

Mind and Mental Factors

Geshe Lotin will teach on the topic *Mind and Mental Factors* by Konchok Jigme Wangpo. A translation of the full text in English is not available, however the Berzin archives contains a summary commentary of the text which can be accessed at the following link:

http://www.berzinarchives.com/web/en/archives/sutra/level4_deepening_understanding_path/mind_mental_factors/mind_mental_factors_51.html?query=mind+and+mental+factors

May 25, 2008

1. Homage to the Guru
2. The mind of an ordinary human being is like an elephant crazy on alcohol. This text is like a mirror. Through it, one can see everything clearly and precisely. Its general meaning concerns how the mind engages in mental activities.
3. Three words for mind: *sem* = mind; *yod* = thoughts; *namshe* = consciousness. They all point to the same object.
4. The primary consciousness perceives an object mainly from its own capability. It doesn't need to rely on factors. It can perceive an object itself. Consciousness perceives, but it doesn't necessarily understand. For example, a person with jaundice will see "yellow" snow, but doesn't understand that it should be "white."
5. Definition of a human being: One who can speak and understand words. However, there are humans who are outside of this definition – e.g. a baby.
6. There are six types of consciousness; however, all rely on primary consciousness
 - Eye
 - Ear
 - Nose
 - Tongue
 - Body
 - MindEach has a specific location and each relies on an organ and each has its own unique function.
7. Where is the mind consciousness located? Different schools have different ideas. It is found in the final moment of previous consciousness. e.g., you see the TCC, then The stream of consciousness cannot generate from an inanimate object—it must come from a previous consciousness. There is a strong connection between the 5 organs and the mental consciousness which is supported by the organ in question.

June 1, 2008

Primary consciousness is considered to consist of 6 types. This is a common assertion of all schools.

The Mind Only School additionally sees consciousness as eightfold. In addition, the 6 types, the Mind Only School which follows the scriptures (Asanga) adds:

7. Deluded awareness
8. Mind basis of all - *alayavijnana* (*kun-gzhi rnam-shes*, all-encompassing foundation consciousness, storehouse consciousness).

Another school (Tenam did not state the name of this school) adds a ninth type: (Tib. *Tunme*) – pure consciousness, stainless consciousness.).

Which is the consciousness that goes from this life to the next?

Lower school asserts only one primary consciousness (remember the example of the house with 6 windows with only one monkey inside).

The Mind Only with its assertion of 8 consciousnesses, sees *Kungshe* (Foundation consciousness, also described as the mind basis of all, or the storehouse for mental imprints) as the vehicle that carries the consciousness from life time to life time. However when the practitioner reaches the 8th bhumi, the nature of this mind is transformed and ultimately need to be eliminated.

The mind consciousness goes from this life to next. This argument is very subtle, sparking much debate about what consciousness holds the mental imprints that are carried from lifetime to lifetime. There are many types of consciousness within mind consciousness. The stream of mental consciousness must be stable for the stream to go from one life to another. This text deals with imputed mind, aspects of the mind, type of mind, type of consciousness.

Consciousness can be categorized into three types:

1. positive or virtuous mind which depends on positive mental factors
2. non-virtuous mind which depends on non-virtuous/negative mental factors
3. neutral mind which depends on neutral mental factors.

The five congruent features will be dealt with further on in the Tibetan text (the Berzin archives document discussed them now.)

How is consciousness generated? It depends on three factors;

1. objective condition: the target or object of observation
2. fundamental condition: the organ of apprehension
3. immediate condition: final moment of previous consciousness

As an example, Geshe-la noted how consciousness apprehends the color blue. The objective condition is the actual color of the object being seen, in this case blue. The fundamental condition in this case is the eye, the pure inner organ which is type of fundamental condition needed to generate (or give rise to) the result of eye consciousness.

Eye: The inner pure form substance or organ which helps to generate eye consciousness must rely on the eye faculty but it is not the physical organ of the eye – it is described in the text as light bluish, the size of the seed of a grape and transparent. It is a physical form aggregate so it exists. This is the inner pure form substance organ which helps to generate the eye consciousness and, therefore, it must rely on the eye faculty. It is unique. It helps to develop a special quality of eye consciousness (not simply the physical eye.) The Tibetan word translates as the basis or location of where the eye organ is located.

What are the remaining organs? Ear, nose, tongue and body.

The fundamental conditions of these remaining organs are described as follow:

Ear: It looks like the cross section of a rolled leaf that has been cut in half resembling the form of a spiral.

Nose: Resembles the pointed end portion of a white conch shell.

Tongue: Two crescent moon shapes are located on the tongue in overlapping areas which enable one to distinguish between different tastes. Geshe-la said you could experiment and see for yourself where you can apprehend sweetness versus sour.

Body: This aggregate is based on all parts of body.

Each fundamental condition has a unique ability to perceive or apprehend object or information. The sixth mental consciousness has the ability to understand all 5 but also must end on the other five (in other words is has to rely on individual faculties)

June 8, 2008

There has to be a flow

Where does this consciousness arise? It arises from a previous moment of consciousness which then ceases.

1. Schools that assert objective phenomena, such as the Sutra School, state a cause/effect relationship between subject and object.
2. The Mind-Only school says that the subject and object are of the same nature and, therefore, there is no cause/effect relationship.
3. There are three types of conditions according to the Sutra School
 - a. Object (e.g. the color blue)
 - b. Fundamental condition (e.g. eye organ)
 - c. Immediate Condition (the previous moment of consciousness)

Mind-Only School asserts that when the eye consciousness perceives the color blue (the object of eye consciousness) that color existed previously and was just triggered by the perception

June 15, 2008

The primary mind is like the general of an army who has a regiment under him. It has “mental factors” under him. The “mental factors” have a “boss.”

The mind and mental factors have the same nature but are different entities.

Regarding the 5 aggregates:

1. Form – has nothing to do with mental factors
2. Feeling – one mental factor
3. Perception/discrimination – one mental factor
4. Compositional Factors – 49 mental factors
5. Consciousness – has nothing to do with mental factors

Mental Factors: Divided into two categories

1. General

2. Good and Bad

General: The mind which accompanies the primary (major) mind—the consciousness of apprehending others.

Three words for mind:

1. *Sem* – literal meaning (*citte* – Sanscrit) refers to the nature of accumulation and gathering of the mental imprints. The storehouse where mental imprints are gathered.
2. *Namshee* – consciousness – which apprehends the particularities of the objects; *nam* = perfect; *shepa* = apprehends
3. *Yod* = that which recognizes/identifies its object of observation

A network of subsidiary awarenesses accompanies each moment of primary consciousness and 49 of these compositional factors have the following congruent or concomitant features:

1. Reliance – relying on the same cognitive sensor
2. Object – cognitively aiming at the same focal object
3. Aspect – giving rise to the same cognitive appearance or mental semblance
4. Time – arising, abiding, and ceasing simultaneously
5. Natal source – although coming from their own individual natal sources (referring to individual karmic tendencies) they come from natal sources that have the same slant. Thus, they work harmoniously together without clashing.

June 29, 2008

Tenam is using Geshe Rapten's book: *The Mind and Its Functions* to help him translate Geshe-la's teachings. He also has been using Geshe Kelsang Gyatso's book *Understanding the Mind*. He did not buy the book, but found in a box of freebies. Geshe Kelsang Gyatso is a leading member of the Shugden sect who broke his commitment to his root lama, the Dalai Lama. In the Tibetan tradition, a dharma author needs to be commissioned to do his writing by his teacher, his yiddam, and his students. However, since he broke his connection to his teacher, this creates bad karma which is transmitted with his writings.

When science and Buddhist teachings contradict each other, His Holiness says "go with the facts—go with reality." During the time of the Buddha, only Sariputra was given permission to read non-Buddhist texts. The cosmology described in the *Abhidharma Khosh* is different from what we experience when we fly from India to the USA. We need to "go with our experience." When we meet many contradictions, we must analyze, examine, and follow the logical approach.

There are 51 mental factors:

- 5 All accompanying, ever-functioning mental factors
- 5 All ascertaining subsidiary awarenesses
- 11 Constructive emotions
- 6 Root delusions
- 20 Secondary delusions
- 4 Changeable mental factors

All accompanying, ever-functioning mental factors

Whenever there is a primary mind, it has to have an ever-functioning mental factor. Each of these 5 has its own function. The primary mind works with the mental factor that is strongest at that time. Analogy: a

king has 5 ministers who are always with the king. All are involved in a project (active), but one minister is more involved with the king than others.

These all accompanying, ever-functioning mental factors are

- Feeling—a distinct cognition of pleasure, pain, or indifference. The mind a feeling with the help of the mental factor.
- Discernment/discrimination—identifies the object to be one thing and not another by means of differentiation
- Intention—enables the mind to move towards the object
- Contact—connects the organ with the primary consciousness
- Attention—directs the primary mind and mental factors—pushes the mind towards the object

Tibetan texts change the order:

- Feeling
- Discernment
- Intention
- Attention
- Contact

July 13: Notes to be provided for 5 All Ascertaining Subsidiary Awarenesses and 11 Constructive Emotions.

July 27, 2008

The Six Root Delusions are the principals from which all other delusions arise. They serve a root causes. They make the mind and/or mental factors more deluded.

1. Desire: attachment to one's object
2. Anger: hatred toward the nature of the suffering
3. Pride: relying on the mundane
4. Ignorance: of one's knowledge
5. Deluded doubt: frozen decision – obstruction to the Path of Seeing
6. Deluded views: 5 types
 - a. Root of samsara – grasping to the “I” and “my” based on the aggregates = self grasping of person
 - b. Extreme view – holding on to either of the 2 extremes: unchanging creator and not holding on to cause/effect. (result of “a.”)
 - c. Holding false views – looking at the 4 Noble Truths as not true
 - d. Holding false views by holding the concepts of the lower schools as being the best philosophy
 - e. Holding wrong moral conduct – acting on wrong views and adopting extreme practices (e.g. jumping into fire and sitting on a 3-pointed scepter.

The 20 Secondary Delusions: closest to the 4 root delusions

1. Wrath
2. Vengeance
3. Spite
4. Envy
5. Cruelty
6. Avarice

7. Self satisfaction
8. Excitement (scattered mind)
9. Concealment
10. Dullness
11. Faithlessness
12. Laziness
13. Forgetfulness
14. Inattentiveness (careless indifference)
15. Pretention
16. Dishonesty
17. Shamelessness
18. Inconsideration of others
19. Unconscientiousness
20. Distraction

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The Four Changeable Mental Factors

1. Sleep: if the mentality is positive, it will be positive.
2. Regret: by itself it is not positive or negative—depends on what you regret
3. Investigation: examines an object to get understanding of its gross nature.
4. Analysis: examines an object to get understanding of its subtle nature

This discussion of the 51 Mental Factors is based on the *Treasury of Knowledge*.
We will return to examining the All Accompanying Mental Factors:

- Feeling
- Discernment
- Intention
- Contact
- Attention

Feeling is direct and distinct. It is different from logical experience. This experience is generated when Contact touches the object. The result is Feeling. Feeling doesn't go through the other mental factors. Pleasure and pain are not the object of feeling. They are the feeling or the experience itself.

The general function of feeling is to fully experience the ripening effect of our previous actions.

Feelings may be classified as

1. pleasure, suffering or indifference
2. sensory: accompany senses consciousnesses
mental feeling :accompany mental consciousnesses
3. contaminated: unsatisfactory experiences of pleasure, pain and indifference that accompany all states of consciousness affected by affliction

uncontaminated feelings accompany states of consciousness in the minds of Aryas who are no longer affected by the afflictions.

Process:

1. look at an object
2. Eye generates feeling of attractiveness and passes it to the mental consciousness
3. Mind receives and wants to see it again—this is a function of consciousness (goes through eye consciousness and then to the mind)

We experience many types of feelings on a daily basis:

1. Seeing – then a feeling is generated
2. Feeling gives birth to craving
3. Craving gives rise to grasping and so on through the 12 Dependent links of Origination

If you know the roles of the All Accompanying Mental Factors, it will help you to understand better the 12 Links of Dependent Origination

There are two ways of explaining a feeling:

1. Through the Faculty: relying on a faculty: this feeling is ignorant until it meets the object
2. Through the Mind Itself: feeling in the mind – a memory has nothing to do with the faculty

Discernment is a distinct mental factor having the function of identifying the object as one thing as opposed to another by means of differentiation.

E.g.: the eye consciousness is accompanied by the Five Ever Accompanying Mental Factors. Each factor does its work—not that of the other. The eye consciousness seeks support of these Five Ever Present Mental Factors. Each of the Five has its own ability and function.

There are two types of discernment: with a sign and without a sign.

1. Without a sign:
 - a. a young child looks at two different colors and sees the difference but doesn't have the words to define it.
 - b. Discernment of a meditative perception of ultimate truth in which there is no sign of any conditioned phenomenon.
 - c. Discernment of the formless absorption at the peak of Samsara in which there is no sign of a clear or distinct referent.
2. With a sign:
 - a. That which is skilled in relating terms to their corresponding objects
 - b. That which discerns concrete, impermanent phenomena
 - c. That which has a clear, distinct referent.