

Chapter Two of Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika*

ADVANCED BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY COURSE – TERM 6

Class 2 - 2017 April 12 – Wednesday¹

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Institute for Buddhist Dialectics, McLeod Ganj, India

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D R A F T of CLASS 2 Transcript-NOTES

NOTE TO READERS: This Draft was typed in the class & lightly edited & corrected later. The recording was not consulted for the corrections & since it is impossible to type at the speed of classroom speech, it is offered for *what it is worth*.

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Tibetan Prayers

. . . the latter three prayers³ pay homage to the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*, a very important genre of teaching. First paying homage to the sutras generally, which teach both wisdom and method, the wisdom . . . in the first prayer, we bow down to the paths set forth in the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*, and the latter we bow down to wisdom.

Introduction to Course Text, Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika*

Regarding the text, itself, what we study here as part of this class is the Second Chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*, Dharmakirti's *Commentary on the Compendium of Pramana*, which is basically a text on Enlightenment, e.g., are Liberation and Enlightenment possible, the goals of Buddhist practice, which are the eradication of suffering. But is that Enlightenment possible?

A mere belief is insufficient to generate the strength of mind and determination to do the practices that lead to Enlightenment over an extremely long period of time continuously. In order to have this continuous determination to make this effort, no matter how difficult, it is extremely necessary to understand that the goal of Enlightenment, the state of an omniscient Buddha, is possible.

Last time, it is important to understand that this state is possible for two reasons. What does Enlightenment mean? Someone who was just like us has reached the state of Buddhahood with the understanding of how exactly to lead each person to that state.

So why is it so important to understand that Buddhahood is possible? First, if we understand that, we'll understand that the person who has reached Buddhahood knows how to reach that state and can teach us how to reach that state so that we can generate enough faith to follow those teachings. . . and also, not only do we want to eradicate our own suffering, but do so for the benefit of others. So the two:

² ROUGH DRAFT -



³ For Audio of Geshe Wangmo's detailed presentation of the Class Prayers, see the course

first, Buddha is enlightened and is a reliable teacher, and that we, ourselves, can reach that state in order to benefit ourselves and all others.

Right now, we have no idea. We may possibly believe in it, but we don't know for certain.

In Buddhism, faith is important but it must have two characteristics. The first is that faith must be based on reason, not blind faith, but faith because we understand the reasons supporting past and future lives, liberation, etc., The second quality of Buddhist faith should be temporary until we come to hold a first hand understanding. A Buddha doesn't have faith. Our faith is just temporary until we experience ourselves and know for certain.

We do this throughout our lives. First we are told something by our parents and teachers -- they may present reasons -- and eventually, we come to our own understanding and are really able to pursue certain goals.

Similarly, in Buddhism, we learn about the Buddha, realize that the Buddha is reliable, get a understanding of the concept, start practicing, and eventually gain certain understanding ourselves.

So this text presents the reasoning, not just presenting objects of faith. Last time in order not to confuse you too much, I spoke a little bit about the *Pramanavarttika*. But in each class, I want to speak a little bit about the text, here, the Second Chapter. Basically, the Second Chapter proves, establishes that Enlightenment is possible. That is the claim. How does it do that? How does it prove that Enlightenment is possible? By way of five factors or five ideas.

Why those five? Because the author of the Second Chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*, Dharmakirti, and the *Pramanavarttika* in general, is a very famous Indian master known by any Tibetan master. He composed the text on *pramana*, on reasoning.

Pramana can be translated in different ways: reasoning, logic, valid cognition.

Dharmakirti composed a text on *pramana*, valid reasoning, of the authenticity of the Buddha's teachings. The Second Chapter deals with concepts such as Four Noble Truths, past and future lives, Great Compassion, etc. That chapter, in fact the entire four chapters of the *Pramanavarttika*, are a commentary on a text by another great Indian masters, Dignaga. The outstanding Buddhist masters, . . . in particular with regard to presenting logical reasons for understanding what the Buddha taught are Dignaga and Dharmakirti, a system of logic that hadn't existed in India.

These are tools, just like study, meditation, etc., are tools. Therefore, logic is a very powerful tool for gaining more understanding that was first introduced by Dignaga and Dharmakirti. It has been around for more than 1,000 years. The system of debate is very much based on their system.

Dharmakirti's text is actually more popular, famous than Dignaga's text, even though it is a commentary on Dignaga's *Compendium*.

The Second Chapter only comments on **two lines of Dignaga's text**.⁴ Those two lines are extremely profound, and the Second Chapter is devoted to them and is the most important of the four chapters.

Five Factors of Enlightenment

Basically, Dignaga said, I pay homage, bow down to five factors; and Dharmakirti explains those five factors in two ways. He gives two explanations of those five factors. That is why the Second Chapter can be divided into two parts. One part takes the five factors in the sequence they are presented in the two lines, the *forward sequence*, and the latter part takes the five in the reverse order.

The Second Chapter of Dharmakirti's text explains five factors. First is the explanation according to the *forward sequence* in which they were set forth. He then explains those by the *reverse sequence*. What are those five factors?

First Factor - the Buddha

The first one is the **Buddha**: "the one who has become pramana." Pramana here means someone who is a *pramana being*. This is how Dignaga describes Buddha, "the one" . . . "become" is very important. *Pramana being* means an authentic being, who is omniscient and reliable -- the text sets forth reasons for Buddha being such.

What factors, the Buddha has *become* enlightened. Just like us, he had problems and afflictions, but he had an incredible mind, like us, that can be transformed by applying the correct causes and conditions.

Dignaga says, 'I bow down to the one who has become *Pramana*' -- that is the **first factor**, who is that? The Buddha. Dharmakirti begins by explaining a mind that knows its object incontrovertibly, etc. that Buddha is not God, but became enlightened. Although Buddha is omniscient, Buddha is not omnipotent. The Buddha cannot take away anyone's suffering and problems just as a doctor cannot take away our disease; but Buddha can show us the methods for removing those in order to reach the enlightened state.

Therefore, the first of the five factors is the Buddha.

Factors 2-5: Two Causes & Two Results

The next four factors can be talked of as two causes and two results.

The two causes are: first, the *intention* that leads a person to Buddhahood. So causes of what? Enlightenment: one is the *intention* and the *application*.

⁴ Dignaga's 2-line Homage [highlights added here] from his *Compendium on Pramana* that serves as basis of Dharmakirti's commentary:

To **the one who has become pramana**, the one **wishing to benefit migrators**,
To "the **teacher**", "the **sugata**", "the **protector**", I bow down.

ཚད་མར་གྱུར་པ་འགྲོ་ལ་ཕན་བཞད་པ། རྟོན་པ་བདེ་ཤེས་སྐྱོབ་ལ་ཕྱག་འཚལ་ཏེ།

Intention: Why would anyone want to become enlightened, and what is to be done?

Factor 2: *Intention*

First the intention. Usually, when we think about intention, which type of mind are we talking about in the context of the mind that must be generated? Bodhicitta. Usually, it is Bodhicitta, but a good friend of mine told me she'd heard that if you have the wish to become enlightened in order to benefit all beings, you are a Bodhisattva. . . . she thought, 'I have the wish to become enlightened, so I must be a Bodhisattva'.

Great Compassion

The only reason someone would desire to become enlightened is to benefit others, so first, one must have the great wish that all beings be happy, not merely temporarily with food and shelter, etc., but the wish that they can achieve the greatest happiness possible, full Enlightenment, and that wish is expressed with the mind of Great Compassion, the wish to benefit all sentient beings. So Great Compassion is stressed here.

So far, we've had the wish to benefit one sentient being: I, me and mine! But I'm not even so effective in that. Having an ordinary body born in cyclic existence and bound to be born in *samsara* again.

So Great Compassion is the intention that is first cause that leads a person away from cyclic existence. Self-centeredness is kind of like the road to *samsara*, and Great Compassion is the road that leads us away from *samsara*.

Factor 3: *Application - Wisdom Realizing Selflessness*

But just that is not enough, to just have compassion and to be kind hearted, we need know how; we need the *application* which is the understanding of Selflessness, which is the second factor. The first factor is the *intention*, Great Compassion -- no. Sorry. The very first factor is *the One who has become Enlightened, has become reliable or pramana*. That is the first factor.

The second factor is the *intention*, Great Compassion.

The third factor is the *application*, the Wisdom Realizing Selflessness.

The last two factors talk about the *Result*.

Factor 4: *the Sugata*

The fourth factor is called *Sugata*, which is actually another word for Buddha. But here in this context, it speaks of two qualities of a Buddha which are included in the Four Noble Truths; the two Truths of the Four Noble Truths that describe the qualities of the Buddha: the Truth of Cessation -- cessation of any kind of fault in the Buddha's continuum, and the Truth of the Path, the realizations in the continuum of the Buddha. Those are the resultant state of the Buddha.

So, the first factor is the Buddha, himself, who has **become *pramana***.

Then the two causes: Great Compassion and Wisdom Realizing Selflessness.

Then, Sugata, which talks about the Buddha's absence of any kind of obstructions, obscurations; and the Buddha's realizations; the two-fold nature of Sugata, . . .

Factor 5: the Protector

And the f last factor is the Protector, which is the most important quality of the Buddha for us that the Buddha teaches other. The Truth of Cessation and Truth of the Path benefit the Buddha, and only indirectly benefit us. But what benefits us most directly is that the Buddha teaches us, and that is what is called the Protector.

Those five are set forth in the first part according to the *forward sequence*. This is enough of a presentation of the Second Chapter, and next time we will discuss more so you have a basic sense of what the text is about.

Materialist Objections to [possibility of generating Great Compassion over] Many Life Times

Last time, we discussed in great detail, that the Buddha is the one who has become *pramana*.

The next factor mentioned is Great Compassion, and Dharmakirti says that Great Compassion is difficult to generate. Big surprise. We're so used to looking just after ourselves, and it is very difficult to transfer that focus. Maybe changing focus to your child is less difficult than to one's neighbors, let alone to everyone else. So this takes a long time, Life Times.

Then Dharmakirti presents objections to the possibility of generating Great Compassion over many life times by people who think like us, Materialists. I'm not saying you're all philosophical materialists but we've been raised in societies of materialism and may consciously or subconsciously hold such views.

The followers of such in Dharmakirti's day asserted what you see is what exists, there's one life and body, and the mind comes from the body. That is the usual sense in the West. Most people have no interest in Liberation or Enlightenment or in past and future lives.

So the opponents that Dharmakirti presents are particularly helpful to us as Westerners.

Assuming that our own system is correct, using reasoning to negate the materialistic view that all that exists is the body. . . . And we can learn a lot from our opponents' views because we may actually hold the same views subconsciously or subtly.

Lokayata was the name of that ancient Indian Materialist school of philosophy [also known as the *Charvaka*]⁵ which asserts that:

⁵ Charvakas (*tshu rol mdzes pa ba* - ལྷོ་རོལ་མཛེས་པ་བ་, *this life happy*), also referred to as Lokayatas (*rgyang 'phen pa* - རྒྱུང་འཕེན་པ་), are the followers of an ancient Indian school of materialism. They

Because the relationship between the Consciousness and the Body is either:

- a relationship of cause and effect; or
- one is a part of the other; and
- there is no other possibility.

Therefore, there is no possibility of past and future lives, and thus, there is no possibility of generating Great Compassion.

It is hard for us as Westerners to really believe in past and future lives, although some people believe in past and future lives, without any religious practice or belief.

Do we live our lives as though there is a future life?

Buddhism, however, is incomplete without past and future lives.

Some, who claim to be Buddhists and to believe in the *Law of Karma*, reject past and future lives. I engage in volition actions in this lifetime that may have a result in this lifetime, I may have a certain experience in this lifetime, but the actions of this life may ripen in future lives.

Without past and future lives, *Karma* doesn't make sense. Then sometimes *Karma* would apply, but sometimes cause and effect would be random. And how could there be Liberation?

Again and again, I meet people who are very interested in Buddhism, but the fix they are seeking does not come quickly enough, and they lose interest. Unfortunately, we have such very strong habituations that quick fixes are not possible.

I'm not saying that you should give up on Buddhism right away if you don't believe in past and future lives. We'll be studying the reasoning supporting past and future lives.

If there are past and future lives, if you are not prepared, you are really in trouble, so we should pretend there are, and you're covered in all situations.

If you live your life as though there is *Karma* and past and future lives, if there isn't you'll provide a good examples to your friends and family, and die without regrets. If there is a Heaven or hell only, then you will benefit, and if there are past and future lives, you will be well prepared.

If you want to have certain financial means, there's nothing wrong with having sufficient means to do what you want and need to do - not talking about accumulating wealth beyond.

So don't rob a bank . . . if you want other people to trust and believe in you, then be honest. If you want to be loved and cared for, then be loving and caring. If you

do not accept past and future lives, karma, liberation, or enlightenment. Instead, they believe that wisdom lies in seeking out pleasurable experiences and avoiding unpleasant ones.

Like the Buddhists they reject the existence of a creator God. [p. 148, *Pramanavarttika text*].

want to be abused, etc., then you know what you should do. But if you want to be happy and continue to expand your mind, . . .

Necessity of Ascertaining Relationship between Mind and Body in order to Analyze Possibility of Past/Future Lives

Let's look at past and future lives, are they possible? That brings us to the Mind/Body problem:

- What is the relationship between Mind and Body?
- Is the Mind or the Body a more important factor?
- Does one give rise to the other?
- Is one part of the other?

Practice Mindfulness of Your Mind and Body to Examine their Relationship

So we discussed this and I asked you to check by way of mindfulness of your mind and body. Mind is more important as we're quite familiar with our body, keeping it clean and healthy. In which way can we better take care of our mind. Mindfulness, to not just follow the objects of our mind, but to make it a habit to look at the mind itself. During the day, not just in 30 minutes in the AM and PM. If that 30 minutes doesn't affect you throughout the entire day, it doesn't mean anything. That 30 minutes is meant to be a training.

My mom takes classes for her back problems that teach her how to move properly in order not to reinjure her back. Meditation is like that: say you do mindfulness meditation, say by watching the breath and watch thoughts that come. This is meant to prepare you for the day so you can watch your mind when stresses, etc., arise. How can we understand the mind body relationship if you have no idea what the mind is. If you want to know the relationship between X and Y you have to know what X and Y.

Homework Assignment

So your homework is to **make an effort to check watch your mind is doing throughout the day. Every few seconds check** what your own mind is doing. Modern science has found watching your own emotions, not just watching the (mind's_ object, has a very calming effect.

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Relationship between Mind and Body - Discussion/Q&A

What kind of conclusion did any of you reach about the relation between mind and body?

STUDENT: I have a crazy mind, the more I see my mind, I see I have a lot of emotions and need to purify a lot.

GESHE WANGMO: How does the relationship between your mind and body feel?

STUDENT: Body reacts to the mind; it is not that the body . . . the body is a servant of mind, the mind decides everything and the body acts to do what the mind says.

GESHE WANGMO: Interesting: the body is secondary and the mind is in charge.

STUDENT: That's not what the Buddha said.

GESHE WANGMO: Right now it doesn't matter what the Buddha said. Does it feel as though the body created the mind? Or does it feel as though the body created the mind?

We want to find out where the mind comes from. I see only three possibilities, maybe you see a fourth.

1. The mind comes from a previous life. From a time when this mind and body weren't linked.
2. The mind comes from my parents ovum and sperm.
3. I got a piece of my mom's mind and a piece of my dad's.

STUDENT:

GESHE WANGMO: You're saying when we're children, we don't really have an awareness of awareness.

Are you sure we don't? Do you remember very clearly. My bother one told me, 'You know, children only have a consciousness once they're three years old'. And I said, 'Huh, when your daughter was two years old, she really knew what she wanted'.

Until recently, we've accepted the assertion that animals don't have consciousness, but now science is realizing that bees learn very complicated things. So how can we say they don't have consciousness?

I once saw about documentary about two monkeys in a cage. When both got a piece of bread, they were both happy. But when one got a piece of bread and other other got a grape, then the one with the bread threw the bread back. Even the monk knew, 'I got a piece of bread while He got a grape!'

So from a Buddhist perspective, there is awareness right from the moment of conception. However, the question remains: Where does that awareness come from?

- Some would say, it only developed in the womb;
- Some would say from union of sperm and egg; and
- Some would say it comes from the parents.

STUDENT: Can you relate this to someone who is a coma. . . .

GESHE WANGMO: She is mentioning the idea of someone who has been in a deep coma who, when they awaken, has lost memory and function, and needs to re-learn. I read about someone who'd been a deep coma, and when he awoke, he was on the level of a 12 year old.

STUDENT: . . .

GESHE WANGMO: There seems to be a separation of mind and body, as though they no longer communicate any more or cooperate any more. While for us, mind and body cooperate very well. But in the case she's mentioning, the body doesn't seem able to do what the mind wants it to do. These situations are interesting, as usually we take it for granted that the body and mind are as they seem to be; that they are one entity.

Materialists present three cases:

1. Either the mind arises from the body;
2. The mind is a *part* of the body; or
3. The mind is a *quality* of the body. Here *quality* and *part* mean that they are always linked.

Here *quality* and *part* mean that they are always linked.

This is how it feels, as though the body is a property of the mind. To us it feels that way sometimes while other times it feels as though the mind is a part of body.

In terms of origin, which one was first? Buddhists would say mind; but a lot of scientists would say, body.

STUDENT: A fourth possibility is that consciousness is a property of matter itself. We know that on the quantum level, it is very complicated and unpredictable as though . . . and when it increases in complexity and interconnectedness, this tiny primordial awareness manifests as a mind.

GESHE WANGMO: So on an atomic level, you have the atoms that make up the ovum and sperm, and you're saying that in each atom there's a tiny bit of awareness that basically gives rise to consciousness. So that is one of the three alternatives given.

STUDENT: I'm saying the sperm and ovum already have consciousness within them at a simpler and more rudimentary level.

GESHE WANGMO: So there are lots of different consciousnesses on the atomic level, so you are continuously having new consciousnesses. . . . a constant exchange of consciousness, e.g., as you shed skin and I breathe it in, I should really understand you . . . well, keep that as a sentient being.

The question remains: is the consciousness one entity with the body . . . mixed like one coin seen from two different sides or . . .

Any other suggestions? This is very helpful.

Using Causation to Analyze Mind/Body Relation

We need to look at causes and conditions as we discussed last time. An important concept of Buddhist philosophy is repeatedly applicable, cause and effect are major concept in the philosophy.

Two-fold causes: What are the two types of causes? Substantial and cooperative conditions. What is the substantial cause? It is the main cause. The substantial cause generates something that is a continuation of itself.

Take a seed which is the substantial cause of the sprout because the seed keeps changing and changing into the sprout. Then there are cooperative conditions: the warmth, the sun, the soil and farmer, etc.

- Whenever you have a phenomenon that is changing, it must have a substantial cause and cooperative condition causes.
- Right now each one of us is both a cause and result; in fact, cause and result are synonymous.
- However, whatever is the result is not the cause of its cause.
 - I'm the result of something in the past and the cause of something in the future.

Whatever there is, can you have something that has a substantial cause but not a cooperative condition or vice versa? Are either of those possible?

STUDENT: Sound.

GESHE WANGMO: Okay, sound?

STUDENT: It's uncompounded.

GESHE WANGMO: No, sound is impermanent. Some say, sound does not have a substantial cause.

What are the different sense objects, colors, and shapes. Think of a color and shape, things that you can see: does it have a substantial cause?

Something material that transformed into the table. What is the substantial cause of the wooden table? Wood. The cooperative conditions are the carpenter, nails, etc.

Whatever is an impermanent phenomenon, e.g., a table, must have had a substantial cause and it must have cooperative condition.

Is it possible that one phenomenon has only one cooperative condition? No, that's impossible. If you think of inter-dependence, it gets really vast. There's the carpenter, the persons who fed the carpenter, who gave birth to the carpenter.

STUDENT: Why is the substantial cause the wood and not the carpenter who conceived of the table?

GESHE WANGMO: Here, she brought in the mind. Remember:

Substantial does mean *main* cause. *Substantial* means that something has transformed in such a way that it became a table.

The carpenter is the cooperative condition.

Her question is why isn't the carpenter's conception of the table not the substantial cause?

STUDENT: Because without the wood, the table wouldn't come about.

GESHE WANGMO: Without the idea it wouldn't either.

The wood, the atoms of the wood, the entity or quantity of wood used, there's a continuum of the atoms of the wood that became the table.

Is the continuum of the idea of the table in that table, also? If the idea were the substantial cause of the table, that idea would have to become the table. Is that possible?

No. But you would say, yes. That's great; we need different ideas to reason properly. I'm just presenting the Buddhist idea, and in the end we come to our own conclusions.

STUDENT: What is the substantial cause of this pen?

STUDENT: Plastic.

STUDENT: Is the pen the ink or the plastic?

GESHE WANGMO: Good question. Can you have more than one substantial cause? Yes, think of a cake. A cake with eggs, chocolate, flour, milk and sugar.

STUDENT: Another example might be a book. The mind that wrote it or designed it and the paper, etc.

GESHE WANGMO: Then accordingly, the cook's idea would also be a substantial cause. But I would say that the material objects are the substantial cause of the cake, and not the mind of the person who makes it. In which case, certain objects or all objects have multiple substantial causes.

STUDENT: But none of the materials of a book, none of the paper or ink are bookish without the idea of the book.

GESHE WANGMO: That's true, but does the idea become book or does the idea designate book?

The idea imputes the book, but it is not the material that transforms into the book.

As I said, don't get hung up on the idea that the substantial cause is necessarily more important than cooperative conditions.

STUDENT: I was wondering about abstract things. Is a question, the substantial cause of an answer?

GESHE WANGMO: Yes, it seems easier with material things, the substantial cause is the material that gives rise to the thing. What about questions and answers? What is a question in the first place?

You have a good point. It is not difficult to understand the idea of substantial cause and cooperative conditions, but it is difficult to identify the instances of such. But to some degree we can all understand what a substantial cause and cooperative condition mean.

We want to find out whether or not the body gives rise to the mind:

- Is it mind that gives rise to the mind?

- Does the mind give rise to body?
- Or are they different but they work well together . . .

Not to lose the plot.

STUDENT: First I thought that substantial causes can't be immaterial objects, but you said they can. When we look at the body mind dualism. So the idea of the cake is a part of the mind and its interacting with a sensory object with the mind, so it is interacting in the same way that the body and mind are interacting.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes. As Kelsang said, the mind controls the body. You have an idea of a cake and the mind is telling the body to do this and that and in the end, there is a cake. But this is where we have to draw the line.

For Buddhism: one idea gives rise to the next idea, etc., but the claim is that the idea does not become the cake; nor does the cake become the idea. But there is an interaction between the idea and the material

STUDENT: With regard to the idea of the book, if we think that the idea of the book transforms into the book, that . . . so then the mind cannot transform into the body.

GESHE WANGMO: Again this is the Buddhist claim, but here, you need to become more familiar with your mind in order for you to reach a conclusion.

But the Buddhist idea is that the mind is an experiencer and is not physical. I was reading a book that described the mind as like a canvass with all sorts of objects painted on it, and that the mind is just *an experiencer*.

Someone said that 'I don't feel that way, but when I go rock climbing a dangerous place, I'm so *in the moment*; and in that moment, it feels like it is just perception. Just awareness being in the present.'

We don't need to put ourselves into that danger. . . .

. . . they are very clever and good at what they are doing, and therefore, he reasons there must be an intelligence.

But if you have the right causes and conditions, then a seed becomes a sprout. I think the sensation that there must be an intelligence, is the motive for the feeling that must be a god.

The experiencing entity can interact with the material, absolutely, watch your own mind, it is just experiencing. The definition of mind is clear and knowing.

This key to the room appears to me, I don't need to stick it into my mind or brain but I can hold it front of me, and even though it is not physical, my mind has a location, so the key appears to my mind that is aware of it. The neurons, prefrontal cortex, etc., are also responsible for making the awareness arise, but they are different entities.

That is the Buddhist claim: Consciousness cannot give rise to cake. Cake cannot give rise to brain. . . . in the sense that consciousness transforms into something physical. It can play a huge part in it, but it doesn't transform into it. Similarly, a sound cannot become a color and a color cannot become a taste. Taste requires a

tongue consciousness. Does it have a form or continuum, a former moment of color.

Sound is a little problematic. Some say it doesn't have a formal continuum. But this is debated. That would mean that a piece of music is not a continuation of notes; and that's difficult to support.

The First Dalai Lama said that everything has a former continuum that can go back endlessly through time. Nothing has a beginning. The continuum of something doesn't have a beginning. That means there was something physical existing before the Big Bang. And Buddhists say that is also true of consciousness. This feels very unsatisfactory to us because we like beginnings and ends -- well, maybe we don't like not ends as much; but definitely we want a beginning.

But if you check, was there something before the Big Bang? If not, then nothing gave rise to the Big Bang.

More people are raising their hands.

STUDENT: The story in the book comes from the mind of the writer, and that story makes the book a book.

GESHE WANGMO: You can say that the most important cause of the book is the idea of the writer, but still the substantial cause is the material of the book. The mind does not transform into the story.

When you talk about the book the question, is the story the written words? Is it the story read aloud or the story in your mind? The visual, verbal and mental stories? The first is an object of an eye consciousness; the second is an object of ear conscious; and the third is a mental object.

AIDAN: If the book is written in a language that no longer exists and that no one can read, is it still a book? Is it still a story.? it still a book?

GESHE WANGMO: Now we are getting into trouble: the fact that everything is merely imputed.

If you define a book as something with pages and writing in it, then it is book. For someone else, who defines a book as something with a content that has meaning, it's not a book.

STUDENT: Why is it not fair to say that the book is a reflection of the author's mind at the time.

GESHE WANGMO: You can say that the book is a reflection of the idea of the author. Think of everything as like a continuum, like a river. It may sound as though I've contradicted myself.

A reflection of your face is not your face; it is not a face. The continuum of your face and the continuum of the reflection of your face are different.

On a more subtle level, it is difficult to assert a continuum of my body and your body; but on a conventional level, there are different continua.

There is an interdependence of the production of the story of the book and the materials that were used to make the book. The author's continuum is not included in the book.

GESHE WANGMO: Think of your present mind right now. Where are you right now? Mentally. What would your parents think? Oh, dear, you're wasting your time. There must have been prior moments of continuum that gave rise to your being here.

Most people experience anger or resentment. Have you ever caught yourself thinking, OMG, I've been angry for the last hour. Then you go back trying to find the trigger through the continuum that led to the present moment of anger.

When you become aware, you can begin to see the continuum of consciousness. It may feel as though, 'Oh, I never change, I'm the same person'. But that's an illusion. You are similar; but that is not identical.

So a function of this study is to become more aware of your continuum of awareness. The past and future don't exist right now; but when we think about them, it seems as though the past, which is just memories, still exists, because we're still suffering from it. But it is long gone; which is not to say it didn't happen. The past is past.

No matter how happy we are, we're running after more happiness; but in 10 years, it is just a memory, so was it really worth it?

The objects of the mind are just something that appear to the mind. That's it.

The big Buddhist question is: is there an object at all?

All we really know is that we experience! Let's be honest about the scientific claim that we can objectively understand reality. Without a subjective mind, you couldn't understand anything. Aidan says he perceives something and I perceive something that I call the same thing; but we don't know for sure if we perceive the same thing.

The only thing I perceive is a subjective reality and the same is the case for Aidan.

KELSANG: How is reincarnation related to the mind and body issue?

GESHE WANGMO: You're asking how is that related? Why is reincarnation, how does that connect to this discussion of the mind and body problem?

STUDENT: Reincarnation is the passing on of consciousness from one life to another from the Buddhist point of view.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes, but why are we talking about the mind body relationship?

AIDAN: Because we can't generate Great Compassion in just one lifetime, so when this body dies, we hopefully will continue on . . .

GESHE WANGMO: Because of his question though: . . .

STUDENT: If the body is the substantial cause of the mind, when the body dies, the mind dies so there's no reincarnation.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes. Dharmakirti discusses how the body connects to the mind, because the materialists -- then and now -- have the idea that the mind is a substantial result of the body; therefore, when the body dies, the mind dies. When there is no body, there can't be a mind, because there's no brain. Scientists are so familiar with the idea that the mind is just a by-product of the brain, so when the brain dies there can't be a mind.

But Buddhism asserts that the mind and body are different entities. However, even Buddhists, raised as Buddhists, who believe in reincarnation, do they really live their lives as though there is a next life?

No, because we have an instinctive sense -- not rational thinking. We need to become aware that we are split between our rational thinking -- this is how phenomena are, they change moment to moment, and yes, I will die -- and our emotional sense that I'm not going to die tomorrow; I'm too busy.

I hope no one goes into my room, it is a mess; no one can find anything but me. I'm not prepared.

We don't prepare. If there is a future life, then there are future lives. Unless we stop our rebirth in samsara, we will be reborn again and again, far longer than this one life time, yet we live as though life is only for this lifetime.

STUDENT: I don't understand this one contradiction in the teaching: the one idea, that we should live completely in the present moment and not think about the future; and on the other hand, we should think about future lives.

GESHE WANGMO: She restates his question. Nice, this is good when we see apparent contradictions. Does anyone want to address this?

STUDENT: For future lives, it is more beneficial to stay in the present.

GESHE WANGMO: He's saying that in the back of your mind, you keep in mind future lives, . . .

STUDENT: How can you be in the present and be concerned about future lives?

STUDENT: Are we concerned about . . .

GESHE WANGMO: Does it say you should always be *in the present*? That would be very difficult; how can you prepare dinner?

AIDAN: You can cook in the present moment. You can plan the dinner. It means to be aware of being aware, doesn't mean you don't think.

GESHE WANGMO: He's saying what does it mean to be *in the present*?

AIDAN: Aware of awareness.

GESHE WANGMO: Very good. Can you be simultaneously aware of your cooking and your awareness? No. Only sequentially.

If you have a consciousness, it cannot simultaneously be aware of an external object and the awareness. So basically, we should be aware of the present while I'm

cooking. The moment I say, “May I become a Buddha for the benefit of all sentient beings”, I’m thinking of the future. No one is saying that is wrong.

KELSANG: To try to answer him, when we are speaking of future lives, we must have wisdom. . . . you gather the wisdom . . . if you say, I should be aware of the present moment, I should be aware of what I’m doing. When I’m eating and thinking of something else . . .

GESHE WANGMO: We’re not saying you can’t think of anything else. When you’re in the class, *be present*; don’t be thinking about unrelated past and future mental. Do what you do, fully, without being distracted by unimportant . . .

STUDENT: When are we aware of awareness as a result of thinking about future lives?

GESHE WANGMO: What is the goal of Buddhism? To become Enlightened in order to make ourselves and other happy.

So being in the present is a tool for happiness, a tool to become more aware of the mind . . . so we can apply appropriate antidotes when needed . . . accumulate positive karma . . . these are tools.

The moment you say, “May I become a Buddha” . . . the mind wishing for your own Enlightenment, when you are taking that to mind, you are not in the present.

STUDENT: Another contradiction: when one attains Enlightenment, after that one is not reborn again; they are liberated?

GESHE WANGMO: So, he is saying that after becoming a Buddha, the Buddha dies and is gone. She has answer.

STUDENT: The teachings live on through that example . . .

GESHE WANGMO: She is saying the teachings go on whether or not the person goes on.

STUDENT: Do you mean that the consciousness ceases?

STUDENT: Yes, once you are Liberated. Isn’t that the case?

STUDENT: The aspiration is, “May I remain as long as any sentient being remains” . . .

GESHE WANGMO: There is no beginning to consciousness and no end to consciousness. However, there are different philosophical systems, but according to this system . . .

Now that I believe it’s time to end. . .

Those of you who continue with this class, I won’t do this again with this text. If you have it please read ahead a little bit. So we can go into the next material.