

MIND & ITS WORLD 1

sourcebook

This sourcebook is published as part of the Nītārtha Institute study program directed by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche.

Mind & Its World 1 Sourcebook © 2006, 2007 Nītārtha Institute

All rights reserved. Printed in Canada. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission.

All Articles:

By The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche © 2006, 2007 The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche and Nitartha *international*.

By Āchārya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen © 2006, 2007 Āchārya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Nītārtha Institute.

By Āchārya Sherab Gyaltzen © 2006, 2007 Āchārya Sherab Gyaltzen and Nītārtha Institute.

Reversing Confusion © 2006 Āchārya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen.

First published in Bodhi Magazine, volume 7, issue 4. Reprinted with permission.

The Two Truths in the Vaibhāṣhika & Sautrāntika Philosophical Systems © 1996 by Khenchen Tsültrim Gyamtso Rinpoche, Z.D. Labinger, and the Marpa Institute of Translators. Reprinted with permission.

SOURCE MATERIALS:

Root Texts:

Collected Topics © 1999, 2000 Āchārya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Karl Brunnhölzl, and Nītārtha Institute.

The Gateway That Reveals the Philosophical Systems to Fresh Minds © 2001 The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche, Nitartha *international*, Āchārya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen, Karl Brunnhölzl, and Nītārtha Institute.

The Presentation on the Classifications of Mind © 1996, 2000, 2003, 2006 Karl Brunnhölzl and Nītārtha Institute.

The Vaibhāṣhika and Sautrāntika Philosophical Systems Root Verses: From the Treasury of Knowledge by Jamgön Kongtrul Lodrö Taye © 1996 Nītārtha Institute.

Commentaries:

Commentary on the Classifications of Mind © 1997 by Āchārya Sherab Gyaltzen and Nītārtha Institute.

Commentary on the Collected Topics © 2004 by Āchārya Lama Tenpa Gyaltzen and Nītārtha Institute.

Lorik Oral Commentary © 1996 by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche and Nitartha *international*.

Commentary on Hinayāna Tenets © 2003, 2004 by Āchārya Sherab Gyaltzen and Nītārtha Institute.

Tenets Sourcebook © 1998 by The Dzogchen Ponlop Rinpoche and Nitartha *international*.

Other:

Bodhi Magazine, volume 7, issue 4.

Second Draft Edition

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2

For further information contact: info@nitarthainstitute.org

Acknowledgments:

This sourcebook was sponsored by the Tsadra Foundation.

Edited & designed by Stephanie Johnston and Tashi Wangmo.

Cover design by Stephanie Johnston.

On behalf of Nītārtha Institute, we wish to express our deep appreciation to the many transcribers, editors, designers, and translators who helped in the production of the transcripts that provided the material for this sourcebook: Karl Brunnhölzl, Elizabeth M. Callahan, Migme Chödrön, June Crow, Tyler Dewar, Oona Edmands, Michelle Grissom, Lisa Hilliard, Brian Hilliard, Bill Karelis, Z.D. Labinger, Kalden Lhamo, Susan Neumeier, Sherab Norbu, Rafael Ortet, Tingdzin Ötrö, Steve Seely, Susan Spilman, Cara Thornley, Greg Torvik, Scott Wellenbach, Gabrielle Yakoushkin, Nyendrak Zangpo, Chryssoula Zerbini, and those whose work remains unnamed. Thank you!

Divisions of Mental Sense Faculty

The text says:

2.1.1.2.1.1.2.2.2. Divisions of mental direct valid cognition

This has five parts:

- (1) Mental direct valid cognitions apprehending forms
- (2) Mental direct valid cognitions apprehending sounds
- (3) Mental direct valid cognitions apprehending smells
- (4) Mental direct valid cognitions apprehending tastes
- (5) Mental direct valid cognitions apprehending tangible objects

The definition of the first exists, because it is “a nonconceptual, nonmistaken awareness arisen on the basis of its dominant condition, the mental sense faculty, and the object condition, a form.”

The definition of the second exists, because it is “a nonconceptual and nonmistaken awareness arisen on the basis of its dominant condition, the mental sense faculty, and the object condition, a sound.”

The definition of the third exists, because it is “a nonconceptual and nonmistaken awareness arisen on the basis of its dominant condition, the mental sense faculty, and the object condition, a smell.”

The definition of the fourth exists, because it is “a nonconceptual and nonmistaken awareness arisen on the basis of its dominant condition, the mental sense faculty, and the object condition, a taste.”

The definition of the fifth exists, because it is “a nonconceptual and nonmistaken awareness arisen on the basis of its dominant condition, the mental sense faculty, and the object condition, a tangible object.”

The divisions of mental direct valid cognition are similar to the divisions of sense perceptions. There are five divisions of mental direct valid cognition apprehending forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tangible objects. For example, the definition of mental direct valid cognition apprehending forms is “a nonconceptual, nonmistaken awareness arisen on the basis of its dominant condition, the mental sense faculty, and the object condition, a form.”

Each division has a separate observed object condition. Each has an object condition that is unique to that particular mental perception. The object condition unique to the mental direct valid cognition apprehending form is form. Without the uncommon object of a form, you cannot generate the mental direct perception that apprehends that form. Similarly the other uncommon dominant conditions of the mental sense faculty are sound, smell, and so on.

Divisions of Mental Direct Valid Cognition

Mental direct valid cognitions apprehending:	forms
	sounds
	smells
	tastes
	tangible objects

SAUTRĀNTIKA THEORY OF PERCEPTION & CONCEPTION

Student: According to the Sautrāntika theory of perception, although it is called direct perception, you do not actually experience the object—you experience an image in your mind. In direct perception, the image is considered to reflect the object closely. It is not the object, but it is intimately related to it. When you have thoughts or concepts,

the image that appears to the mind is a general object; it is not nearly as detailed as the image of direct perception. Is the image of a mental direct perceiver the same as the image of the sense direct perceiver?

DPR: I think it is the same object, or same image. Yet, as we have discussed, it is not the same: With mental direct perception, you perceive an image different from what was perceived in the preceding sense cognition.

Student: It is different in time but has all the details?

DPR: It is the same in that way.

Student: It is confusing because usually we think anything mental means it is conceptual. In this case, a mental organ actually perceives a very detailed image that is a direct perception. It is not a mental concept, not generalized.

DPR: That's right. I think it is important for us to remember we are studying the first category of direct valid cognition.

The Sautrāntika view of the object is very interesting and important. According to the Sautrāntika view, you cannot perceive the atomic level of external objects, but you can perceive an image of an object: an image or aspect of that level of existence. The example cited by Thrangu Rinpoche is that of a glove with a hand inside. You know the fingers are there—you can sort of see them—but you do not see the object directly; you see an aspect of it. It is not the real thing. When you see a shoulder draped in clothing, you know it is a shoulder there, but you do not see it directly. The atomic level of the object is called “the hidden aspect.” The object we perceive directly is the image or aspect of the object. This is very similar to the science of physics, where you cannot perceive atomic particles. You perceive something like an image. To perceive at the particle level, you need a microscope. At the naked perceptual level of eye consciousness, we see an image of the underlying atomic composition.

Student: In the Sautrāntika view, whatever is real must have a function. In perceiving an image, what is the functional aspect of it? Does it occur at the atomic level or is it an image aspect?

DPR: The general conceptual image associated with the labeling process is seen as a nonfunctional thing. We might say that anything within the purview of direct valid cognition and its objects is functional. It is more ultimate in a certain sense. The images within mental conception are nonfunctional. Concept and thought lack any sense of solid relation with the object; the image of the object of concept is impure.

Student: A lot of concepts, like communication, have a functional process. Does this mean that all kinds of concepts are considered nonfunctional?

DPR: You have to differentiate between the concept and the general image created by it—the object of concept. Nonfunctional things are objects of concept, not the concept itself. The concept itself is a state of mind, a substantial thing. It has its own momentary phenomena; therefore it is functional.

Student: Do the Sautrāntikas view the object as possessing any kind of reality? Regarding the object itself, which we do not actually perceive because it remains hidden, is there something there that is real?

DPR: Yes, I think in the Sautrāntika view, the sense of realness is the svalakṣhaṇa.

Student: Which is not fixed.

DPR: No, there is nothing like a fixed reality in the Sautrāntika view. The whole approach is based on impermanence—the momentary nature of things. There is no one reality existing forever, but there is the momentary nature of reality, the momentary nature of the validity and perception of the object in itself—which does not depend on anything else. It does not depend on our conceptual labeling, saying this is true or not. It has its own state of being in whatever moment it occurs. For that reason, the svalakṣhaṇa plays a very important role in the Sautrāntika view. It is the main thing that shows the validity of anything that exists.

Student: How does the experience of the svalakṣhaṇa in the Sautrāntika view differ from the emptiness in the Mahāyāna view or the Karmapa's view. How would each school describe its experience and views about the differences in the experiences, without using the language of the schools?

DPR: Without the language of the schools, I can't speak! Just kidding. Generally speaking, the experience of the svalakṣhaṇa reality according to the Sautrāntika view comes very close to the experience of the realization of emptiness. Nāgārjuna says that through understanding or apprehending the meaning of arising, you can understand the meaning of cessation. Understanding both arising and cessation, you can understand and apprehend impermanence. Once you have true realization of impermanence, at that point, he says, you are close to experiencing genuine dharma, the true nature of reality, emptiness. According to Sautrāntika view, all the perceptions and concepts we go through in the subtle experience of the svalakṣhaṇa nature of reality are where we experience impermanence. We observe it, perceive it, and relate to it more directly. This is a very subtle level of experience of relative phenomena. In the seventh Karmapa's presentation on this topic, there is not much difference between the Sautrāntika-Chittamātra view and the Shentong Madhyamaka view. The subtle level of direct valid cognition that we are describing now very closely approaches the experience of the mahāmudrā, or tantric view. It is like a bridge that connects the two.

The *Kālachakra Tantra* presents six applications, and in that teaching, there are certain practices that directly connect to these direct valid cognitions. If we did not have a clear understanding of valid cognition, it would be hard to relate to those teachings—they go to such a subtle level of direct perception and its different states. Therefore as Khenpo Rinpoche and the seventh Karmapa have said, there is a link between the *Lorik* teachings and the mahāmudrā practice and the higher tantras. Within this very basic Buddhist teaching of the Sautrāntika and Chittamātra views, there is great insight. At the same time, it goes beyond Buddhist tenets, because it is direct experience, nonconceptual experience.

Student: What keeps these appearances distinct from each other?

DPR: Me! Yes, me. Our ego. Actually the difference is the method. The method presented here is very dry, logical, and technical. We are using a logical mind, making assumptions, and conducting analyses, with lots of space for debate and so on. It is left for you to discover such things as direct mental perception. You have to find out for yourself. All the definitions and divisions are given, and then we have to find out exactly how what is said corresponds to our experience. Mahāmudrā tantra is more directly pointed out to your experience through the different practice methods. There is not so much conceptual or logical theory; we get into more direct experience. At the same time, it has been emphasized by many tantric masters that you cannot reach that level of experience—you cannot click into that experience—without having some prior knowledge of the details. It is our logic texts that lay a bridge between our mundane, confused, vague state of mind and the very awakened state of mahāmudrā.

Student: Can you say that the experience is the same, but the methods are different?

DPR: Yes.

Student: Earlier you presented three conditions for the arising of sensory experience, but you left out the traditional causal condition of the eighth consciousness. Is that because it does not belong to this system?

DPR: The Sautrāntika tenet system does not accept the notion of the eighth consciousness. It mainly works with the notion of the sixth consciousness, and it holds that the seventh and eighth are not separate from the sixth. So the mind consciousness (sixth consciousness) has the continuity of the all-basis (eighth consciousness) as well as the clinging aspect of the klesha mind (seventh consciousness). The theory of the eighth consciousness belongs to the Chittamātra view.

Student: You were talking about the general image of conceptual mind. That image seems to be a functional phenomenon because it refers to its object of reference.

DPR: At the same time, that conceptual image, the object of conceptual mind, does not function like the chair. You cannot sit on it; it is nonfunctional.

Student: Is the image of the chair also nonfunctional? Using that same logic, the image itself cannot function either.

DPR: Not really, because with direct sense perception, we do not see a chair; we see the svalakṣhaṇa of the chair. The svalakṣhaṇa performs its function, but we are not seeing the chair, because “chair” is a conceptual image. We have never perceived “chair” directly. It is not an object for perceptual mind.

Student: So the svalakṣhaṇa is not the actual external object? But it’s how we know the object?

DPR: The aspect of the object.

Student: Is that a nonfunctional phenomenon? You said the conceptual image was a nonfunctional phenomenon.

DPR: These two aspects differ slightly. The aspect of the direct sense perception has a direct connection to an object that is out there functioning. That aspect or image is inseparable from the object. Such an aspect or image cannot be perceived without such an object. Without the object, you cannot perceive the aspect through your direct sense perception. On the other hand, you can conceive a mental image of it without having the phenomenon out there. There is no relation whatsoever between the two. ♣