

# Chapter Two of Dharmakirti's *Pramanavarttika*

ADVANCED BUDDHIST PHILOSOPHY COURSE – TERM 6

Class 7 - 2017 April 24 – Monday<sup>1</sup>

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## D R A F T of CLASS 7 NOTES

**NOTES TO READERS:** This Draft was typed in class; then lightly edited & corrected. This is NOT a TRANSCRIPT of the recording. Since typing at the speed of classroom speech is impossible, it is offered *for what it is worth*.

When the Text is read aloud in the class, it is included in the body of the Notes. The portions of the Text that are not read aloud in class are included in Footnotes.

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### D R A F T of CLASS 7 Transcript-NOTES

20170424C07T1.MP3

#### Q&A & DISCUSSION REVIEW

KELSANG . . . In that sense our whole life from birth to death, AM to bed, everything is a fruition of past lives karma; or is there some mixture of karma from this life also?

GESHE WANGMO: . . . Everything we experience in some way . . .

DORIS: Genetic material?

GESHE WANGMO: The genetic material we got from our parents is not a volition action? Karma refers to volitional action. Action doesn't necessarily mean volitional action. Are we the result of our parents' genetic material? Yes, but not "just" the result of that. But in terms of the body, the physical entity

KELSANG: When you obtain a body, all humans have different bodies, all 6 billion. We have a collective karma, that we . . . even our body is a result of my past actions, not what my parents give me.

GESHE WANGMO: Kelsang is saying that the genetic material we have is also the result of karmic accumulations in past lives.

From perspective that we are all on this earth, there's a similarity. But even identical twins are only completely identical at time of conception, and over time it is individually changing. So the genetic material, the fact that we have certain genetic material is also the result of our karma. That is true.

So are we only the result of our karma, no, we're the result of genetic material is not karma, but we have that genetic material as a result of our karma. We're the result of gravity and oxygen that are not the result of our individual karma.

We can debate: Is everything about us the result of our karma; or do we have causes that are not karma?

KELSANG: It is complicated when you go into details, but generally speaking, you'll never experience a karma . . .



GESHE WANGMO: . . . but “anything I experience is the result of actions in the past” - usually, Karma is explained from the point of view of experience; but we need to widen it, because our body is not an experience.

For instance, having a very beautiful body: is that the result of positive or negative karma in the past? Or being very rich? Generosity results in resources. But for some people being extremely beautiful or wealthy can be a curse.

. . . sometimes people ask if Buddhism is beyond positive and negative.

KELSANG: . . .

GESHE WANGMO: Do *good* and *bad* exist?

KELSANG: At a human level, it exists.

GESHE WANGMO: So for a Buddha, *good* and *bad* don't exist? Positive and negative karma don't exist?

KELSANG: He . . .

. . .

Geshe Palsang said, yes, the Buddha is *bad* in relation to the afflictions as Buddha harms our anger and attachment. The afflictions or self-grasping are *good* because they benefit our anger. He was demonstrating how we use the words, *good* and *bad*. If we don't like an experience, we call it *bad* . . .

The experiences we have, they are the result of our karma.

To go back to Kelsang's question: whatever is our reality is the result of karma because of our experience. Why do I say I have a . . .

. . .

KELSANG: Can something ripen other than one of the trillions of actions we've accumulated over countless lifetimes?

GESHE WANGMO: So he has reformulated the issue: Everyday, we accumulate so much karma, every thought in every moment, and verbal and physical Karma. Since we've lived since beginningless time, can we have an experience that in one way or another does not relate to one of those Karmas?

AIDAN: What do you mean by “experience”?

GESHE WANGMO: Usually, feeling relates to pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feeling . . . feeling is an odd word in English. Here it means that for every consciousness there's a sense of pleasant, unpleasant or no feeling, *i.e.*, neutral.

Often it is explained by the type of feeling, which can never be separated from the mind; so in the end, it is a mental experience.

Therefore, it is difficult to say that resources are the result of generosity because *resources* are not a feeling.

Also, when we speak of rebirth in human realm, that's not such an experience. So we have to widen . . . to include *having* a human body or having resources being karmic results; though they go along with a certain feeling. But as a debate, if we have resources but our experience of those is unpleasant . . . but in the end, when if one . . .

There's a citation of the Buddha that says,

Living beings like to be happy; and resources bring them that happiness.

So this is why Buddha spoke of generosity, first. Even if you engage in giving with a harsh mind or an impure motivation, as long as you have a mind that wants to give, that mind will lead to resources; even if the original motivation is not kindness . . . maybe if someone is generous but doesn't give with a positive mind, that may lead to resources which the person experiences with less pleasure. If I give something away with the hope that others will see me and think highly of me . . . or if I give and don't receive the gratitude I expect, and I become angry . . .

AIDAN: Using your beggar example, if I give 10 rupees and the beggar is unhappy because I only gave him 10 rupees.

GESHE WANGMO: That assumes only your action is responsible for his unhappiness as opposed to his mental expectation of 20 rupees. . . .

STUDENT:

GESHE WANGMO: Is this person getting angry at me a result of my positive action of giving?

KELSANG:

GESHE WANGMO:

AIDAN: Are all experiences . . . I thought that was his question. We've moved on from there. My question: is the experience of my karmic fruit for giving to a beggar . . . say I spoke harsh words to someone, do those depend on their reception by the person to whom I spoke them?

GESHE WANGMO: . . . it's not a negative action, e.g., the dentist drilling a hole in your tooth. Whereas, if you give a short-term positive experience to someone with the intention of harming him in the long-term, that becomes negative karma. The motivation is the main point.

I wasn't trying to say if I want — if I give a certain experience to someone, then I'll experience the same. That's not what I meant.

It is still an important issue. When we start Buddhist practice, we're instructed to watch our Karma. Once we're driven by Great Compassion, that is not the prime instruction . . . so it is important to be mindful in each moment.

## **STUDY QUESTIONS [P. 176] – TRACK 20170424C07T2**

Let's go back to the text. We still have a few questions that need to be answered in the questions for study on page 176.

The last question answered [in Class 6] was question 6.

7. Why does the physical body serve as the *mere base* of the conceptual mental awareness?

What is the *special base* and the *mere base* of the mind. The substantial cause of my present mind is the cause that became my current mind. My mind now: has my body become my mind?

No, so the body is not the *substantial cause* of my mind. Nor is it the *special base*, since the . . . anything that happens negatively or positively to the body need not necessarily impact the mind. It may, but if you get sick, you can still remain very happy. If you're very healthy and someone gives you a massage, you can still be very depressed.

But the body does serve as the ***mere base*** of the mind that, in other words, can affect the mind.

AIDAN: You need the brain.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes, you need the brain, although from the Buddhist perspective, not every mind is affected by the brain, certain awareness are affected by the brain, coarse types of awareness or the sense powers. Anything we think about with a conceptual mind relating to a sense perception, sense object, without the body, we wouldn't experience that sense object; so the body is a *mere base* for that.

8. In what way does the conceptual mental awareness serve as the base of the physical body?

In what way? Tells the body what to do; the mental conscious directs the body, controls the body; that works. Anyway, we'll go more into this later.

9. How does Dharmakirti present rebirth in higher realms, liberation, and omniscience, after presenting past and future lives?

AIDAN: If there's a place there must be someone there to experience it.

GESHE WANGMO: How do we come to understand rebirth . . ., liberation and omniscience after understanding past and future lives: is there a necessary sequence for that understanding? Why does Dharmakirti present that sequence?

STUDENT: Syllogism by faith.

GESHE WANGMO: . . . Could you understand Omniscience first, then understand Liberation, and then rebirth? What does it mean to understand liberation?

STUDENT: We need to understand what you're to be liberated from.

GESHE WANGMO: When we talk only about Liberation, we need to be liberated from the afflictive obscurations, *i.e.*, the afflictions (which lead to karmic actions and different results).

Now, how do we get liberated from afflictions?

STUDENT: By understanding reality.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes, but in order to understand that Liberation is possible, what else do we need to understand other than what we need to get rid of in order . . .

KELSANG: Afflictive emotions give rise to rebirth in lower realms.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes, as an example. Why do we have to realize that? Don't we need to realize that we are not Liberated right now? If you didn't . . . we need to know the Four Noble Truths in order to understand Liberation: we need to know the First Truth, the three types of suffering: Suffering of Suffering, Suffering of Change and Pervasive Compositional Suffering. What is Pervasive Compositional Suffering? Do you have it right now?

DORIS: Aging.

GESHE WANGMO: Aging is just one type of Pervasive Compositional Suffering. You can put it all into one term, the Five Aggregates. And we need to understand that having this mind and body is not desirable and that there's something greater.

Where does this mind and body come from? Afflictions and Karma. To understand that, we need to understand past and future lives.

So, basically, if I don't understand past and future lives, I don't understand that after this life I may be reborn in a higher or lower realm.

Secondly, if I don't understand Past and Future Lives, I don't understand that my future is birth, aging, sickness, death, over and over and over and over again.

And again, and again, and again, millions or trillions of lives. To stop that, liberation is the answer.

Therefore, first, Dharmakirti explains past and, especially, future lives; what lies ahead. Do we really want that? Do we want to be reborn in lower realms? There is that danger as we've accumulated so much negative karma over countless past lives . . . and then do we want to do it again and again? . . . if there are afflictive . . . because the cause is basically the same.

What is the main cause of the *cognitive obscurations to omniscience*? Where do they come from? Ignorance and the imprints left by ignorance, the misperceptions of reality. If you understand that by removing the obscuration to reality, you . . .

Then Buddhism makes sense. Buddhism is all about that.

#### 10. What is the meaning of 'beings of ~~Hinayana~~ *Hearer* nature', 'beings of Solitary Realizer nature', and 'beings of Mahayana nature'?

The teachings . . . the person of middling scope practices that which takes a person to Liberation; and a person of great scope practices that which takes a person to Enlightenment.

AIDAN: Why couldn't you just practice that which only leads to high rebirths . . .

GESHE WANGMO: So your question is: can you become liberated without understanding past and future lives?

There's a big problem with Buddhism in the West, I would say. I was in a quite big center in Germany where I was told that some teachers say you can practice Buddhism without reincarnation. Why? Because people find reincarnation difficult, why bother with it? It's difficult for me so let's leave it. It's like people saying, 'I want to eat healthy, but I don't like vegetables.' Maybe you can have a healthy diet without vegetables; that I don't know.

But the point here is, can we have Buddhism without reincarnation? Aidan is saying, you can work towards Liberation without ever understanding that Past and Future Lives exist. Can you really? Don't you have to be convinced at least, without realizing it, that Liberation is possible? Don't we have to understand that this body, this mind, is the result of past Karma and Afflictions?

DORIS: Otherwise, if you don't believe, then karma is incomplete.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes. If there's only one lifetime, it is difficult to understand the workings of Karma in our lives. . . . if I'm nice to my friend, and my friend likes me, that's instant Karma; but if she backstabs me when I've only been nice to her, how do I explain that?

. . . Buddhism . . . happiness in this life is a side-effect of practicing, but it is not mentioned because we may get side-tracked . . . better to be aware of experiences we may experience in future lives . . .

Don't forget this order, especially with regard to Liberation, which doesn't work without understanding past and future lives.

“What is the meaning of ‘beings of ~~Hinayana~~ Hearer nature’, ‘beings of Solitary Realizer nature’, and ‘beings of Mahayana nature’?”

. . . Someone has a Hearer nature . . . Hearer and Solitary Realizer natures are temporary, but Buddha Nature is not temporary. Everyone has Buddha Nature, but temporarily, one may have, e.g., a Hearer nature.

What does it mean to be a being of Hearer nature?

STUDENT: Renunciation.

GESHE WANGMO: No, renunciation is the requirement for entering the Hearer path; but one has the Hearer nature before entering the Hearer path.

. . . we all have renunciation to the Suffering of Suffering but not to the Suffering of Change or the Suffering of Pervasive Compositional Suffering. Renunciation means you definitely wish to emerge from Samsara.

STUDENT: To accumulate merit in order to be able to hear the teachings.

GESHE WANGMO: No, all that sounds great, but it's not how it's actually defined. The definition is given in one of the footnotes, so you need to read this handout text. A person of Hearer nature is someone who, upon hearing the teachings, is so over-joyed that their hair stands on end and their eyes fill with tears. . . . You get the picture. So they experience true joy, their expression of real affinity for the Hearer Path, which is amazing to have such an affinity for a spiritual path.



Similarly for a person of the Solitary Realizer nature: their goal of Self-Liberation is the same as the Hearer goal, but the method of practice differs.

### ***Affectionate Love, Great Compassion, Mahayana Nature & Buddha Nature***

What about a person of Mahayana Nature? Is it just measured by their expression of joy? No, a little more is required of a person of Mahayana Nature. They developed Great Compassion, which awoke their Mahayana Nature. We all have Mahayana Nature or Buddha Nature. Here in the context of the three types of beings, that Buddha Nature is being called, Mahayana Nature. Right now our Mahayana Nature is asleep. What is the sleeping mind? Self-cherishing.

What do self-cherishing and compassion have in common?

STUDENT: They care for someone.

GESHE WANGMO: Self-centeredness cares for someone; it cares the center of the universe, me. My self-centeredness cares for me. Great Compassion cares for all sentient beings. In that sense our Mahayana Nature is only awakened if we change our focus from I, me, mine.

Take today, everything I did was totally governed by self-focus. So awakening our Mahayana Nature is so difficult because self-cherishing is so profound.

Before we can generate Bodhicitta, we need to awaken our Mahayana Nature by generating Great Compassion.

Great Compassion can be the wish that all beings be freed from suffering; and may I be the being who releases sentient beings from suffering.

Geshe Palsang makes the distinction: Those of the Hinayana or Theravada also have Great Compassion, wishing beings to be free from suffering. Geshe Palsang says that those who wish for self-liberation also wish for all beings to be freed from suffering; but they don't have the wish to protect all sentient beings from suffering as in: I, myself, will free them from suffering.

There's a difference, they have Great Compassion, but not the wish, 'May I be able to free them from suffering.'

### ***Causes that Precede Generation of Bodhicitta***

Is there anyone who likes Bodhicitta? Anyone who doesn't like Bodhicitta? Anyone who doesn't know about Bodhicitta?

So I guess we all like Bodhicitta. If we could buy it in a store for 10 rupees, we'd all buy it. So we should know the cause of Bodhicitta. What are they?

STUDENT: Equanimity. Understanding that all sentient beings have been our mothers; remembering their kindness, wishing to repay their kindness.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes, you have those three, and as an alternative — although they should be practiced together — the method of Equalizing and Exchanging self and others.

So those two causes . . . lead to Affectionate Love. What is Affectionate Love?

STUDENT: Loving kindness.

DORIS: Wishing others to . . .

GESHE WANGMO: Loving kindness is seeing others as close and endearing. We have to feel close to them. Seeing them as attractive and loveable. After that, we either generate Great Love — the wish for others to be happy; or Great Compassion — the wish for others to be free from suffering. And the wish: May I free them from suffering. And then the Special Altruistic Attitude: the determination, I, myself, will do so. Next is Bodhicitta.

So if you like Bodhicitta, we should know those.

KELSANG: Can you explain that in terms of the prayer, may all beings be free from suffering.

GESHE WANGMO: Kelsang is asking about how those steps for generating Bodhicitta relate to the Four Immeasurables Prayer. It's not a direct relationship, so let's discuss that later.

STUDENT: What is English for *Lhak tsam*?

GESHE WANGMO: Special Altruistic attitude.

Never mind question 11, syllogisms through the power of fact, for now.

12. Are celestial beings of the three realms manifest, slightly hidden or very hidden phenomena?

STUDENT: Is there a way that Celestial Beings can be slightly hidden?

GESHE WANGMO: . . . and a way they can be extremely hidden . . . hidden phenomena are not manifest, so we can't know directly.

### ***Syllogism through the Power of Fact & Syllogism of Belief***

What is a tool for accessing something indirectly? Syllogism that eventually leads to an inferential cognition.

If you want to come know something that is hidden: If you want to prove, Beings of the Celestial Realm exist. A syllogism — **A is B because it's C** — provides logical reasoning to understand slightly hidden phenomena: a Syllogism through the Power of Fact.

If phenomena are extremely hidden, then we use scripture. So through scriptures, we come to understand that the scripture that teaches is reliable, so it is called a Syllogism of Belief.

So the higher Celestial Realms, are they slightly hidden or extremely hidden?

VEN. PHUNTSOK: They are both in a general way.

GESHE WANGMO: They are both. This text indicates that, as Dharmakirti says, first he will prove through logic higher realm rebirth; thereby proving their existence. But all the details of life in Celestial Realms will remain *extremely hidden*.

Most things in this world that are *slightly hidden*, we can understand generally, but not all of their details.

We can know that a Buddha exists, but the details about the Buddha, we can't know. We can know the law of karma; know that positive acts lead to positive results, but the details are extremely hidden.

We can know about Emptiness, but to know each and every phenomenon upon which Emptiness is based is extremely hidden. . . .

So a general knowledge can be slightly hidden, but the details about it can be extremely hidden. Here with the Celestial Realms this is similar.

One of the scholars mentioned that when we say the Celestial Realms are extremely hidden, we mean in general we can know that the Celestial Realms — how is a different matter — but we can know this, yet the details will remain *extremely hidden*.

I can know that you exist, but everything about you, including your mind, is *extremely hidden* to me. So I know you superficially.

This should be enough for the questions. There are two or three more left that you can do on your own time.<sup>3</sup>

### 20170424Co7T3

Now:

#### **An Extensive Explanation**

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Setting forth the establishing agent of the existence of past and future lives
- (2) Refuting the establishing agents of their non-existence

So think of Dharmakirti being in dialogue with the ancient Materialist philosophers who asserted that there are no past and future lives, no liberation, no omniscience. . . today, in the West we're born into a system that espouses Charvaka materialism. Talk to people, ask if you anger can be eliminated? No way. If we live a modern Western life, absent traditional religious beliefs, we usually hold Charvaka materialistic views. Therefore, if we were logically inclined before we encountered Buddhism, we'd probably set forth arguments opposing existence of Past and Future Lives.

So we have the two outlines here, *establishing agent* just means correct reasons.

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<sup>3</sup> 13. What does it mean that a text is devoid of the three contradictions?

## SETTING FORTH THE ESTABLISHING AGENT OF THE EXISTENCE OF PAST AND FUTURE LIVES

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Setting forth the reasons
- (2) Disposing of [the objection that the reasons are] faulty

This is Dharmakirti's organized manner of going through the reasoning.

### Setting forth the Reasons

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*When one has thoroughly taken birth,  
Inhalations, exhalations, sense powers, and awarenesses  
Do [not] exist independently of similar types.*

What does that mean? Gyaltsab Je explains:

Regarding the subject, a newly-born ordinary being's **exhalations** and **inhalations**, [his] lucid **sense powers** and specific **awarenesses** such as distractedness, etc., they **do not – when** [that being] **has fully taken birth – exist independently** of earlier [continuums] **of similar types**, because of possessing exhalations and inhalations, and so forth.

What does this mean? When you are enrolled in an institution studying the Five Great Classical texts of Buddhist philosophy, one of those is the *Pramanavarttika*. We use Dharmakirti's root text and, in the Geluk curriculum, we use Gyaltsab Je's commentary. In other traditions, they have their own excellent commentaries.

The oral tradition is most important. That's why you have class. You don't just read this, and go, 'Okay, what's next?' You have a teacher who goes through the text. In class, when we study this text, the teacher will extensively explain a short passage; and that oral commentary is replicated in our text [in the further indented material] by translations of explanations I've received. However, in traditional studies, after the classes, you debate so that we have the opportunity to engage in Wisdom Arisen from Hearing (in class), the Wisdom from Reflection (from one's own studies supplemented by debate), and the Wisdom of Meditation (internalization). So you have to do most of the job yourself.

### PRESENTATION OF SYLLOGISMS TO ESTABLISH EXISTENCE OF PAST LIVES

Basically, Dharmakirti's three lines set out three syllogisms; and those present three subjects.

Dharmakirti first presents the reasons establishing the existence of *past* lives: Since the syllogism that is indicated in the three lines of the *Pramanavarttika* presents three different subjects (a newly-born ordinary being's exhalations and inhalations, his lucid sense powers, and specific awarenesses) it can be expanded to three syllogisms:

## Explanation of Syllogisms

Next Dharmakirti's syllogisms are presented. First you have a subject. Say you are trying to prove Emptiness, you have **A** is **B** . . . even if you are trying to prove that something lacks inherent existence, you are trying to prove Emptiness, you are trying to prove **A** is **B**. You have a basis. In what way do I have **A** is **B**?

A syllogism is structured **A** is **B** because it is **C**.

What is the establishing agent that proves something? It is **C**. **A** is **B** because of **C**. **C** is the tool, the indicator, the evidence, the sign, the reason that establishes logically that something is **C**.

What do you prove? Do you prove **A**? Do you prove **B**? **A** is **B** because it is **C**. **C** is that which you use to prove something. What do you prove: **A**, **B** or anything else?

You don't prove **A**. You don't prove **B**. You prove that **A** is **B**. First you need to understand **A**, then **B** and then **C**. If you understand those, let me give you an example:

Regarding the subject **A** (*in my neighbor's house*) there is **B** (fire) because there is **C** (smoke).

So we need to know *in my neighbor's house*, know what fire is and know the relationship between smoke [of the kind that comes from a fire] and fire. Even though the fire in the neighbor's house is hidden to you, but the smoke is not, because of the relationship between smoke and fire, the smoke, which is not hidden, can serve as a proof of that which is hidden.

If you understand that for fire and smoke, it is the same for Emptiness. It is the same for Selflessness, impermanence. You use something, which is obvious to you, that connects to Emptiness in order to prove Emptiness. When you use a syll . . . when you prove Emptiness, you never just prove one thing, Emptiness, there's also the **A** and the **B**. Can you understand just Emptiness. Is there an Emptiness that flows in the sky?

You understand E on a basis, e.g., a table.

To understand that which is to be understood, Emptiness, you end up understanding the basis of the table. The lack of inherent existence of, e.g., this table.

Let's look at subtle impermanence. Something is impermanent: my body. If I want to understand that my body changes moment-by-moment — my body is A, B is the characteristic of changing moment to moment. Is that hidden to me? It is. If I look in the mirror every morning, it looks the same to me. We have an innate sense of permanence; this is hidden to me. As I can't visually see subtle impermanence.

What is something that is obvious to establish it? My coarse aging that I can observe over time. So either I change all the time, and I notice after 5 or 10 years; or I change a lot, suddenly, every now and then.

A syllogism always proves that a basis (A) is B because it is C.

**A** [the subject, my body] is **B** [subtly impermanent] because it's **C** . . .

We use syllogisms all the time, but we use them wrongly all the time. This person is a jerk because he was mean to me. We never get angry without a reason; we use a syllogism. I don't like that guy because he said something. I like that guy because he was abusive to a person who's my enemy.

Why do we use syllogisms in Bism? Because we use them naturally.

But since many of our syllogisms are not based on reality so they are not logical:

**A** must be **C** and whatever is **C** must be **B**.

It is as simple as that.

Wherever there is smoke (**C**), there must be fire (**B**). So there must be fire in my neighbor's house because smoke is billowing from the window.

So the syllogisms Dharmakirti uses are wordier than the ones we usually use:

- (a) *Regarding the subject, a newly born being's exhalations and inhalations, they do not – when that being has fully taken birth – exist independently of earlier continuums of a similar type, because they are exhalations and inhalations.*
- (b) *Regarding the subject, a newly-born ordinary being's lucid sense powers, they do not – when that being has fully taken birth – exist independently of earlier continuums of a similar type, because they are sense powers.*
- (c) *Regarding the subject, a newly-born ordinary being's specific awarenesses, such as his distractedness, they do not – when that being has fully taken birth – exist independently of earlier continuums of a similar type, because they are awarenesses.<sup>4</sup>*

The first two are harder to understand than the third, which is the most important. This is a literal translation of the Tibetan. All it is saying is that a *newly-born being's awareness* comes from a former moment of awareness because it is an awareness.

Being an awareness is easy to understand, but how can I understand it must come from an prior moment of awareness? Look back at the example of fire and smoke: unless I understand that if there is smoke, there must be fire, the syllogism is not effective.

How can I come to understand that whatever is an awareness must be preceded by a former moment? What technique would you recommend.

STUDENT: By familiarizing yourself with your own awareness.

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<sup>4</sup> In reliance on their respective reasons, the three syllogisms establish that a newly-born being's respiration, sense powers, and specific awarenesses do not – when that being has fully taken birth – exist independently but as results of (and thus in dependence on) their respective earlier continuums of a similar type, *i.e.*, earlier continuums that have the potential to generate the newly-born being's respiration, sense powers, etc.

GESHE WANGMO: Yes, mindfulness. We are very mindful of sense objects, and the past and future. Though that's not what we mean by mindfulness. Mindfulness means to become aware of your own awareness, not the objects of the awareness but the awareness itself. If we were attached to our own awareness, *i.e.*, we'd be more obsessive about it.

If we get to know your own awareness, we can come to see that one moment gives rise to the next, on and on; or look at a present awareness and trace it back to when it first arose.

Mindfulness is a powerful tool to not be angry. Why can't you be angry when you watch your anger? Because you let go of the focus of your anger, another person, since you aren't angry with the awareness — it's like running out of petrol in the car. There's no fuel for the anger because your not focusing on it. You can only be angry with the focus of your anger. It doesn't feel that way, it seems like the existence of the object of anger is the cause of my anger.

### **Homework – be Mindful of your Anger**

If you get angry between now and Wednesday, allow yourself to be angry, and then think, 'What is my anger doing?' Don't go back to its object. That way, you can remove the anger. Also, if you're not aware that you're angry — often we're not because we're so aware of the object of anger, and we don't want to give up the anger.

Anger is quite exhausting, so at some point you can think, how long have I been angry? What was the moment before I got angry, and see the trigger of the anger.

What is the definition of anger: It's an awareness that focuses on a negative aspect of its object and exaggerates the negative aspect.

So how did we get there? From exaggerating the negativity, also, a wish to be separated from them, a wish to harm, so it is more complicated than the definition.

Am I exaggerating, do I have resentment or a wish to retaliate and harm? So watch what was thought before that, what was before that . . . then you can come to realize that whatever is perceived is a continuum of preceding awareness . . . and maybe you can come to stop future anger before it gets triggered off.

It's like heroin. Take it once, you're much more likely to try it again and eventually become addicted.

Like couples who continually have the same or similar arguments. It always makes me angry when he says that, . . . and a pattern develops. If my neighbor says the same thing, no problem. We don't get as angry with the people we don't do as the people we are closest to.

The point is that due to the degree of attachment, which is always there, you can trace back your anger to your attachment, me. So you get to know your own afflictions better.

But there's not so much reasoning that can prove this to you. This text claims that it proves past and future lives, but if you just read the text and attend class and walk

out of the room, that is insufficient. You need to understand on our own that whatever is an awareness is a continuation of a former continuum.

Let's look at this a little closer because the wording is odd. First, *a newly born being* here in this context relates to being newly born *in* the womb, *i.e.*, conception, as distinguished from being *born from the womb*.<sup>5</sup>

So the red and white constituents of the ovum and sperm coming together to serve as a base for . . .

### **Exhalation & Inhalation – Energy Winds**

Now you have a problem: *Regarding the subject, a newly born being's exhalations and inhalations*,. This can be explained as in this text below.<sup>6</sup>

There are different ways of thinking about exhaling and inhaling. Tibetans are referring to the energy winds — not the inhalation of oxygen. You can also take the tantric approach, though this text is from sutric point of view and doesn't speak of subtle energy wind.

What is respiration per tantra? A movement of energy. When your consciousness thinks, the energy wind associated with that consciousness also moves.

Can anyone explain that?

STUDENT: The wind energy goes to wherever you attention goes.

GESHE WANGMO: Anything else you know about subtle energy or consciousness.

STUDENT: Anything that happens within the body, subtle energy winds are moving.

GESHE WANGMO: Or becoming activated.

STUDENT: . . .

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<sup>5</sup> The reason for saying “when that being has *fully* taken birth” (instead of “when that being has taken birth”) is to indicate the time when a being has clearly been born or conceived [Fn. 80], that is, when the being's awareness has completed the process of entering and creating a link to the physical aggregates of a new life. For instance, in the case of a fertilized ovum it is not immediately obvious whether a consciousness has entered the ovum and whether the ovum is now the body of a sentient being [Fn. 81].

Fn. 80 - Please note that in Tibetan, the term “to take birth” (*skye ba len pa* - སྐྱེ་བ་ལེན་པ་) can refer to both conception and – in the case of a mammal – birth from a mother's womb. Yet in the context of the presentation of past and future lives it usually refers to conception. In order to differentiate between conception and actual birth, the term is sometimes used in the following two ways: (1) to take birth *in* a mother's womb (*ama'i mngal na skye ba len* - འམའི་མངལ་ན་སྐྱེ་བ་ལེན་) and (2) to take birth *from* a mother's womb (*ama'i mngal nas skye ba len* - འམའི་མངལ་ནས་སྐྱེ་བ་ལེན་).

Fn. 81 - Of course, it may be difficult to observe, for example, a fertilized human ovum. Yet even in the case of the eggs of “external fertilizers” such as female frogs who release their eggs in the water to be fertilized by their male counterparts, it is not immediately obvious whether a consciousness has entered the fertilized egg and whether it now contains the body of a sentient being. This becomes more evident only when the ovum starts to grow.

<sup>6</sup> A person's present exhalations and inhalations refer to his respiration, *i.e.*, his breathing in and out. Like his sense powers and different types of awarenesses, a person's breathing in and out is generated in dependence on its past continuum – a continuum that has the capacity to produce the present respiration.



GESHE WANGMO: So any kind of activity in the body can only take place if there are energy winds — the movement of the limbs, breathing — those are coarse energies. But subtle ones accompany awareness.

Not the subtlest of the Clear Light Mind, but the subtler energies that accompany the mind.

DORIS: Our consciousness is more subtle in sleep so the accompanying energy winds are more subtle.

GESHE WANGMO: The analogy of the energy wind and the consciousness is to a horse on which the mind is mounted; but they are said to be of one nature — unlike a horse and its rider.

So the energy and mind are of one nature where one affects the other. The aspect of perceiving the object, we call consciousness; and the aspect of movement we call energy winds.

Geshe Thupten Palsang said that consciousness is explained from the perspective of taking an object; whereas, the energy winds are explained from the point of view of strength or weakness of the appearance of that mental object, *i.e.*, is the object perceived strongly, is it hazy, or vivid?

The movement refers to making the consciousness active, activating the mind.

The subtle energy wind can do . . . but there's no contradiction as they're of one nature.

. . . from a tantric point of view, a newly born being has subtle energy winds in the body that can only be present due to prior continuum . . . but that's not what Dharmakirti says here, because he doesn't speak from a tantric perspective.

STUDENT: We're supposed to . . .

GESHE WANGMO: We're just speaking generally

KELSANG: . . .

GESHE WANGMO: When you die, we say the coarse energy dissolves into the subtle energy; but that doesn't mean the coarse energy becomes the subtle energy. The coarse mind doesn't become the subtle mind; it dissolves into it.

The subtle energy is always present. When you're reborn, the subtle energy gives rise to the coarse energy, though not on its own.

. . . basically, how does the subtle energy in the body connect to the coarser energy in our body? By breathing air, we bring in coarse energy.

DORIS: Inside and outside winds. Chi is relatively form.

GESHE WANGMO: The subtle energy wind is also form, but it's more subtle. So there's some respiration or movement that comes from one life to the next.

From a Sutric point of view, what do you need to be able to breathe? Intention; there's always a subtle intention, subtle effort.

KELSANG: What about the dissolution of the elements at the time of death.

GESHE WANGMO: That's too complicated to discuss now.