

SETTING FORTH THE DEFINITION OF SUBSTANTIAL CAUSE

[This is divided into:]

- (1) The definition of substantial cause
- (2) The body does not [satisfy] that [definition] as regards to the mind

THE DEFINITION OF SUBSTANTIAL CAUSE

To counteract the misperception that the body is the substantial and thus the indispensable cause of the mental consciousness, Dharmakirti presents the definition of substantial cause:

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Without a transformation of the substantial cause
The substantial result would be unable to change.
[This is] like, [for] example, without the transformation [61]
Of the clay [there would be no transformation of a clay] vase, and so forth.*

Regarding the subject, the flame of a lamp, it is **the substantial cause** of the rays of the flame of the lamp, (a) because **without the transformation of** [the flame's] nature, **the substantial result**, the nature of the rays of [the flame] **would be unable to change** [and] (b) because [the flame] is the unique and direct placing agent of the mark, the mere nature [of the rays]. This is **like**, for **example, without a transformation of the clay**, there would be no transformation of a clay **vase, and so forth**.

The definition of substantial cause is: that which mainly generates its substantial result, a continuum of a similar type.

This means that the flame of a lamp (or a butter-lamp¹) is the substantial cause of the rays of the flame since the flame transforms into or becomes the rays, with the rays being the flame's continuum of a similar type. The rays are the flame's continuum of a similar type because they are the subsequent continuum as well as the result of the flame.

If the nature or entity of the flame did not change, the rays would not be transformed either. This is similar to the example of clay and a clay vase: unless the nature of the clay is transformed, the clay vase cannot change or be transformed. In other words, without the clay changing moment by moment and eventually transforming into a clay vase, there would be no clay vase that also underwent momentary changes and transformed into its substantial result.

Therefore, a substantial cause is *the direct and unique placing agent of the mark* (Tib: *thun mong ma yin pa'i lag rjes 'jog byed*), the nature of the substantial result.

Please note that in the context of a cause and its effect, 'a placing agent' (Tib: *'jog byed*) refers to a cause, i.e., that which "places", generates, creates or produces a result. The Tibetan term *lag rjes*, translated as "mark", literally means 'hand mark' or 'hand impression' and when used together with the term "placing agent" it means 'result'. So, a cause is described as 'a placing agent of a mark' (Tib: *lag rjes 'jog byed*), because it is that which generates its result.

¹ Please note that although Gyaltshab Je cites a similar example of a substantial cause and its substantial result – a flame and its rays – here he does not use the Tibetan term "*mar me*" ("butter fire" or "flame of a butter-lamp") but the term "*sgron me*" which is often translated as "lamp" or "light". However, in Tibetan the two terms are synonymous, with "*mar me*" or "*sgron me*" not always literally referring to a butter-lamp. In Tibetan, even the flame of a paraffin lamp is called "butter-lamp". Yet both "*mar me*" and "*sgron me*" refer to an open flame which is why I chose to translate "*sgron me*" as "flame of a lamp".

Here, Gyaltsab Je describes a substantial cause, not just as ‘a placing agent of a mark’ but as a ‘*direct* and *unique* placing agent of a mark’. This is because a substantial cause such as the flame of a lamp is the *direct* cause of — and thus directly generates — its substantial result, the rays, without first giving rise to something other than the rays. Also, the flame is the *unique* cause of the rays, for of the two, the characteristics and the nature or entity of the rays, the flame mainly creates the nature of the rays.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the definition of substantial cause?
2. Why would it be absurd if a substantial cause, such as the flame of a lamp, did not change in order to generate its substantial result, the rays of the flame?
3. What is the meaning of this phrase: ‘a substantial cause is the direct and unique placing agent of the mark, the nature of the substantial result’.

THE BODY DOES NOT [SATISFY] THAT [DEFINITION] AS REGARDS TO THE MIND

This outline presents the reason why the body does not satisfy the definition of a substantial cause as regards the mental consciousness, and thus does not serve as the substantial cause of the mental awareness:

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Without the transformation of some functioning entity
[of the cause]*

*It is not reasonable that [the cause which] transforms some functioning entity
[Of the result] is the substantial cause of that [result]*

It is like an ox and a wild ox. [62]

The mind and the body are also like that.

It follows that **the mind and the body are also** not [related as] substantial cause and substantial result, because **an ox and a wild ox are like that** in that the transformation [of one] does not ensue from the transformation [of the other].

Our own system cites a consequence, the meaning of which is that the body does not satisfy the definition of a substantial cause with regard to the mind, because changes to the mind do not depend on changes to the body.

This is similar to, for instance, a domesticated ox and a wild ox² in the sense that the transformation of a wild ox does not depend on the transformation of a domesticated ox.

[The reason] is pervaded [by the predicate], because **without the transformation of some functioning entity** of the cause, **it is not reasonable** that the cause – **which transforms some functioning entity** of the result – be that [result’s] substantial cause. For example, like an ox and a wild ox.

² In Tibetan, the term *ba lang* = ox, refers to a domesticated bovine. With regard to a ‘wild ox’, Gyaltsab Je’s *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* and Khedrup Je’s *Ocean of Reasoning* differ in their spelling. The spelling in Gyaltsab Je’s commentary is *ba min* which literally means ‘non-ox’ (or ‘non-cow’), while Khedrup writes *ba men* which translates to “wild ox” (although sometimes Khedrup also writes *ba min*). According to Geshe Palden Drakpa, here the term refers to a ‘wild ox’, which is why I chose that translation.

The reason of the consequence (*because the transformation of one does not follow from the transformation of the other*) is pervaded by the predicate (*the mind and the body are not related as substantial cause and substantial result*), which means that, *if the transformation of the mind does not ensue from the transformation of the body, it necessarily follows that the mind and the body do not relate as substantial cause and substantial result.*

This is because a substantial cause cannot possibly transform into its substantial result without undergoing a transformation.

Hence, if the body were hypothetically the substantial cause of the mental consciousness, the mental consciousness could not be transformed without a transformation of the body. Yet this is not the case, for a transformation of the mental consciousness does not require a transformation of the body, just as changes to a wild ox do not necessitate changes to a domesticated ox.

Someone says: Well, then, it is contradictory that [body and mind] abide together.

An opponent holds that if our own system compares the body and mind to a domesticated and a wild ox, it then follows that the body and mind do not exist together just as a domesticated ox and a wild ox live in different environments. However, that would contradict our own system's explanation that, as regards one lifetime, the body and the mind are propelled by the same projecting karma and exist together as the aggregates of the same living being:

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*.]

By the [substantial] causes of those [two] acting as [each other's] cooperative conditions

*They are generated [as] the resultant [body and mind that] abide together. [63]
Like fire and molten copper.*

[Response:] It is suitable for **the resultant** body and mind to **abide together**, because they are generated **by the substantial causes of those two acting as each other's cooperative conditions**. For example, **like fire and molten copper** abiding together.

Our own system replies that although *in general*, a living being's mental consciousness is the cause of that living being's body (and therefore precedes that body), the mental consciousness and the body that pertain to one rebirth, as the aggregates of the same living being, relate to each other in the following way: former moments of the body serve as the substantial cause of later moments of the body and as the cooperative condition of later moments of the mental consciousness, while former moments of the mental consciousness serve as the substantial cause of later moments of the mental consciousness and the cooperative condition of later moments of the body.

To be more specific, the first moment of the body is the substantial cause of the second moment of the body and the cooperative condition of the second moment of the mental consciousness; the second moment of the body is the substantial cause of the third moment of the body and the cooperative condition of the third moment of the mental consciousness, and so forth. Similarly, the first moment of the mental consciousness is the substantial cause of the second moment of the mental consciousness and the cooperative condition of the second moment of the body; the second moment of the mental consciousness is the substantial cause of the third moment of the mental consciousness and the cooperative condition of the third moment of the body, and so on.

The relationship between the mental consciousness and the body that are the aggregates of the same person is similar to that of fire and molten copper, for example, in the sense that although in general, fire is the cause of molten copper, there are

instances of fire and molten copper existing together. There are such instances because molten copper only retains its fluid consistency as long as it is hot, which means, as long as it is of one nature with the element of fire.

Please note that fire here does not refer to bright flames giving off light but to the *fire element* (defined as 'that which is hot and burning'). Since molten copper possesses the characteristics of being hot and burning, one of its constituents is necessarily the element of fire. The fire element is a part of the molten copper; it is of one nature with it and thus exists together with the molten copper.

Furthermore, the earlier moments of the molten copper are the substantial cause of the later moments of the molten copper and the cooperative condition of the later moments of that copper's fire element, while the earlier moments of the fire element are the substantial cause of the later moments of the fire element and the cooperative condition of the later moments of the molten copper.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. In what sense are a domesticated ox and a wild ox similar to the body and the mental consciousness?
2. Why does an opponent argue that is contradictory for the body and the mind to abide together?
3. In what sense are fire and molten copper similar to the body and the mental consciousness?

REFUTATION THROUGH AN ANALYSIS OF [THEIR] SIMULTANEOUS [EXISTENCE]

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Refutation [of the idea] that [the body] is the simultaneous base [of the mind]
- (2) Refuting other types [of non-Buddhist tenets] through that
- (3) A summary

REFUTATION [OF THE IDEA] THAT [THE BODY] IS THE SIMULTANEOUS BASE [OF THE MIND]

In the following outlines, our own system addresses the latter two possibilities (according to the Lokayatas) as regards to the relation between the body and the mental consciousness (see pp. 166 - 167): If the body and the mental consciousness do not relate to one another as substantial cause and result, some Lokayatas may argue that the body is the special base of the mental consciousness by way of the body being a simultaneous cause and thus a quality or part of the mental consciousness. This would mean that the body exists at the same time as that mind. Our own system refutes that assertion.

[This is divided into:]

- (1) Citing a consequence
- (2) Refutation of the reply to that
- (3) Eliminating [the idea] that it is contradicted by direct perception

CITING A CONSEQUENCE

An opponent argues that just as, for instance, the flame of a butter-lamp is the special base of the flame's rays while the flame and its rays exist simultaneously³, likewise the body serves as the special base of the mental consciousness, with the body and the mental consciousness existing at the same time.

In order to refute this misperception our own system cites a consequence:

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

[Whether substantially] existent [or substantially] non-existent, since [a simultaneous base does not [make sense]

[The body] is not [the simultaneous base of the mental consciousness].....

Regarding the subject, the mental awareness, it follows that the body **is not** its simultaneous base, because whether [the mental consciousness is substantially **existent** or substantially **non-existent**, a simultaneous **base** that is of a different substantial entity **does not** make sense.

Our own system cites the following consequence: *Regarding the subject, the mental awareness, it follows that the body is not its simultaneous base, because there can be no simultaneous base of a mental consciousness that is of a different nature than that mental consciousness.*

A simultaneous base of a mental consciousness that is of a different nature than the mental consciousness does not exist because if two phenomena relate to each other as one being a base of the other, they are either (a) of different natures or (b) of one nature. If they are (a) of different natures, they cannot exist simultaneously, while if they are of one nature, they exist at the same time.

If two phenomena – that relate to each other in terms of one being a base of the other – are (a) of different natures, they necessarily relate as cause and effect since that which acts as the base is necessarily the cause of the other phenomenon. An example of such a relationship is a seed and a sprout. The seed is the cause, and thus the base, of the sprout. Since the seed is the cause of the sprout, the seed and the sprout do not exist at the same time and are thus of different natures.

If two phenomena – that relate to each other in terms of one being a base of the other – are (b) of one nature, they must exist at the same time. Their relation is such that one is an attribute, a part, or an instance, etc. of the other phenomenon, with that other phenomenon serving as the base. An example would be a human body and the head of the human body. The body is the base of its part, the head, and the two are of one nature, both existing at the same time.

Hence, if as the opponent suggests, the body were the simultaneous base of the mental consciousness, the body and the mental consciousness would have to be of one nature. But since the body and the mental consciousness are of different natures, the body cannot serve as the *simultaneous* base of the mental consciousness.

³ Please note, that although the opponent is correct in the assumption that the flame is the special base of the rays of the flame, he fails to understand that the flame is the rays' special base on account of being their substantial cause. He is unaware of that, for he believes that the flame and the rays exist simultaneously since they can be perceived at the same time.

According to our own system, the flame and the rays that we perceive together are not related as cause and effect. This is because the first moments of the rays of the flame (which are the result of the first moment of the flame) exist one moment after the first moment of the flame and thus the first moments of the rays exist at the same time as the second moment of the flame. Likewise, the second moments of the rays exist simultaneously with the third moment of the flame; the third moments of the rays exist together with the fourth moment of the flame, and so forth. However, those simultaneously existing moments are not related as cause and effect.

This is why Dharmakirti argues that the body is not the simultaneous base of the mental consciousness because, whether the mental consciousness is substantially existent or not, there is no simultaneous base of the mental consciousness that is of different natures than itself.

Please note, that *substantially existent* (Tib: *rdzes su yod pa*) and impermanent are synonymous, and a phenomenon that is *substantially non-existent* (Tib: *rdzes su med pa*) and a permanent phenomenon are synonymous.

Hence, whether a phenomenon is impermanent or permanent, if something is the simultaneous base of that phenomenon, it is necessarily of one nature with the phenomenon.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. Why does an opponent assert that the body is the simultaneous base of the mental consciousness?
2. What is the consequence our own system cites in response to that assertion?
3. Why is there no simultaneous base that is of a different nature than the phenomenon based on it?
4. What is the meaning of *substantially existent* and *substantially non-existent*?

REFUTATION OF THE REPLY TO THAT

In response to the consequence cited by our own system, an opponent – who is a follower of one of the Indian non-Buddhist philosophical systems – argues that the body is the *simultaneous base* of the mental consciousness because it is a base that causes the already existent mental consciousness to remain for some time.⁴ In the context of refuting such a base, our own system refutes an *abiding cause* and a *disintegrating cause*.⁵

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

.....Someone says: a cause of the abiding of
That which exists is [the meaning of] a base.....

Someone says: [That] is not so, because the meaning of **a base is: a cause of the abiding of that which exists** as an already established [phenomenon].

An opponent disagrees that there can be no simultaneous base of a phenomenon that is of a different nature than the phenomenon. This is because, he claims, the meaning of a base is: *a cause of the remaining or persistence of an impermanent phenomenon which has already been established*.

⁴ Such as a base is also referred to as *a base of the abiding of something that is already established* (Tib: *grub zin gnas pa'i rten*). Here in the context of the body and the mental consciousness, the opponent claims that the *body is the base of the abiding of the already established mental consciousness*.

⁵ Please note that if an *abiding cause* (Tib: *gnas rgyu*) existed, it would not *generate* or *produce* its result – it would cause it to remain. A *disintegrating cause* (Tib: *jig rgyu*) would not generate its result either: it would cause it to disintegrate or go out of existence. For instance, the *abiding cause* of a sprout would not produce the sprout (unlike its *generating cause*, for example, the seed); it would cause the sprout to remain for some time. Likewise, the sprout's *disintegrating cause* would not generate the sprout; it would cause it to disintegrate, i.e., go out of existence.

In other words, according to the opponent, a base refers to a cause that is responsible for an impermanent phenomenon (that has already come into existence but has not yet disintegrated) to remain for some time.

Based on the assumption that impermanent phenomena first come into existence, then remain for some time, and eventually disintegrate (i.e., go out of existence)⁶ the opponent holds that in order for a phenomenon (that has already come into existence) to remain, it needs a base that causes the phenomenon to remain, for otherwise it would go out of existence as soon as it was produced. The body therefore acts as a simultaneous base of the mental consciousness, because it is a base of the *already existent* mental consciousness and thus exists at the same time as the mental consciousness.⁷

However, since according to the opponent the body also serves as the cause of the mental consciousness' remaining, it is of a different nature than the mental consciousness.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

.....[the body] does not exist [as] a base [of the abiding of the mental consciousness] [64]
Because that which makes [the mental awareness] abide is not of a different [nature] than [the mental awareness].

[Response:] Regarding the subject, the [mental awareness], the body **does not exist as a base of the abiding** of the already established [mental awareness], **because that which makes** [the mental consciousness] **abide is** (a) **not of a different** [nature] **than** [the mental awareness], but (b) generated as its entity by the cause of [the mental awareness].

In response, our own system cites a syllogism: *Regarding the subject, the mental consciousness, the body is not a base or cause of the persistence of the mental consciousness, because the mental consciousness' attribute of persistence is (a) of one nature with the mental consciousness and (b) generated by the same cause that generated the mental consciousness.*

'That which makes the mental consciousness abide' (Tib: *gnas pa po*) refers to the mental consciousness' attribute of persistence. According to our own system, it is a feature or characteristic of the mental consciousness that enables the consciousness to abide or remain.

⁶ This assumption is similar to the view of the Vaibashika School which asserts that an impermanent phenomenon has three characteristics: *generated* (Tib: *skyes pa*), *abiding* (Tib: *gnas pa*), and *disintegrating* (Tib: *jig pa*) with these three held to act as agents. *Generated* is responsible for the production of the impermanent phenomenon it characterizes, *abiding* is responsible for it to remain for some time, and *disintegrating* for it to go out of existence. According to the Vaibashika, although the three characteristics are established simultaneously, the times at which they perform their activities are different. This is because initially, *generating* causes an impermanent phenomenon to come into existence; thereupon, *abiding* causes it to remain, and eventually, *disintegrating* (i.e., *impermanence*) causes it to go out of existence (see Jeffrey Hopkin's *Maps of the Profound* pp. 239 - 243).

According to the other Buddhist tenet schools, the three characteristics do not act as agents but are associated with the *activities* of having been generated, remaining, and disintegrating. The three are explained to occur simultaneously, not serially, since whatever is an impermanent phenomenon is necessarily all three: it has been generated, it abides, and disintegrates. A clay vase, for instance, has been generated because it was created by its substantial cause (clay) and cooperative conditions (a potter, a potter-wheel, etc.); it abides since it exists and continues for some time as a vase; and it disintegrates (i.e., it is impermanent) because the different moments that comprise the vase change moment by moment, thereby taking it closer to the time when it ceases to exist as a vase.

⁷ From a Buddhist point of view, a cause of an *already existent* phenomenon does not exist, for a cause and its result do not exist at the same time. A cause can only give rise to a phenomenon that *will come into existence*.

The mental consciousness is the base of that feature.⁸

Since a characteristic and its base (i.e., in this case that which possesses the characteristic) are (a) necessarily of one nature, the mental consciousness' feature of persistence and the mental consciousness are of one nature.

Also, (b) as a *unique* characteristic of the mental consciousness, the mental consciousness' attribute of persistence arises from the same cause as the base of that characteristic, the mental consciousness. This is because the cause of a *unique* impermanent characteristic and the cause of the base of that characteristic are synonymous.⁹

Hence, according to our own system, it does not make sense for the body to act as a cause of the mental consciousness' quality of persistence since – as established before – the body is not a cause of the mental consciousness, and if the body is not a cause of the mental consciousness, it is necessarily not a cause of the mental consciousness' attribute of persistence. This is because the causes of those two are synonymous and whatever is the cause of one is necessarily the cause of the other.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Even if [someone says that they] are [of a] different [nature, our own system replies:]
[because it is] the very cause
In what way does the [body] act [as responsible for the abiding of the mental
consciousness'] functioning entity?*

Even if someone says that the reason is not established [as] they **are** of a **different** substantial entity, [our own system replies:] **In what way does the** body act [as responsible for] the abiding of [the mental consciousness'] **functioning entity** – it follows such is not feasible. This is because [according to the opponent, the body] is **the very cause** of the abiding [of the mental consciousness which is] of a different nature [than the mental consciousness].

If an opponent argued that the reason of the syllogism cited by our own system is not established, because the mental awareness and its persistence are different substantial entities the following absurdity would occur: the mental consciousness' attribute of persistence would have no impact on the mental consciousness because it would be not be connected to the awareness. If that were the case, then, even if (as the opponent holds) the body were the cause of the mental consciousness' persistence, the body would only be able to affect the mental consciousness' persistence, not the mental awareness itself (since the mental consciousness's persistence and the mental consciousness would be of different natures and have no connection). The body would therefore not be responsible at all for the mental awareness abiding or remaining for any time.

⁸ Please note that from a Buddhist point of view, the base of a phenomenon is either of one nature with the phenomenon or of a different nature. If it is of the same nature, the phenomenon is in general a characteristic, quality or aspect of the base. If it is of a different nature, the base is a cause of the phenomenon.

⁹ Every phenomenon has numerous *unique* permanent and impermanent characteristics or attributes. The causes of the *unique* impermanent attributes and the causes of their base (the phenomenon that has those attributes) are synonymous. Taking the example of a vase, whatever may be the causes of the color, shape, impermanence, etc. of the vase are necessarily the causes of the vase, while the causes of the vase are necessarily the causes of the vase's color, shape, impermanence and so on.

Please note that although the causes of a *unique* impermanent attribute and the causes of its base are synonymous, the causes of a (common) impermanent attribute and the causes of its base are not synonymous. For instance, impermanence is an attribute of a vase but it is not a *unique* attribute of the vase, for it is also the attribute of a pillar, a table, and so forth. Therefore, the causes of the *vase's* impermanence and the causes of the vase are synonymous; the causes of impermanence (which is a common attribute of the vase) and the causes of the vase are not synonymous.

This is similar, for instance, to a vase and pillar which are of different natures and not connected: the cause of the vase has an effect on the vase but not on the pillar.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

It follows that the mental awareness does not disintegrate. [65]

Regarding that subject, [the mental awareness], **it follows that it does not disintegrate**, because it abides during the second moment after having been [newly] established.

Furthermore, if the mental consciousness had an *abiding cause*, i.e., a cause that is responsible for its remaining once the mental awareness has newly been established, (i.e., has newly come into existence), it would follow that the mental consciousness is not impermanent. The mental consciousness would be permanent, for it would not disintegrate moment by moment. This is because one moment after having newly come into existence, the mental consciousness would still be around (in dependence on the cause that is responsible for its persistence) and not have disintegrated, that is, not transformed into its next moment.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

Suppose [someone says:] we assert that it [disintegrates in reliance on] a disintegrating cause.

Suppose someone says: [the mental consciousness] is not permanent, for **we assert** that it disintegrates **in reliance on a disintegrating cause**.

Someone may argue that just as the mental consciousness has a cause that is responsible for its coming into existence (a *generating cause*) and another cause that is responsible for its abiding (an *abiding cause*), it needs a further cause that is responsible for the mental consciousness going out of existence (a *disintegrating cause*)¹⁰. Therefore – the opponent contends – the mental consciousness is impermanent since its first moment goes out of existence as a result of its *disintegrating cause*.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

There is also the same absurdity.

[Response:] It follows that it is not feasible that an already established and abiding [mental consciousness] later disintegrates in reliance on a disintegrating cause. This is because if one analyses whether the mental awareness' disintegrating and the mental awareness are of one or different substantial entities, **there is also the same** fault as with the previous **absurdity**.

¹⁰ Our own system asserts only the existence of the first type of cause: a *generating cause* (Tib: *skyed byed kyi rgyu*) that is responsible for an impermanent phenomenon being generated and thus coming into existence; it does not accept the existence of a separate *abiding cause* (Tib: *gnas pa'i rgyu*) or *disintegrating cause* (Tib: *'jig pa'i rgyu*) the main functions of which are to cause a phenomenon to abide or disintegrate.

A cause that generates an impermanent phenomenon is either that phenomenon's substantial cause or cooperative condition. Substantial causes and cooperative conditions create not only impermanent phenomena such as tables, cars, and so forth, they also generate all the characteristics of those phenomena, including the qualities of abiding and disintegrating. It is on account of those attributes that the continuums of impermanent phenomena naturally remain and at the same time disintegrate, that is, change moment by moment. Therefore, it is explained that a phenomenon's *generating causes* not only cause the phenomenon to come into existence, they are also responsible for the phenomenon remaining and disintegrating. Yet, a generating cause is not referred to as an *abiding cause* or a *disintegrating cause*, for it does not mainly cause a phenomenon to abide or disintegrate.

Our own system's response is: just as it is absurd to hold that the mental consciousness remains in reliance on an *abiding cause*, it is absurd to accept that the mental consciousness goes out of existence in reliance on a *disintegrating cause*. Therefore, the analysis that was applied above to refute an *abiding cause* can be applied here to refute a *disintegrating cause*:

In order for the mental consciousness to go out of existence it must have the attribute of disintegrating (i.e., of being impermanent). This attribute and the mental consciousness are either of (a) one nature or (b) different natures.

If they are of (a) one nature, there is no need for a *disintegrating cause* since the mental consciousness naturally goes out of existence owing to the characteristic of disintegrating that is part of it.

If the attribute of disintegrating were of a different nature, it would follow that the *disintegrating cause* only affects the mental consciousness' attribute of disintegrating. It would not affect the mental consciousness itself, since the consciousness and the attribute would be of different natures and thus unrelated. Therefore, even if the *disintegrating cause* existed it would not cause the mental consciousness to go out of existence.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

Also, what could an abiding cause do?

Also, what could an abiding cause do? It follows that it is pointless, because when [the mental awareness] does not meet with a disintegrating cause, it is established and abides; when it meets [with a disintegrating cause] an abiding cause cannot affect its abiding.

Furthermore, if a *disintegrating cause* existed, there would be no need for an *abiding cause*. This is because after a mental consciousness has come into existence, it would remain for as long as it was not affected by a *disintegrating cause*. Once such a *disintegrating cause* came into effect, the mental consciousness would go out of existence without an abiding cause being able to interfere. Hence, an *abiding cause* would play no part in a phenomenon's persistence.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

In case [someone said:] it [affects] the abiding until [the mental awareness] meets With a disintegrating cause.....

In case someone said: if there is no abiding cause, [the mental consciousness] disintegrates prior [to meeting with a disintegrating cause]. So, there is no fault [with our position] as the abiding cause affects **the abiding** [of the mental consciousness] **until** [the mental consciousness] **meets with a disintegrating cause**.

An opponent may counter that an *abiding cause* is necessary, for after having come into existence through its *generating cause*, the mental awareness would not remain for any time unless it had an *abiding cause*. It is only after the *abiding cause* has come into effect and the mental consciousness has been around for some time that the *disintegrating cause* takes over and causes the consciousness to go out of existence.¹¹

¹¹ Although it may seem plausible for a phenomenon to remain for some time in reliance on an *abiding cause* and then to disintegrate in reliance on a *disintegrating cause*, upon analysis it becomes clear that it is impossible. Taking the example of a flower that bloomed three days ago; on day four, fertilizer is added and causes the flower to become bigger, while on day five poison is applied and the flower wilts. This does not mean that the fertilizer is the flower's *abiding cause* and the poison its *disintegrating cause*. The fertilizer is not the *abiding cause* of the flower that existed for the first three days, since it is not its cause. It is not its cause, for the fertilizer was not added before the flower first came into existence. Nor is it the *abiding cause*

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

.....*There is no contradiction here
That disintegrating is innate to a functioning entity.
And what is the use of an abiding cause?*

[Response:] It follows that **there is no contradiction here that** [the attribute of] **disintegrating is innate to a functioning entity**. This is because [a functioning entity] can disintegrate even without meeting a disintegrating cause. If you accept that, **what is the use of an abiding cause?** It is not able to effect the abiding of that which is established, because you accepted [that a functioning entity disintegrates naturally without a disintegrating cause].

According to our own system, whatever is a cause is necessarily a *generating cause*; there is no separate *abiding* or *disintegrating cause*. An impermanent phenomenon exists as a result of having been produced by its *generating causes*, i.e., its substantial causes and cooperative conditions. Those causes not only created the phenomenon itself, they also generated its innate qualities of *remaining* and *disintegrating*. Therefore, as soon as an impermanent phenomenon has come into existence, it naturally abides or continues for some time, while at the same time disintegrating or changing moment by moment.¹²

This is why our own system replies that the attribute of disintegrating is one of the characteristics of an impermanent phenomenon, for an impermanent phenomenon naturally changes moment by moment without the assistance of a *disintegrating cause*. If the opponent agreed to that, he would also have to agree that there was no need for an *abiding cause*.

QUESTIONS FOR STUDY

1. What is the meaning of a base as set forth by the first opponent of this outline?
2. What is the syllogism our own system cites in order to refute that the body is the base of the abiding of the mental consciousness?
3. What are an *abiding cause* and a *disintegrating cause*?
4. Why would the mental awareness be permanent if it were to remain in reliance on an *abiding cause*?
5. Why is there no need for a *disintegrating cause*?
6. Why do the three characteristics of generated, abiding, and disintegrating occur simultaneously?

ELIMINATING [THE IDEA] THAT IT IS CONTRADICTED BY DIRECT PERCEPTION

of the flower on day four, because it is the *generating cause* of that stage of the flower. It is a cooperative condition of the flower on day four, for it caused the flower to continue to thrive. Similarly, the poison is not its *disintegrating cause*, for it is not the cause of the flower that existed for the first three days, while it is the *generating cause* of the wilted flower. It is the cooperative condition of the wilted flower, for it caused it to wilt.

¹² The fact that an impermanent phenomenon both abides and disintegrates may seem contradictory. Geshe Thubten Pelsang refutes this apparent contradiction with the example of a skydiver: a skydive will last about five or six minutes. During the descent, the parachutist is constantly moving – falling ever closer to earth. Yet, although at each moment of his descent he is never flying in the same spot, it is nonetheless correct to say (during each moment) that he is flying. He is flying just after jumping from the plane, when his parachute opens, and shortly before landing. Similarly, although a vase changes moment by moment and is never the same from one moment to the next, each of its moments are nonetheless referred to as ‘vase’. Although the vase is disintegrating or changing moment by moment, it still abides or continues to exist (for some time) as a vase.

The Second Chapter of the *Pramanavarttika*

In this outline, our own system explains that although there is no simultaneous base of an *already existent* phenomenon, there is a base for a phenomenon that *will come into existence*.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Suppose [someone says:] just as, for instance, [67]
The support of water etc.*

Suppose someone says: **just as** it has been established by direct perception that earth, **for instance**, is the base that affects the abiding of already established **water** etc., so is the body also [the base] of the mind.

An opponent insists that the body is a simultaneous base that is responsible for the mental awareness (that has already come into existence) to remain. He argues that the body can be compared to the earth which serves as such a base of (already existent) water. A water-vessel like a vase, for instance, exists at the same time as the water inside it; the vessel also holds and supports the water and is thus responsible for the water remaining in the vase. This, the opponent argues, is realized – and thus established – by our sense consciousnesses.

Similarly, a person's body is responsible for the person's (already existent) mental awareness remaining with the body as one of the person's aggregates. Since the person's body and mind exist at the same time, the body is a simultaneous base that causes the mental consciousness to remain.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

.....this has the same [flaws]

[Response:] It follows that a vessel does not affect the abiding of already established water, because **this** assertion **has the same** flaws as those cited in the [previous] case.

Our own system replies that a water-vessel that serves as a simultaneous base causing the water inside it to remain can be refuted by the reasoning presented in the previous outline.

Someone says: Well then, why is [a water-vessel] known in the world as the base [of water]?

An opponent objects to our own system's refutation, wondering why a water-vessel is usually described in the world to be such a base.

[Dharmakirti says in the *Pramanavarttika*:]

*Since it is a cause generating the functioning entities
That disintegrate each moment [and] the continuum [of which are in the same location
as]
The [earlier] functioning entity, it is a base. [68]*

[Response:] Regarding the subject, a water-vessel, **it is a base** of the water inside it **since it is a cause generating** the later continuum of **the functioning entities**, the [moments of] water inside it, **that** naturally **disintegrate** in **each moment** and are in the same location as the earlier **functioning entity** [water].

In response, our own system says that a water-vessel is indeed a base of the water inside it but not a *simultaneous* base. The water-vessel does not serve as the base of the water that exists at the same time as the water-vessel, but of the water that exists a

