimpositions with regard to its object - because it is not incontrovertible with regard to its object - because of being invalid - because of being a subsequent cognition.

The root is unsuitable to be accepted - because an uninterrupted path is the direct antidote against its measure of self-grasping. Take the subject 'second moment of the uninterrupted path of seeing' - it follows it is valid - because it is incontrovertible - because it eliminates the superimpositions with regard to its object - because it has the power to cut off its measure of self-grasping.

Subsequent Cognition

Definition

A knower that realises the already realised.

As already mentioned in earlier in the quotes by Gyaltsab Je and Kedrub Je, a knower does not become a knower the realises the already realised, just by realising the same object. It means that it realises the object through the force of the preceding realization. Therefore there are no subsequent cognitions in the continuum of enlightened consciousness.

Using an analogy, inventors realise something new through their own power and their disciples realise the same facts, but not through their own power but through taking on the idea of the inventor.

Similarly, a prime cognition realises its object through its own power and the subsequent cognitions realise the same object as a continuation of the initial realization.

Divisions

There is the subsequent cognition of a direct perception, conceptual subsequent cognition and subsequent cognition that is neither of the two.

Subsequent Cognition Of A Direct Perception Has Five Subdivisions:

- Subsequent sense direct perception.
- Subsequent mental direct perception.
- Subsequent self knowing direct perception.
- Subsequent yogic direct perception.
- Subsequent cognition that is neither of these four.

Examples

- Second moment of the sense direct perception apprehending blue.
- Second moment of the clairvoyance knowing the minds of others.
- Second moment of the self knower that accompanies the eye-consciousness.
- Second moment of the uninterrupted path of seeing.
- Second moment of direct perception.

Conceptual Subsequent Cognition

Conceptual subsequent cognition induced by a direct perception, e.g., the ascertaining consciousness ascertaining blue that is induced by the direct perception realising blue.

The conceptual subsequent cognition induced by an inferential cognition, e.g., the subsequent conceptual cognition realising impermanent sound.

Correct Assumption

Definition

A factual determinative knower that is controvertible in determining its object.

Divisions

- Correct assumption without reason.
- Correct assumption due to a contrary reason.
- Correct assumption due to an indefinite reason.
- Correct assumption due to a non-established reason.
- Correct assumption that did not understand the valid reason.

Examples

The awareness that grasps at sound as impermanent merely in dependence on having heard that sound is impermanent. There mere statement 'sound is impermanent' does not convey any reason for it being so.

The awareness that apprehends sound as impermanent by reason of it being empty of being a functionality. Empty of being a functionality is mutually exclusive with impermanence.

The awareness that apprehends sound as impermanent by reason of it being an object of comprehension. Object of comprehension is an indefinite reason for establishing impermanence.

The awareness that apprehends sound as impermanent by reason of it being held by eye-consciousness. Being held by eye-consciousness is a non-established reason for establishing impermanence.

The awareness that apprehends sound as impermanent by reason of it being a product, but without having ascertained the pervasion or the directional property. Product is a valid reason to establish that sound is impermanent but is not recognised as such here.

From Understanding To Cognition

Correct assumptions, while not being cognitive, are still very important. For beginners most meditations constitute correct assumptions and to highlight the importance of correct assumptions the texts refer to 'being cognised by correct assumption, but not being cognised.' In other words, the meditator has an understanding of the topic or object, but has not cognised it yet.

Correct assumption is also the direct cause for inferential cognition. So the natural progression for a yogi would be from a correct assumption to an inferential cognition, then the conceptual subsequent cognition and from there to the yogic prime and subsequent cognitions.

Awareness To Which An Object Appears Without Being Ascertained

Definition

An awareness that is a common basis between having a clear appearance of the self-characterized phenomenon that is its object of engagement and not being able to induce ascertainment with regard to the self-characterized phenomenon that is its object of comprehension.

As such: An awareness to which its object of engagement, that is a self-characterized phenomenon, appears clearly, but which cannot induce ascertainment with regard to that object.

Definition Key

- A self-characterised phenomenon is an impermanent phenomenon.
- To appear clearly means to appear without the aid of the mental image.
- Ascertainment is a cognition.

Examples

An ear consciousness apprehending sound at a time when the mental consciousness is distracted by strong attachment to a pleasant sight.

Mental direct perceptions in the continuum of ordinary beings apprehending any of the five sense objects, and the self-knowers that accompany them. Sense direct perceptions are always followed by one moment of mental direct perception of the same object. One moment is however too short for an ordinary individual to cognise an object they and the self-knowers that accompany them are awarenesses to which an object appears without being ascertained.

Venerable Shantideva,

All recitations and austerities,
Even practiced for a long time,
Done with a wandering mind
They are meaningless, the Knowledge teaches.

From the Buddha's sutras,

Bikkhus, austerities, prayers and so forth that distract the mind to the desire realm, do not have a result.

Doubt

Definition

A knower having qualms into two directions out of its own power

Divisions

- Doubt tending toward the truth, e.g., doubt that thinks that sound is probably impermanent.
- Doubt tending away from the truth, e.g., doubt that thinks that sound is probably permanent.
- Equal doubt, e.g., doubt that wonders whether sound is permanent or impermanent.

Debate 17

Opponent: A knower having qualms with regards to its object is the definition of doubt.

Answer: Take the subject 'main mind accompanying doubt' - it follows it is the definiendum - because it is the definition. The reason is easy. One cannot accept because - it is not a mental factor.

Further: Take the subject 'the feeling that belongs to the entourage of the main mind that accompanies doubt' - it follows it is doubt - because of being that definition. If 'accept': it follows that all mental factors in that entourage are doubt.

One cannot accept because - if it is doubt - then it is necessarily a mental factor having qualms in two directions out of its own power.

The main mind accompanying doubt, the mental factors of feeling and so forth have qualms through the power of the doubt, but do not have qualms into two directions under their own power.

Debate 18

Opponent: Wrong consciousness and doubt are mutually exclusive.

Answer: If it is doubt it follows that it cannot be a wrong consciousness - because these two are mutually exclusive. The reason you accept. If the thesis is accepted: Take the subject 'the doubt thinking that sound is most likely permanent' - it follows that it is not a wrong consciousness - because it is doubt - because it is doubt that tends away from the truth.

If 'accept': Take that subject - it follows that it is a wrong consciousness - because it is a conceptual wrong consciousness - because it is a wrong thought. There is a pervasion because - wrong thought and conceptual wrong consciousness are synonymous - because it says so in the *Dispelling Mental Darkness*.

Further: It follows that wrong consciousness and doubt are not mutually exclusive - because wrong thought and doubt are not mutually exclusive.

From *Dispelling Mental Darkness*:

Concerning the assertion that all wrong thoughts are necessarily of a one-pronged mode of apprehension: that is not valid because it would follow that the wrong thought 'Sound is most likely permanent' is not a wrong thought. ... Hence, wrong thought and doubt are not mutually exclusive.

Wrong Consciousness

Definition

A knower that engages its object incorrectly.

Divisions

Conceptual Wrong Consciousnesses

Like a thought apprehending sound as permanent and a thought apprehending the horns of a rabbit.

Non-conceptual Wrong Consciousnesses

1. Wrong Mental Consciousness

Like a dream consciousness to which the blue of a dream clearly appears as blue.

- This dream consciousness is at the same time a mental consciousness, a non-conceptual consciousness, and a wrong consciousness.
- It is a mental consciousness because of being a dream consciousness.
- It is a non-conceptual consciousness because of not being a determinative knower which apprehends a sound generality and a meaning generality as suitable to be mixed.
- It is a wrong consciousness because of being a consciousness that apprehends its object, a form phenomenon-source that is not blue, as blue.

However, to the mind of the dreamer it is a factually concordant sense consciousness.

Wrong Sense Consciousnesses

Like a distorted eye-consciousness, which is synonymous with mistaken eye-consciousness and with eye-consciousness to which a non-existent appears clearly.

Some divisions:

1. The cause for the distortion can lie with the physical sense power when it is harmed by internal or external adventitious conditions.

Examples of internal adventitious conditions harming the physical sense power:

- Eye disease, which can cause the appearance of falling hairs to the eye-consciousness or the eye-consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons.
- Yellow eyes, which can cause the eye-consciousness to which the white conch shell appears as yellow.
- Ingested datura, which can cause all kinds of distorted eye-consciousnesses.

Examples of external adventitious conditions harming the physical sense power:

- A mirror, which causes the eye-consciousness that mistakes the reflection of form for the actual form;
- White sand and sunlight, which can cause the eye-consciousness that mistakes the mirage for water;
- The herbs or the mantra applied by the magician, which causes the eye-consciousness that mistakes the piece of wood for a horse or elephant.

2. Cause for distortion lies in the place; e.g. like being in a boat, which causes the generation of an eye-consciousness to which trees appear to be moving.

3. Cause for distortion lies in the object; e.g. a whirling firebrand, which causes the generation of an eye-consciousness to which a fire wheel appears.

4. Cause for distortion is on the immediately preceding condition; e.g. being mentally angry, which generates an eye-consciousness that sees the place as red.

Food for Thought

Difference Between Mistaken Consciousness And Wrong Consciousness



1. Mistaken consciousness - synonymous with a knower mistaken with regard to the appearing object.

2. Wrong consciousness - synonymous with a knower that is mistaken with regard to the apprehended object.

There are three possibilities between (a) mistaken consciousness and (b) wrong consciousness:

Both: the eye-consciousness to which one moon appears as two (non-conceptual), or the conceptual grasping at the self of person.

a but not b: the inferential prime cognition of impermanent sound. All inferential cognitions are mistaken because they are mistaken

with regard to the appearing object, which is the mental image that appears to them as the apprehended object, even though it is not the apprehended object. They are however not wrong concerning the apprehended object because they have grasped their investigated meaning.

Neither: the visual direct perception apprehending blue.

There is nothing that could be b but not a, since every wrong consciousness is necessarily also mistaken. All conceptual consciousnesses are mistaken anyway, and all non-conceptual consciousnesses that are mistaken with regard to the apprehended object are also mistaken with regard to the appearing object.

Conceptual Consciousness

Definition

A determinative consciousness that grasps at sound and meaning as suitable to be mixed.

All awarenesses that grasp at sound and meaning as suitable to be mixed are the conceptuality that direct perceptions are free from.

What then is the meaning of grasping at sound and meaning as mixed, and what is the purpose of including suitable in the definition?

Grasping at sound and meaning as mixed: At a time when the conceptual thought is able to make both the sound generality and meaning generality of a phenomenon its object one says the conceptual thought grasps at sound and meaning as mixed.

Suitable is part of the definition to include conceptual thoughts such as the ones of a child that is not able to combine the sound and meaning generality of a phenomenon, and which makes only either the sound generality or the meaning generality its object. These conceptual thoughts do not grasp at the sound and meaning as mixed, but as suitable to be mixed.

Divisions

There are different divisions:

1. Conceptual consciousness that apprehends only the sound generality, only the meaning generality, and both.
2. Conceptual thought that affixes names or meanings.
3. Conceptual consciousness that is factually concordant or factually discordant.

Conceptual Consciousness That Apprehends Only The Sound Generality, Only The Meaning Generality, And Both

Examples

- A conceptual thought apprehending vase merely in dependence on the name *vase*, in the continuum of a person who does not know that a vase is a bulbous flat-based functionality that is able to perform the function of holding water.
- A conceptual thought in the continuum of such a person, apprehending vase in dependence on merely seeing a bulbous functionality.
- A conceptual thought apprehending a vase in the continuum of a person who knows vase.

If it is asked “What are the sound and meaning generalities of vase?”

The mental image appearing as vase to the first conceptual thought is a mere sound generality. The mental image appearing as vase to the second conceptual thought is a mere meaning generality. The mental image appearing as vase or as a bulbous flat based object to the third conceptual thought is both sound and meaning generality.

Debate 19

Query: Is the mental image that appears to a conceptual thought that depends just on sound necessarily a mere sound generality?

Answer: There is no pervasion. This is because the appearance of a prominent rabbit horn to a conceptual thought apprehending the horns of a rabbit is an appearance to a conceptual thought which is generated in dependence on just sound but is not a pure sound generality. That follows because it is both the sound and the meaning generality of the horns of a rabbit.

Conceptual Thought That Affixes Names Or Meanings

Examples

- The conceptual thought that thinks, 'This bulbous functionality is a vase,' is both. It is a determinative knower that apprehends by combining the name and meaning of vase. It is also a determinative knower that apprehends by combining the characteristics with its basis.
- A conceptual consciousness that affixes a meaning is not necessarily one that affixes a name, because a conceptual consciousness that apprehends by thinking, 'This person has a stick,' is a conceptual consciousness that affixes a meaning. It is a conceptual consciousness that apprehends by affixing an attribute - stick - to a basis - person.

Also, a conceptual consciousness is not necessarily either of these two, because a conceptual consciousness that apprehends merely the basis of characteristic "vase" is neither.

Conceptual Consciousness That Is Factually Concordant Or Discordant.

- The definition of a factually concordant conceptual consciousness is a factually concordant determinative knower that apprehends a sound generality and a meaning generality as suitable to be mixed. If something is an established base, the conceptual consciousness apprehending it is necessarily a factually concordant conceptual consciousness.
- The definition of a factually discordant conceptual consciousness is a factually discordant determinative knower that apprehends a sound generality and a meaning generality as suitable to be mixed. If something is not an established base, the conceptual consciousness apprehending it is necessarily a factually discordant conceptual consciousness.



Does Conceptual Mean Intellectual?

There is a tendency among western students to equate conceptual with intellectual. In Buddhist terminology there is however no term for intellectual. There is only conceptual and non-conceptual, and cognition and non-cognition. There is no such thing as an intellectual realization.

It would be impossible to have a conceptual cognition of impermanence, suffering or emptiness and not be deeply affected by it. These would be regarded as high realizations, and are in no way reflected by the slight correct assumptions that may enable one to give a run down of the definitions and divisions of the four noble truths, but where one's heart and mind is not touched by what one teaches.

Conceptual in Buddhism does not have the stain of being necessarily superficial. It simply means the consciousness apprehends the object via a mental image. This could be a superficial understanding of merely of the word emptiness or the extremely profound cognition of emptiness on the path of preparation by the conceptual union of calm abiding and special insight in meditative equipoise.

Feeling can be conceptual, as it is one of the five ever present mental factors, which shares five similarities with the main mind it accompanies, and with the other conjoined mental factors. Every conceptual main mind is therefore accompanied by a mental factor of feeling.

Analysing the Causes, Conditions & Effects of Eye-Consciousness

General

Definition

A consciousness generated in dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of an eye sense power

Definition Key

- A consciousness - that which is clear and knowing; eliminates form, such as the eyeball, chemical reactions in the brain , etc., as eye-consciousness.
- Generated in dependence - shows cause/effect relationship.
- Uncommon - not shared with the other five types of consciousnesses.
- Empowering condition - that primarily generating directly in an empowering manner.
- Eye sense power - a clear subtle form residing in the container of the eye.

Example

The eye-consciousness apprehending blue.

Exception

The omniscient eye-consciousness of a buddha, which realises not only visual input, but the complete world of multiplicity as well as the world of suchness.

It is still eye-consciousness however, because of arising in dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of the eye sense power.

Significance Of The Physical Sense Power

The empowering condition of the eye sense power is responsible for the distinguishing characteristic of the eye-consciousness to apprehend mainly visual stimuli, i.e., out of the three conditions it is the condition that primarily causes the eye-consciousness to apprehend primarily form source.

Likewise, the ear sense power is responsible for the ear consciousness to apprehend primarily sound out of the five sensory inputs, and so forth.

In this way, what makes each of the six types of consciousness unique and distinctive from each other is their uncommon empowering condition and they are labelled relative to their uncommon empowering condition.

The strength of the eye sense power determines the strength of the eye-consciousness. When the eye sense power becomes weaker, as can happen in old age, then the eye-consciousness also becomes weaker. In such a case one can use glasses, which then complements the sense power.

The eye sense power is a clear subtle form that is a very hidden phenomenon residing in the container of the eyeball. As such it is nothing one would see with one's eye-consciousness while dissecting the eyeball.

Can One Meditate With The Eye-consciousness?

A favourite misconception is to hold eye-consciousness to be a suitable agent for meditation, like looking at a candle flame.

Regarding this Phabonka Rinpoche stated very clearly in his *Liberation in the Palm of your Hand*,

... the elephant mind has to be tied to the pillar of the object and therefore one needs an object for calm abiding, the basis to which it can be tied. Regarding the object of meditation, one can practise by focussing at any object.

But, Hindus who focus on pebbles and fine pieces of wood to attain calm abiding, and Bonpos who focus on *A* to attain calm abiding, make these objects of meditation mental objects. They do not practise by gazing with their eyes.

The practise by some dissidents to gaze at the object of meditation with the eyes is inferior to even the two above. Calm abiding needs to be attained on the mental consciousness and not on the eye.

Lama Tsong Khapa in his *Great Exposition on the Stages of the Path*,

That master Yeshe-de refuted the opponent's meditation of placing the statue in front of oneself and that gazing at it with the eyes was well done. Sine concentration is not attained on the sense consciousnesses, but on the mental consciousness, the direct focus of concentration is the direct object of mental consciousness, and that is what has to be held by the mind.

That is also why it is taught that, in accordance with what was said earlier, one has to focus on the mental image, or the reflection that arises, of the actual object.

Here is an attempt at some reasons why the eye-consciousness is an unsuitable medium for attaining concentration and why one will not be able to attain calm abiding and special insight on the basis of it.

1. The eye-consciousness is too fickle and unstable, both from the point of view of its empowering condition as well as from the point of view of its focal condition; e.g. its continuity is interrupted when one blinks, and it only generates in the presence of visual stimuli.
2. The eye-consciousness of human beings is a coarse consciousness that belongs by nature to the desire realm. Calm abiding on the other hand is a very fine and subtle awareness that belongs by nature to the higher realm.
3. Eye-Consciousness cannot apprehend subtle objects such as impermanence or selflessness, and therefore cannot act as the antidote against afflictions.
4. In the Prasangika system the eye-consciousness of sentient beings is always tainted by true appearance.
5. It is a very commonly reported experience of meditators that the sense consciousnesses subside upon entry into deep meditational states.

The way a visual object, such as the body of the Buddha, becomes the object of one's meditation is that upon having looked at the outer representation of a picture or a statue of the Buddha, one then concentrates on the reflection of that image in one's mental consciousness. Concentrating on the external form would become a distraction.

As Kamalashila said in his *Stages of Meditation*,

Only the mind that naturally engages an internal focus continuously after having calmed the wandering to external objects, and which is endowed with ecstasy and pliancy, is called calm abiding.

While looking at a candle flame might bring some calmness to the mind, this has probably more to do with the mental attention to the object and the soothing mental image created in our mental consciousness, than with the eye-consciousness. If we try to keep the focus on our eye-consciousness than it will just become an obstacle.

The Five Ever Present Mental Factors Of Eye-consciousness

The term eye-consciousness can refer each to the main eye-consciousness, the mental factors that accompany the eye-consciousness, as well as the combination of main eye-consciousness and its accompanying mental factors. All of these are consciousness generated in dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of the eye sense power.

There is always a minimum of five mental factors, which are called the five ever present mental factors, that accompany any primary consciousness: feeling, recognition; intention, attention and contact. For complete engagement of the object the five ever present mental factors need to be complete.

In General

Feeling - happy, suffering or neutral experience through which the ripening of the results of virtues and non-virtuous karmas are individually experienced.

Recognition - a knower apprehending the uncommon characteristics of the object.

Intention - a mental factor that moves and directs its accompanying mind to the object.

Attention - the engaging of the mind, having the function of making the mind apprehend the object.

Contact - a knower that, after object, sense power, and consciousness have been combined, establishes the object according with the feelings, such as happiness and suffering, to be experienced.

If any of these is missing then the engagement of the object will not be complete:

No feeling - no experience of happiness or suffering.

No recognition - no apprehension of the uncommon characteristic of the object.

No intention - no directing to the object in general.

No attention - no placing of the mind on a particular object.

No contact - feeling will not generate.

The primary consciousness shares five samenesses with its accompanying mental factors:

Same basis - relying on the same empowering condition

Same object - generated from the same object

Same aspect - arising in the same aspect

Same time - generated simultaneously

Same substance – being of similar individual substance

On The Example

The combination of the primary eye-consciousness apprehending blue and its accompanying entourage of five ever present mental factors is the eye-consciousness apprehending blue.

The primary eye-consciousness is distinguished by its mere apprehension of blue, while the mental factors distinguish themselves through specific functions, such as the function of intention to move the mind to the object.

Feeling experiences blue, either as happiness, suffering, or as neutral. One factor that can determine the experience is whether one likes blue.

Recognition apprehends the individualistic feature(s) of blue, which distinguish blue from other objects.

Intention is the karma that draws one's consciousness to blue.

Attention engages the primary consciousness with blue.

Contact establishes blue as something to be experienced with happiness, suffering or equanimity.

The primary eye-consciousness apprehending blue and its accompanying entourage of five ever present mental factors share the five samenesses:

Same basis – they all are generated from the same uncommon empowering condition of the eye sense power that is their cause.

Same object – they are all generated from blue.

Same aspect – they all arise in the aspect of blue.

Same time – they all generate, abide, and disintegrate simultaneously.

Sameness of substance – they are all the same individual substance in that there is always only one substance of each, i.e. only one mental factor of feeling with only one primary consciousness.

Combinations

There are three possibilities between (a) primary eye-consciousness and (b) eye-consciousness:

Both: Primary eye-consciousness apprehending blue

Neither: ear consciousness

B but not a: The mental factor of feeling that accompanies the primary visual consciousness apprehending blue.

There is nothing that is primary eye-consciousness but not eye-consciousness.

Eye-Consciousness According To Sautrantika

1. Eye Direct Perception

Definition

An unmistakable awareness free from conception, which is generated in dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of an eye sense power and its focal condition of form.

Divisions

Prime Visual Direct Perception

A newly incontrovertible knower free from conception arising in dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of an eye sense power.

Example: The first moment of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue.

Subsequent Visual Direct Perception

A knower free from conception that realises the realised and arises in dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of an eye sense power.

Example: The second moment of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue.

Eye-Consciousness To Which The Object Appears But Is Not Ascertained

An eye-consciousness that has a clear appearance of the self-characterised phenomenon that is its object of engagement, but which cannot induce an ascertainment of that object of engagement.

Example: The direct perception apprehending blue that induces doubt about whether one has seen blue or not.

2. Wrong Eye-consciousness

Definition

An eye-consciousness that engages its object in a distorted way.

This is synonymous with mistaken eye-consciousness and with eye-consciousness to which a non-existent appears clearly.

Example: The eye-consciousness that mistakes the whirling firebrand for a fire wheel.

Eye-Consciousness According To The Prasangika

Food for Thought

Some points specific to the Prasangika system:

- All consciousnesses of ordinary individuals are mistaken consciousnesses for the reason that their objects appear to them as existing from their own side. That is why they do not specify the definition of direct visual perception as unmistaken.
- All subsequent cognitions are direct prime cognitions.
- All dualistic consciousnesses are direct prime cognitions with regard to their appearance.



1. Eye Direct Perception

Definition

An awareness free from conception, which is generated in direct dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of an eye sense power and its focal condition of form.

Divisions

Prime Visual Direct Perception

A valid direct perception incontrovertible with regard to its manifest object of comprehension through directly depending on its uncommon empowering condition of an eye sense power.

Eye-Consciousness To Which The Object Appears But Is Not Ascertained

An eye direct perception that has a clear appearance of the phenomenon that is its object of engagement, but which cannot induce an ascertainment of that object of engagement.

2. Wrong Eye-consciousness

Definition

An eye-consciousness that engages its object in a distorted way

This is not synonymous with mistaken eye-consciousness and with eye-consciousness to which a non-existent appears clearly.

Example

An eye-consciousness to which the appearance of the face in the mirror appears as the face

The Objects Of Visual Consciousness

The Objects Of Eye Direct Perception

In the example of the eye-consciousness apprehending blue:

Apprehended object - the main object, i.e., the object that possesses the aspect in which the consciousness arises mainly as, which in this case is blue.

Appearing object - blue and everything that is of indivisibly one simultaneous substance with blue regarding place, time and nature, such as the impermanence of blue.

Engaged object – the engaged object of prime eye-consciousness is synonymous with the apprehended object of prime eye-consciousness.

Held object – synonymous with appearing object.

Focal object - blue and everything that is of indivisibly one simultaneous substance with blue regarding place, time and nature, such as the impermanence of blue.

Form Source

The main object of eye-consciousness is visual stimuli, or in more traditional Buddhist terms, form source. Form source is defined as that which is to be held by the eye-consciousness and divided into colours and shapes.

Colours and shapes are referred to as sources or stimuli because they are a door through which the mind and the mental factors are generated and increased. They cause the harm of future lives through the contact with the physical sense powers, because through that they generate the perception of pleasant, neutral or unpleasant shapes and colours, which then generates happy, neutral or unhappy feelings. These feelings in turn become the cause for attachment, ignorance or anger to arise, through which in

turn one creates contaminated karma that causes one to take rebirth in cyclic existence.

That is why it is recommended to be always mindful and keep the doors of the senses under control. As a beginner on the path mental afflictions will be generated merely through the meeting of the doors of the five senses with the object. Taking a 'Time Out' from the object(s) can be a good way to relieve the mind temporarily.

The Objects Of Wrong Eye-consciousness

In the example of the eye-consciousness to which one moon appears as two moons:

Apprehended object - two moons.

Appearing object - one moon; one moon appears as two moons.

In the example of the eye-consciousness to which the white snow mountain appears as blue:

Apprehended object – the blue snow-mountain.

Appearing object – the white colour of the snow-mountain.

Engaged object – the white colour of the snow-mountain.

Focal object – the white colour of the snow-mountain.

The Three Conditions Of Eye-consciousness According To The Mind Only

The Focal Condition

According to the Mind-Only system, the arising of any sense consciousness in the aspect of its object comes about through the power of karmic imprints, and not through the object showing the aspect from its side. Therefore, the generation of the sense consciousness in the particular aspect of the object is caused by a karmic imprint on a preceding consciousness.

This potential in the nature of a karmic imprint of the concordant family on the preceding consciousness is the main condition for generating its resultant subsequent sense consciousness in the aspect of the object. For that reason it is the focal-condition of that resultant sense consciousness.

The Immediately Preceding Condition

There is no difference between the presentations of the immediately preceding condition according to the Sautrantika and the Mind Only.

The Empowering Condition

The Sautrantika and Mind Only agree that the entity that is the empowering condition of the eye-consciousness is responsible for the distinguishing characteristic of the eye-consciousness to apprehend only form and no other of the five sensory inputs. Out of the three conditions it is the condition that primarily causes the eye-consciousness to apprehend only form source out of the five sources.

While the Sautrantika assert this entity to be matter, the Mind Only assert it to be in the nature of a potential on the immediately preceding condition.

Looking For The Substantial Cause Of The Eye Sense Power

Definition Of Substantial Cause

A generator generating its effect mainly as its substantial continuum is the definition of a substantial cause.

Definition Key

- A generator - a cause.
- As its substantial continuum - continuum of its nature or identity; in Buddhism the substance of a functionality equals the nature or identity of that functionality. Since the identity of the seed is the potential of the identity of the sprout, the sprout is a continuity of the identity of the seed.
- Mainly emphasises the way the seed generates the sprout, i.e., as its substantial continuum.

Example

Like the first moment of eye sense power being the substantial cause of the second moment of eye sense power.

Debate 1

If it is asked: Then, what is the substantial cause of the first moment of eye sense power of the next life? It is nothing but the last moment of eye sense power of this life, because it is stated:

The five sources of this life alone
Are the generating cause of other bodies.

If this is further analysed: Does the physical sense power that just took rebirth in the desire realm, after having taken birth from the desire realm in the formless realm, have a direct substantial cause or not? If 'no', it follows it does not have a concurrently arising

condition – because it does not have a substantial cause. There is a pervasion because – only that supporting a substantial cause in the generation of a result is called concurrently arising condition.

If 'accepted', it follows it does not have a cause – because it has neither a substantial cause nor a concurrently arising condition. If 'accepted', it follows it is either always existent or non-existent – because it has arisen without cause.

Then: It has a direct substantial cause because it is a functionality.

Since there is no eye sense power in the formless realm, what is the direct substantial cause of the eye sense power of a person who has just taken rebirth in the desire realm from the formless realm? If it is a functionality there is a pervasion that it has a substantial cause.

Debate 2

If it is said: Its direct substantial cause is the mind just about to take rebirth from the formless realm. That is incorrect because it would be flawed for matter and knower to act as the substantial cause for each other since it is stated,

What consciousness would be the substantial cause of non-awareness?

It is also established because:

Non-consciousness is not consciousness's substantial cause

This refers to the fact that consciousness cannot act as the substantial cause for something that is particle based, i.e. form, and that mental consciousness can only arise from mental consciousness.

Debate 3

If it is said: The physical sense power just about to take rebirth from the formless realm acts as the substantial cause.

This is also incorrect because in the formless realm physical sense powers do not exist because form does not exist in the formless realm.

Debate 4

In case it is said: The physical sense power just about to take rebirth from the desire realm is its direct substantial cause.

Take as the subject 'being of the desire realm just about to take rebirth from the desire realm into the formless realm and then again into the desire realm' – it follows it takes birth in the desire realm immediately after death – because its physical sense powers act as the direct substantial cause of subsequent physical sense powers belonging to the desire realm.

Take that subject – it follows immediately after death it takes simultaneously rebirth in both the desire and formless realm – because of that reason as well as also taking rebirth in the formless realm.

Debate 5

In case it is said: There is not mistake of birth in the desire realm immediately after death – because the mind just about to take rebirth from the formless realm, which is the concurrently acting condition for the generation of the first of the subsequent physical sense powers by the final of the preceding physical sense powers, does not exist before.

Well then, does the final of the preceding physical sense powers abide until the generation of the mind just about to take rebirth from the formless realm or does it cease? If we look at the first: It follows

the final of the preceding physical sense powers belonging to the desire realm is a permanent functioning phenomena.

If we look at the second: Take the subject first instance of the subsequent physical sense powers belonging to the desire realm - it follows the previous last instance of physical sense powers belonging to the desire realm is not its substantial cause – because it is disintegrated at the time of its direct concurrently acting condition.

Debate 6

If it is said: The physical sense power just about to take rebirth from the desire realm is its direct substantial cause since the earlier and later physical sense powers are interrupted by that belonging to its family and not by something discordant.

This is incorrect because it cannot eliminate the fault explained previously:

The fault that the substantial cause of the first moment of physical sense power that just took rebirth in the desire realm from the formless realm would not be simultaneous with its concurrently acting condition.

Gyalwa Gedun Drub:

Only the potentials of the physical sense powers on the mind of no-form, placed there at the time of the preceding death and transference from the desire realm, are the substantial cause for the first instance of physical sense powers born later in the desire realm.

Debate 7

Then, if someone says: Are the potentials of the physical sense powers on the mind of no-form matter, awareness or neither. If we look at the first: This entirely contradicts the meaning of 'What consciousness would be the substantial cause of non-awareness'.

If we look at the third: Take that subject – if follows it is not a functionality – because it is neither matter nor awareness. You accept both reason and predicate. There is a pervasion because: Functionalities are either matter or awareness.

Answer: Take the subject 'a being' – it follows it is not a functionality – because it is neither matter nor awareness.

Then: Even though the potentials of the physical sense powers are functionalities they are not posited as either matter or awareness. They are posited as non-associated compounded phenomena.

While form and consciousness cannot act as each others substantial cause, to be the substantial cause of form it does not have to be form, e.g., the karmic potentials of the physical sense powers can act as their substantial cause.

Debate 8

Someone says: But then it follows that form exists in the formless realm– because the seed of form exists there.

Answer: Then it follows that in the formless realm non-virtue exists – because the seed of non-virtue exists there.

This refers to the fact that there is no non-virtue in the form and formless realm.

Colophon

I want to thank all my teachers for being patient with me so that I got the reflection of a glimpse of understanding of the ocean of consciousness.

In particular want to thank my mother Maria Mörtl and her Husband Werner Mörtl who have supported me in my studies for the past twenty years, both materially as well as morally.

Sarva Mangalam

By the merits of this commentary
May all our teachers such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama,
Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lama Ösel Rinpoche and so forth
Remain immutable with us like a vajra, brimming with health,
And continually turn the wheel of Dharma of Sutra and
Tantra,
Especially Lama Tsong Khapa's teachings.

The qualities of the Buddha are inconceivable
The qualities of the Dharma are inconceivable
The qualities of the Sangha are inconceivable
The ripening result, caused by
Faith in the inconceivable, is also inconceivable.

May all sentient beings immediately
Attain the supreme state of enlightenment.

This text is primarily based on different parts of the Collected Topics by Yong-dzin Purchok Ngawang Jampa, who was a tutor of the thirteenth Dalai Lama.

The section on the three conditions according to the Mind Only comes from the Ornament of the Seven Valid Cognitions, Dispelling Mental Darkness, which was composed by Khedrub Je, one of the two main disciples of Lama Tsong Khapa. The section on direct and indirect realisation is based on the same text.

The section on the substantial cause of the eye sense power comes from the Ornament of Reasoning by the first Dalai Lama, Gyalwa Gedun Drub, as does the main part of the section on fake direct perceptions. There are also many other smaller parts based on Gyalwa Gedun Drub.