Chapter Two of Dharmakirti’s *Pramāṇavarttika*

**Advanced Buddhist Philosophy Course – Term 1**
Institute for Buddhist Dialectics, McLeod Ganj, India

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Chapter Two of Dharmakirti’s *Pramāṇavarttika*

IBD’s Advanced Buddhist Philosophy Course – Term 1

Class 2 - 2014 Oct 3 – Friday

Teacher - Geshe Kelsang Wangmo

**Review First Class**

In the first class, I explained that the Handout that you are eventually going to get is a text that has been translated from Tibetan into English, and it is actually the translation of two texts. It is a translation of the second chapter of the *Pramāṇavarttika* and a translation of Gyaltsab Je’s commentary on the *Pramāṇavarttika*. These two translations are interspersed with explanations given by contemporary masters to ensure that when you read the material you will get something out of it. Because of their language style, these two texts alone are quite difficult to understand. The *Pramāṇavarttika* was composed in the 7th Century and Gyaltsab Je’s in the 15th century. Of course, the way of presenting material has changed; therefore, it is a little difficult to understand and some of these explanations may be helpful.

The text we are actually studying, that we are mainly interested in is Dharmakirti’s *Pramāṇavarttika*, which is, in turn, a commentary on Dignaga’s *Compendium of Pramana*. So those three texts, if you remember the names of those, that will suffice for this course.

You can see here in Charts Handout, page 1,

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**Charts for the Second Chapter of the Pramanaavarttika**

**Introduction**

1. **THREE COMMENTARIES ON PRAMANA:**

   - **Buddha’s Teachings**
   - **(1) Dignaga’s *Compendium of Pramana***
     - (six chapters/
       written in verse)
   - **(2) Dharmakirti’s *Pramanavarttika***
     - (four chapters/ 
       written in verse)
   - **(3) Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation***
     - (provides detailed 
       outlines/ written in prose)

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Pramana is translated as epistemology or logic.

First of course, there were Buddha’s teachings. Then based on the teachings of the Buddha, there’s Dignaga’s *Compendium of Pramana*, composed of six chapters written in

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verse. Then the four chapters of Dharmakirti’s *Pramāṇavarttika* are written in verse. Then Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* provides detailed outlines that you don’t find in the other two texts and it is written in prose.

You will receive a portion of the Second Chapters of the latter two texts [that we will cover this month].

**Biographies – Hagiographies – Life Stories of Dignaga & Dharmakirti**

Then last time we talks about the biographies of these three. First, I introduced Dignaga. Scholars sometimes call this type of biography a *hagiography*. It is not necessarily a biography in the sense that some things are added to serve as a teaching. We don’t know whether we can them literally.

**STUDENT:** Usually, excessively flattering.

**GESHE WANGMO:** Excessively flattering, yes. Nothing really negative about the person; that’s true. But on top of that, there are magical feats. Here with the Brahman, if you remember, who emanated flames to harm Dignaga. These kinds of stories, we don’t know whether they’re literally true. It is possible, that these great meditators were able to perform special feats that, maybe, nowadays people are not able to perform. Anyway, we don’t know. It is not a biography in the strictest sense that every detail of their life is recorded or is being described. It’s mainly special events.

Here the main event was, of course, in the case of Dignaga, he wrote the verse on the rock and the Brahman came and wiped it out, and they had this debate, and then Dignaga was about to give up Bodhicitta. I think that is significant.

This idea that someone may be highly advanced, may have already have Bodhicitta, the wish to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings, then someone obnoxious comes along and they lose their determination. Of course, initially, when Bodhicitta is generated, one can lose it. It is such an amazing mind. It is so difficult to generated, to cultivate; and once one has it, all that is needed is an obnoxious, debate opponent. And so, he was about to give up Bodhicitta, but then Manjushri appeared to him. Again, whether Manjushri really appeared or it was a teacher who appeared to him; we don’t know. But, basically, the idea is that Manjushri communicated with him and said, ‘Don’t do this.’ Encourages him to continue. So that if you are looking for the gist of Dignaga’s biography, that is the most important part.

I think all of those biographies are seen as teachings. There’s something one is supposed to get out of them, to take personally, as a personal teaching. I don’t know how many of you have Bodhicitta or are practicing to generate Bodhicitta on a daily basis, again and again. The teaching contained in here is the idea that, well, there’s a lot difficult people around; so don’t be discouraged. Never mind, however clever and difficult those people are. If they are clever, it is more difficult, because they’re most sophisticated in their harmful actions, for example, but not to lose one’s determination but continue on. That’s something we can take out of this biography.

I am sure you will find things that you find personally inspiring.

Then, of course, Dharmakirti’s life story. His incredible determination in terms of his studies, understanding, learning about other systems; learning about non-Buddhist Philosophy. Of course, in order to then convert the person to Buddhism.
[NOTE: After about six minutes, the recording sound quality and volume increase]

However, in his determination, and of course, composing this very important text. His entire life of serving the Dharma, undergoing hardships, living as a servant in a family in order to understand a non-Buddhist Philosophy in order to debate it later on.

So these were the two stories we went through.

Life Story of Gyaltsab Je

Then of course, Gyaltsab Je’s biography still needs to be told. This is quite short. Of course, there is a long biography, but I kept it quite short because his biography is much more detailed. In Tibet, great masters such as Je Tsong Khapa (Je Rinpoche), Gyaltsab Je, Khedrup Je, et al., their biographies were recorded in great detail. So Gyaltsab Je where he was born, where he was ordained, where he received his education, what monasteries he went to. Interestingly different from today, nowadays, when there is an ordained person, a monk or a nun, they usually just study in one monastery. But in those days, the monks would go to different monasteries, travel to different monasteries and study with different masters. If they heard of greatly qualified master, they would go and receive a teaching and possibly engage in the debate, and then continue to a different place. Of course, in exile that is difficult because there are not as many monasteries. I don’t know whether before 1959 this was still done as widely as it was done at the time of Gyaltsab Je, Je Rinpoche. Anyway, in his more extensive life story, this is how it is described, how he travelled to different monasteries to receive his education.

3 So here the story goes, he was born in 1364. Again whether or not the date is totally accurate is not certain. Some people say he was born in 1365. He was born in Tsang, Tibet; was ordained as a monk at a very young age, age 10. He received the name, Darma Rinchen (དར་མ་རིན་ཆེན) – not Dharma but Darma (sounds like Tar-ma). That is his actual name. He is usually called Gyaltsab Je (དབྱལ་ཙེབ་རྒྱལ་ཙེ་བ་) because he was the (successor to Je Rinpoche as) Throne Holder of Gaden, so gyaltsab has a connotation of the representative. So in Tibetan, his full name is written, Gyaltsab Darma Rinchen (དབྱལ་ཙེབ་དར་མ་རིན་ཆེན).  

4 He mainly received his education in the Sakya tradition. He went to different monasteries, and exactly what he studied is given in great detail in biographies. Never mind, it is not important for this class. He was a student of the renowned Sakya Master,

3 Gyaltsab Darma Rinchen (1364–1432) was born in Tsang province of central Tibet. He was ordained as a monk at the age of ten and given the name Darma Rinchen (dar ma rin chen).

4 Gyaltsab Je (དབྱལ་ཙེབ་རྒྱལ་ཙེ་བ་) studied at the Sakya Monastery, the Kadam monastery of Sangpu (gsang phu - ལྟོགས་ཕུ།), and the Kagyu monastery Tsetang (rtse thang, རྟེ་ཐང་ – which later converted to the Geluk tradition). Like Lama Tsongkhapa, he was also a student of the renowned Sakya Master Rendawa Zhoenu Lodroe (red mda’ ba gzhon nu blo gros).
Rendawa (རེད་མདའ་བ་). His full name is Rendawa Zhoenu Lodroe (རེད་མདའ་བ་བོད་མོ་). Some of you may have heard of his, so like Je Rinpoche, he was a student of Rendawa.

After he had received extensive education in different monastic institutions, he travelled to central Tibet where he went to different monasteries to receive teaching. And he had already heard of Je Rinpoche, who was from Amdo, Kumbun. His fame as a scholar and for his realizations and eloquence had spread.

There are stories people tell that are not contained in the actual biographies. You may have heard this story – in the Tibetan biographies, they do not tell this story, because they don’t think it is really accurate. But you can hear this story, or see this story, in Western texts. But it doesn’t really make sense.

It is a story that Gyaltsab Je was so proud and arrogant – and he may have had some pride, I don’t know. He was already a great master, but I don’t know deluded pride that His Holiness talked about during the last teaching. The Tibetan word, nga gyal [ང་ལྷ་], translates as arrogance. His Holiness said there is good arrogance and bad arrogance, so I think good arrogance would be self-confidence. So if you are self-confident and aware of your abilities, you do not just go to any type of teacher; you go to a teacher who has even greater qualities than you have. So, it makes more sense that Gyaltsab Je was that kind of person. And he heard about Je Rinpoche, and he was curious and went to his teachings. But the story that they tell and you find in Western books is that he was very arrogant, and he went to this teaching where Je Rinpoche was teaching on a throne; and he didn’t even remove his hat. And Gyaltsab Je came inside where Je Rinpoche was on the throne, he kind of went on to the throne also, pushed his way up onto the throne. And Je Rinpoche was not in any way disturbed, he just made some space for Gyaltsab Je. And as Gyaltsab Je was listening to Je Rinpoche, he realized these incredible qualities and how Je Rinpoche’s teaching, his profound way of explaining Emptiness and so forth. So then, he slowly came down from the throne, did the three prostrations and sat on the floor.

It’s kind of a sweet story, kind of funny and it is easy to remember. But, honestly, a scholar like Gyaltsab Je, I mean, who does that? There’s a lama on the throne, and you climb up and push him to the side. It doesn’t make sense. So it is a funny story, and it doesn’t say that in the biographies, and I talked to my teachers about it; and they don’t think it happened.

Basically, the idea that is said in the official and commonly published biographies, is that he heard about the fame and was curious. He wanted to hear Je Rinpoche’s teachings; and right away when he sat down – and not with pride or anything, definitely self-confidence but not full of pride, he sat down and he was right away totally impressed by the style of teaching, by the reasonings that Je Rinpoche put forth; and he

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5 After extensive study of the Prajnaparamita, Pramana, Vinaya, and so forth Gyaltsab Je became an accomplished and eloquent scholar of the Sakya tradition, famed for his intellect and knowledge.

6 While visiting different monasteries in Central Tibet, he met Lama Tsongkhapa. He had heard of Lama Tsongkhapa’s fame and went to attend one of Lama Tsongkhapa’s teachings at Ratrung Monastery. As Gyaltsab Je listened to Lama Tsongkhapa, he was astounded by the clarity and profundity of his teaching, and generated great faith. From that time on, Gyaltsab Je was completely devoted to Lama Tsongkhapa and became one of his main disciples.
decided right there and then, ‘He’s going to be my teacher. I’ll consider this man my teacher and I will rely on him.’

So from that time onwards, he was totally devoted to Je Rinpoche and became one of his main disciples. Usually, we talk about Gyaltsab Je and Khedrup Je, the two main disciples. Gyaltsab Je, being the elder, is usually depicted to the right of Je Rinpoche. This is something traditionally done in Tibetan society, when you see two monks to answer in a debate situation, especially when it is in an official organized debate, then the one in the older class will always sit on the right side. You will always notice that if this person is elder or maybe a Rinpoche or in anyway senior to the other person, they’ll always sit on the right side. I guess this comes from India; the right side being cleaner, this is why we show the right side and cover the left. Some will know what the left is used for and this is why it is usually covered. When you greet a lama, you put down your zen and cover your left arm. So this is traditional in India and Tibet. Therefore, Gyaltsab Je as the older main disciple usually, when you have a picture of Je Rinpoche in the center, then Gyaltsab Je and Khedrup Je, Gyaltsab Je is on Je Rinpoche’s right as the elder of the two.

We could tell Khedrup Je, but that is not who we are talking about. We are not using any of this text. Why? Because Khedrup Je was also a prolific author. Gyaltsab Je and Khedrup Je and Je Rinpoche, himself, of course, composed a lot of great commentaries that are very helpful. However, Gyaltsab Je’s commentaries were more on the sutric system; whereas, Khedrup Je’s commentaries are more on the tantric system, or they are more renowned. They both composed commentaries on sutra and tantra, but Gyaltsab Je is more popular or more renowned for his sutric commentaries; whereas, Khedrup Je is more known for his tantric commentaries.

Does anyone know other commentaries that Gyaltsab Je composed?

**Student:** On Santideva.

**GESHE WANGMO:** Yes, on Santideva’s *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Way of Life*. What else? Many of you know one in particular. Kiko, you know one.

**KIKO:** The commentary we have been using on the *Abhisamayalakara*.

**GESHE WANGMO:** Yes, absolutely. That commentary; and another one that is quite widely known, I mentioned it last time. The blind person shouldn’t blame the sun for not being able to see. Gyaltsab Je said that. I recited a verse from it. Gyaltsab Je composed a text on the *Four Hundred Verses*. Also, Gyaltsab Je composed a composed on Maitreya’s *Uttaratantra*. These are some of his most famous and very helpful commentaries. Of course, Santideva’s text is a little easier to understand, but the *Four Hundred Verses*, the *Uttaratantra*, have passages that are quite difficult. His explanations are considered extremely helpful; and of course, the *Abhisamayalakara*, also.

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7 He received extensive teachings from Lama Tsongkhapa and took copious notes. Being a prolific writer he composed numerous commentaries (such as the *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* - *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*). He also supervised the construction of Ganden Monastery.

Before Lama Tsongkhapa passed away, he appointed Gyaltsab Je as the first ‘throne holder’ of the Ganden (or Gelug) tradition.
So this gives you some sense of who Gyaltsab Je was. His writing is famously difficult. Actually, Khedrup Rinpoche did compose a commentary on the *Pramāṇavarttika* that is not used in the same way as Gyaltsab Je’s. I will, sometimes, when there is some difference between them, point it out. However, in general, I will use this text more; but it is harder; it is more difficult than Khedrup Je’s – the grammar, the way he uses the words, the sentence structure – Gyaltsab Je’s is a little harder to understand; Khedrup Je is a little easier to read.

**Buddhist Criticism of Pramana**

So going back to Dharmakirti: Dignaga composed the *Compendium of Pramana*. After he was done, a lot of people didn’t see this text as useful. So despite his earlier obstacles with the Brahman who wanted to destroy his text, etc., on top of that, even though Manjushri said the text will become “an eye for sentient beings,” it didn’t become an eye right away. It was very difficult to understand. And there was a lot of criticism of the text. This will be discussed a little bit later, but this idea of *pramana* or logical reasoning: people were not happy with this. Somehow, people felt, “This is not Buddhism. Why do you need logical reasoning to the extent described in this text.” Of course, logic and reasoning were used; but this text seems so focused on logic and so little – according to people’s opinion – on the Dharma, it was criticized for that. Some people said, logic, epistemologist, all of this logical reasoning, what do you need this for? This is not Buddhism. This doesn’t even come from the Buddha. Okay. The Buddha did say, ‘Investigate everything. Analyze everything.’ But the tools of that Dignaga, and later on Dharmakirti, prescribed – people were like, ‘This is taking it too far.’ Only slowly did people realize, ‘Oh, this is a very useful tool. It’s not the end, in itself; but it is a tool to understand the teachings better.’

And of course, as time went by, initially, it was easier to understand the teachings of the Buddha. It was easier just because the style of teachings was more in accordance with people’s ways of think, in accordance to the culture; it became as time went by to really understand what the Buddha said. So a new tool was made available, which was initially criticized.

Khedrup Je, in one of his commentaries, writes about this, and he says that ‘actually, most Buddhist texts are based on logical reasoning. There’s only one genre of teaching where you don’t question.’ In the sense, you do not check, ‘Is it correct or not.’ The other teachings, you should. The best way of reading a Buddhist text is to always be critical, skeptical, does that make sense; is that in accordance with my own experience; does this logically hold or not?” But there is one genre of teachings of the Buddha where you should not do so. What could that be?

**STUDENT:** Tantra.

**GESHE WANGMO:** Not tantra. Vinaya: the code of conduct of monks and nuns. It is not about whether or not this or that code is right or wrong. It just gives certain rules. That doesn’t mean that you cannot ask where do those rules come from? Is this rule still applicable? Because times have changed. That is a different matter. But, ‘What is the thought behind,’ etc., seeing it skeptically and critically, no. These are just rules that were helpful at the time that the Buddha set forth as he went along. So we do not debate the Vinaya, as such. There is debate on the Vinaya, but it is more like, ‘How does
this relate to that.’ That’s how you debate the Vinay; not in terms of, ‘Oh, does this hold? Isn’t that contradictory to that?’

All the other teachings, including the Tantric teachings, they are based on logic and it is encouraged to use the tool of logic. When you go to Gyuto and Gyumay, although it was not done in the past, nowadays, the monks debate; and they also debate the tantric teachings to get a better understanding. Because it is much easier to understand something when you have debated it. It always gets easier.

Just to understand that Dignaga was criticized first. And even in Tibet, some people held the view that these epistemological texts, like Dignaga and Dharmakirti’s texts – before in India, they served the purpose – not only for one’s own understanding, getting a deeper understanding, but also to debate with non-Buddhist philosophers. That is very helpful. It is not about converting them and being victorious in the debate. That was not the main purpose, which is to understand one’s own system better. This is quite obvious, like when the Buddha came along. The Buddha could have taught the Dharma in thousands of different ways. If he came in the 21st century, let’s say Buddha Shakyamuni had not come 2,600 years ago but came now, I’m sure he would teach Dharma very differently. Based on scientific discoveries or understandings – as His Holiness does now. For instance, the Aaron Beck explanation?

I’m not sure if Aaron Beck is still alive; if so he is in his Eighties. He was a cognitive psychiatrist, and he had done some research on anger. He said that anger, when people get angry, 90% of what they perceive in that moment is a projection. This is a very scientific kind of explanation; and Buddhism is saying, yes, that’s what the Buddha said 2,600 years ago. It is a misperception. We totally exaggerate in this moment; we no longer see things as they are. This is how His Holiness teaches.

Non-Buddhist Philosophies extant in India at the time of Buddha [did not exist later in Tibet & other Buddhist countries] and Pramana

And when the Buddha taught, he taught differently. Why? Because who were the highly respected scholars at the time? They were not scientists. They were non-Buddhist philosophers; right. The Brahmans, the great philosophers of Samkhya, Mīmāṃsaka, Lokhayata, all these different philosophical systems; and the language that they used, the Buddha took that language – because most scholars understood it – and then taught accordingly.

So to us, some of the teachings are so strange, some of the refutations. You wonder, ‘Why would you emphasize this so much? We don’t have a problem with this.’ Yeah, we don’t, but at the time, there were people who had very strong ideas about certain things that we may have never thought about. So when some of the teachings go on and on about it, we go, ‘Why? I understood that the first time he said that.’ But it is because of these philosophies of the time.

Of course, some of those philosophies do reflect our own sense of reality. Some of go to an extreme, but a lot of those non-Buddhist philosophies do strike a chord in us; there’s something that does make sense. Definitely with regard to the ‘I’. Whom am I? They said there is an ‘I’ and very beautifully.

The non-Buddhist systems did us a great favor. They very beautifully describe the object of refutation. If we talk about the ‘I’, we say, I’m going to find myself. We travel
the world to find ourselves. Do we ever sit down to say, This is the 'I', this, this and this. We don’t do that in the West; do we? But Indian philosophers of the time did.

And so the Buddha, according to those philosophies, the language he used, he refuted that kind of ‘I’; and he went even further, deeper levels of a type of ‘I’ that he refuted. Not the ‘I’ in general, but he refuted a specific type of ‘I’.

Therefore, it was helpful to have this tool of pramana, these tools of logic that were set forth, because it became harder and harder to understand the Buddha’s teaching, but also differentiate them from the non-Buddhist teachings. Being raised, possibly, in a non-Buddhist environment, or in a Buddhist and non-Buddhist environment, these great masters – we hear that Dignaga and Dharmakirti were born in a non-Buddhist families. I am sure they were very much conditioned by their own system, so in debating with one another, they would possibly see the fault in one system, and the advantage of another. So it helped them to understand their own system better.

It’s as true for a non-Buddhist, it was just as helpful to debate with a Buddhist, right, and then get a better understanding of their own view, which was for them the right kind of view if Buddhism was just not the religion that they wanted to follow.

Therefore, in Tibet, some people said, ‘Well, we don’t need Dignaga and Dharmakirti’s texts on logic any longer.’ Why not? Why did people say that in Tibet?

There were no non-Buddhists. I mean non-Buddhists – remember, I said the term non-Buddhist doesn’t necessarily mean someone who is not a Buddhist. Non-Buddhist meant philosophers of the Indian philosophical systems other than Buddhism that existed at the time of the Buddha and afterwards. So the Tibetan for this term isn’t equivalent to non-Buddhist, it literally means outsider. The term for Buddhist, nang pa [ནང་པ་] means insider. The word used in Tibetan means outsider, which of course is a matter of perspective. From the non-Buddhist perspective, Buddhists were outsiders. I don’t know what the Sanskrit term was, whether it was literally, outsider. I have no idea. But the point is, those were non-Buddhist philosophers; and those types of non-Buddhist philosophers did not come to Tibet; those teachings were not taken to Tibet. They had their own philosophical system or religious system, the Bon tradition and possibly some variations of other religious systems. But in any case, there were no non-Buddhist philosophers.

So some Tibetans said, ‘We don’t need this system,’ and there was great criticism of epistemology and so forth.

Dharmakirti’s Seven Treatises on [Dignaga’s] Compendium of Pramana – Three are like a Body; Four like Branches - TRACK 2

Going back to Dharmakirti. He composed seven commentaries on this. These seven commentaries – I’m not going to go into many details, but anyone who studies the

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8 As mentioned above, Dharmakirti composed seven commentaries on the Compendium of Pramana, referred to as the Seven Treatises on Pramana (tshad ma sde bdun- བདེ་བསྡུན་བདག་). These seven texts can be categorized into:

i. Three treatises that are like a body and
Pramanavarttika, usually in the monastic institutions, knows this much about the Seven Treatises. It’s not that much; usually, we only read the first one; we don’t read the other six. The first is the most extensive and is said to contain the information in the other ones. The other ones, there are actually seven that can be divided into three commentaries or three treatises that are like a body and four that are like branches.

I was having a little trouble using “that are like branches” to translate the Tibetan. The word, yan lag (ཡན་ལག), literally means branch; but it can also mean, limb. It could mean element. It has different translations depending on the context.

So the four treatises then are like branches; branches of what? And the three that are like a body. I chose the word branches, because the first three are just general commentaries on Dignaga’s Compendium on Pramana. General texts on logic and epistemology. The last four are not that general; they are more specific. In that, well, first, all four are really supplements to the first text, to the Pramanavarttika; they are just supplements; right.

I do not know how Dharmakirti went about it; but first, he composed the most extensive version, the Pramanavarttika. Then a somewhat shorter version, and then an even shorter version. So those the three treaties that are like a body.

In terms of their subject matter, they are very similar. They teach Eight Pivotal Points of Logic (བརྟོ་དོན་རྣམས་པར་ཟད). That sounds like a strange name. It is not the actual, literal translation, but a better translation of the meaning would be: Eight Tools of Logic. They are very, very important and will be explained.

In terms of pramana or epistemology, there are eight tools for this field of study of logic; understanding these is very helpful.

So the first three texts that are like a body teach all eight of the tools; each one of them teaches all eight. So like a body contains all of the parts of the body, likewise, those first three texts, which I can barely pronounce – I can only pronounce the Pramanavarttika. For the other two, I use the English name, the Ascertainment of Pramana, and Drops of Reasoning. Those three texts teach all eight pivotal point or tools of logic.

Whereas, the latter four do not teach all eight tools of logic; and moreover, they are just supplements to the first text. Does that make sense; those two? Okay

I think I said this in the Charts, you can see it here: [Chart 2. Dharmakirti’s Seven Treatises on Pramana.] Three Treatises that are like a Body.

My hope is that when you walk away from this class, you retain something, the most important bits at least. And I thought this would help you; the most important parts are in here.
2. DHARMAKIRTI’S SEVEN TREATISES ON PRAMANA:

The Seven Treatises on Pramana

Three treatises that are like a body
(1) *Pramanavarttika* (longest of the three texts)
(2) *Pramanaviniscaya* (slightly shorter)
(3) *Nyayabindu* (shortest of the three texts)

Four treatises that are like branches
(1) *Hetubindu* (supplement to the first chapter of the Pramanavarttika)
(2) *Sambandhapariksha* (supplement to the first chapter of the Pramanavarttika)
(3) *Samtanantarastiddhi* (supplement to the third chapter of the Pramanavarttika)
(4) *Vadanyaya* (supplement to the fourth chapter of the Pramanavarttika)

So it says the Three Treatises that are like a body, and those three are listed. So, they teach all eight pivotal points of logic.

9 And then the four treatises that are like branches teach only some of the eight pivotal points of logic and they are supplements to the first, third or fourth chapter of the Pramanavarttika.

So this will be explained a little further down, but they are just supplements to the Pramanavarttika.

There’s another explanation that is usually given regarding these three texts -- the *Pramanavarttika*; the *Pramanaviniscaya* (对手, Ascertainment of Pramana); and the *Nyayabindu* (投卵, Drops of Reasoning). I had a lot of trouble formulating and Tica was very helpful.

They primarily teach the four correct pivotal points and, in a hidden fashion or in an auxiliary fashion, they teach the four false pivotal points. We’ll come to this. There are correct pivotal points and false pivotal points. Really, when we say the eight tools of logic, really there are only four; and then four that seem to be real tools. How we

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9 *Typo as “three” on class handout*
confuse those to be the real tool will be explained. It's actually very important to identify the real ones and the wrong or incorrect ones.

This gives you some sense how those seven differ by way of having the three that are like a body and the four that are like branches.

Really what I want to get to is those Eight Pivotal Points of Logic, because they are extremely important. Whenever you study Buddhist philosophy, in one way or another, at least the first four come up, and often the last four do also. So as it says in your Handout [BEGINNING ON PAGE 4]:

The Seven Treatises on Pramana

As mentioned above, Dharmakirti composed seven commentaries on the Compendium of Pramana, referred to as the Seven Treatises on Pramana (tshad ma sde bdun - རྟེག་མ་ཐོབ་བདུན་). These seven texts are usually categorized or can be categorized into:

i. Three treatises that are like a body; and
ii. Four treatises that are like branches.

The three treatises that are like a body are listed here, and the four treatises that are like branches also are listed, both with their Sanskrit title first, and then the Tibetan and English.

Who composed the Compendium of Pramana?

STUDENT: Dignaga.

10 The three treatises that are like a body are:

a) Pramanavarttika (tshad ma rnam 'grel - རྟེག་མ་ཐོབ་བདུན་'གྲེལ་, Commentary on [Dignaga's Compendium of] Pramana)

b) Pramanaviniscaya (tshad ma rnam nges - རྟེག་མ་ཐོབ་བདུན་'རེ་, Ascertainment of Pramana)

c) Nyayabindu (rgigs thigs - རིགས་ཐིག་, Drops of Reasoning)

11 The four treatises that are like branches are:

a) Hetubindu (gtan tshigs thig pa - གཏན་ཐིགས་ཐིག་པ་, Drops of Logic).

b) Sambandhapariksha ('brel ba brtag pa - ཐེག་པ་བྲེལ་བ་, Investigating Relations).

c) Samtanantarasiddhi (rgyud gzhan grub pa - རྟུལ་གཞན་གྲུབ་པ་, Proof of Other [Mental] Continua)

d) Vadanyaya (rtsod pa'i riggs pa - རུས་པའི་རིགས་པ་, Reasoning of Debate).

Sambandhapariksha (on the relationship between correct reasons and predicates) are supplements to the first chapter of the Pramanavarttika, while the Vadanyaya (on the issue of other minds) is a supplement to the third and the Samtanantarasiddhi (on debate techniques etc.) is a supplement to the fourth chapter.
GESHE WANGMO: Good, just checking.

... on logic and epistemology. The first is the most extensive, the second is slightly shorter, and the third is the shortest. These three are *treatises that are like a body* because they each teach the *eight pivotal points of logic* (rtog ge’i tshig don rgyad - རྩོག་གེའི་ཚིགས་དོན་རྒྱ་དག). 12

Translation Issues re *tog gay* [ཐོག་གེའི] and *tshig don* [ཚིགས་དོན]

Again, *tog gay tshik don gay* [ཐོག་གེའི་ཚིགས་དོན་ཇ་]. I had problems with the words *tshig don* [ཚིགས་དོན], and I had problems with the word *tog gay* [ཐོག་གེའི].

I’ve translated, *tog gay* [ཐོག་གེའི], here as *logic*. Some people as *reasoning*. So *correct reasoning* is a good kind of *dog gay*, and *incorrect reasoning* – but likewise, *correct logic* and *incorrect logic*. There is logic that is not really logical, a false type of logic. So the word is sometimes used to describe *false logic*, but usually, that is clear from the context.

Or *logical reasoning* in general: we need logical reasoning; it is important to rely on logical reasoning to understand reality, for example. So then the word is used in the positive sense. So it can be used in a negative and positive sense. So that is the first word. I don’t know whether to use the *logic* or *reasoning*. Sometimes one is good; sometimes the other. Here I chose, *logic*.

Another reason that I chose *logic* here is because *dog gay* [དོན་%ད་] is because it means *logic* and *dog gay wa* [དོན་%ད་བ་] is the person who practices that, *so logic* and *logician*. So a *logician* who really follows correct logic; or a *false logician*. So that translation works, while *reasoning* doesn’t, *reasoner*. So that is another reason I selected the translation of *logic* over *reasoning* here; but if you are aware that it can have both connotations, it may help you to understand it better.

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12 The eight *pivotal points of logic*:

1. Correct inferential cognizers (*rjes dpag yang dag* - རྗེས་དཔག་ཡན་དག)
2. False inferential cognizers (*rjes dpag ltar snang* - རྗེས་དཔག་ར་*ང་)
3. Correct direct perceivers (*mngon sum yang dag* - མངོན་སམ་ཡན་དག)
4. False direct perceivers (*mngon sum ltar snang* - མངོན་སམ་ར་*ང་)
5. Correct proof statements (*sgrub ngag yang dag* - སྒྲུབ་ངག་ཡན་དག)
6. False proof statements (*sgrub ngag ltar snang* - སྒྲུབ་ངག་ར་*ང་)
7. Correct refutations (*sun ’byin yang dag* - སུན་’བིན་ཡན་དག)
8. False refutations (*sun ’byin ltar snang* - སུན་’བིན་ར་*ང་)
Tshig don \(\text{ཚགས་དོན་}\) – I had a problem with that translation. Here, I selected, pivotal points, that is, the most important points. Really, tshig \(\text{ཚགས་}\) means word; and don \(\text{དོན་}\) means meaning. In the Tibetan dictionary, tshig don \(\text{ཚགས་དོན་}\) is translated as either: word and meaning or the meaning of the word; right. Because in Tibetan, if you say, tshig don tang \(\text{ཚགས་དོན་དང་}\) – tang means and so you have meaning and word or word and meaning, and tshig kyi \(\text{ཚགས་ཀྱ་}\) – kyi is the genitive – tshig kyi don \(\text{ཚགས་ཀྱ་དོན་}\) means the meaning of the word. So, which one is it, we don’t know. Unless one knows the Sanskrit term for that and I haven’t met anyone.

Again, we do not know whether the translation was really literally from the Sanskrit. Anyway, this is not such a big deal. However, someone has also described it to me as the meaning of the most used words in logic – or the meaning of the most important terminology when you debate logic; those are the eight. But actually, it comes down to the most important points or most important tools.

When I double checked – and asked can you really call them, pivotal points or important points or tools – all my teachers agreed, they really liked tools.

So despite all of this confusing explanation that I just gave you, just think of tools of logic, eight tools – where really, the real tools are the four correct ones.

Okay. So, page 5 of the text.

Each of the three texts teaches the eight pivotal points of logic by primarily teaching the four correct pivotal points, while teaching the four false pivotal points in an ancillary fashion.

I mentioned that before. So those first three texts mainly teach those four correct tools primarily, and in a kind of ancillary fashion, in a less pronounced fashion, they teach the false ones. And then:

The last four texts are treatises that are like branches because they do not teach all eight ‘pivotal points of logic’ but only some of them, . . .

So each one of them teaches one or the other.

. . . and because they are just supplements to the first, third, or fourth chapter of the Pramanavarttika. The Hetubindu (on correct reasons) and Sambandharpriksha (on the relationship between correct reasons and predicates) are supplements to the first chapter of the Pramanavarttika, while the Vadanyaya (on the issue of other minds) is a supplement to the third and the Samtanantararassiddhi (on debate techniques etc.) is a supplement to the fourth chapter.
This is not extremely important information, but this is how much explanation is usually given. When we receive teachings on *Pramanavarttika*, this is usually what is explained about the Seven Treatises. If you can remember, great. Most importantly, knowing that there are three that are like a body and four that are like the branches.

**General Introduction**

*Importance of Logic to Counter Misperception of Reality*

Basically, the reason that I’m explaining those is in order to explain the *Eight Pivotal Points of Logic*, which are most important. I want to really go into this, why logic is important. Why do we bother about logic.

So I will just leave this for the moment, and give you some general information. As you know by now, I’m sure – most of you have a background in Buddhism and Buddhist philosophy – everything in Buddhism revolves around the misperception of reality. In other words, the removal of the misperception of reality. The reason that we suffer is because we do not perceive phenomena the way they are. And here, I’m not talking about on the deepest level – in terms of not understanding what is the self, what other phenomena are.

*In Everyday Living, our Afflictive Emotions are Based on Reasoning.*

I’m talking about day-to-day life. When you do self-reflective kinds of practices, looking at your own mind, we come to see that we hold so many wrong views, have so many misperceptions. ‘This person does so-and-so; that person thinks this and this; this is what the situation is.’

We take little clues, and then create a certain reality, and believe that to be the truth, and act accordingly. And often enough, we suffer, because, it is not actually what is going on. This needs to be explained and is incredibly important.

But another thing we do, we rely on reasoning all of the time. We use reasoning all of the time. Have you ever noticed: all day long, we are analyzing. I am not saying correct reasoning.

If you just take afflictions. Of course, we all know by know, the most harmful are our afflictive emotions such as anger, attachment, jealousy, arrogance; such as what else? 84,000, they say, different types: resentment, hatred, and so forth.

Sometimes, we use this expression – but it is actually not true: ‘He got angry without any reason.’ No, no, no. That usually means, ‘without a good reason.’ No one gets angry without a reason. We get angry because there’s a reason. In my case, I don’t know about your anger. But when I get angry, I get angry because he or she dared to do such-and-such. First, I think, ‘Oh, wow. They just said that.’ And then I get angry. There’s always a reason, and on the basis of that, – or I’m attached to something. I’m attached to a person; I’m attached to him or her because they benefit me; right. I’m attached to this or that object, because it helps me, because I can do this much better if I have that object, because it makes me sleep better, or whatever. There are always reasons.

We always have a reason, but that doesn’t mean that it is a correct reason. ‘I need this, because I can’t live without it.’ ‘I need this person, because I can’t live without them.’ And then we find out, well, we actually can. Surprise. But it seems in that moment –
and it is not on an intellectual level; it is deep within. It is not the intellectual that governs our emotions; it’s is deep within. These are emotional state that are still based on reasoning. They are deep emotions that come forth. Like, ‘Oh, the happiness this person gives me. I need them for my happiness. I can’t let go.’ Then of course, I worry when they are not around. I’m angry when someone else gets too close to them. I get jealous. All the other afflictions work very nicely with one another. They assist one another greatly. Usually if there’s jealousy, it’s not hard to find another affliction. With anger, if I’m angry at someone who is better than me; that is jealousy. Angry with someone having said something to me, because I’m a little better than him or her. So how dare they say that to me? They can say that to this person who is lower, but not to me. Right, arrogance. Or how dare they touch my stuff! It’s mine. Attachment. So there is always another affliction that works really well together.

**We constantly use logical analysis to perform tasks of living.**

But my point is that there’s always reasoning involved with the afflictive emotions; we are always analyzing. Our mind never stands still, and it is a kind of analysis: what did so and so say. Some of it is good. You need to think: what do I do first; what do I do next; how to get that cup of tea to actually taste like something. Especially, when you do something for the first time. There are procedures all throughout the day; and they are based on logic. Our minds are actually logical, based on logic. Unless certain emotions come in; then it gets a little … but we don’t always get it wrong.

In general, we are able to do certain things – we clean our room. That is based on logic. I mean, just throwing it from one side to the other side of the room is not logical; that doesn’t get the room clean. So it is all based on some logical system. It doesn’t even occur to us, I guess, because it is so simple.

My little nephew once asked me – it’s so weird. He was discovering the logic of cleaning his room. He said, ‘Why is it so quick to get dirty; and it takes so long to get it clean?’ I was like, ‘OMG. One day, he asked a really deep question.’ Because he was always asked to clean and that was annoying, because it always took much longer than it took to make it dirty. He discovered the logic of cleaning. Anyway.

**Correct Logic works because of Interdependence; Incorrect reasoning brings trouble.**

So everything is based on some type of logic. Why? Why would that be? It is because of interdependence; right. Things connect to one another. Therefore, if you do such and such, then such and such results. What is logic? Things connect. If A is B, then B also has to be this. So there’s this connection; things connect to one another. Does that make sense.

So reasoning allows us to understand things. And when we use false reasoning, we come to false conclusions; and we act on the basis of those, and we suffer. If I misperceive, if I think there’s no glass on the floor – whereas, there actually is – well, the moment I start stepping over it without my shoes on, I’ll suffer. If I think the red traffic light is actually green, I’ll suffer.

If our understanding is not in accordance with reality, we are bound to hurt ourselves. This is basically what the Buddha is saying. And since we get it wrong on such a deep level, that has consequences on a slightly coarser level.

If I don’t really understand how phenomena other than myself exist, if I separate myself from everyone else, don’t understand that this is just a convention, I and others, from
your perspective it is again, ‘I and others’, is totally different. But I have a sense that there is me very separate from everyone else. And I’m really sorry: but I am the center of the universe and no one else is. Then I act according to that, and then all these afflictions arise. In just one hour, look at your mind for one hour, all of the different misperceptions. It’s like a funny movie, funny story, if you look at your own mind. The stuff we create. Especially when emotions are involved.

This is what is beautiful about Buddhism. It uses emotions to undo this: faith in the Lama inspires us to practice. What inspires us, usually, to be attached, is the good feeling that the person gives us. You know, we are in love with someone, that inspires us to be attached. Success inspires us to be arrogant. There are certain emotions that give rise to our affective emotions. Buddhism offers certain emotions to counteract those: strong love, strong compassion, emotions that make you feel good, and use those to counteract the other ones.

So I think in Tibetan Buddhism, the importance of the lama, which sometimes people call Lamaism, which has a negative connotation. But there is an emphasis on the lama, because when you rely on the lama, there’s deep faith and deep happiness, then you are willing to follow the lama. There’s an emotion you replace. Then you want to practice; if there wasn’t that, it is much harder. Because we need some emotion; we need to replace one emotion with another one.

Without emotions that make us feel good, we are not going to do it. That is why, if you meditate too long – they say, ‘Don’t meditate too long; otherwise, you’ll want to throw up when you look at the meditation cushion.’ You won’t want to meditate any longer. It should be fun.

We work on emotions and reasoning. Reasoning is involved with the emotions that govern our actions.

*Many of our basic perceptions of reality are wrong, e.g., perceiving permanence rather than impermanent momentary change.*

Now, from a Buddhist point of view, many of our perceptions of reality are wrong; and since there is already a mistake – and sometimes I’m using an example on the deepest level, the deepest perception of reality is like the ingredients, the main ingredient.

If there is something wrong with the main ingredient, the result can only be a mess. The example I’ve given before is a rotten egg when you bake a cake. You can have the most incredibly wonderful ingredients, but if one egg is rotten, in the end, the whole things is messed up. Likewise, on the deepest level, the main ingredient is our perception of ourselves and others. If that is not in accordance with reality, if we add something to that that doesn’t exist, we are bound to add more, other afflictions that are not in accordance with reality.

We always exaggerate. We add a self that doesn’t exist. We add, to other phenomena, a mode of existence that doesn’t exist; and therefore, then out of those, we see ourselves as more precious, add some importance, which we don’t have; then with someone harms us, we add some negativity to them that they don’t have. When someone benefits us, we add some greater qualities that they do not possess, and we only look from one side.

When we get jealous with someone, we exaggerate the other quality we’re jealous of. When we’re proud or arrogant, we exaggerate our own quality. We always exaggerate, exaggerate, exaggerate. So on the basis of having already exaggerated, already added,
and then all the other afflictions keep adding things that are not in accord with reality, which is why Aaron Beck says that 90% of our anger is just a projection on what’s there. Projection means to add something.

Buddhism is all about, ‘Look again. Look again. Check it out. See whether that really makes sense or not. Is it really true? Does the self really exist the way it appears?

I don’t know whether or not you connect with that. If I ask you: are you permanent or impermanent? All of you are going to say, impermanent, of course. No one will disagree.

If I ask: do you live your life as if you are permanent or impermanent? Then I’m not sure. I say, yes, as if I was permanent. I live my life as if I was permanent.

So this is a little difficult. Because I said earlier on, our actions are not governed by our intellectual understanding but upon our notion, for lack of a better word. It’s more of an emotional sense. How often do I catch myself thinking, ‘This is going to last. I hope it is going to last.’ Even if it is something I don’t like, ‘Oh, this sucks’, because there’s a sense that it is going to last.

Do you know what I’m talking about: when you catch yourself – like of course, we plan our lives like we’re going to live forever. It seems that we are going to live forever, so we plan accordingly. ‘I’m definitely not going to die tomorrow.’ Okay, intellectually, it could be. But emotionally, ‘No way.’ I’ve already laid out everything for the next week, I do not have time to die; I’m very busy up to next week, next month, I’m too busy to die.

If you asked me: could you die tomorrow? I’d say, ‘Yes.’ Intellectually, of course, it makes sense. But deep inside, no way, I’ve got a full schedule. Therefore, there are these deep misperceptions that really govern our lives. In terms of emotions.

When we’re in a relationship, and there’s strong attachment – attachment to anything – we’re so scared of change. We hold on; we want it to stay the same. We are scared of change. Any type of attachment comes along with a fear of change, and the fear of change becomes a kind of wishful thinking, and before we know it, there’s a sense that it is going to last. And we are so surprised when it suddenly doesn’t. It was already on its way out the moment it came into existence, but we didn’t notice that. From A to B, it was on its way to going out, and then suddenly, it’s gone; and we’re like, ‘What happened? How could that be? It was permanent’ until that moment.

What I’m trying to express here is the idea that we need to connect to these misperceptions that are not just intellectual, but are much deeper. And this is what Buddhism is trying to do. The idea of changing moment by moment. My whole being is going, “NO.” I feel deeply within, I feel like almost like putting down my feet, ‘No impermanence! It’s permanent!’ I want it to be, and I catch myself again and again believing in some kind of permanence. All of the time, all day long. When you start looking, checking the situation, reflecting.

**Correct Inferential Reasoning is required to understand Hidden Phenomena**

Therefore, to us impermanence is hidden. But there are two types of impermanence. There’s the coarser type of impermanence. If I now take an axe and destroy this table, then what you perceive is the coarse type of impermanence. If I blow out a candle – you know, the last moment of a candle flame, the next moment, it is gone – that is the coarse kind of impermanence.
But the coarse type is only possibly because there's constant change; constant change. When you wake up in the morning, you are not the same person. When you go to sleep, you are not the same person. When you came into this room at four, and now at five, you are not the same person. Does it feel like you are still the same? Of course. Okay. We can kind of accept: Okay. My body's been changing, and the molecules and the enzymes have been doing their jobs, and they've been creating new cells and transporting whatever needs to be transported; but I was there the whole time. I'm still the same. I haven't changed. There's a sense of that self that is still the same. There you go; welcome. A sense of a permanent self.

Therefore, to understand impermanence, impermanence is a hidden phenomena to us. Not to everyone. It is something hidden to us. It is not obvious to us. This table is something obvious. We can easily understand the table. We can easily understand a lot of phenomena around us. A lot of phenomena are described as obvious or manifest. I'm not talking about all of the characteristics of these phenomena. But just table, whiteboard, microphone, mp3 player; those things we know. But the impermanence of that microphone, the impermanence of this, my own impermanence, those are different matters. Those are slightly hidden to us.

Misunderstanding Hidden Phenomena causes Suffering; that Misunderstanding can only be countered by Correct Inferential Reasoning

Since they are slightly hidden to us – I understand that my misperception of permanence, perceiving myself to be permanent, relationships to be permanent, the whole thing, it causes me to suffer.

Does that make sense to everyone, how that is a problem? Perceiving things to be permanent, not going with the flow; wanting things to be the same; sometimes wishful thinking, wanting it so hard that we start believing it; sometimes we just believe in it because we’re so habituated.

Therefore, it makes sense that this gives us trouble. How can we overcome that mind. It is actually an awareness that holds on to permanence. How can we overcome that mind? By understanding impermanence. Replacing the misperceiving mind with another type of awareness.

His Holiness just said it during the teachings. Was it His Holiness, or was it during the review and I was translating? Or was it during the question and answer with the Singaporeans? I get confused. I think it was maybe during the question and answer session with the Singapore group, where His Holiness said, 'The mind that doesn’t know ‘A, B, C’ is replaced with the mind that knows A, B, C.”

If there is a mind that doesn’t know the alphabet, then it can only be replaced by a mind that knows the alphabet, then you get rid of the first one. This is just a law of nature, if you like.

Therefore, likewise, is we have a sense of permanence, we can only get that mind that perceives permanent that is so strong and so powerful, and really pops up all the time. It may just pop up for a few seconds, you may not even be aware of it but you are already acting on it. That is what is so fascinating about watching one's own mind, being alert, is a matter of catching those tiny moments. And every time we allow them to stay a little bit, they are strengthened. So it pops up more often. And then it leads to all the trouble. So we can only replace it with a mind that perceives impermanence.
Six *Directly Perceiving Consciousnesses & One Conceptual Consciousness (relying on Generic Images)*

But can we do that with our eye consciousness? Can do that with our sense consciousnesses? Not at all. We can’t. We need to use the *mental consciousness*: the mind that can analyze, investigate.

We have six types of consciousness: five sense consciousnesses (eye, ear, nose, tongue and body consciousnesses), those are the ones that allow us to perceive the world around us. Those are not important here. The mental consciousness, the constant chatter in the background.

There are two types: direct perceiver and a conceptual mind. It is difficult to understand, *conceptual* and *non-conceptual*. Those in the class who do not know the difference between a *conceptual* and *non-conceptual* mind, can you please raise your hand? Who knows about the *generic image* and who doesn’t?

Okay. I need to say one thing about the *generic image*. A conceptual mind that takes some object to mind – let’s say, for example, the whiteboard – if I ask you, think about the whiteboard then when you think about the whiteboard, the whiteboard appears to you; doesn’t it?

So now, I’d like you to do a test. Look at the whiteboard. It is your eye consciousness that checks out the whiteboard, that perceives it directly. And then I’ll ask you to close your eyes and think about the whiteboard. Close your eyes.

Does the whiteboard appear? When you first look at the whiteboard, and then you close your eyes and think about the whiteboard, does it appear?

Does it appear exactly, as clearly, as when you looked at it? No. Why? Because what appeared was actually a *generic image*, a representation of the whiteboard.

When you close your eyes – I ask you to close your eyes, because otherwise it is difficult for us to differentiate between the *generic image* that appears to the conceptual mind and the actual whiteboard that appears to your eye consciousness. It is very difficult to differentiate.

So when you look at the whiteboard with your eye consciousness, you have the actual whiteboard appearing: but when you think about it, at the same time, you also have a *generic image* of the whiteboard appearing. But since this appearance is stronger, you are not aware of it. But when you close your eyes and continue to think about the whiteboard, something appears there that is not the actual whiteboard. It is just what is called a *generic image*. It is a representation of that.

Now, of course, if I ask you to now think about the breakfast you had this morning – unless you’re on a diet. But if you had breakfast, or at least tea or coffee, think of that coffee or tea. And the moment you do that, it appears. Not from all sides. You know, from what you remember, there’s kind of an image that comes up. It is not the full image as if it was in front of you. That’s called a *generic image*. You can only get at the object through this *generic image* – that is a *conceptual mind*. 
And this isn’t something that only Buddhists talk about. I used to subscribe to a magazine called the *Scientific American Mind* that talked about this image that we use. They may have used a different term, I forget.

So things that are not in our sphere of vision, not here in time, we can nonetheless take to mind because we have this very helpful mind that is called a conceptual consciousness. Because the image, it is due to the memory we have, it allows us to conjure up an image or some representation of the object, and then we can think about the object. We can’t get at it directly. Directly would be when it is in front of us, we directly perceive it with a sense consciousness when it is front of us. Whereas, here it is indirectly; it is not a direct mind. It is an indirect mind, indirect by way of the generic image.

So it is like a song. If I ask you to remember a song, I may not be doing you a favor, because as you walk home, and it’s like going round and round in your mind. So I’m not going to mention any song now. But you can actually play a song in your mind. Is that a song? No, it is not sound. It is a representation of that.

I can ask you to think of the taste of the coffee this morning. And you can almost taste it – almost, because it is just a representation of that taste. That is a conceptual mind that takes to mind the meaning generality, i.e., the generic image of the taste.

**Conceptual Minds must use Correct Inferential Reasoning to realize Hidden phenomena (that are not accessible to sense consciousnesses).**

So these are conceptual minds. In order to understand subtle impermanence, initially, we can only use a conceptual mind. We can only use a conceptual mind. And not only that: we need to deduce, we need to use inference to understand subtle impermanence. Why? Because – yes, please.

**STUDENT:** I have a question. I don’t understand so well direct, indirect perceivers?

**GESHE WANGMO:** I’ll explain those. I’ll explain those. We’ll come to those. I’ll totally explain in a moment.

**Eight Pivotal Points of Logic**

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13 Among the four correct pivotal points of logic, (1) correct inferential cognizers and (3) correct direct perceivers are considered to be the tools that facilitate our own understanding; they function mainly for our own benefit, for they enable us to accomplish our personal short- and long-term goals by replacing harmful misperceptions with well-founded recognition of reality.
Correct Inference, Correct Syllogisms & Inferential Cognizers

But first, I want to explain the correct inference. I gave you some explanation but it is not sufficient.

Inferential Cognizers

Let’s first talk about inferential cognizers.

14 Correct inferential cognizer and inferential cognizer are the same thing. Something that is incorrect, incorrect logic is not real logic is not real logic. An incorrect mind, well, an incorrect mind is still a mind. A false correct mind is not a real correct mind. Likewise, an inferential cognizer is always a correct inferential cognizer. But we think a false inferential cognizer is a correct inferential cognizer. There’s an example later.

In order to understand inferential cognizer, I would like you to look at your Charts. I didn’t know how to put page numbers when I printed this out. Now, I know. Because some are oriented vertically on the page and some horizontally. After this, I Googled it and found out how to do it, so the final version of the charts will have page numbers.

14 (1) Correct inferential cognizers and inferential cognizers are equivalent. Inferential cognizers are conceptual consciousnesses that realize their main objects in dependence on correct reasons. These types of consciousness are essential for Buddhist practice because they facilitate the realization of essential concepts, such as the suffering nature of cyclic existence, impermanence, selflessness, etc. which need to be apprehended in order to gradually eliminate the numerous misperceptions that are responsible for our problems and difficulties. However, most of these essential concepts are slightly hidden phenomena and cannot be perceived initially without relying on logical reasoning. Logical reasoning, in turn, relies on logically correct syllogisms. An example of such a syllogism is:

Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is impermanent, because it is a product of its own causes and conditions. Like the last moment of a candle flame, for instance.
6. INFERENTIAL COGNIZERS

An inferential cognizer

- Is a conceptual consciousness (and thus a mental consciousness) that realizes its main object by way of a generic image of the main object appearing to the inferential cognizer
- Is a mistaken consciousness because it is mistaken with regard to its appearing object. It is mistaken with regard to its appearing object because the object's generic image appears to be the actual object
- Is a correct awareness because it correctly apprehends its main object
- Realizes its main object which from the perspective of that inferential cognizer is a hidden phenomenon
- Arises in dependence on a correct reason (correct syllogism)

Correct Syllogisms

Anyway, on page two, the header at the top says, *Charts for the Second Chapter*, and there are three charts on the page (3-5). Look at No. 5, *Correct Syllogisms*. What is it saying? Basically, the idea is that an inferential cognizer is a mind that deduces something, that infers something because of a certain reason.

So I'll give you a classic example, an easy everyday kind of example, for example: the presence of fire in a house – that is not hidden to us; right. We do not have a strong misperception of the existence of fire; as opposed to discussion earlier of our strong misperception of *permanence* which is why *impermanence* is hard for us to understand on a deep emotional level, subtle *impermanence*, the subtle changing of phenomena. We do not have that with fire in general.

However, due to circumstances, fire can be hidden to us; literally, hidden to us. Because if the fire inside a house, and the walls of the house hide the fire from us, in that moment, we can say the fire in the house is *hidden* to us. Usually, the example given in the scriptures is, fire on a mountain pass. You have a huge mountain, and you have a fire there, but you can’t see the fire; maybe it is just behind the first rock, so you can’t see it due to its location. But you can infer its existence by way of smoke. The type of smoke that comes from a fire, of course, not steam and so forth. So on the basis of the result of fire, the smoke, that is not hidden to us, we can infer, ‘Well, there’s fire on the mountain pass.

And we do that all of the time. We may not formulate it. We may not say, ‘Oh, I just cited a correct syllogism!’ We don’t use that language, but we actually use syllogisms all of the time. Some of them are incorrect syllogisms. ‘Oh, my friend is happy because he smiles.’ That is not a correct syllogism. Whoever smiles is not necessarily happy.
A *correct syllogism* would be: on a mountain pass, there is fire because there's smoke billowing above it. Or: In my neighbor's house, there's fire, because there's smoke coming out of the doors and windows.

Because fire and smoke are connected with one another, and because one is obvious to us, on the basis of one, we can deduce the other; similarly, with *impermanence*. *Impermanence* relates to lots of other things. There are a lot of other phenomena that exist because there is *impermanence*; or there are a lot of other characteristics of phenomena that are more obvious to us, and those we can use as proof to establish *impermanence*. This is was a *correct syllogism* refers to.  

### 5. CORRECT SYLOGISMS

**An example of a correct syllogism:**

Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is impermanent, because it has arisen from its own causes and conditions. Like the last moment of a candle flame, for instance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Predicate</th>
<th>Correct reason</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The physical body</td>
<td>[is] impermanent</td>
<td>has arisen from its own causes and conditions</td>
<td>the last moment of a candle flame</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The object that is to be established

(in dependence on this reason the following inferential cognizer is cultivated)

An inferential cognizer realizing that the physical body is impermanent

If you look at this chart of a *correct syllogism*, it uses the physical body as the **subject**. But I'll change it. I want to use the **person**; I want to use the **self**.

A *syllogism* is basically just saying: **A** is **B** because it is **C**. The word *syllogism* comes from the Greek, and has been borrowed for the translation of this Buddhist idea; the Tibetan is *ten dzig yang dag* (གཏན་ཚིགས་ཡང་དག) for *correct syllogism*. Anyway, it basically is saying: **A** is **B** because it is **C**. If it is actually correct, then it is called a *correct syllogism*. So to give you an example:

The **subject**, inside the house there is fire, because there is smoke. There is a **basis** for the fire, which is the house. The house is the basis or the **subject**. The basis, inside the house, there is fire because there is smoke.

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15 A correct syllogism has four parts: a (i) subject, (ii) predicate, (iii) correct reason, and (iv) example. In the case of the syllogism cited above, “physical body” is the subject, “impermanent” the predicate, “being a product of its own causes and conditions” the correct reason, and “the last moment of the candle flame” the example. Furthermore, the composite of the two, the subject (physical body) and the predicate (impermanent), constitutes the **object that is to be established** (*bsgrub bya* - བཞི་རིགས་པ་). Hence, “the physical body is impermanent” is the above syllogism’s **object that is to be established**.
If I want to establish, to prove that the self is impermanent. There are other things that are more obvious to us. The self is the SUBJECT, the basis. “The self is impermanent” is the PREDICATE. The PREDICATE is impermanent. The CORRECT REASON: because it has arisen from its own causes and conditions; it was produced by its own causes and conditions. Something gave rise to it.

So whatever is produced by causes and conditions, the cause for its production is also the cause for its destruction. Right. So impermanence just means changing, going out of existence. So the cause for our birth is also the cause for our death. Since we were born, we are going to die. Therefore, if something is produced by causes and conditions, it has to go out of existence eventually.

Therefore, it is impermanent; it changes moment-by-moment. Within these sub-moments, each moment is actually different, each moment gives rise to a new moment, new moment.

The self is impermanent. The self is the SUBJECT, the basis. It is impermanent – that’s the PREDICATE. Because it is the product of its own causes and condition. And that is what is written on Chart No. 5: The SUBJECT [that is the self, or the physical body]. PREDICATE: is impermanent. CORRECT REASON: has arisen from its own causes and conditions.

What is it that you want to realize? What is it that you want to understand? The object that is to be established – as said in Tibetan. You want to understand whether A is B.

That is what you want to understand. So if you had, for example: On the mountain pass as A, the SUBJECT. There is fire – that’s B, the PREDICATE. Those two, the composite of those two is what you want to understand. That is what you want to understand.

Or about myself, I want to understand that I am impermanent. My sense of permanence makes me suffer. That’s a problem. So when I say, ‘I want to understand impermanence.’ Impermanence based on what? My own impermanence. So if I want to understand impermanence, when we talk about impermanence or selflessness, it is always the selflessness of something. The impermanence of something. So you always have two aspects. You have a basis, the SUBJECT, and then a kind of characteristic of that, which is the PREDICATE. So, A is the SUBJECT; and then you have a characteristic that you want to understand that, B, the PREDICATE. You always have those two.

Anything we understand is usually the combination of those two. I am impermanent. My happiness is actually in the nature of suffering. My happiness does not last in other words. These kinds of ideas. I think that my happiness is permanent. The objects that give me happiness will always do so; but that is not the case. So my happiness is not in the nature of real, lasting happiness. My happiness [that is the SUBJECT] is not in the nature of real happiness [that’s the PREDICATE]. But then I have to prove that on the basis of a CORRECT REASON.

So the CORRECT REASON gives me access to the understanding of that composite of A and B; that is the object to be established.
So an inferential cognizer is a mind that understands that A is B after having reflected on the reason. After you have reflected on the reason again and again, the end result is a mind that understands that A is B in dependence on a correct reason. 16

Does that make sense? Do you want me to do a drawing on the white board. Would that be helpful? Sure.

[Geshe-la stands up at the whiteboard].

So, I am using the translation of the Tibetan word, Subject [chos-can - དབྱུང་གནད་], which is basically the basis for any kind characteristics. So A. Then B, that is the Predicate or characteristic. That is a very loose term here, but a certain characteristic. And I prove those two together on the basis of the Reason.

So if I want to prove anything, e.g., on the mountain top [the basis], there is fire. This is a little awkward in English, which goes the other way around: There is fire on the mountain top. On the basis of that, this characteristic, the existence of fire, is there.

How do you prove it? On the existence of smoke because: because there is smoke.

So this is easier to understand because this is obvious [the smoke], and this is hidden [the fire]; but since there is a connection between the two, the two are related, we can deduce that if B is there, A must be there. So on the basis of reflecting on this correct reason, e.g., understanding that wherever there is smoke, there must be fire. If you understand the properties of this correct syllogism here [on the mountain pass, there is fire because there is smoke], then in the end, you are able to understand this, and generate what is called an inferential cognizer.

So it is technical language, and you may wonder, why is it so complicated? We do this all the time. There are so many things we don’t have direct access to. And then if you just wonder what are the ingredients in your cake or entrée, well, they must have put some salt in something, because it tastes salty. You deduce that someone has put salt in the tea, because it is salty.

It is so easy, you may fell, why would you bother to think about A, B. What would be the basis? The tea. It has salt in it because it is salty.

All of the time, we use inferential cognition; we have inferential cognizers all the time. These examples are easy to understand. Where the Predicate, on the basis of the Subject, is just temporarily hidden to us.

**Using Correct Syllogisms to overcome clinging to notion of my Self being permanent**

What about phenomena that are always hidden to us? Hidden for as long as we perceive the opposite. We have a very strong notion of the self being permanent. So, here, instead of mountain pass, you replace that with the self, my ‘I’, myself – the most

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16 After having realized the different aspects of the syllogism – e.g., that the physical body is a product of its own causes and conditions, that whatever is a product of its own causes and conditions is necessarily impermanent, and so forth, a practitioner eventually generates an inferential cognizer realizing the object that is to be established, i.e., realizing that the physical body is impermanent. Since such realization arises in dependence on a correct reason (being a product of its own causes and conditions) inferential cognizers are described as conceptual consciousnesses that realize their main objects (e.g. that the physical body is impermanent) in dependence on correct reasons.
important thing in the world, by the way! More important than everyone else! So, the Self. In my case, it is my Self.

It seems as though it is permanent, unchanging. There’s a permanent self that was here at 3:00 o’clock; entered the room at 4:00, and is still here now. The same thing, the same self. It is almost as though I carried into the room and I sat down with it. It is somewhere right here (in my body) or here – I don’t know; everyone has a different sense of location. But sometimes I ask jokingly, but seriously, a lot of people point at different parts of their body. To me, myself, is behind my eyes. A lot of people say it is in the center of their chest. I’ve never heard anyone say, ‘it’s in my elbow’ or ‘my knee.’ Usually, people say: the belly, heart, the head, the eyes. They have the sense that is permanent.

If you check, that sense of a permanent self leads, of course, to a sense of other permanent things: permanent situation, permanent friends, permanent qualities, permanent this, permanent that. And that causes suffering; especially, when it is taken away, and suddenly, you are confronted with its non-existence. Of course, it was already on its way out of existence from the moment of its creation.

However, in order to understand that, we need to gain an understanding that: the Self is impermanent.

So, usually, the Predicate is said to be impermanent. That is why we put it in brackets, because it is a characteristic that we are trying to prove here is impermanent. So, is impermanent is how you would actually formulate it. The Self is impermanent – that is what we need to understand. That is the Object to be Established, which is a composite of the Subject and the Predicate.

Then, how do we get there? Unfortunately, e don’t just think, ‘Oh, I want to understand; I want to know,’ and then miraculously, we know. We need to rely on a reason that connects to this but is easier to understand, that is not hidden.

So, a Reason would be: that it is arisen from its own causes and conditions. Something gave rise to this Self; right.

What is the Self, anyway? First, we need to get a sense of what the Self is; and then understand: what are the causes and conditions that give rise to it.

Doing that, the causes and conditions that gave rise to the Self: what would those be? Parents – I mean, who I am right now: how many factors were involved? Teachers, parents, schools, food, medicine, whatever kept me alive – and when I’m talking about the Self, I’m talking about the Self right now.

Therefore, causes and conditions: I am the result, and I have arisen as a result of causes and conditions. Those causes and conditions, I can understand those; I can even perceive them with my eye consciousness. With my senses, I can perceive these causes and conditions; take specific ones, and remember have perceived those.

So I understand that – here the Self the Reason would be a different one here:

The Self is impermanent because it is arisen from its own causes and conditions.

This is something that is obvious to me; and this very much connects to this, because whatever arises from its own causes and conditions, must be impermanent.

So there’s a connection between those two: whatever is this must be that.
So whatever is arisen from its own causes and conditions must be impermanent. And the Self has arisen from its own causes and conditions. Therefore, it also must be impermanent.

If you take that to mind long enough, we can actually come to an understanding. It takes time. This is simplified. It takes a lot of analysis, a lot of meditation – in a certain environment where you can focus on it again and again. Where you can actually come to a understanding. You can generate a mind, the object of which is: the Self being impermanent. You can cultivate a mind that is called an inferential cognizer.

Why is it called an inferential cognizer? Well, it cognizes – it realizes its main object, the Self being impermanent. And it does so through inference, inferential reasoning. Inferring that the Self is impermanent on the basis of this.

So the end result is the inferential cognition that the Self is impermanent. That is the only way, it is said in the Scriptures, that we can initially come to an understanding.

Now, sometimes, people ask: can you not miraculously know something? Well, you can only miraculously know, if had an inferential cognizer in a previous life. You’d just forgotten about it, and then it popped up again in this life. But it is said that to initially get an understanding of something hidden – how can we access that?

How can we access that the Self is impermanent without relying on reasoning? If you have another solution? But just spontaneously, unless – okay. If you do not have a perception of permanence, then it is not hidden to you. But we do. We are within samsara, we have minds that grasp onto a Self, a certain, specific kind of self: independent, intrinsic self. Then as the result of that, we will also perceive a permanent Self. It is just a consequence of that.

Therefore, as ordinary human beings, we will have a sense of the permanence of the Self; and that is a block to our understanding that the Self is impermanent. But we can come to an understanding by using logic.

The logic involved here is this relationship between the different aspects of this reason. They are all based on logic. It all makes sense; they connect to one another. It is not saying that the self is impermanent because today is Friday. That is not a correct reason; right? It is totally unrelated. It is a reason that connects to this and that; and from that an inferential cognizer arises. And we use inferential cognizers in terms of everyday life. We have those a lot.

This is a correct inferential cognizer. And it realizes its object; it knows, 100%, the Self is impermanent. And afterwards, now matter what someone tells you, you will not have any doubt about the impermanence of the self once you do realize it.

That is the difference between just assuming the self is impermanent; as opposed to understanding, knowing, realizing it on the basis of a reason.

That’s a difficult process. It takes time, a lot of time, a lot of analysis. But the point I am trying to make here, is that it is based on logic, so the end result is, therefore, an inferential cognizer.

Inferential Cognizer is the result of having reflected on this reason. Realizing that the self is impermanent.

[Geshe-la returns to her seat].
1. **Correct Inferential Cognition** (*rjes dpag yang dag - རྟེས་དཔག་ཡང་དག - ) - **Track 4**

In Buddhism, this is where *logic* comes in. When we say a *correct reason* – that is what *logic* means. Logical reasoning is expressed by way of such a *correct reason*. It is based on logic, on reasoning.

It doesn’t need to be only one *correct syllogism*; it could be many, many different reasons that we reflect on, why is the *self* impermanent.

For the sake of simplicity, I’ve chosen one example. Usually, one example does it. You think of many, many reasons, but it is one reason that really hits you. ‘Oh!’ And then one day, you realize it. That is the reason that actually got you there; it’s usually one specific reason; although the other ones help you.

But an inferential cognizer is, therefore, described as a mind that realizes its main object – which is hidden. It is a hidden object to that mind or to the person who has that mind, for whatever reason, it is hidden. And that then, on the basis of that correct reason, that mind realizes it.

In order to understand something like selflessness or impermanence, in order to understand that, those things that are the opposite of what we perceive and that make us suffer, those are understood through an inferential cognizer. We have misperceptions of these objects: we perceive the *self* to be permanent when it is not. We perceive a *self* that is separate from mind and body, as though it is pointable somewhere in the body. We perceive a *self* that is more precious. We perceive the objects of our desire as being in the nature of happiness – real lasting happiness – which they are not. If the objects of our happiness were in the nature of real happiness, the more we did them – the more we watched a movie – the happier we would get. If watching a movie was in the nature of happiness, if being with a friend was in the nature of happiness, then the more we were with this friend, then the greater our happiness. But only the first moment is real bliss. And then slowly, slowly, slowly, five hours, ten hours, hum. And we need to change the object. Yet there is a sense that it is real happiness. Deep within, why don’t I yet have renunciation?

Why do I not have the wish to overcome the suffering nature of cyclic existence? Because I am very attached to my happiness. I’m very attached to my contaminated happiness. The happiness of this lifetime, somehow, seems to promise me real lasting satisfaction. And until I understand that it cannot give me that – not just intellectually – I can debate it and give you all the reasons, blah, blah; but it doesn’t feel like that inside. As long as it still feels that this really gives me satisfaction, this really makes me happy, well, I’m not going to give up and I’m going to continue suffering.

Therefore, this reasoning is something that allows me to understand this. My happiness, which is limited, is limited happiness, is *in the nature of suffering*. It is *not suffering*; it is *in the nature of suffering*. Because – and then there are all these reasons.

On the basis of that, I generate what is called an *inferential cognizer*.

Can you see that in order to get an understanding of something that is hidden to us, we need to depend upon an *inferential cognizer*, which is that mind that understands that. And that mind, in turn, depends upon logic, on reasoning. This is logic. The principle of logic is used when you say that the *self* is impermanent because it has arisen from its own causes and conditions.
This is why logic is said to be so important: because, otherwise, how are we going to access these phenomena that are hidden to us right now due to our strong perception of the opposite? You may disagree. Sure, enough. It could be that just by reciting a mantra, I could just spontaneously come to realize it. But how is that possible?

If reciting a mantra is the cause of gaining the realization, if that is the main cause, then, first of all, it would be the case for everyone – reciting a mantra would lead to that, because it is the main cause of that.

And where is the connection between the two? There must be a connection. Out of an apple seed, I don’t get a peach tree; right? Right? Just reciting a mantra can become a cooperative condition. It can become a conducive condition; but the main cause is a mind that understands the opposite of the misperception. And I need to get to that through a reason; I cannot access it; it is too deep for me, too hard for me to understand. But something that connects to that, that is easier to understand, that allows me to access it.

That is an inferential cognizer: a mind that does that based upon a correct reason.

That is extremely important. This is why Buddhism says reasoning is important; logic is important. It is important, of course, first, to investigate other teachings; something that is beneficial for me or not? Is this something? Yes, for all of that. But even on a deeper level, if I want to start removing my misperceptions that are responsible for my problems and difficulties, I need to get my understanding of reality right.

**First, become aware of my own misperceptions.** If you just look from morning to evening, the moment you feel a little bit unhappy, check. The moment there is a sense of dissatisfaction; there’s a sense of unhappiness. And those pop up again and again. I’m not talking about deep rooted depression, feeling so depressed that you do not want to get out of bed. I’m just talking about two seconds of discomfort: where does that come from? Check. Mental discomfort; I’m not talking about tooth ache. Just a mental discomfort, something’s not right. What was that? Maybe a situation that I felt was going to last that did not last; or a situation – not in terms of permanent. It could be other things like, ‘It was so quiet before; and now it is noisy. OMG. It was supposed to last and it didn’t.’ Something bothers me.

Does that make sense? The inferential cognizer, the correct inferential cognizer is the first tool of logic.

### 2. False Inferential Cognition (*rjes dpag ltar snang* - རྒྱུད་དཔག་ལྟར་སྒུན་) 

There is also a wrong inferential cognizer, a false inferential cognizer. How often do we think we’ve understood something, number 1. Because this mind, a false inferential cognizer, realizes its object. And it takes some self-awareness to be able to understand the difference between assuming something and realizing something. It is not that easy.

And a lot of things we think we know, we realize we didn’t or don’t realize; we just believe them. Many of you have heard this example so many times. I ask you, what day were you born? And someone tells me, March 3. I said, ‘Do you know that?’ ‘Yes, I know that.’ And then I ask, ‘100%?’ ‘No, not 100%.’ Well if you do not know 100%, it means you do not know; you do not realize.
To realize means beyond doubt. You have an incontroversible understanding. Whatever someone else would tell you afterwards, they could not get you to let go of that understanding. That is what realization means.

And I think there’s very little in life that we realize. One thing we realize is that we don’t realize much. That we can realize. But there is so little we know. We say, ‘I know, I know,’ and this is not to say, we are using it wrongly. In everyday language, that is acceptable. But when I say, ‘I know,’ oftentimes, it means, ‘I believe.’ I have strong reasons to believe; I assume.

But here, we are talking about an understanding that is certain; afterwards, you understand, you are impermanent. And that is shaking up the mind that perceives yourself to be permanent. But it is still just a conceptual mind.

Incorrect/false Syllogism [ten dzig ltar snang - ཐེན་རྩི་ལྟར་སྙིང་]

First, I want to say a little more about the false inferential mind. The point is here, sometimes we say, A is B because it is C, but it is not a correct reason. We use a lot of logic, ‘This person is not a good person because they said I am not nice.’ Or, ‘This person is totally negative, has no good qualities, because they don’t like me.’ I’m not saying that we are actually saying this to other people; that would be embarrassing because we know it is so wrong. But deep inside, it feels that way.

When we are attached to someone, what is going on in our mind? We would never tell someone else. It is seeing this other person as so wonderful, so positive. It just this total exaggeration of what is actually there. I’ve told you jokingly, when you are a teenager, and you are in love with someone, and this person has a backpack. Just seeing the backpack, it’s beautiful. It’s that guy’s or that girl’s backpack, so everything about them is wonderful, even the backpack. I remember I was in love with someone, and their backpack, I saw the backpack, and went, ‘Oh!, it made my day. So it is totally exaggerating: this person gives me happiness so they have the most beautiful backpack; and 

So we use a lot of wrong reasoning, and then we have false inferential cognizers. Sometimes, we are aware that they are actually false; sometimes, we are not. That is why it is good to differentiate between a correct and a wrong. You cannot start off with a wrong syllogism – there are a lot of examples of wrong syllogisms: the self is impermanent because it exists. Not everything that exists is impermanent. There are also permanent phenomena. So whatever is C is not necessarily B, so on the basis of such an incorrect syllogism, you just cannot prove it.

Or the self is impermanent because it is blue. Well, the self is not blue, so therefore, it again, does not work: whatever is blue is necessarily impermanent; there is nothing permanent that is blue. Blue is necessarily a color, and a color is necessarily impermanent.

Trust me, if you are thinking, ‘Oh, this is beyond me, logic.’ First of all, what we do is thinking, ‘I’m not like that.’ So you are already creating a self that is not like that. The good thing is that since I can do it, I know that everyone can do it. Cause I’m totally average; so if I can figure out this logic – initially, I was like, ‘OMG, that’s like chess; and I never liked chess.’ I found it totally frustrating, especially since my uncle was better than me and he always won, so I lost my interest in chess, because he never let me win.
I only came to the Institute of Buddhist Dialectics to learn Tibetan. And I had no idea what was going on. And my teacher said, 'The best way to learn Tibetan is to debate.' I had no idea what debating was. I said, 'Okay,' so I learned debate; whatever, if it helps me to learn Tibetan. And then he gently introduced me to this, step by step, and at some point, I figured it out. My classmates did, too; everyone did. So whatever seems difficult now, your main obstacle is thinking, 'I'm just not a logical person; I never liked math and I never liked chess.' It's a different kind of logic altogether anyway. And anyone can learn it.

This is also something we have in the west: there's this sense, either you have this intelligence or you don't. From a Buddhist point of view, any intelligence can be created. You may not have that ability initially, but it can be created. Some are better at this at the beginning, but our teacher, our director, our late director, used to say, 'Of the two, inborn, natural intelligence and working hard, the latter is more hard.' If someone has this inborn intelligence but doesn't work as hard, they always fall behind. As opposed to the other person who works really hard but maybe didn't have the same intelligence initially. I could see it in my classmates. Those who had this logic right from the beginning, if they didn't work as hard, they always fell behind those students who didn't have that logic but worked so hard; they were able to acquire it. So it is something that anyone can acquire, I totally believe.

Therefore, this reasoning, if it is difficult right now, if you hear about it again and again, you'll figure it out; it is not that hard.

But this text is based on this idea, A is B, because it is C. but we do not go into all the nitty-gritty details; this is as much as you need to hear about it. Understand the principle, and the rest, these correct reasons will be presented to you.

What is the correct reason that establishes past and future lives? Myself, I had previous lives because? What is the correct reason?

Because again, in order to realize past and future lives, which is possible to deduct inferentially, you need to have a correct reason.

This will be presented in this text, for example.

**Introduction - Direct Perceivers** *(mgon sum yang dag - རྡོ་རྗེ་བུ)*

Now to come to the direct perceiver. The inferential cognizer I hope is clear. This is something that benefits us to get an understanding. Something that is hidden to us can become accessible by using that mind, that awareness.

There is also another type of awareness that is very crucial, because an inferential understanding, first of all, is not enough. Our misperceptions of reality are very, very, very strong, very powerful. Long familiarization with them made them very powerful. I'm sure you are familiar with the power of familiarity. Allow yourself to be angry today for half an hour, oh, it will be so easy to be angry for an hour tomorrow. At least for a half an hour. Anything! You do something today, take food, you have a sweet tooth, but you don't eat chocolate, because otherwise you'll crave it all day long. So you just don't eat it; and then someone gives you a chocolate. Oh, then I had it today, and tomorrow, at the same time, my body is going to say, 'Chocolate.' Habituation.
This is the case with physical things, but it is the same with mental things. I’m trying to not be as angry, I’m trying to work with my anger. I’ve been able to control it a little bit, but today, I didn’t have a good day. I didn’t sleep well, and there was this really obnoxious person, so I allow myself to be really angry, maybe lash out at him or her. Oh, great, tomorrow, it is even easier to be angry. These habits grow so easily.

So, it is said that this mind that perceives permanence, it’s a habit; we are habituated with that mind. It comes again and again and again. So every time it arises, it gets strengthened, so it is sure to arise again and again. They say it has been with us since beginningless time, so we’ve had a lot of time to habituate with it. Therefore, it is not easy to over come it; just understanding that the self is impermanent will not deter it; will not prevent it from arising. It won’t arise as strongly any longer; but it will still arise. That means there is more work to be done. If you’ve realized that the self is impermanent, if you have realized that inferentially, you need to make that mind stronger and stronger.

And there is still this generic image, the generic image of the impermanence of the self. It’s a bit like with the image of a song, you don’t experience it directly. Therefore, you need to habituate with that mind further and further and further, until you directly perceive this, so you have no generic image; it is like you experience. It is the same kind of experience as if you tasted chocolate.

A conceptual mind that perceives chocolate – you can do that. Take chocolate or any other taste, a strong taste that you can easily take to mind. You conceptual mind can actually take that to mind; you can almost taste it. But it is not the same intensity as actually tasting it.

So a direct experience actually experiences it. Our sense consciousness always directly experience objects, which are very vividly there. Colors, tastes, smells, and so forth, are very vivid experiences, direct; as opposed to just thinking about it.

So this inferential cognizer does not directly perceive or experience.

We do not have an experience of a conceptual mind that becomes a mental direct perceiver. Because it takes a lot of familiarity, a lot of meditation, and we haven’t done that so far. Actually, theoretically, it would be possible, that if you think about the taste of chocolate again and again and again and again, it could be come a direct experiencer. You could transform that conceptual mind into a direct experience of chocolate; but who would bother? I mean, why would you spend hours, days, weeks, months on just meditating on the mind that perceives the taste of chocolate. Just go to a store and buy a piece of chocolate if you want to get the direct experience, taste it with your tongue consciousness; you don’t need to do that.

(3) Correct direct perceivers and direct perceivers are also equivalent. Direct perceivers refer to correct sense or mental consciousnesses that perceive their main object directly without relying on a generic image. Examples of direct perceivers are sense direct perceivers, such as an eye consciousness apprehending a table, an ear consciousness apprehending a song, a nose consciousness apprehending the smell of perfume, and so forth. These sense consciousnesses realize phenomena that are obvious or manifest (i.e., not hidden), such as shapes, colors, sounds, etc. Other examples of direct perceivers are self-knowers (which are explained below), clairvoyant awarenesses, and yogic direct perceivers. Yogic direct perceivers are mental direct perceivers that directly realize their main objects (e.g., impermanence, selflessness, etc.) in dependence on prolonged and extensive meditation.
But the concept of the self being impermanent is hidden to us. The sense consciousness cannot access it. It is only the mental consciousness that can access it; and initially, it is only an inferential cognizer, which is conceptual. So that needs to be transformed into a direct perceiver, a direct experience. That mind, for it to become an antidote to the opposite, the antidote to the perception of permanence; that’s when it can really be lessened and eventually overcome.

That is the idea here. Therefore, direct perceivers are the other tool. We cannot stop with inferential cognizers. The next step is then, we let go of the logical reasoning, you don’t need the logical reasoning, because we’ve already understood what we need to understand; we don’t need to again take reasons and reflect on them. Just with regard to this idea (the self being impermanent), once you’ve understood it, you don’t need to think of reasons why the self is impermanent; you’ve understood it. Once you’ve understood that there’s fire in a neighbor’s house, you don’t need to reflect on smoke.

Now you focus on that realization with regard to the self being impermanent, because you need a direct experience of that. Therefore, direct perceivers are important from that perspective.

They’re also important from another perspective. Why, because if you remember, if I want to understand that the self is impermanent on the basis of a correct reason, just citing the correct reason in my mind one time is not going to have me miraculously understand that the self is impermanent. I need to reflect on that correct reason. I need to understand that the self has arisen from its own causes and conditions; that A is C. I need to understand that whatever is C is necessarily B. I need to understand all of this.

There are certain things about the relationship of the parts of this syllogism, I need to understand how they connect. If I don’t understand that, I will not understand that the self is impermanent. This makes sense; right? If I don’t know that wherever there is smoke there is necessarily fire, if I don’t understand that; and if Melissa says, ‘Oh, wow. Look over there! There’s fire because there’s smoke!’ I’ll say, ‘So what? So what there’s smoke? What does that mean?’ We do that often enough. Someone gives us a reason, ‘Oh, such and such is so and so, because.’ But since we don’t see the relationship between C and B, we do, ‘So what?’

‘Oh, look, he or she is happy because of such and such.’ That is not a correct reason; that’s not proving they are happy. So what? It may be a correct reason, but I don’t understand this connection, so I need to understand that wherever there’s smoke, there’s necessarily fire. I need to understand that connection.

Direct perceivers are essential to Buddhist practice. Although hidden phenomena are realized for the first time by inferential cognizers, such a realization is not sufficient for practitioners aspiring to transform their mind and attain liberation or Buddhahood. Such a realization is not sufficient because inferential cognizers are conceptual consciousnesses that do not realize their objects directly but through a generic image.

For instance, an inferential cognizer realizing selflessness does not realize selflessness directly but through the generic image of selflessness. Hence, a practitioner who has cultivated an inferential cognizer realizing selflessness continues to familiarize with the conceptual consciousness realizing selflessness until, after prolonged and intense meditation, that consciousness transforms into a yogic direct perceiver realizing selflessness, which is strong enough to serve as an effective antidote to the misperception of the self and to other afflictions.
There are other things. They say, sometimes, one of the examples given: wherever there’s a certain type of bird, there’s water nearby. There are examples from nature. This animal could only exist there if there is something else nearby. You can infer on the basis of the animal’s existence there, that bird, that there’s a body of water nearby.

Scientists use this, inferential cognition, all of the time. There are certain things about atoms that they cannot know, because they are too subtle. But then there are coarser things that connect to them, and they understand the connection between those coarser things and use them as a reason to infer something or other about an atom.

So the coarser thing that is the crux here, the coarser idea. For example, that the self is arisen from its own causes and conditions. In order to understand that, you need to understand that first. You need to understand that A is C and that whatever is C is necessarily B.

Let’s take the example of the fire in the house. First one needs to understand that there’s smoke coming out of the house. One needs to understand that wherever there is smoke, there’s fire. If you understand those two, then one can eventually come to an understanding that there’s a fire in the house. For a child, it takes a little longer to understand that; for us, it’s nature. For a child, they may have to go through some reflection; and then go, ‘Oh, yeah, I’ve just learned, wherever there’s smoke, there’s fire. And, oh, yeah, I can see there’s smoke in the house.’

So, for example, that A is C, you can know with a direct perceiver. So you need direct perceivers, you need your sense consciousnesses to somehow access the information, because if you need an inferential cognizer, then you need another syllogism, it’s endless. If all of the parts of the syllogism, if you need another inferential cognizer to understand that A is C, and that whatever is C is necessarily B, then you need another syllogism. And if for those parts, you again need an inferential cognizers, so it would be endless. There’s an endless regress and you never come to understand that the self is impermanent or that there’s fire in the house.

So there are parts of the syllogism that you understand with a direct perceiver. For example, what is it with the fire and smoke syllogism? The inferential cognizer does not understand that there is fire in the house. This the sense consciousnesses cannot understand. So they can only understand, the only thing the direct perception can understand is that there is smoke in the house. This is can understand.

So the direct perceivers are important in two ways. They help to figure out the syllogism and then come to understand the SUBJECT and the PREDICATE, those two together. So everyday direct perceivers can help you to understand more subtle things about phenomena. And then, of course, direct perceivers are also important because just the conceptual understanding by this inferential cognizer is not enough. Now, you need a direct perception. So that is the second tool.

Direct perceivers and inferential cognizers are the two tools. You need both for Buddhist practice; both are extremely important. So if we need to cultivate those minds, it’s better to understand them first; otherwise, it is very difficult to cultivate something we don’t understand.

Of course, more is to be said; and it is not part of this class. I cannot go into too many details on this just because it is a different topic, altogether. But if you have some rough
understanding, and you look at the charts, you will see a direct perceiver and some of the characteristics that I’ve described, it will give you some idea of what this is about.

7. DIRECT PERCEIVERS

- Is a non-conceptual consciousness because it apprehends its main object directly without having to rely on the generic image of that main object.
- Is a non-mistaken consciousness because it is not mistaken with regard to its appearing object.
- Is a correct awareness because it correctly apprehends its main object.
- Direct perceivers are either sense consciousnesses or mental consciousnesses.
- There are direct perceivers that realize their main object and direct perceivers that do not realize their main object. Examples of direct perceivers that realize their object are yogic direct perceivers, and examples of direct perceivers that do not realize their object are awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained.

3. Correct Direct Perceivers (mngon sum yang dag - མངོན་སོམ་ཡོན་དག), and 4. False Direct Perceivers (mngon sum ltar snang - མངོན་སོམ་ལྷ་ར་སྟང་)

Sometimes we think we perceive something directly; whereas, actually, we don’t. There’s a misperception. People think all of the time, ‘Oh, I just realized impermanence directly. I had such a clear appearance of impermanence, that must have been a direct perceiver.’

It is actually a conceptual mind, but the object appears so clearly. Like in a dream, for example. Most of our dreams are conceptual minds. But because of the emotion involved, it appears so clearly, we think it is a direct perceiver.

STUDENT: I just wonder about correct direct perceivers. For example, eye consciousness. I think it is composed of two things: first, I have the central information . . .

GESHE WANGMO: Yes, very good, the object.

STUDENT: And then I have, also, a concept. So in the perception, there’s also the concept coming together. And if I say, direct and correct, then I also have to look at the concept which is based on . . .

GESHE WANGMO: This is a very profound point that you’re bringing up. But it is not – you see, actually, you are right that certain things we can perceive with our senses because previously we had a conceptual mind understanding that. Previously. So they influence one another; but that is not saying that – for example, you eye consciousness just gives you the information: this is a table. When you think about the table; that is no
longer your eye consciousness. It seems to be one mind. But the fact that you can identify a table is because previously, as a child, learned to differentiate it; you labeled, table. You learned to differentiate it from other objects. So your eye consciousness is influenced by conceptual mind but it, itself, is not a conceptual mind. It is influenced by it, but actually, it just perceives the shape and color of this table.

But when within your mind, you look at it, and you think, 'Table,' the mind that thinks, "Table," is not the eye consciousness. It seems to be; we can't differentiate; you can have six consciousness right now; you actually do. But you are not aware of them. Because they are all blurred together.

So when you think, 'Table,' the mind that thinks "Table" is your conceptual mind. The mind that perceives the shape and color of this, that is your eye consciousness. They coordinate together.

If you swirl something around, it looks like an actual circle. Like if you burn incense, for example, and swing it around quickly – those are actually different moments, but they all seem mixed together.

Likewise, right now, there are all these different minds there, but they all seem to be just one mind. This is also something: learning to differentiate between just the information that is giving shape and color from the eye consciousness. Then, of course, there's another mind that is always there, even when we are asleep; that mind is the mental consciousness. This is a process of learning about this.

If you understand this roughly, that is sufficient. Of course, some of you already have a background in other topics, such as the topic on the mind (Lorig བོད་ལོ་). But this is the hardest of the Eight Pivotal Points to understand. The other points, and I know I have to leave it here – I'm already overtime.

20 Having gained some understanding, we gain understanding on the basis of those two minds. A direct perceiver which directly gives us information; and then inferential minds that in dependence upon the direct perceiver which provided crucial information, they are able to figure out things that are not as accessible, so we can inferentially come to understand those. And these inferential minds, which are conceptual, we can actually transform into direct perceivers through habituation.

This is what Buddhist practice is all about: gaining an understanding – and we need to understand the tools that allow us to gain those understandings. And those are inferential minds and direct perceivers. Those are the two tools. They are for our own benefit.

20 Ordinary direct perceivers, such as sense direct perceivers, are also significant in Buddhist practice, for they enable practitioners to listen to teachings, read the scriptures, etc. They also facilitate inferential cognition of a hidden phenomenon. For instance, a practitioner who generated the inferential cognizer realizing that the physical body is impermanent in dependence on the above syllogism (Regarding the subject, the physical body, it is impermanent, because it is the product of its own causes and conditions) must have realized, prior to generating such an inferential cognizer, that the physical body is the product of its own causes and conditions. But unlike the physical body being impermanent, the physical body being a product of its own causes and conditions is not a hidden phenomenon, for it can be realized for the first time by an eye consciousness.
However, teaching from the point of view of the Mahayana, well, that is not good enough. If we have an understanding of reality, and we are slowly able to first reduce and then, hopefully, totally eliminate our misperception and therefore our problems and difficulties that arise from those misperceptions, well, there are so many people around us. So in order to help those, those who are willing to listen, then there are tools that allow others to come to the same understanding. Because the fact that I have an inferential cognizer actually depends upon someone else.

From my perspective, it is the direct perceiver and the inferential minds that allow me to get a good understanding; but another person has helped me to get there. So now, I am “paying forward”, if you like, whatever I’ve learned. I use proof statements and correct refutations in order for other people to come there. So this is what I will explain next time.

Today, I spent quite a lot of time. I hope there will not be a lot of new people the next time, because I can’t go through the same thing again. But anyway, if you read in advance and read the proof statement and the refutation: these are the tools to benefit others.

Then we have the most important, Eight Pivotal Points. They will not come up again to this extent, but as a basis for understanding the actual Second Chapter, this may be helpful.

So if you want the material, the Handout that I’m working on right now and that will be available at the next class, please sign up. WE won’t have class on Monday and Wednesday because of His Holiness’s teachings. Someone suggested, there’s not an afternoon session so we could have class. However, I want you to reflect on His Holiness’s teachings, which will be probably four hours straight, from 8 to 12 again. There are review classes in the afternoon. So I want you to dedicate that time to His Holiness’s teachings. Then I’ll see you again next Friday.