

Chapter Two of Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika*

ADVANCED BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY COURSE – TERM 6

Class 3 - 2017 April 14 – day¹

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Institute for Buddhist Dialectics, McLeod Ganj, India

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D R A F T of CLASS 3 Transcript-NOTES

INTRODUCTION TO PRAMANAVARTTIKA, CONT.

As I announced last time, every time we start classes, I'll speak a little bit about the text in general, and then I'll go back to the particular topic we are studying now.

The text we study, its name is *Pramanavarttika*. You can hear the Sanskrit word *pramana*, which in Tibetan is *tshad-ma* (ཚད་མ་). *Pramana* has many different meanings and can be translated many different ways into English. Usually, when we talk about the *Pramanavarttika*, this is a text that is part of the *Pramana* literature, and here, *pramana* means Logic. In other words, the text we are studying is a text on logic.

However, not just logic, it is a text that logically establishes certain concepts of Buddhism that are important to understand. In particular, we are studying the Second Chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*, and so the topics that are presented in that Second Chapter are considered to be very important for the practice of Buddhism. Concepts such as *Past and Future Lives*, *Liberation*, *Enlightenment*. This text establishes or claims to prove the existence of *Past and Future Lives*, the *Four Noble Truths*, the possibility of *Liberation*, *Enlightenment*, etc.

Therefore, *pramana* can be translated into English as *logic* and as *tshad-ma* in Tibetan. Actually, in the Tibetan word, *tshad-ma*, the first syllable, *tshad*, can mean *measure* or *degree*; and *ma* doesn't have any separate meaning. So together, *tshad-ma*, this term is the translation of *pramana*.

Pramana does have other meanings, in the sense that it can mean: *reasoning*, *logic*, a type of consciousness that knows or realizes its object, *valid cognizer*. So, *logic*, *reasoning*, *valid cognizer*, and it can also mean *correct reasoning*. So that seems pretty random. There are more meanings than that, but here in this context, those are the main meanings.

So *pramana* can mean *authentic* or *reliable*, *valid cognition*, *logic*.

Basically, that all comes down to the idea that we do not understand things as they really are. And there are different degrees of that misunderstanding. Basically, it



comes down to any mistake, when we make mistakes in our perception, there's a potential that we will suffer. With everyday kinds of things, this is logical. But if we just think of day-to-day kind of situations, when we are with other people, who don't really what is going on, what they are thinking, what their needs are, etc., and we may have difficulties with these people because of not understanding. But that is still on a pretty superficial level.

On an even subtler level, because we do not know what the *I* is, we don't know *Who am I* -- yet all day long it is, 'I this', 'I that', 'I don't want this', 'I want that'. All day long, I, me and mine. We work so hard for that *I*, but we don't really know what it is.

In fact, we misunderstand its existence.

Therefore, on this subtler level, it becomes clear that it is extremely important to understand: 'Who am I?', 'How do I exist?', 'How do others exist?'

Here, we can already see that misperception, not really understanding how things are, is a problem; and that understanding how things really are is a way to repair that problem, or is a way to counteract that problem. Therefore, seeing things as they really are, understanding how I exist, understanding how others exist, understanding that phenomena are impermanent, the objects we deal with on a daily basis -- relationships, friends, situations, our own lives -- are all impermanent.

The understanding of those is explained to be a solution or an antidote to all of our problems. And if you come to understand the afflictions, it makes sense that the misperception of all of these things just mentioned that is responsible for our afflictions of attachment, anger, etc., and for our resulting problems and difficulties.

Therefore, perceiving things in a correct way. This explains a *valid mind*. How do we perceive something? What is it that perceives correctly. If I say, I perceive something correctly, what is it that correctly perceives something when I understand something, what is that entity? It is not the body. It is the mind. It is awareness. It is consciousness that can misperceive things and can perceive things correctly.

One of the goals of Buddhism is to reduce and, hopefully, totally overcome wrong perceptions and replace them with correct perceptions, correct understanding, with regard to ourselves, others, impermanence of phenomena; the fact that phenomena are merely relative, interdependent, etc.

So, here, *pramana* means *valid cognition* in the sense of understanding things the way they actually exist. That makes them *reliable*. A person who understands things as they really are is *reliable*. A text that describes things as they really are is *reliable*.

This is where the word *reliable* comes in when we talk about *pramana*.

Also, there is a tool for developing a correct understanding, a tool. We don't just naturally understand the way things really are. Of course, there are certain things that we do understand: colors, shapes, tastes, etc. We do understand the sense objects. We do know objects around us. It is not that we totally stumble along in

the world and don't get anything. No, no. There are certain things we can understand

However, on the subtler level, with regard to what I mentioned earlier -- the understanding that everything is constantly changing; the understanding that we can die tomorrow; the understanding that I don't exist the way that I think I exist; and others don't exist the way that I think they exist. These understandings are not obvious to us. If it were, we would understand; but they are not obvious.

Another way to describe it, they are hidden to us because of our strong misperceptions which are kind of like an obstacle to understanding how phenomena really exist. So *Logic* is a means to understanding how they really exist; *Logic* is a tool. Reasoning or logic are tools that can help us to understand how phenomena really exist.

Do you see how the word *pramana*, because they are all connected.

Because we do not understand how phenomena really exist, we need to correct that understanding in order to have a *reliable* perception of reality; it is reasoning or *logic* that is a tool to help us to come to that understanding.

Of course, that is not the only tool. There's also meditation. But meditation, basically, means *familiarizing* ourselves with -- for instance -- the correct type of *reasoning*. *Familiarizing* ourselves with that, and also, to make sure that the reasoning is not something superficial, *i.e.*, 'Oh, yes. It makes total sense. Things are impermanent.' When that understanding remains on a superficial level, doesn't go on to a deeper level, then our actions won't change. We will continue to act out of a sense that things are permanent; we will continue to act out of a sense that there is a separate kind of self, a separate kind of *I*, that is somehow more important than everyone else's *I*.

Through the tool of *logic* and reasoning, we can come to understand how phenomena really exist; and then through the tool of *meditation*, in other words, internalizing, taking that understanding to a deeper, more emotional level, one is then able to make changes.

Therefore, the *pramana* literature that we are studying here presents reasoning that establish concepts that are important.

Sometimes people find that the *Geluk-pa* tradition of the four Tibetan Buddhist traditions (Sakya, Nyingma, Kagyu and Geluk) difficult because there's so much emphasis on reasoning, on this particular tool. I think that depends upon the person: it is important to find a balanced state between understanding the reasoning without getting caught up in just the reasoning, and just logical reflection. To take that as a tool and internalize it. That is something very personal.

It can be tempting to go through these texts and see, 'Oh, this is connected to that', and just have it on a very superficial level, without making it practical, without applying this to one's own life. Logic is not a goal, it is just a means to a specific end. It is a tool. There are other tools that we need to apply, but what is most important is to take what you learn here -- any kind of reasoning -- and apply it to

your own experience, your own life, if you find it helpful. Of course, this is a matter of choice.

With regard to *pramana*, there's another word, a verb, that is often used: *to establish*.

When we say, *reasoning*, *pramana* can be translated as *reasoning* or, more specifically, *correct reason*, because if something is not obvious to us -- if we don't know that **A is B**, we use reasoning or reasons that can establish that **A is B**.

It sounds a little odd to talk about this, but we are very familiar with this because we do it all the time. We say, **A is B because it is C**. In modern science, there are a lot of concepts, a lot of facts that are not directly obvious to us, but through reasoning, through reasons, scientists have been able to establish them.

Now, science has the great advantage of using microscopes and other tools to measure, to be able to perceive more subtle phenomena of this world. Buddhism does not have those tools; the only tool you have is your own mind. So Buddhism is sometimes described as a science of mind which implies that it is all about consciousness, all about awareness; and since that is something very subjective, it is very hard to say, 'Oh, look, there's consciousness! What do you think about this? How heavy is it? How right or wrong is it?' Unfortunately, though we can individually perceive our own awareness, there's not one awareness walking around that we could all, as a community, investigate and share our experiences of it.

We can discuss it, like, 'I have this feeling.' And I have that, and that is helpful, but in the end, it is something very subjective. And the only tool is to go inwards, to meditate, in other words to leave aside all of the distractions and just turn inwards. That's the only way to get a better understanding and, hopefully, see whether these ideas here are true or not.

Therefore, *to establish* means to prove something on the basis of reason by using reasoning. So **A is B** -- that is to be established. We say that **A is B because it is C**. **C** is the reason that establishes that **A is B**. This is called a *sylogism*: **A is B because it is C**. The technical English term is that is a *sylogism*. This mode of reasoning is introduced in here, and we'll discuss it when we get there.

To establish can also mean *to understand*. Again, as with the word, *pramana*, the idea of *reasoning* and the idea of *understanding* are contained in that one word. So depending on the context, *to establish* can mean *understanding* something and, it can mean *to exist*.

Here, **if something exists, it can be understood**; and we can **use reasoning** to come to that **understanding**.

Again, the idea that we misperceive only those things that don't exist. If we misperceive, we mistakenly perceive that, e.g., 'I'm not going to die.' That may be our perception, even though we're not that conscious of it. Right? We live our lives as though we are going to live forever. So there are subtler types of awarenesses that pop up every now and again and make us act as if 'I'm just not going to die.' Definitely, I'm not going to die tomorrow or anytime soon. So we're totally

unprepared. Even when we have a long life, our own death is scary because we've never considered it; we're just not prepared; and, in fact, we're scared of it.

Or other misperceptions: The sense that 'I'm just a little more important than everyone else.' Familiar with that one? Right. We're all familiar with that self-centered attitude that doesn't hold any truth in reality. It has no basis in reality. Why am I more important than others? Logically, on a coarser level, we would all agree that doesn't make any sense, but it feels that way so strongly.

So there are awarenesses that pop up every now and then that are much subtler than the coarser kinds of rationale consciousness, and they determine our actions. Therefore, that which exists, the Self as it really exists -- that is what we are trying to establish here. The fact that consciousness goes on; that this life is just one of many, etc. All of this, that's said to be a fact in Buddhism that can be understood and it can be understood through the tool of logic, which is a tool that helps us to come to that understanding. And that is what we are studying here.

The Second Chapter, in particular, discusses different topics. Having spoken about this today, I will again next time.

Basically, the topic that is discussed here, in this particular case, is Great Compassion, the wish for all sentient beings to have lasting and true happiness. That Compassion is a state of mind that we don't have naturally. Why? Because naturally, we have the self-centered attitude. Naturally, in the sense, that right now, that arises naturally. But Great Compassion, I don't know, maybe some of you every now and then have Great Compassion arising; but my guess is that more often it's the self-centered attitude.

Therefore, it is explained that it takes many life times to establish, that is to generate Great Compassion. In that context, we speak about Past and Future Lives.

We can only speak of Past and Future Lives if we understand properly how the mind and the body connect. In particular, because there is a perception, especially now in the West, that the mind is just a result of the body. In the sense that the first moment of awareness, the first moment of consciousness is a result of the body. It is a result of the brain. That possibly, when we were first conceived, there was no awareness, there was only matter, and then from the matter that was there, consciousness arose; suddenly we became conscious. We don't really remember when that moment occurred; maybe we have a sense that the moment we can remember, maybe at the age of two or three, I guess that's how far our memory goes back, and those are just short moments. There's a sense, some people have said that to me in the West, "That's probably the first time there was consciousness."

From a Buddhist point of view, consciousness was there all along; except we don't remember. Just because we don't remember something doesn't mean it wasn't there. I don't remember being alive last night. That doesn't mean I wasn't alive; it's just that I don't remember because I was asleep. I don't remember what I had for dinner three months ago, that doesn't mean I didn't eat then. Just because I don't remember it, doesn't mean it didn't take place.

The Buddhist claim is that consciousness has existed from the first moment of conception. That's to be seen. Why? Because every consciousness must be preceded by a former moment of consciousness.

Here, I can I prove this to you? This is very difficult to prove. Why is it difficult to prove? It is a subjective experience. Unless you are mindful, you watch your own mind -- is it true that if you look at your mind right now, this is the result of a former moment of mind; which again, was the result of a former moment of mind. And so forth.

We had this discussion last time about causes. Our mind was caused; our mind is a result. It is a result; it is the effect of something that preceded it. I think we can all agree on that, because our minds, when we were children, and our minds now are quite different. And we can basically see how we got there from the child's mind to the mind now. It is a stream of experience. So the word *stream* is used a lot; a continuum. Our consciousness is a continuum. Our consciousness this morning gave rise to the consciousness at lunch time. And the consciousness at lunchtime gave rise, etc.

When I say, *consciousness*, it sounds as though we have only one type of mind. Actually, we have six types of awareness or consciousness. Six types: the five sense consciousness -- eye consciousness, ear consciousness, etc. Those are not really the ones we're discussing here. They perceive the sense objects. They don't meditate. They don't reflect, analyze. They don't think. They don't arise in the form of love or in the form of anger. It is the sixth type of consciousness, which is the mental consciousness, that we are interested. The mental consciousness is always present. Fascinating. It is the one thing that is always there, and we're not even aware of it.

I think before we met Buddhism or another system that talks about the mind, we've been aware of everything but our own awareness. We've not been aware of that which is aware. And if we've every been aware of experience, we thought it was the brain. We talk like that, 'Oh, my brain knows.' 'My brain feels unhappy sometimes.' People actually -- especially when they're studying Neuro-science, and their whole life is about the brain, they just talk about the brain all the time. 'My brain perceives this and that.' The brain is made of neurons and enzymes and proteins and hormones, etc., and they just do their thing. They fire away, and electrical current is sent forth, etc. But that is not perception. That is a cause can give rise to perception.

Last time we talked about a substantial cause of something and cooperative conditions of something. Anything that is a result has a substantial cause, a former continuum that is of a similar type than itself and then cooperative conditions that help for that former moment to be able to give rise to the present moment.

The classic example is that of a seed and a sprout. Let's take another example. Think of a river. Sometimes an analogy for the mind that is used is a river. A river that is constantly changing, but it is always in the nature of water. It is always in the nature of consciousness. So a former moment of river gives rise to a second moment of river. If you're standing at the short of a river, the water just flows by.

That's like our thoughts. The water is very clear. The clarity of water is the ability of our mind to perceive things. Sometimes it is a little muddy -- that's the afflictions.

Basically, one moment gives rise to the next. One moment of water gives rise to the next moment of water, gives rise to the next moment of water.

But there are cooperative conditions. There are things other than water that enable a former of water to generate a later moment of water. What are those conditions? Oxygen, the shore, the river bed, all of these other phenomena around it -- gravity plays a part. All of these other factors are cooperative conditions that are also important because without them, one moment of river could not give rise to the next moment of river. But the substantial cause of river is the former continuum.

REFUTING [THE IDEA] THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BECOME FAMILIAR [WITH GREAT COMPASSION] OVER MANY LIFETIMES: A BRIEF DEMONSTRATION

Here, it says in the text -- if you see, on the first page, page 168, the last paragraph. Before this, the text explains that there were a substantial cause and cooperative conditions. In your own time you can read this.³

³ **REFUTING [THE IDEA] THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO BECOME FAMILIAR [WITH GREAT COMPASSION] OVER MANY LIFETIMES**

[This is divided into:]

- (1) A brief demonstration
- (2) An extensive explanation

A BRIEF DEMONSTRATION

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

[This] is not [so], because [the body being] the base has been negated.

Regarding the subject, the conceptual mental awareness, the body **is not** its base [by way] of being a substantial cause or special cooperative condition, **because** being such a **base has been negated** and will be negated by *pramana*.

There are different ways of categorizing causes. One way is to classify them into: (1) substantial causes and (2) cooperative conditions. Whatever is a cause necessarily falls in one of these two.

A substantial cause (*nyer len* - ཉེར་ལེན་) refers to a cause which produces or generates an effect that is a continuation of its own entity. A cooperative condition (*lhan cig byas rkyen* - ལྷན་ཅིག་བྱས་རྒྱུན་) refers to a cause which produces or generates an effect that is not a continuation of its own entity. It is called "cooperative condition" since it generates its effect in association with the substantial cause. [Fn. 73: For more explanation on substantial causes and cooperative conditions, please see Daniel E. Perdue's *Debate in Tibetan Buddhism* [Snow Lion: New York, 1992]]

For instance, a seed is the substantial cause of a sprout, while warmth, water, fertilizer, and soil are a sprout's cooperative conditions. A seed is the substantial cause of a sprout because a seed and a sprout are one continuum, with the seed gradually becoming or transforming into the sprout. The seed changing into the

Basically, now we have the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, and the First Dalai Lama was someone named Gendun Drup. *Gyalwa* is an honorific term meaning *Victorious One*. Actually, the First Dalai Lama was called Gendun Drup, and he wrote a text on *pramana*, on logic, called *Ornament for Pramana* [ཚད་མ་རིགས་རྒྱན།].

He basically said⁴ that “anything that is impermanent, and” therefore “an effect, is necessarily the result of both a substantial cause,” a former continuum, “and a cooperative condition.”

Actually, we should say, “cooperative conditions”, because there is never just one phenomena, of course, but many cooperative conditions that are *the* cooperative condition that gives rise to it, anything that is a result.

Think of anything that is a result: this table, for instance. The table right now that is made of wood, nails, glue, all of that, is the result of a former continuum of glue, wood, nails, and whatever other substances that may be included in this table. So the former continuum of those, wood, nails and glue, they came together, giving rise to this table; and that is the substantial cause of this table. The former wood, the former glue, the former nails, they came together. But the cooperative conditions were the carpenter, the person who fed the carpenter, the person who fed the person who fed the carpenter, the truck driver who carried the wood. You see there are so many cooperative conditions that have come together and made it possible for this table to come into existence.

So this relationship between a result and its cause is very important. When you study Buddhist philosophy, the idea of cause and effect -- cooperative conditions, substantial causes -- comes up again and again. You get a really nice sense that every phenomenon is a continuum in time that, in itself, changes -- basically meaning that it gives rise to its substantial result; and that substantial result serves as the substantial cause for its substantial result; and that in turn, and so on and so forth.

Every phenomenon has a substantial result and a substantial cause. And the substantial cause gives rise to its resultant substantial effect because of the cooperative conditions that help it to do so. Without cooperative conditions, it wouldn't be able to do it.

sprout is assisted by the sprout's cooperative conditions: warmth, water, and so forth.

Similarly, clay is the substantial cause of a clay vase, whereas a potter and his wheel are cooperative conditions. In the case of our present mind, the mind of the immediately preceding life is the substantial cause of our present mind, while its cooperative condition is, for instance, the karmic action (*i.e.*, the propelling karma) of a former life that propelled us into this life.

⁴ According to Gyalwa Gendun Drup's *Ornament for Pramana* (Tib: *tshad ma rigs gyan*), anything that is impermanent, and thus an effect, is necessarily the result of both a substantial cause and a cooperative condition. There is no impermanent object that has not arisen in reliance on both of these two. FN74/ The substantial cause is considered to be the main cause of an object and the cooperative condition, secondary.

When we study this, since it comes up again and again, and you think about it, you really take it to a deeper level. There is really a sense when you think about a phenomenon, right away, there's a sense of continuation and a sense of the substantial cause that preceded it. Oftentimes, you wonder, what is the substantial cause? What is the cooperative condition? It is just a matter of, through familiarity, getting a better understanding of this idea.

How is this idea important? This is something to ask you: what is the consequence, if you like? What does it mean that every phenomenon must be preceded by a substantial cause? What does that lead to? What does that mean?

What does it mean that every phenomenon must have a former continuum of a similar type?

STUDENT: [Unintelligible].

GESHE WANGMO: Okay. It just exists. There is nothing that just exists of itself; it is dependent on something. What else comes to mind? What does that lead us to? Something very radical?

STUDENT: Beginningless-ness.

GESHE WANGMO: Beginningless-ness. Nothing has a beginning. You cannot find a beginning of the continuum of something. That is pretty radical

Of course, there's a beginning to this table. We're not saying that this table has always existed. But it has preceded different continua that were also preceded by another continuum, another continuum; and there never was a time when there was nothing, and a moment later, you had an object. That just didn't happen.

Here, we are strictly talking about physical objects. You have a physical object that is preceded by a former physical object, and so forth.

As I mentioned last time, when we think of the physical beginning of this universe, from a Buddhist point of view -- the Buddha, himself, said there is more than one universe; there are many universes; there are many worlds. But let's just keep it smaller, to what we're used to.

So this world, this universe, when was the beginning of this material world? The Big Bang.

His Holiness mentions it frequently because of the fact that, yes, the beginning was the Big Bang, but what was before the Big Bang? What was before that which was before the Big Bang? And so forth

You cannot posit a beginning. Honestly, how could you have nothing there, and have something a moment later? That physically wouldn't make sense. So that is from a physical point of view.

But consciousness is not physical. That's not to say it doesn't depend upon something physical. Yes, of course, it depends upon something physical. But that dependence doesn't make consciousness physical. If something depends upon something physical, that doesn't mean it has to be physical.

As she mentioned last time, e.g., a book depends upon a mind perceiving it to be a book. So a physical object such as a book depends upon a mind to make it a book, but that doesn't make a book a mind just because it depends upon something that is not physical.

So physical and non-physical objects can very much depend on one another; but that does not mean -- in other words, they can serve as one another's cooperative conditions -- but that does not mean that one is the substantial cause of the other.

That is the Buddhist claim: something physical cannot become something non-physical such as consciousness; and something non-physical, such as consciousness, cannot become something physical. It can cause something physical; but it cannot become. That is to be seen.

I also do not think that an object -- not just that I don't think so. In general, from a Buddhist point of view, something that is an object of the eye consciousness, something we can see, does not become taste. Something that we can see does not become sound. It depends upon it.

So something that we can see has a taste. But we don't say that which we see is the taste; right? That which we see. I see the shape and color of a cake, but my eye consciousness does not perceive the taste of the cake. It is my tongue consciousness that perceives the taste. They exist together in that cake: the taste, the smell -- I don't know that there is a sound of a cake unless you throw it against a wall. But they all exist together in that phenomena, but we speak of it as something different. There is the sight of the cake. There is the taste of the cake. The smell of the cake. And those are all different entities. And the sight doesn't give rise to the taste. It may taste better because it looks so good. I love these Indian cakes; they look so good. But the taste.

The point is that these phenomena do not become one another. Likewise, a physical phenomenon does not become something non-physical. And consciousness cannot become something physical.

If that is the case, in the end it is very hard to prove, unless we get to know our minds better. If we generate mindfulness, in the sense that we learn -- last time after the class was over, I talked about this with someone. We talked about always being aware of your mind. It's almost like there's a little spy sitting there, and as we're doing other things: thinking about, possibly, what we're going to have for dinner and so forth, there's also this little spy watching the awareness; being aware of the awareness.

Now, there's a whole discussion that we can have on this: is it the same mind that perceives an external object that perceives itself? Is there another mind perceiving that mind which perceives something else? Does it go very quickly back and forth? One mind perceives an object; perceives itself? Who cares? This is something we can debate in a debate setting, but in the end, whatever it is, there is a sense of like a simultaneous happening, or at least a sense that we can through familiarity, through habituation, train ourselves to not just be aware of objects, sights, sounds, etc., as we usually are, but through mindfulness we can train our mind so that we are also always aware of the awareness as Mingyur Rinpoche often speaks about so

beautifully, so eloquently. It's amazing. I only attended one teaching in person at Tushita. It was so amazing. You just don't want to do anything else but watch your mind, the way Rinpoche so inspirationally speaks about it.

The point here is that to really understand the reasonings for past and future lives, this is essential. Unfortunately, it is not like we can just sit here and do what we usually do without mindfulness, etc., get a few reasons, walk away and understand there are past lives. No way.

Unfortunately, those reasons are only effective when we really understand our own minds; understand the facts that an awareness needs to be preceded by a former moment of awareness, which in turn needs to be preceded by another mind of awareness. And it is through experience that we get to know that.

There are certain things we can use reasoning to understand something, but eventually, it comes back to our own experience. To give you a simple example: we use reasoning to establish that there is fire somewhere. We use smoke to establish that there's fire. But that can only be done if we understand what smoke and fire are. We must have had the experience of fire and smoke, because otherwise, the reasoning -- in my neighbor's house, there is a raging wood fire because there is wood smoke. If I don't know what a wood fire and wood smoke are, forget about it. It is not effective reason.

All the other reasonings that we use on a daily basis, we have some experience, and on the basis of that experience, we use reasoning to come to an actual understanding of what is actually going on.

This is the same in this case of our mind. Consciousness must have been preceded by a former moment of awareness. You cannot be aware suddenly, if you were not aware before.

I hope you get a sense of that continuum. And this is what Gyalwa Gendun Drup says here. I am going to read and explain together so that even if you aren't looking at the text -- reading you can do on your own. I will try to read and explain together.

So here, Gyalwa Gendun Drup says that, "There is no impermanent object that there has not arisen in reliance on both of these two."

Then you see that there is this little footnote 74⁵ on page 169 right at the bottom. The note here says,

"Many scholars".

But one of my teachers said, "Put 'Some scholars'". He said that it is not that many scholars so:

Some "scholars would disagree with this statement" because they hold that "sound has neither an earlier nor a later continuum."

⁵ Many scholars would disagree with this statement, for they hold that sound has neither an earlier nor a later continuum. This means that it has neither a substantial cause nor a substantial result. It also means that particular moments of sound – for instance, the different notes of a song played in a specific order – do not form a continuum.

They say that sound is an exception. There's a lot of debate about this.

Let me first clarify the idea [expressed in the footnote] here.

“This means that it has neither a substantial cause nor a substantial result. It also means that particular moments of sound – for instance, the different notes of a song played in a specific order – do not form a continuum”

So this is like, What? We just got this idea that everything is like a river. A shape gives rise to another shape. A river gives rise to another river. Consciousness gives rise to the next moments of consciousness. Our body gives rise . . . what is it with sound? Where does that idea come from?

The idea comes from the fact that sound is -- actually, how is sound produced? At the time when Buddhism was around, the Buddha, himself taught this, and it was also known in India, that sound was produced, e.g., while I speak, my vocal chords are vibrating; and that vibration causes the particles close to my vocal chords to move. Then you have this domino effect where they start moving and that is continued on and on and on. And this continuation of these pressure waves, if you like, enter your ears. You have the ear drum, that starts vibrating, that sends electrical current to your brain and it is interpreted as sound.

As a note, nothing exists objectively because sound as we experience it is something very subjective, but that is a whole different discussion.

The point here, you can see, is that sound is just moments of particles hitting our ear drums. So the sense of a continuum is a little difficult here. It is not like one moment gives rise to the next, because it is just these different moments. But you can argue that is true for taste as well. Because you have on each particle something that is experienced by the tongue consciousness as taste, and there are different particles. There's also no continuum there.

This is why some would disagree, including myself, with this idea. To me it makes much more sense that sound has a continuum; that no matter how it is produced, there's still a continuum, one moment giving rise to the next: my voice as it talks, the sound of a river, the sound of music, the sound -- whatever sound that is from the amplifier, and so forth; these are all continuations. This continuum, one moment giving rise to the next, one moment giving rise to the later continuum is only possible because of the other cooperative conditions.

When you think about it, this is a beautiful way of looking at interdependence. Every phenomenon is dependent upon its own continuum: its earlier continuum and of lots of cooperative conditions that make it possible for that earlier moment to be transformed into the later moment.

Then that which is the substantial cause of one phenomenon is the cooperative condition of something else. Because initially, we can think of it as one simple stream, just to understand the idea; but then, every phenomenon is a stream and they act as one another's, either, substantial cause or cooperative condition. In this way, everything is interconnected.

When you think about it on a molecular level -- this is really gross. If I think about it,

at first, it is gross; but then again, it is beautiful. Actually, what makes up our body? We are actually exchanging this. I talked about this last time. I said, you know, we're shedding skin, and that skin floats around in this room; and other people breathe it in. As I said, initially, it is gross. Other people breathe it in, and it becomes part of your body. Actually, parts of your body substance become a substantial cause of my body. It is a constant exchange. Because the body is made upon of atoms and subtle particles, it is possible. But mind is not like that; it doesn't split off like that. So it is not like my mind becomes part of Philippe's mind and Philippe's mind becomes part of my mind.

My mind can affect his mind, can become a cooperative condition of his way of thinking by way of my ideas giving rise to me saying something; those sounds are heard by his ear consciousness; they give rise to thoughts, conceptual or mental consciousness; and that leads to a new idea. But it is not as though part of my mind becomes Philippe's mind, because if it did, we'd all be enlightened. The Buddha would just send out enlightened minds, and we would have these enlightened minds. We could just be sitting here and be enlightened automatically. Unfortunately, that's not how it works.

So going back to this here [p. 169, ¶12].⁶ Anything, according to what the First Dalai Lama says, everything that is changing, every impermanent phenomenon, must have a substantial cause and must have cooperative conditions.

So we say that the substantial cause is considered to be the main cause; and the cooperative condition is secondary. But that can be debated; that should be debated because, of course, it is just as important that we have the idea, e.g., that we designate book in order to have a book. So it is very difficult to determine what is more important.

What is more important for the existence of the book: a former moment of a book or the idea of book?

As Nan mentioned last time, she made a very profound statement: Don't we need the idea of book, too? Of course, a very important Buddhist concept is that you cannot have a book unless someone designates book. It is not, in and of itself, a book.

Maybe I will change this. It is just that the meaning of the word *substantial* is main cause; but don't get hung up on that meaning. There are a lot of examples in everyday life where the word, in itself, does not necessarily define the object. Can you give an object. I can only think of a Dharma example; but I'm sure there are other examples of a name, itself, not defining the object. One example in Buddhism: you say another word, in Tibetan or Sanskrit, for a lotus flower is *lake-*

⁶ Anything that is an impermanent phenomenon has a substantial cause, because every impermanent phenomenon is the result of a former continuum of other impermanent phenomena. Furthermore, since every impermanent object is the result of a preceding substantial cause, which in turn is the result of another preceding substantial cause and so on, the continuum of an impermanent phenomenon does not have a beginning. This means that the prior continuum of every impermanent object has existed since beginningless time.

born, that which is born from a lake; but not every lotus is; that doesn't define a lotus. A lotus that has grown in a flower pot is still called *lake-born*, but that doesn't mean that the flower pot is a lake.

So in that sense, there are lots of words in English where the name that something is called does not define the thing, itself. Can you come up with an example?

STUDENT: A shepherd dog.

GESHE WANGMO: Very good. A shepherd dog. If you have a shepherd dog, it doesn't mean you are a shepherd. You can live in New York City and have a shepherd dog. What else?

STUDENT: There's a flower called *Snow Drop*.

GESHE WANGMO: So a *Snow Drop* flower doesn't necessarily have to grow in the snow. Other examples.

STUDENT: A butterfly.

GESHE WANGMO: A butterfly! I wonder if the butter is really the butter that you eat? But, you're right. I'm sure you can come up with other examples. I like butterfly. If something is a butterfly, it doesn't have to be a fly that looks like butter or whatever.

STUDENT: Sunflower.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes. I mean. There are examples where it can be that, like a shepherd dog. A sunflower just looks like the sun. But a shepherd dog can be the dog of a shepherd, but it doesn't have to be. A lotus can be lake born but it doesn't have to be.

A substantial cause can be the main cause, but it doesn't have to be. So we don't get caught up in the word so much. This is what our teachers have been saying ever since we started to study philosophy. The word, the etymology, the meaning of the word, of each syllable, does not refer to the meaning of that which it conveys. Be careful. Don't get caught up in the word.

We know this on a daily basis, because we are very familiar with the words that we use on a daily basis. But when you start studying philosophy, you are presented with hundreds of new words, and you have no idea what they mean. So it is very natural to look at the word, and try to define the idea of what this word stands for by looking at it; and then you can go in a very wrong direction. You may believe that the *main cause* of something must be the former continuum; although, as Nan said before, the idea is equally important.

Yes, Ken.

QUESTIONS

KEN: Can I go back. In Western philosophy, particularly in Christian theology, there's great stream that says we can trace causes back and back and back and eventually, we get to a point where we can't designate, or see or define a cause. And Thomas Aquinas and Aristotle would say that is the uncaused cause and we

name that God.

GESHE WANGMO: Okay. I guess in Christian philosophy -- I don't know. I've heard this for the first time. When I was educated in the Roman Catholic faith, I was never introduced to this idea. But it is definitely very beautiful; and certainly, in the 21st century, understanding cause and effect in terms of God can be very satisfying. But from a Buddhist point of view, it wouldn't make sense that something uncaused can give rise to something caused.

Also: is God permanent or impermanent? We had this discussion last year. If God is permanent then God cannot affect anything. If God can affect something, God must be impermanent, must be changing, because God affects something. If God is changing, what caused or was before God or the moment before that? Has God existed since beginningless time? Or was there something that created God?

These are just philosophical discussions. I can only say that from a Buddhist point of view, the assertion would be you cannot have something permanent give rise to something impermanent.

It is not just in Christianity. Actually, when we discussed God here, initially, I just said, *God*, when I translated it. And then Aidan pointed out -- he was definitely one of the cooperative conditions that made me look at the word again. Because in Tibetan, there are two words for God. One means *The One Who Made the World, The One Who Created the World*. And then there is the word which means *Ishvara*, which is the Tibetan translation of *Ishvara*. The two words they use, *The One Who Made the World* and *Ishvara* are often used interchangeably, which is why in the translations, you often find the word God to be used for those two terms. But in this context, it is pretty clear that when they talk of God it is a specific philosophical system, that asserts *Ishvara* who is said to be permanent and is responsible for everything.

This is not necessarily true in Christianity, as Aidan pointed out. Because in Christianity, for some Christians, there is definitely the idea that there is free will. God can influence our actions, but it doesn't have to be.

The other day, I listened to a BBC program of a discussion between different followers of different faiths, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. And at least the person on that program who represented Islam said that God caused everything. He was very clear: everything is created by God.

Then the Christian would say, No, that's not true; because we assert free will. So I was reminded of Aidan in that moment.

So you see, there are different ideas of what a creator god refers to. In some traditions, God created everything. And in others, some.

But this is a very important idea. Although we may not believe in God, we are definitely influenced by the view that there is something there that can save us; there is something that can protect us. We're very influenced by that. Even the Tibetans have it which is very interesting. For instance, when I go to the temple sometimes, and go to the Protector Room, you hear elderly Tibetan ladies, for instance, making offerings and you can hear them pray, 'Oh, please, Buddha, make

sure my son passes his exams. Make sure my husband does . . . ' -- they have a whole list of things that they want the Buddha or the Protectors to do. There's also a sense that it is not like: I have to create the causes to do so, please assist me; but really, there's a sense, "His Holiness, please make Tibet become free."

So I'm not sure what their motivation is, but I think that as humans, we have a tendency to wish for someone to be able to do it for us. Right? Therefore, asking for assistance is one thing, but actually, we have to create the causes ourselves. And that is not always clear. Even if we know this logically; innately, sometimes it is a whole different story. Which is why we discuss this idea of God.

Actually, I'm glad Ken brought it up. Because of the idea here that if something is impermanent it must be preceded by something impermanent, and something that is of a similar type.

From a Buddhist point of view, you can't have God creating consciousness. You can't have God creating a body. A cooperative condition would be okay; but not a substantial cause.

Therefore, Buddhism doesn't say that it is not okay to believe in God. No. For some people that is very helpful. People should do this if they find it helpful. As H.H. the Dalai Lama often says, it is very good for those people.

But as you start studying Buddhist philosophy and go into more detail, it becomes very contradictory. And that is not helpful. So if you choose Christianity, great. But if you choose Buddhism and mix it with Christianity, you can come up with a problem; seriously. Karma and this idea of substantial cause and cooperative condition are very contradictory to the idea of God having created our mind and our body. It becomes very problematic.

Ashish: Maybe this is like a little wrinkle to the whole thing. A big part of Christianity is also hell. Because if you are not a good person, if you don't do what God says, right. So far at least, in Buddhism, I've never heard of something equivalent to that.

GESHE WANGMO: Uh-oh. In Christianity, the idea of hell, you actually have that in Buddhism. But it is quite different because -- and I think it makes much more sense, if we understand that from a Buddhist point of view, our experiences are totally subjective. So you can have your own personal hell, number one. Your own personal hell; and therefore, every experience, even when we die and are reborn in what is called a hellish state, that is like, even in this existence now, totally subjective. So you can be reborn in a state such as this, and due to the degree of happiness and unhappiness and due to the degree of things we can do, it is defined as the Human Realm. And of course, everyone's experience is totally, individually different. I can just assume that you are similar to me, because I see a similar form; but not even means -- for all I know, you could be zombies. I don't know whether you're humans. I'm sorry. I believe so; I'm convinced that you have a mind, but I only know that I have a mind. I have a subjective experience as what we call a human.

Then if, as a part of my karma, I'm reborn such that I perceive a different type of

body, a different kind of environment, which is totally subjective, have different thoughts, then by definition, that could be called hell. But there is no objective hell. There is no objective celestial realm. There is no objective human realm. The human realm is basically the name we give to a group of persons who have a similar experience, and due to that we call those beings humans; and they are totally subjective.

That is a big difference. In Christianity, I believe, it is based on the idea of an objective place that you can go to that objectively exists. It is not about subjectivity; and Buddhism is all about subjectivity. In that sense, yes. I think there are lines. We can have 'Hell on earth.' For a human being, people sometimes go through unbelievable suffering. That's when we say, 'Hell on earth.' And for that person, that is reality. I can think of experiences of great loss, but also of like mental disease. Hearing things, seeing things that no one else sees. For that person, it is true; it is a reality, and they suffer profoundly.

I'm glad you brought it up.

STUDENT: Referring to something you said earlier about creating consciousness. What is your opinion about humans creating artificial intelligence. They are able to create artificial intelligence -- probably not today; probably in a couple of years -- that has its own consciousness; that adapts to everything, the environment gives or does.

GESHE WANGMO: Okay. It is an interesting point. Can we leave this question more towards the end, because artificial intelligence is very interesting. Are we actually creating consciousness? Or is someone reborn in that machine? Okay, never mind. Just an idea. Let's look at it a little bit later.

I've been thinking about this whole idea, too. Because recently, Stephen Hawking has given warnings. So it is an interesting idea.

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