



# A Drop from the Ocean of Aggregates

Five Questions I Always Had about  
the Aggregates

Topic: Five Aggregates

Translator and Compiler: Tenzin Dongak





## Happy Monks Publication

© 2013 Fedor Stracke  
All rights reserved.

No part of this work may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system or technologies now known or later developed, without permission in writing from Fedor Stracke.

## **Other Happy Monks Publications:**

Collected Topics

*A Drop from the Ocean of Consciousness – A Compendium on Awareness and Knowers*

*A Drop from the Ocean of Mind and Mental Factors*

*Self-liberators – Superior to Hearers and Inferior to Bodhisattvas*

Emptiness

*A Debate Between Wisdom and Ignorance* by Panchen Losang Chokyi Gyaltsen

*The Sun Illuminating the Profound Meaning of Emptiness – A Commentary on the Heart Sutra* by Chone Dragpa Shedrub

Biography

*Chandrakirti – The One Clarifying Nagarjuna's Superior Point of View*

Meditations

*Om Ah Hum Meditation* by Lama Yeshe

Available for download from [www.aryatara.de](http://www.aryatara.de) or on order from [happymonkspublication@yahoo.com](mailto:happymonkspublication@yahoo.com).

<b>The Aggregates in General</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Five Questions I Always Had about the Aggregates</b>	
Why Five Aggregates?	3
Why Are Feeling and Recognition Presented Separately?	3
Why the Sequence of Form, Feeling, etc.?	5
Why Did the Buddha not Teach an Aggregate for Non-compounded Phenomena?	7
Why Aggregates, Sources, and Spheres?	7
<b>The Individual Aggregates</b>	
The Aggregate of Form	9
The Five Physical Sense Powers	10
The Significance of the Sense Powers	11
The Five Sense Objects	12
Non-Revelatory Form	15
The Aggregate of Feeling	21
The Aggregate of Recognition	25
The Aggregate of Compositional Factors	28
The Aggregate of Primary Consciousness	29
<b>Functionality (According to Sautantrika)</b>	<b>32</b>

Aryadeva:

He who sees one  
Is said to behold all.  
What is the emptiness of one  
Is the emptiness of all.

From the *Precious Garland*:

The being is not earth, not water  
Not fire, not wind, not space,  
Not consciousness. If it is not any,  
Where is a person apart from these?

Because the being combines the six elements  
It is not absolute. Similarly,  
Because the individual spheres combine,  
They do not exist absolutely.

## Preface

The five aggregates are very central, as they are the basis for many main meditations.

The very subtle yet extremely resilient grasping at the self-existence of “I” and “mine” is the root of all problems. To fully appreciate the harmful impact of this grasping and to then free oneself completely from it, it is necessary to understand both the illusory conventional nature of the aggregates as well as their final mode of abiding.

I collated and translated most of the content from different Tibetan texts such as the *Clear Ornament* by Chim Jam-pe'i yang, *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation* by the first Dalai Lama Gyalwa Gedun Drub, and the *Collected Topics* by Yongdzin Purbuchok Jampa Tsültrim Gyatso.

Some of these are my own thoughts, but still based on the same material. Any faults are entirely mine.

From the *Heart Sutra*:

Shariputra, every son of the lineage or daughter of the lineage, that wishes to engage in the practice of the profound perfection of wisdom, should look upon it thus: To view also all five aggregates intensely and correctly as empty of inherent nature.

Form is empty. Emptiness is form. Emptiness is nothing else than form and form is also nothing else than emptiness.

Likewise, feeling, recognition, compositional factors, and primary consciousness are empty.

## **The Aggregates in General**

An aggregate is the sum of its examples. There are five aggregates listed by the Buddha:

- The aggregate of form.
- The aggregate of feeling.
- The aggregate of recognition.
- The aggregate of compositional factors.
- The aggregate of primary consciousness.

The aggregate of form is the sum of all forms, the aggregate of feeling the sum of all feelings, and so forth. As such one needs to distinguish between the five aggregates in general, and the five aggregates that are the basis in dependence on which the “I” is labeled.

The model of the five aggregates is a short presentation of compounded phenomena, which are the basis for the grasping at “I” and “mine,” and the basis for all contaminated and uncontaminated phenomena.

Every compounded phenomenon is contained in the five aggregates. They are called *compounded*<sup>i</sup> because they are generated from their causes and conditions, which needed to compound first.

*Compounded phenomenon* is synonymous with product, produced, impermanent and functionality.

Functionalities are divided into that which is form and that which is not form. That which is not form is divided into mind and that which is neither form nor mind. That which is neither form nor mind, such as the fifty-one mental factors and the non-associated compositional factors, is divided into the aggregates of feeling, recognition, and compositional factors.

The intermediate presentation of compounded phenomena is their explanation via the twelve sources,<sup>ii</sup> and the model of the eighteen spheres<sup>iii</sup> is their elaborate explanation. One reason for these different presentations is to overcome different misconceptions of self, such as the mental factors being the self, or form being the self, or a combination of form and consciousness being the self. The twelve sources were taught to overcome the misconceptions of form being the self, and the eighteen spheres were taught to overcome the misconception of form and consciousness being the self.

The five aggregates are the basis for human existence because only relative to body and consciousness is the thought “I” generated. The following thought “mine” is generated likewise in relation to form, feeling, recognition, different mental factors such as love and compassion, and primary consciousness.

## **Five Questions I Always Had about the Aggregates**

### **Why Five Aggregates?**

The presentation of the five aggregates is to show the basis of the grasping at “I” and “mine,” and for this the division into five is sufficient, as neither more nor less are needed.

Ordinary individuals usually grasp primary consciousness to be the self, and form, feeling, recognition, and compositional factors as belonging to this self. They perceive external and internal forms as related to the self, as that which either performs its actions or as that acted upon by it. They think that feelings are experiences belonging to this self, they label what they see, hear, smell, taste, and touch by recognizing it as belonging to the self, and they think that the compositional factors belong to the self because they induce various virtuous and non-virtuous actions.

### **Why Are Feeling and Recognition Presented Separately?**

Out of the fifty-one mental factors, only feeling and recognition are presented separately, while all the other mental factors are bundled up in the aggregate of compositional factors. The reason for this is that contaminated feeling and recognition are the main causes for disputes as well as the main causes for cyclic existence.

The Buddha taught in a sutra,

Because of attachment to the sense objects  
kings strive with kings, farmers with farmers, and  
householders with householders. Because of  
attachment to their views ordained ones strive  
with other ordained ones.

Also from the sutra *Praising the Lack of Disputes*,

Unattached because of a non-appearance of  
desire; Having destroyed the net of views;  
Then there is no dispute.  
How can it arise without root?

Because worldly people strongly grasp at sense  
objects and are attached to the experience of the  
feelings they generate, kings strive with kings, farmers  
with farmers and householders with householders  
over water, fields, plains, women, houses, and wealth.

Because of strongly grasping at the good and bad  
views of self and others with distorted recognition,  
ordained practitioners start to quarrel with other  
ordained practitioners.

## **Why the Sequence of Form, Feeling, etc.?**

There are four reasons why the Buddha taught the five aggregates in this particular sequence:

### 1. From the Point of View of Coarseness and Subtleness

Form is the coarsest out of the five aggregates, since most forms are obstructive. Out of the remaining four non-forms, feeling is the coarsest because it is the most obvious; e.g., one can easily feel with one's hands. Out of the remaining three, recognition is the coarsest; e.g., the apprehension of the characteristics of blue is easy. Out of the remaining two, compositional factors is coarser since the wish to be happy and not to have suffering is more obvious. The aggregate of primary consciousness is the subtlest because it is the mere recognition of the object.

Here the coarseness and subtleness of the object are measured according to the degree of difficulty in its cognition.

### 2. It Is in Accordance with the Sequence of the Generation of Afflicted Phenomena

Since beginningless time sentient beings have had a strong liking for form and therefore first look at form. If the form observed is pleasant, then the feeling of happiness arises and if the form is unpleasant, then the feeling of suffering arises. This gives rise to the

different mistaken conceptions such as grasping at the impure as pure, suffering as happiness, etc. From these arise the multitude of afflictions such as attachment, anger, and so forth, which in turn afflict the primary consciousness.

3. It Is in Accordance with the Analogy of the Vessel, Food, Spice, Master Chef, and the Person Eating

Because form is the basis for feeling, it is like the vessel. Because their taste is experienced, feelings are like food. Because it clarifies feeling by apprehending its characteristics, recognition is like the spice that highlights the food's taste. Because intention produced the newly compounded feeling, it is like the master chef. Because primary consciousness is benefited by the feelings, it is like the person eating.

4. It Shows the Sequence of the Three Realms

Form characterizes the desire realm because the five objects of desire are form. Feeling characterizes the form realm because the first form realm is characterized by bliss and mental bliss, the second by mental bliss, the third by mind bliss, and the fourth by equanimity. The first three formless realms are characterized by recognition, and the peak of existence is characterized by compositional factors. Main consciousness is the basis for all these.

## **Why Did the Buddha not Teach an Aggregate for Non-compounded Phenomena?**

Because the Buddha taught the aggregates as a presentation of the basis for contaminated and uncontaminated phenomena, and non-compounded phenomena are unsuitable to act as such a basis.

## **Why Aggregates, Sources, and Spheres?**

Why did the Buddha teach the five aggregates, twelve sources, and eighteen spheres? After all, they are not of different substance, and each category contains all compounded phenomena.

Since the Buddha taught everything to overcome mental afflictions, he taught these three categories for a threefold purpose:

1. To wholly eliminate the ignorance of self-grasping with regard to mental factors, form, and the combination of form and mind.

The Buddha taught the five aggregates to overcome the conception that the mental factors are the self. That is why the mental factors are spread out over three aggregates.

He taught the twelve sources to counteract the idea that form is the self. That is why form is divided here into twelve categories. He taught the eighteen spheres

to overcome the notion that a combination of form and mind is the self. That is why form is divided here into ten categories and mind into seven.

2. To reach all the sharp, medium, and dull-minded students, he taught the brief presentation to the first, the more elaborate to the second, and very elaborate to the third.

3. To reach all students who wish to have short, medium, or long explanations.

## **The Individual Aggregates**

### **The Aggregate of Form**

Definition: That which is suitable to be form

This comes from a sutra where the Buddha said:

Oh bikkhu, because it exists as form and is suitable to be form it is the contaminated form aggregate.

The word *suitable* in the definition means that form is suitable to cause the harm of future lives through meeting with the physical sense powers.

Through the meeting of outer forms with the sense powers, either attachment or anger is generated in the consciousness—attachment when the form is perceived as pleasant and anger when the form is perceived as unpleasant. Through these disturbing thoughts one creates karma, which in turn functions as cause for future lives, in which one is again exposed to the different sufferings of cyclic existence.

Form and matter are synonymous, and the definition of matter is that which is made up out of particles. Therefore the aggregate of form encompasses everything that is made up out of particles.

Divisions: The form aggregate is elevenfold: the five physical sense powers, the five sense objects, and non-revelatory form.

## ***The Five Physical Sense Powers***

- Eye sense power
- Ear sense power
- Nose sense power
- Tongue sense power
- Body sense power

The definition of the eye sense power is:

1. a clear form that acts as the basis for eye primary consciousness, or
2. a clear form that acts as the direct basis for the primary consciousness apprehending form source.

One can apply the same format to the definitions of the other sense powers; e.g., the definition of the ear sense power is:

1. a clear form that acts as the basis for ear primary consciousness, or
2. a clear form that acts as the direct basis for the primary consciousness apprehending sound.

The eye sense power is a clear subtle form that is a very hidden phenomenon residing in the container of the eyeball. The other four sense powers are also similarly subtle clear forms that reside in the container of their respective sense organ. The body sense power is said to pervade the other four physical sense powers.

## ***The Significance of the Sense Powers***

The empowering condition of the eye sense power is responsible for the distinguishing characteristic of the eye consciousness to apprehend only visual stimuli and no other of the five sensory inputs.

Out of the three conditions of focal, empowering, and immediately preceding condition it is the condition that primarily causes the eye consciousness to apprehend only form source. Likewise, the ear sense power is responsible for the ear consciousness to apprehend only sound, out of the five sensory inputs, and so forth.

Exception: The omniscient eye consciousness of a buddha, which realizes not only visual input, but all phenomena of multiplicity as well as of suchness. But it is still eye consciousness, because of arising in dependence on its uncommon empowering condition of the eye sense power. In this way, what makes each of the six types of consciousness unique and distinctive from each other is their uncommon empowering condition; they are labeled relative to their uncommon empowering condition.

The strength of the sense power determines the strength of the sense consciousness. When the eye sense power becomes weaker, as can happen in old age, then the eye consciousness also becomes weaker. In such a case one can complement the eye sense power with glasses.

## ***The Five Sense Objects***

Sense objects are divided into the five sources:

- Form source
- Sound source
- Smell source
- Taste source
- Tactile source

The five sense objects are called *sources* because from them the various primary consciousnesses and mental factors are generated and increased. Contact with an external object generates a sense perception, which in turn gives birth to a multitude of disturbing thoughts belonging to the family of attachment or anger, which then afflict the mental continuum.

### 1. Form Source

Definition: that which is held by eye consciousness

Divisions:

- Color
- Shape

The definition of color is that suitable to be shown as a hue. Color can be divided into primary and secondary colors.

The definition of shape is that suitable to be shown as shape. Shape has an eightfold division into long, short, round, square, even, uneven, high, and low.

## 2. Sound Source

Definition: that which is heard by ear consciousness

Divisions:

- Sound arising from elements conjoined with sense powers; e.g., the words spoken by a person.
- Sound arising from elements not conjoined with sense powers; e.g., the sound of the wind whispering in the trees.

## 3. Smell Source

Definition: that which is experienced by nose consciousness

Divisions:

- Simultaneously arising smell; e.g., the smell of the durian fruit.
- Applied smell; e.g., perfume applied to the body.

## 4. Taste Source

Definition: that which is experienced by taste consciousness

Divisions: Sweet, sour, bitter, astringent, hot, salty

## 5. Tactile Source

Definition: that which is experienced by body consciousness

Divisions: The elements and the derivatives of the elements

Elements: Earth, water, fire, wind

Definitions:

Earth element - solid and firm

Water element - wet and moistening

Fire element - hot and burning

Wind element - light and moving

Derivatives of the elements: 1. soft, 2. rough, 3. light,  
4. heavy, 5. cold, 6. hunger, 7. thirst

## ***Non-Revelatory Form***

Vasubandu in the *Treasury of Knowledge*,

Also while distracted or lacking mind,  
Following virtue or non-virtue,  
Being caused by the great elements,  
This is call non-revelatory.

Vasubandu in the *Explanation of the Treasury of Knowledge*,<sup>iv</sup>

*Distracted* mind refers to: also a mind apart from it; *also lacking mind* is also absorption without recognition and absorption on cessation; the word *also* means: also while not distracted and with mind. *Virtue* and *non-virtue* is good virtue and the reverse of good virtue. *What follows* means continuum. Since the attained continuum also exists in such a way, to differentiate I said “*being caused by the great elements.*”

Non-revelatory form has five characteristics:

- Occasion (two types)
- Nature
- Time
- Cause

## Occasion

1. Occurs at a time when the mind has wandered off from the original motivation.
2. Occurs during mindless absorptions such as the absorption without recognition or absorption on cessation.

*Also* in the root text indicates that non-revelatory form can also arise at the time of its motivation for as long as the motivation remains.

## Nature

Since the distinction of occasion also applies to the eyes and so forth, it has the further distinction of nature: It has to be either virtuous or non-virtuous, which makes it impossible for non-revelatory form to be unpredicted.

## Time

Since the distinction of nature also applies to revelatory form, it has the further distinction of time: Strong continuity.

## Cause

Since the distinction of time also applies to that attained from virtue and non-virtue, it has the further distinction of being caused by the four great elements.

The first Dalai Lama Gyalwa Gedun Drub, in his *Elucidation of the Path to Liberation*, outlines eight reasons for the existence of non-revelatory form, which are all based on quotes from the sutras.

#### Reason One

The existence of non-obstructive form that cannot be shown, which would be impossible without non-revelatory form. This relies on a quote from a sutra that says that all forms are contained in the three kinds of form: obstructive form that can be shown, obstructive form that cannot be shown, and non-obstructive form that cannot be shown.

#### Reason Two

Uncontaminated form exists, and uncontaminated form has to be uncontaminated vows.

#### Reason Three

Because sons and daughters of good family can continually increase the seven merits arising from substance and the seven arising from non-substance, regardless of whether they sleep or not, walk or sit, which would be impossible without non-revelatory form. These would be impossible without non-revelatory form since merit that is revelatory form is impossible at the time of sleep.

#### Reason Four

Without non-revelatory form there could be no accumulation of a complete karma by ordering another person to perform an action. This relates to the situation where, after having ordered somebody to be killed, one's mind turns to virtue while the action is being completed by the other person; i.e., while having a virtuous mind and engaging in virtuous actions that are revelatory form, through the action of the other person carrying out one's order, one accumulates a complete non-virtuous karma.

#### Reason Five

The existence of the eightfold path<sup>v</sup> in a person's continuum while abiding in meditative equipoise on the path of seeing would not be possible without non-revelatory form, because perfect speech and action would otherwise be impossible at this stage.

#### Reason Six

A monk still has vows in his continuum even though his mind is distracted.

#### Reason Seven

A metaphor used for vows is a dam, but they could not be like a dam if there were not non-revelatory form.

Reason Eight

Without non-revelatory form, the form of phenomena source would be impossible.

The Vaibashika are the one Buddhist school that asserts a common basis between form and karma, and that form can be revelatory form or non-revelatory form.

The basic difference between revelatory form and non-revelatory form seems to be whether it is a form that is recognized by another person after having arisen from one's own motivation.

Similarly to positing the chariot  
In dependence on the accumulation of parts,  
One talks about illusory conventional sentient  
beings in dependence on the aggregates.

The Buddha

## **The Aggregate of Feeling**

The aggregate of feeling is synonymous with feeling.

Definition: From the *Compendium of Knowledge*<sup>vi</sup>:

What is the definition of feeling? The definition of experience. The nature of experience through which the ripening of the results of virtuous and non-virtuous karmas is individually experienced.

Feelings are the happy, suffering, or neutral experiences through which the ripening results of virtuous and non-virtuous karmas are individually experienced. Without the mental factor of feeling it would be impossible to experience joy or pain. Feeling is one of the five ever-present mental factors, and without it one could not experience the object, either with happiness, or suffering, or with a neutral feeling.

All feelings are the results of past karma, from the happiness that a fresh breeze brings on a hot summer day up to the bliss of enlightenment, or from the suffering of a small headache up to the intense sufferings of the lower realms.

It is the karma, rather than the object, that determines whether the experience will be pleasant or unpleasant; e.g., the preta that experiences food as suffering despite being hungry or the sun as cold despite being cold, or a buddha who experiences nominally bad-tasting food as delicious and bliss.

Divisions - feeling has the threefold division into:

- Happiness
- Suffering
- Equanimity

Happiness is that which we wish to meet, suffering is that which we wish to avoid, and that with regard to which we do not have a particular wish is equanimity.

These three feelings have a sixfold division by way of the basis of body and mind:

- three physical feelings
- three mental feelings

The three physical feelings: physical feeling of happiness, suffering, and equanimity.

The three mental feelings: mental happiness, mental suffering, and mental equanimity.

The difference between physical and mental feelings is whether the feeling arises together with a sense consciousness or with a mental consciousness. Physical happiness arises only through contact with an outer object and is therefore fragile and fleeting. True happiness is mental happiness, which arises without the contact with outer objects. It is born only through the power of the mind, independently of outer conditions, and is therefore a stable and true inner friend.

By generating positive thoughts such as love and compassion and reducing harmful thoughts such as anger and attachment, mental happiness is generated naturally.

For as long as there is grasping at the aggregates  
For that long is there grasping at the 'I.'

Nagarjuna

## **The Aggregate of Recognition**

Definition: Recognition is a knower that apprehends the uncommon characteristics of the object through the meeting of object, sense power, and consciousness.

It is the mental factor that recognizes the special characteristics and patterns of the object and can thus discriminate it from other phenomena and label it. It labels the meaning we understand through seeing, hearing, investigating, and the objects of consciousness.

The term “recognition” is not to be taken literally, because the mental factor of recognition can also be a distorted consciousness, like the mistaken recognition of the body as belonging to an inherent self.<sup>vii</sup>

## **Correct assumption, inferential cognition, and non-conceptual perception**

Recognition labels objects that are seen; it labels the meaning understood merely through hearing teachings; it labels the meaning understood through investigation in dependence on a valid reason and it labels the meaning understood non-conceptually with a yogic perception. The attainment of freedom from suffering comes about through a progression from correctly assuming the lack of inherent existence to a non-conceptual perception of emptiness via an inferential cognition of emptiness.

- Meaning understood merely through hearing

Correct assumption understands the object on the basis of having heard a teaching or read about it, but has not ascertained the object with a valid reason. For example, merely through hearing or reading that the self lacks independent existence one thinks, “The self does not exist inherently.” Simultaneously with the generation of correct assumption, recognition labels the apprehended meaning.

- Meaning understood in direct dependence on a valid reason

Then one investigates the thus understood meaning to actually ascertain and confirm it with analysis. Once one has, in dependence on a valid reason, realized the object, which is here the lack of an inherent self, an inferential cognition has been generated. The simultaneously generated recognition labels the ascertained meaning.

The consciousness of correct assumption is the substantial cause for the inferential cognition.

- Objects of yogic perception

After having realized the object conceptually with an inferential cognition, the meditator deepens the understanding through continual meditation, until a clear, non-conceptual realization of the object is

generated. The clear, non-conceptual realization of the lack of an inherent self marks the beginning of the path of seeing. The simultaneously generated recognition labels the nondually realized meaning.

Divisions: A sixfold division relative to the basis:

- Recognition generated through contact with the eye
- Recognition generated through contact with the ear
- Recognition generated through contact with the nose
- Recognition generated through contact with the tongue
- Recognition generated through contact with the body
- Recognition generated through contact with the mind

## **The Aggregate of Compositional Factors**

The aggregate of compositional factors encompasses everything impermanent that is not contained in one of the other four aggregates, such as the remaining forty-nine mental factors, all non-associated compounded phenomena<sup>viii</sup> such as the self, impermanence, and so forth, and every awareness that is not contained in one of the other aggregates.

- The five ever-present mental factors: Feeling, recognition, intention, contact, attention.
- The five ascertaining mental factors: Aspiration, belief, mindfulness, concentration, wisdom.
- The eleven virtuous mental factors: Faith, shame, embarrassment, non-attachment, non-hatred, non-ignorance, enthusiasm, pliancy, conscientiousness, equanimity and non-harmfulness.
- The six root afflictions: Attachment, anger, pride, ignorance, doubt, afflicted view.
- The twenty associated afflictions: Wrath, resentment, concealment, spite, jealousy, miserliness, pretension, dissimulation, conceit, harmfulness, shamelessness, non-embarrassment, lethargy, mental excitement, faithlessness, laziness, non-conscientiousness, forgetfulness, non-Introspection, distraction
- The four changeable mental factors: Sleep, regret, investigation, analysis.

## **The Aggregate of Primary Consciousness**

Definition: A consciousness that distinguishes itself through its mere apprehension of the object. It does not need to be explained in the context of any specific function.

Mental factors on the other hand are consciousnesses that are not merely focused on the object, but are each characterized by a specific function such as keeping the object in mind, recognizing uncommon characteristics, and so forth.

Divisions - the aggregate of primary consciousness is divided into the six types of main consciousnesses, which are labeled in dependence on their uncommon empowering condition:

- Eye primary consciousness
- Ear primary consciousness
- Nose primary consciousness
- Taste primary consciousness
- Body primary consciousness
- Mental primary consciousness

Primary consciousness is synonymous with mind and main mind, and does not include the mental factors. Consciousness, knower, and awareness are also synonymous and include both main minds and mental factors.

The fifth aggregate is in English usually presented as the aggregate of consciousness rather than the aggregate of primary consciousness, although the Tibetan term *rnam par shes pa* is synonymous with primary consciousness, and excludes by definition mental factors, while consciousness specifically includes mental factors.

For example, there are three possibilities between primary eye consciousness and eye consciousness:

- Both: primary eye consciousness apprehending blue.
- Neither: ear consciousness.
- Eye consciousness that is not primary eye consciousness: the mental factor of feeling that accompanies the primary eye consciousness apprehending blue.

There is nothing that is primary eye consciousness and not eye consciousness.

The term *eye consciousness* can refer to the primary eye consciousness, the mental factors that accompany the eye consciousness, as well as the combination of the primary eye consciousness and its accompanying mental factors as all of these are consciousnesses generated in dependence on their uncommon empowering condition of the eye sense power.

## **Simultaneous Multiple Primary Consciousnesses**

Sentient beings have individual mental continuums.

The Buddha

No multiple primary consciousnesses sharing the five similarities of basis, object, aspect, time and substance, can exist simultaneously. Multiple primary consciousnesses sharing the four of object, aspect, time and substance, or less, can exist simultaneously manifest in one continuum.

Examples:

- Awareness to which the object appears but is not ascertained, and the primary consciousness distracting it, like an ear consciousness apprehending sound without being able to induce ascertainment, at a time when the mental consciousness is distracted by strong attachment to a pleasant sight.
- Eye-consciousness apprehending blue and the simultaneous thought apprehending blue.
- Bodhisattvas on the path of seeing can enter into and exit from 100 different concentrations at the same time, yet there can be only one mental factor of concentration with one main mind.

## **Functionality (According to Sautantrika)**

Definition: Able to perform a function

Divisions of functionality and their definitions:

### 1. Matter - atomically established

- Internal matter - matter that is contained within the continuum of a person; i.e., the arms, legs, etc.
- External matter - matter that is not contained within the continuum of a person, i.e., the trees, the sun and moon, etc.

2. Consciousness - clear and knowing, e.g., the six primary consciousnesses, the mental factors, and others.

3. Non-associated compounded phenomenon - a compounded phenomenon that is neither matter nor consciousness, e.g., the self, functionality, and the like.

Some Synonyms:

Functioning phenomenon, impermanent, produced, cause, effect, condition, compounded phenomenon, self-characterized, truly existent.

Vaibashika: According to the Vaibashika, there are permanent functioning phenomena and impermanent functioning phenomena.

The merit arising from the compilation of this booklet is dedicated to the long and healthy life of Ven Kyabje Zopa Rinpoche, Ven Kensur Rinpoche Jampa Teckchok, Geshe Doga, Geshe Dawö, and all other holy beings.

May they remain until samsara's end, in the aspect brimming with health and strength, and continually teach us sutra and tantra.

The qualities of the Buddha are inconceivable  
The qualities of the Dharma are inconceivable  
The qualities of the Sangha are inconceivable  
The ripening result, brought about through  
Faith in the inconceivable, is also inconceivable.

May all sentient beings immediately  
Attain the supreme state of enlightenment.

i The *compounded* in compounded phenomena does not refer to the phenomena itself, but to the causes and conditions that need to compound in order to bring this phenomenon about.

A compounded phenomenon is a phenomenon that was generated from compounded causes and conditions.

ii The twelve sources are the six sense powers and the six types of form.

Six sense powers: Eye sense power source, ear sense power source, nose sense power source, tongue sense power source, body sense power source, mental sense power source.

Six types of form: form source, sound source, smell source, taste source, tactile source, phenomena source.

iii The eighteen spheres are the twelve sources and the six primary consciousnesses.

Six primary consciousnesses: eye primary consciousness, ear primary consciousness, nose primary consciousness, tongue primary consciousness, body primary consciousness, mental primary consciousness.

The meaning of sphere is type or class.

iv Vasubandu's Self-Commentary.

v Correct view, correct thought, correct speech, correct course of action, correct livelihood, correct striving, correct mindfulness, correct concentration.

vi By Asangha.

vii See also page 3, under "Why are Feeling and Recognition presented separately?"

viii Non-associated compounded phenomenon, or NACP, is a compounded phenomenon that is neither form nor consciousness.