

# **Buddhist Philosophy**

based on:

## **The Rice-Seedling-Sutra**

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The teaching is concerned with the sutra called the Rice-Seedling Sutra, which is one of the first teachings given by the historical Buddha Shakyamuni. This sutra can, therefore be considered to be the basis of all Buddha's teachings.

Many of you who have come to this course are already familiar with Buddhist teachings but some of you are new. In either case the teachings of this sutra will be very beneficial.

For both the teacher and the students it is very important to have a good motivation during the teachings. For the teacher it is very important to bring to mind the kindness of the Buddha himself who originally gave the teachings and to apply his intelligence to comprehend the sense of the teachings. For the students it is essential to take the teachings without trying to compete with one another, being jealous of the progress of others or proud of one's own progress. It is important that one does not involve oneself in these negative emotions. The Buddha himself is a perfect being who has attained enlightenment, therefore the teachings he has given are words of truth. In that sense they are ultimate and both teacher and student should keep this in mind. As a result, the influence of these words of truth will enter one's mind so that it becomes free of obscurations.

Buddha gave different cycles of teachings. The first was about the Four Noble Truths. Today's sutra belongs to **the second cycle** of teachings which is mainly concerned **with presenting emptiness**, the fact that all phenomena are essenceless, insubstantial and unreal.

The name of the sutra is The Rice-Seedling-Sutra. From among the Theravada and Mahayana traditions it belongs to the Mahayana tradition. Buddha himself was an individual who had complete and perfect realisation of emptiness, however, in terms of other beings their capacities to understand and realise this vary. There are some who are able to relate to these teachings on emptiness and some who are not able to relate to them. In order to make these teachings comprehensible the Buddha **used the analogy of a rice-seedling when attempting to explain emptiness**. Looking at a rice-field nearby the Buddha spoke of the growth of a rice-seedling and the associated process as an example to illustrate **what is called dependent occurrence**. He used this analogy in order to make the teachings easily comprehensible for different kinds of people who might otherwise, due to their inferior intelligence, have difficulties to understand these teachings. The Buddha pointed out that when one sows a seed in a rice-field that seed will grow into a rice-seedling in a process

involving different steps. However, in essence all the different elements of that process **are empty of reality**.

The Sutra goes on saying: *To all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas I bow down.*

This is related to the translation of the sutra. The person involved in translating the sutra would pay homage in the beginning to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.

The sutra says: *Once I heard these words told to me.* The point made here is that one of the main disciples of the Buddha, in this case Shariputra, received these teachings directly from the Buddha. He experienced or came to an understanding through studying the teachings and its meaning, so this indicates that the teachings have an authentic source.

Then follows information on the place where the sutra was given, the people who were present and the time the sutra was given.

*The Buddha, the Bhagawan had been staying at Vulture Peak in Rajgir, that is to say Rajgir Vulture peak is the place where the Buddha gave this teaching. "with a great assembly consisting of 1.250 fully ordained monks and a vast number of Bodhisattvas and Mahasattvas.*

Those who were present belonged both to the Theravada and the Mahayana traditions. There were Shravakas, there were Bodhisattvas who belong to the Theravada tradition and there were Mahasattvas who belong to the Mahayana tradition.

*At that time, the noble Shariputra went to the place where the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Maitreya had been staying during the days. At that time one of the main students of the Buddha, Shariputra, went to see another main student of the Buddha, Maitreya, in order to clarify the meaning of what he had heard. The sutra says that the two of them were sitting down on a flat rock and talking with animation on various subjects of interest. Now, when people who are developed in the way which Shariputra and Maitreya were, sat down and talked together they would speak about the Dharma, they would have discussions in terms of understanding different teachings and these discussions such people would find very joyful and interesting. It is also mentioned that they sat down on a flat rock, so these people who were very developed and had attained a very high level of realisation would remain in very humble surroundings, they would sit down on a flat rock to discuss the Dharma together. They had given up all attachment to the five sensual pleasures and so on. Their sitting down together did*

not require any elaborate environment with thrones covered in brocade etc. they would simply sit down on a flat rock.

The sutra then goes on as follows: *The noble Shariputra said to the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Maitreya (who is called a Mahasattva because he has entered the Mahayana): Maitreya, today while looking at a seedling of rice, the Buddha, the Bhagawan said to the monks, O monks, he who completely understands the process of dependent occurrence, understands what is the dharma. He who understands what is the dharma, understands what is Buddha, the enlightened state. Having spoken thus, the Buddha, the Bhagawan fell silent.* Shariputra wanted Maitreya to clarify the meaning of what the Buddha had said while looking at a seedling of rice.

This sums up the subject matter of the sutra.

If one looks how a rice-seed grows into a rice-seedling there are different components and steps in that process. In dependence upon there being a rice-seed a rice-seedling will come into existence. If one plants a rice-seed it will without fail grow into a rice-seedling provided that the various causes and conditions necessary for that process are present. One may ask the question if the reason for the seed growing into a seedling is that **the seedling is potentially present at the time of the seed** and if cause and effect coexist or not, if **they are separate entities or not**. The Buddha, by using the analogy of how a rice-seed grows into a rice-seedling showed that **neither of these possibilities hold true**, in fact, this is a process of dependent occurrence where each and every component is necessary, where the different components depend on one another in terms of coming into existence. The Buddha then said that an individual who understands the process of dependent occurrence understands what is the dharma.

The implications of that is that one will not believe that phenomena have been produced by some sort of inherent potential or that they have been produced by a creator, a supreme being such as Ishvara or another god-like being. By pointing out that all phenomena are the outcome of this process of dependent occurrence one avoids these mistaken notions and one will understand what is Buddha the enlightened state.

When Buddha uses this analogy of how a seed develops into a seedling his point is not to explain agriculture or farming, his point is to explain that phenomena, are merely the outcome of the coming together of causes and conditions in a process of dependent occurrence.

Having heard the Buddha saying this, Shariputra had a lot of questions with respect to what the process of dependent occurrence is, because he had never heard of that process before. He understood that the teaching was very important because the Buddha said that the one who understands this process of dependent occurrence understands what is the dharma. Shariputra also wanted to know what kind of dharma one comes to understand by understanding the process of dependent occurrence, and what is Buddha the enlightened state which one understands as a result of having understood the dharma. So he went to Maitreya to clarify his questions.

In the following paragraph the three first questions relate to what it is that one is to understand. Shariputra asks: *Maitreya what is the meaning of the Sugatas words? What is the process of dependent occurrence? What is dharma? What is Buddha, the enlightened state?* Then he goes on asking three more questions that relate to having questions about what methods would bring about that understanding. He asks Maitreya: *How is it that, by completely understanding the process of dependent occurrence, one understands what is the dharma? How is it that, if one understands what is the dharma, one completely understands what is Buddha, the enlightened state?*

The Bodhisattva-Mahasattva replied: *Noble Shariputra, concerning this, the Buddha the Bhagawan, who is the master of dharma, who is omniscient, did say this..* Then he goes on to clarify this to Shariputra. *O monks, he who completely understands the process of dependent occurrence, understands what is the dharma. He who understands what is the dharma, completely understands what is Buddha, the enlightened state.*

*What is the process of dependent occurrence?* That question involves defining what is meant by the process of dependent occurrence.

The answer is: *It is like this: something is present; something else comes from it; from that, something else comes.* At first there is a cause which produces an effect, that effect in turn will produce something else. There is a process in which the different elements occur in dependence upon one another. The presence of causes and conditions produce an effect and that effect will produce something else.

The process of dependent occurrence is defined by the master Vasubhandu in a treatise he composed which expounds on the process of dependent occurrence. He says: *Something is present, from that something else is produced. As something is present that will produce something else which again in return will produce yet another result. The*

meaning of both Statements is the same. One may wonder why this process is explained repeatedly if the meaning is not different. The point of repeating something is to clarify the point that one wants to make.

Another reason for there being two definitions is that at that time in India there was a non-Buddhist school of thought which asserted that a supreme self, referred to as 'The Inner Gnostic Being, is naturally present within each and every individual. The definition says that something is present and something else comes from that does not refer to the Inner Gnostic Being as the source of phenomena. That the presence of something will produce something else points to a process of dependent occurrence rather than the Inner Gnostic Being being the source of phenomena.

A commentary was written to this treatise of Vasubhandu by an Indian Master called **Gunamati**, who explained the definitions as follows. The first of the two, according to Gunamati, points to there **being a direct connection between cause and effect**. The second definition implies that there is a connection which goes through a number of elements before giving rise to an effect. F.ex. if one looks at basic unawareness that produces karma, basic unawareness produces actions and the karma actions accrue. These two are directly related to one another. If one then looks at consciousness f.ex. which is the next of the 12 phases in the process of independent occurrence, that consciousness is produced by basic unawareness, however, it is through the medium of actions and the karma that actions accrue as the middling link. Therefore it is not a direct connection in terms of basic unawareness producing consciousness, it is more indirect.

Gunamati also gives different characteristics related to the process of dependent occurrence. When it is said: something is present, something else comes from that, **the mere presence of something produces an effect or result**. So it is the **presence itself which is the main condition** in terms of producing an effect. There is no other condition. That is the first characteristic. Then we have the second characteristic of the process of dependent occurrence in relation to how something produces something else. As we saw there was a second statement: when something has been produced that will in turn produce something else. This relates to a process of change, impermanence, so this process of dependent occurrence involves a process of change. **The moment something has come into existence it is subject to change**, namely that in turn produces something else. The third characteristic relates to **that each element of this process has the capacity to produce something else**. Basic

unawareness produces actions and the karma that actions accrue. Actions in turn produce consciousness and so on. Each of the elements in this process has the capacity to produce the next element in the process.

In terms of Gunamati's definition of the process of dependent occurrence the main point is that each of the elements of this process produce the next, so it is in dependence on the previous that the latter is produced. In this way all 12 phases of this process arise in dependence on one another. When saying that each of these 12 phases in the process of dependent occurrence arise in dependence on one another it means that **as the previous phase comes to an end the following comes into existence**, so it is not the case that the cause, namely the previous phase, comes to an end and then there is an interruption and then the next phase is produced. **As the previous phase comes to an end that turns into the coming into existence of the following**. There is no interruption in between the different phases.

In the next paragraph the different phases of the process of dependent occurrence is presented. This process is as follows: *Based on the presence of basic unawareness, actions occur and karma accrues. Due to actions and their accrued karma, the formation of tendencies which colour consciousness come about. Due to the formation of these tendencies which colour consciousness, the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus are produced. Due to the presence of the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus, the six sensory/cognitive faculties come into play. On the basis of the six sensory/cognitive faculties comes contact. From contact come sensations. From sensations comes wanting. From wanting comes actions with the aim of taking hold of what one wants. From taking hold comes impulsion into the next phase of existence. From impulsion into the next phases of existence comes rebirth. From rebirth comes ageing and death and also agony, despair, physical and mental suffering, and psychological turmoil. In this way, nothing beyond massive suffering comes to pass.*

As we saw before, this process of dependent occurrence was defined as follows: When something is present **that presence produces** something else. In terms of the different phases of dependent occurrence that means that when basic unawareness is present that produces actions which accrue karma. When actions which accrue karma are present that in turn produce tendencies which produce consciousness. There is a continuous uninterrupted process where each element produces the following.

In this sutra the Buddha merely said, he who completely understands the process of dependent occurrence understands what is the dharma. Then the Buddha fell silent, which is to say that he rested in a state of evenness, a state of meditation, through which he influenced Maitreya in so that Maitreya was able to comprehend the meaning of what the Buddha had spoken. The Buddha had this capacity to influence his disciples so that they would comprehend what he had said and then explain the meaning of that to other students. There are also other Buddhist teachings written by followers of Buddhism, such as those who have written treatises and commentaries that clarify the meaning of the words of the Buddha. In Buddhism you have these different divisions, the actual words of the Buddha himself and the explanations by his close disciples, as well as treatises and commentaries by later Buddhist masters.

Maitreya is a great Bodhisattva dwelling on what is called the Bodhisattva levels, where an individual has great insight. He has attained such a level of wisdom that the Buddha was able to influence him so that he understood what the Buddha meant when stating that he who completely understands the process of dependent occurrence understands what is the dharma and so on.

The historical Buddha Shakyamuni had the power to influence the minds of others so that they were able to comprehend the teachings that he gave. It is said that the words of the Buddha when heard by different individuals who had developed to different degrees would understand according to their degree of development. Maitreya was developed to the extent where he was able to comprehend the meaning of what the Buddha had said.

Therefore this text that we are studying is referred to as a sutra rather than a treatise or a commentary written by a Buddhist master. Since the Buddha was able to influence Maitreya in this way and Maitreya was developed enough to comprehend what the Buddha taught it is regarded as a sutra, as a direct teaching of the Buddha.

Question:

Answer: There are different ways of regarding the 12 phases in this process of dependent occurrence. There is one presentation where they are divided into three groups in relation to three lifetimes. According to this presentation basic awareness and action which accrue karma relate to a previous life. Then there is the present life which involves consciousness and so on until

death. Then there is the future life which relates to rebirth. It can also be seen in the framework of what follows, namely within each and every instance. All 12 links or phases of the process of dependent occurrence manifest.

One can look at the process in the context of one's every day life. If one looks at the virtuous actions that one engages in during one day then there is an additional element, namely the element of insight that compels one to engage in virtuous actions. In that case basic unawareness, so to speak, is influenced by or embraced by a proper knowledge or wisdom. Together with that all the other 12 phases of the process of dependent occurrence manifest simultaneously. If one looks at a negative or non-virtuous action the element of insight is not present. That action is purely motivated by basic unawareness or ignorance along with which all the other 11 phases that make up the process of dependent occurrence. If one looks at a negative action such as taking the life of another being that action involves the simultaneous presence of the 12 phases that make up the process of dependent occurrence. One cannot say that one phase stops and then the other comes into existence, because that would mean that one has reversed this samsaric process. It would mean that for example basic unawareness stops, meaning it has come to an end. The point is that all 12 phases that make up this process co-exist. It is not the case that the unawareness stops and the afterwards actions which accrue karma take place and so forth. They are all interrelated, they so to speak more or less manifest together. As these 12 phases that make up the process of dependent occurrence present themselves at the same time of course if one looks at one kind of action some of these links are more predominant than the others, so if you look at a negative situation some of the components will be more predominant and if you look at a virtuous action, again other of these components will be predominant. The strength of them varies from situation to situation.

Question:

Answer: One has to understand that this relationship of cause and effect is such

that the first of these 12 phases, namely basic unawareness is so to speak the sustaining cause of all the others. It is the main cause, one cannot say that basic unawareness produces actions and the karma they accrue, but one cannot say that the third phase, namely habitual tendencies which colour consciousness is the product of actions only, because basic unawareness also causes these habitual tendencies which colour consciousness. Basic unawareness is sort of the underlying force of all the other 11 phases. It is the main cause or condition that triggers off the other, however, the others also act as a condition or cause for the phases that follow after them. That is the way in which phases of dependent occurrence are connected to one another. One can on the other hand not say that their relationship would go in a backward direction, so that habitual tendencies that colour consciousness cause actions that accrue karma and in turn create karma. One cannot look at their relationship in that order. As was mentioned yesterday there are direct causes and indirect causes. One should see the relationship between the different phases within that framework.

Question:

Answer:

In relation to this question one first has to understand that there are different obscuring states of mind. Each of these obscuring states of mind has a specific antidote which remedies that obscuration, for example patience remedies anger. Just through virtuous actions in general basic unawareness or ignorance is not suppressed or eradicated. One has to make use of a remedy that directly relates to basic unawareness in the sense that it has the capacity to eradicate basic unawareness. In order to be able to do that one must first recognise basic unawareness, one must be able to pinpoint basic unawareness. That again is very difficult, in fact it is only by means of what is called vajra-like samadhi which one is able to engage in at the 10th Bodhisattva bhumi. It is only by this samadhi that one can pinpoint basic unawareness and then apply an antidote that eradicates it. There are different aspects of basic unawareness, there is one called the natural present unawareness. That kind

of unawareness is extremely subtle and therefore very difficult to pinpoint or recognise. It is not obvious if one tries to bring such subtle basic unawareness to mind so that one in the mind can see what this subtle unawareness is. One will find that it is very difficult, if not impossible. On the other hand if one takes an obscuring state of mind such as hatred, that is very easy to bring to mind. It is very obvious. For that reason it is quite easy to apply something which can eradicate that anger. As was said, the antidote for anger or hatred is developing patience, so it is much easier to eradicate that obscuring state of mind because it is easy to recognise, it is easy to pinpoint. Coming back to the question it was if virtuous actions will contribute towards decreasing basic unawareness. Indirectly they will. It is like putting one's capital in the bank and then the interest one earns one does not take out of the bank one reinvests it together with the capital. In this way one's capital will grow. Similarly virtuous actions will contribute towards weakening basic unawareness, but only indirectly.

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The first of the 12 phases of dependent occurrence is **basic unawareness**. If one explains the word-meaning, it means not seeing, not knowing. If one defines awareness, it is a state of mind which is both clear and perceptive. Unawareness lacks these qualities, so it is a deluded, dense or thick state of mind.

However, basic unawareness is able to perceive something, but it is unclear. If one were to say that awareness is the opposite of unawareness, it follows that unawareness would be matter, which is not the case. Unawareness is also aware, but it is unclear.

In terms of basic unawareness there is an ongoing process, which is unclear awareness.

The buddhist master Vasubhandu has pointed out that basic unawareness is not merely a lack of awareness. It is defined as unclear awareness. If one were to say that basic unawareness is simply a state lacking awareness altogether then basic unawareness could not be the principal cause which produces actions and the karma actions accrue, because it would be nothing. As was said, if basic unawareness is defined as the mere absence of awareness it follows that one could not speak of

basic unawareness ending, resulting in the ending of actions and the karma actions accrue, because basic unawareness in that case would be nothing, it would be a non-entity, hence it could not cease and it would not result in the ceasing of the other phases that make up the process of dependent occurrence. It follows that basic unawareness involves awareness though it is unclear. It cannot be defined as the mere absence of awareness.

Basic unawareness is an obscuration which is deluded with respect to whatever is at hand. It fails to recognise the truth, that is to say absolute truth. **It fails to recognise cause and effect,** it fails to recognise what is the dharma and so on. It is a state of mind which fails to perceive these things. It also fails to recognise the three jewels.

Out of basic awareness **actions** occur which accrue karma. When defining action, the Buddha said that **he is not speaking of actions in term of their essence, rather as a function that occurs.**

Actions and the karma they accrue relate to the activities of body, speech and mind. Therefore this phase in the process of dependent occurrence is defined as a function, rather than an essential component or element.

Actions and the karma they accrue in the process of dependent occurrence are defined as karmic imprints. Karmic imprints are the result of previous actions. They remain in one's mindstream, in one's consciousness and at one point they ripen. Then the individual experiences the result of previous actions.

The Indian scholar, Vasubhandu, has said that in terms of the different actions of body, speech and mind **the process of breathing, where one breathes in and out, is a physical action.** Verbal actions are based in the mind. If one takes an everyday situation where one is about to talk about something, **one first considers what it is that one wants to say and then one thinks through how one should present it.** These two processes where one considers something and then determines how to present it relates to the verbal action. The mental action is where one distinguishes different aspects of an object of perception, and it also involves turning one's attention towards something specific, one focuses upon something.

We have seen Vasubandhu's definitions of physical, verbal and mental actions. These actions in themselves, do not accumulate karma. It is with this function as a basis that one engages in karmic actions. Thus, one accumulates karma, because just by breathing you do not accumulate karma.

These different actions are the basis out of which karmic actions develop. These karmic actions that are accumulated, in turn triggers off or produces habitual tendencies that colour **consciousness.**

When talking about consciousness there are six aspects that relate to six different faculties that an individual has. There are the five sense faculties and then what is called the mental faculty. Consciousness operates through these different faculties and as a result one speaks about six aspects of consciousness.

**Consciousness is defined as that which has the capacity to clearly perceive,** to be clearly conscious of something. Consciousness, as was said, operates through six different faculties hence one speaks of six aspects of consciousness. In relation to each aspect of consciousness there are specific objects of perception that the particular aspect of consciousness is capable of clearly perceiving.

In terms of each aspect of consciousness one speaks of an aggregation of factors or components that bring about that specific consciousness, that kind of perception, whether one speaks of a visual perception or any other kind of perception. Now in order for any perception to happen or any aspect of consciousness to take place there are three main components that must come together, **the object of perception, the presence of the sense faculty and the presence of that particular aspect of consciousness.** When these three components are present at the same time the perception can take place, can operate.

Again, in the writings of Vasubhandu there is a clarification with respect to why one calls for example the consciousness related to visual perception for eye consciousness and not form consciousness, since form is also of a visual perception. Vasubhandu answers that of course all three elements that we spoke of in terms of a perception arising are causes, however, if one looks at a visual perception it is the physical sense-faculty that is specific to that perception. It is by virtue of there being a physical sense-faculty, in this case the eye, that the perception can perceive the object of form.

The reason for speaking of an eye consciousness rather than a form consciousness is that the different forms that are perceived, such as a colour, a shape and so on, these are approximately 20 different kinds of form, do not have the power or capacity to induce a perception on their own. However, the sense-faculty of the eye has that power. The eye has the power to induce a perception of form. Hence this perception is called a visual perception or a perception which operates through the eye.

This is the reason that **one does not speak of a form perception.**

We have come to the fourth phase, which is the phase that involves the four immaterial skandhas and the physical form (**name and form**). In this particular case the physical form relates mainly to the physical form of the fetus.

There is this phase which involves the four immaterial skandhas and the physical form of the fetus. This phase starts **when the being is conceived in the womb of his or her future mother** and it lasts until all the six sensory cognitive faculties are fully developed. This phase thus involves stages of developing.

The sutra says: *Due to the formation of these tendencies which colour consciousness the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus are produced.*

The second phase in the process dependent occurrence is, as we saw previously, actions and the karma they accrue. Due to their presence certain karmic imprints will be placed on the mindstream, hence one speaks of tendencies which colour consciousness, the third phase. It is this coloured consciousness which produces the phase of the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus.

What happens is that the coloured consciousness triggers off different mental functions as well as the physical form of the fetus. The coloured consciousness, so to speak, produces the four non-material skandhas such as sensation, making distinctions, mental events and different aspects of coloured consciousness, as well as the physical form of the fetus.

In terms of the skandha of sensation there are different kinds of sensation, pain, pleasure and what one calls a neutral sensation or reaction to something. Neutral in that it does not involve neither pain nor pleasure. Then there is the second non-material skandha which as we saw involves different mental functions in terms of perceiving different characteristics of an object of perception. The mental function is to single out different characteristics of an object of perception and focus on this.

Then we have the third which is the skandha of mental events (compositional factors) which are mental functions other than the ones we have been discussing. It will be explained later. Then there is the skandha of consciousness which involves different aspects of consciousness. In principal that

is the process of perceiving an object, being aware or conscious of an object.

The Indian master **Gunamati** has explained the process of perceiving different characteristics of an object as follows: **“This is a process where the perception discerns or distinguishes the different aspects and characteristics of an object.”** A focus or an object of perception can be a visual form, a sound and so on and so forth. What the perception does is that it discerns all the different characteristics that the object at hand has, such as a visual form having different colours, yellow etc. it be short or long. This process also involves discerning what the sex of a person is that one is looking at. If this individual is a woman or a man. It involves differentiating between pain and pleasure and so on. It is a process where mind differentiates the different characteristics of what it perceives.

What we just discussed was the group of mental functions where mind differentiates between the different aspects that the object of perception has. Next skandha is the skandha of consciousness. That involves being conscious of an object without differentiating or singling out the different characteristics. It is like merely being conscious of observing an object.

The four non-material skandhas involve a constant process of change, at times there is awareness of different kinds of objects, forms, sounds and so on and that may be followed by differentiating between the different specifics of the object of perception. There are different categories of objects of perception with different characteristics which again involves a constant process of change in terms of what one may call the conscious stream or consciousness.

We have these four non-material skandhas. In Tibetan they are given one name as a group, they are simply called name. One speaks of name and form rather than the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus. The reason is as we saw that there is a constant process of change in terms of different mental activities or functions following one upon another. In each moment there is a change taking place in the mindstream. If one were to attempt to identify each and every change that occurs that would prove impossible, hence one has given a name to these four mental functions in order to give an idea of what is at hand.

As we saw, the mindstream involves different functions, the ones that we have been discussing. In terms of the object of these different mental functions Vasubhandu mentions different kinds. We have the actual object which mind focuses on such as a visual form, a sound, a smell and so on. Then



we have the quality of that object which yet another mental function is aware of, is conscious of. Then there are the specific characteristics of the object such as long, short, something which induces pain something which induces pleasure and so on which yet another mental function is aware of conscious of. We can see that mindstream involves a constant process of change. It is this very process of change which is the very reason for why these different mental functions of the four non-material skandhas are simply referred to as name. One merely gives them a name because it is impossible for one to recognise all the specifics of this process of constant change.

Then there is yet another explanation for the four non-material skandhas being referred to as name and the physical form of a fetus as form. With respect to calling it name the reason is that the names of these four mental functions bring out or produce an idea or understanding of what they are, even though that name cannot completely bring out what is actually at hand. It is impossible by using these names to give a complete description of what these mental processes are.

Then we have form. That term indicates something which obstruct the presence of something else. Form is physical hence it obstructs the presence of something else. That is how form is defined in this context.

Another definition of form is given. If certain conditions are present the form will be subject to destruction or as was said, it will prevent the presence of something else in that it is a physical form, in that it is made up of matter.

There are the six sensory cognitive faculties. One speaks of two kinds, outer and inner. What we are discussing here are the inner six sensory cognitive faculties.

The Indian master Vasubhandu has said that these six sensory cognitive faculties that we are discussing, are called inner because the individual sees the five sense faculties that are physical and mind the cognitive faculty as something belonging to him. That notion involves taking these to be so to speak the possession of that individual. They belong to that person, so body and mind are always referred to when looking at one given individual. The person sees them as belonging to him. That is his attitude or way of looking at them.

These six sensory cognitive faculties, in Sanskrit called Ayatanas, are defined as follows by the Indian master Gunamati. "It is the sixth basis in dependence upon which consciousness arises and expands. They are the sources of the arising and expanding of consciousness."

These are the six cognitive sensory faculties in dependence upon which different aspects of consciousness, different kinds of perception arise and expand. To begin with obviously, an aspect of consciousness or a perception is induced. It arises, it becomes aware or conscious of an object. What follows upon that is that the individual react in one way or another towards what he is conscious of, what he has perceived. He may react with attraction, with repulsion, depending upon the different circumstances. He may evaluate or pass judgement on what he perceives, he may see it as something painful or something pleasurable. That process of passing judgement on what is perceived relates to the part of the definition where one speaks of consciousness expanding.

Vasubhandu continues his explanation on these six sensory cognitive faculties. They are defined as the faculties in dependence upon which consciousness arises and expands. That the first part arises relates to that the faculties act as a cause for a perception of something to arise and then, as we saw, that perception continues to develop further, it expands in the sense that it looks at what is perceived and passes different judgements on that object of perception. In that way there is a continuous stream of consciousness taking place. These six faculties are the cause for that continuous stream to take place.

There are questions with respect to finding the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus in terms of what they are at the beginning and what they evolve into. As was said, from the moment of conception one speaks of the presence of the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus. One may then ask the following question, in terms of body and mind, which these two categories constitute, it is the case that the body and the mind exist as a presence or not at the moment of perception.

This question comes after because the following phase in the process of dependent occurrence is the coming into existence of the six sensory cognitive faculties, so the question is if they are already present. How come that one speaks of the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus as the condition that produces the fully developed form of body and mind.

The answer is that in fact one can speak of the four non-material skandhas and physical form of the fetus as the condition which produces the six sensory cognitive faculties because what is at hand is a process where these involve into a fully developed physical body and a fully developed mind.

The six sensory cognitive faculties come into existence in dependence upon the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus, hence the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus are the basis in dependence upon which the six sensory cognitive faculties can evolve into their complete form and then remain in that way.

In fact talking about the four non-material skandhas and the development of the physical form of the fetus is a vast subject. If one looks at for example the skandha of consciousness there are different presentations, in some there is the mention of six types of consciousness. In another presentation there is the mention of eight kinds of consciousness. If one looks at the skandha of mental events there is mention of for example 51 mental events. There exist other presentations listing another number of mental events and so on, so what has been said today is extremely brief. We should all be aware of the fact that this subject is very large, evolving a lot of details.

Question:

Answer: One should be aware of that when one speaks of the faculty of mind and when one speaks of consciousness one is speaking about two different things.

Question:

Answer: We have the third phase of the process of dependent occurrence where one speaks of habitual tendencies that colour consciousness. This phase is also referred to as just consciousness. What is at hand in this phase is the basis of consciousness, its seed so to speak. Consciousness in the context of the fourth phase, the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus where one of the four non-material skandhas is consciousness involves, as we saw, the six aspects of consciousness. Here consciousness has started to operate. It functions or operates in terms of perceiving something, being aware of something, being conscious of something. One should be aware of that there are these distinctions, even though the same word is used.

Question.

Answer: When looking at the process of dependent occurrence we have gone through basic unawareness, actions and the karma they accrue, habitual tendencies that colour consciousness, the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus. The phase

after that is the six sensory cognitive faculties. One should be aware of that these all occur within one instance of mind, within one moment of mind. As one speaks of them they may appear as separate entities with so to speak a distance between them. But in actual fact it is not the case. If one for example speaks of the third phase, habitual tendencies which colour consciousness, that is mind's basis. However, mind's basis does not engage in the process of perception, does not perceive objects and so on. It is simply mind's basis. After that different aspects of consciousness involve into interacting with different kinds of objects. Both the third phase and consciousness in the context of the fourth phase are part of the continuous mind stream. They are not separate entities with some distance between them. They are simply different aspects of mind.

Question:

Answer: Mind is unobstructed. As you listen to sound you can smell something and taste something.

Question: When one speaks of just six aspects of consciousness rather than eight are the remaining two then included within the sixth, when one deals with the enumeration of the six aspects.

Answer: Yes.

Question:

Answer: One cannot see basic unawareness or actions based in basic unawareness as separate from mind or consciousness. Neither is basic unawareness the beginning of samsara. It is in the beginning of this presentation merely because it is the main cause for the other phases of this process to occur. It is because one is unaware that one accumulates karma. In that sense it is the basis due to which actions occur and karma as a result is accrued. One cannot say that basic unawareness is not mind so that there would be no consciousness. Then you would be dealing with matter.

Question:

Answer: It seems that when there is a physical reflex there probably is a thought passing through one's mind. However

it may be that one is not aware of that a thought passes the mind.

Question:

Answer: There is the statement “if something is present that presence will produce something else”. There was also a mention in that context of a Hindu school of thought where it is said that a supreme self exists as a permanent and static entity, as an unchanging phenomenon. What was said was that with this statement that the presence of something produces something else one refutes the notion of a supreme self as an unchanging phenomenon, as a static entity, as something permanent, because existing means that something is present, and as was said the presence of something triggers off so to speak a chain reaction where something else is produced and what is produced again produces something else. So what was refuted was that this supreme self could be permanent and unchangeable.

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Yesterday the four non-material skandhas and the physical form as well as the six sensory cognitive faculties were explained. Today contact, sensation and so on will be explained. The main subject of the sutra is these twelve phases of dependent occurrence. That is why it is necessary to go through them and in brief explain what each of these phases are. The rest of the sutra, once that has been done, will be easy to go through.

This particular phase called contact relates to the fact that different elements come in contact with one another and that contact produces the next phase of the process of dependent occurrence. It is defined in terms of that function, not in terms of its nature.

There are three components being an object of perception, the perception of it and the faculty through the medium of which the perception operates. The synchronous meeting of these elements is named contact. When these three elements occur together, they come in contact with one another and that contact produces different kinds of sensation.

One can't define contact in terms of it having some sort of essence or nature. It is defined in relation to the fact that these three component factors come together. They assemble, they gather together. That synchronous meeting of these three components

produces the next phase of the process of dependent occurrence, which relates to different kinds of sensation.

When speaking of this particular phase of the process of dependent occurrence called contact in fact this phase contact acts as a cause which produces the next phase, namely sensation. From that viewpoint it is a cause. However, when one discusses this particular phase, one speaks of it as if though it were an effect. In the same way, when one says seeing noble being a sense of well-being comes about. One doesn't say seeing noble beings, in dependence of that well-being comes about. One leaves out the words 'in dependence upon', which points out that this seeing acts as a cause, which produces a sense of well-being. In the same way contact in fact is a phase, which acts as a cause. It, in itself, is not an effect. However when explaining it, it may appear as such.

As was said, contact is a phase, where an object of perception, the perception of it and the faculty through which the perception operates come together. They come in contact with one another. Thus a sensation is produced. In terms of these three components the faculties are the inner faculties, that we discussed yesterday in their fully developed forms. These faculties are the predominant factors in this situation, where you have three components.

The sutra doesn't speak of the objects of perception as the main components of this process concerned with contact. It speaks of the faculties as being the main ingredients in this process, the main conditions in this process.

That is illustrated by the following analogy: When one speaks of the sound of a drum, there are a variety of factors that produce this sound, not just the drum. You need a drumstick, a person beating the drum a.s.o. However, this sound is always referred to as the sound of a drum, because it is the drum that is the predominant factor in terms of that sound being produced.

Then we have come to the next phase, which is sensation. The sutra says: From contact come sensations. There are three main types of sensations, pain, pleasure and a sensation, which is said to be neutral.

Pleasure is defined as follows by Vasubhandu: Once pleasure has arisen one like that to continue, one does not want to be separated from this sensation of pleasure.

Pain obviously is the opposite. It is a sensation that one wants to be separated from.

However, a neutral sensation, one doesn't want to reject it nor for it to go on. One has no particular attitude towards that sensation.

There are different kinds of pleasurable sensations or feelings. One relates to a relationship. The relationship between a male and a female. Someone may ask the following in terms of this definition a what one desires, that one wants to keep that what one desires. If one looks at ordained individuals, this is not the case, because an ordained individual makes efforts in terms of being separated from that particular type of desire.

An ordained person in fact achieves a sense of well-being having been able to do away with the particular type of desire that was mentioned. He wants to be free of that kind of desire, because he sees that it is a hindrance for both keeping the conduct of an ordained person and in terms of developing samadhi or a stable meditation state. Therefore an ordained person achieve a sense of well-being, not involving himself in that kind of desire. That is a particular case where a certain kind of desire would not produce a sense of well-being, where the individual will want to be free of that pleasurable feeling.

As we saw, in terms of this phase of the process of dependent occurrence there is mention of three types of sensation. Someone may object to this definition for the following reason. Namely that in other sutra it is recorded that all sensations are of the nature of suffering.

However, that statement of the Buddha relates to a particular viewpoint, namely that all compounded phenomena are impermanent and hence anything, any kind of sensation would in fact be a state of suffering, but that is from the viewpoint of it being an impermanent phenomenon. That is another kind of definition, which relates to another aspect.

When the Buddha said that all sensation are of the nature of suffering, as was said, that statement was done from the viewpoint of these sensations being impermanent and therefore producing suffering. If one looks at a pleasurable sensation, the flavour of it so to speak in terms of the individuals experience is not one of suffering. Nor can one say that a neutral sensation in terms of the individuals experience of it, produces suffering. One should be clear with respect to the meaning of the different statements by the Buddha. One can look at one particular situation from different angles and in terms of all sensations being impermanent, they produce suffering. That doesn't mean that all types of sensations are experienced as painful.

The Buddha speaks of all-pervading suffering, which one may also refer to as existential suffering. That relates to the perception of a noble being. That is to say someone who has attained a high level of realisation or has attained Buddha, the enlightened state. For such beings all types of sensations involve suffering, involve states of suffering. It is in that sense that the Buddha spoke of all-pervading suffering, because that is the way how such a being perceives the experiences of other beings. Their perception is different from the perception of an ordinary being.

However, that is concealed to an ordinary being. An ordinary being fails to recognise that in fact these sensations are a state of suffering. That fact is concealed to them. They are only able to perceive what is obvious, something manifest. Whereas an enlightened individual perceives this state of suffering, even though it is not manifest or obvious. However, an ordinary person can develop an understanding of the fact through study, reflection and meditation. Through these activities an ordinary being can come to an understanding of what is not manifest or obvious.

There is the very sharp or clean perception of an enlightened individual, of a noble being and what one may refer to as the dull perception of an ordinary being. These two kinds of perception are described through the following analogy: If there is a strand of hair in the palm of our hand, you won't feel anything. That is the kind of perception of an ordinary being. However, if there is a strand of hair in your eye, that will be very painful, you will experience that pain very clearly. That is how sharp the perception of a noble being in terms of perceiving the inherent suffering in samsara is.

The perception of the suffering inherent in samsaric existence is the same for a Shravaka and a Bodhisattva of the Mahayana. However their reactions is different. An individual who follows the Shravaka-path, when perceiving this suffering develops fear and the desire to escape from samsara, to free himself from samsara and attain a state of eternal peace. Whereas a Bodhisattva in the Mahayana gives rise to compassion for all being trapped in this state of perpetual suffering and engages in activities through which he can benefit these beings, through which these beings can be freed from samsara and its suffering.

As was said, from contact come sensations. Contact is the synchronous meeting of the three components object, faculty and perception. The coming together of these three produces different kinds of sensations.

From sensation comes wanting. There are three kinds in relation to the three realms that make up samsara.

In the desire-realm there is a particular kind of wanting relating to the states of minds of beings in this realm. In the form-realm there is another kind of wanting and in the formless-realm yet another kind of wanting. Of course the different beings in the different realm desire whatever they want, or they want to keep whatever they desire. The beings in whichever realm never want to be separated from what they desire. Again it is this tendency of gluing oneself on whatever one desires or wants.

Sensation of pleasure as we know it is present in the realm that we are in, the desire realm, and the three first levels of the form-realm. Whereas the sensation of pain is only experienced in the desire realm. It is not experienced in the two upper realms.

Sensations that are referred to as neutral in that they are neither painful nor pleasurable. Such sensations are present in the desire-realm, as well as the first three levels of the form realm. The form realm has four levels.

Wanting also involves the notion of a truly existent individual, one ego. There is this misperception of there being a real person, an ego. That misperception takes the five skandhas to be made up of a truly existent individual. When looking at this concept of there being a real person, an ego, there are two aspects. There is the natural tendency to see oneself as a real person. Then there are concepts of a real person in the context of philosophical speculation, that are fabricated so to speak as a result of adhering to a certain viewpoint. One should be aware of these two different types in term of that misperception of notion of there being a real person, an ego.

This wanting that we have been discussing, that comes from the sensations, mainly relates to the sensations of pleasure, because it is mainly those sensations that one wants to keep.

To the next phase the sutra says: Form wanting or craving comes taking hold of. Here again the divisions that are to be explained do not relate to any essential nature of this particular phase.

There are four divisions in relation to this phase called taking hold of, where the individual on the basis of a certain attitude so to speak takes hold of what he craves or desires. The first relates to the individual due to wanting or craving takes hold of what he desires or craves. That relates to the five sense objects. It may relate to something in terms of philosophical speculations. It may relate to

something in terms of conduct, different kinds of extreme behaviour and it may be based in this notion of a real person, an ego.

What is meant with taking hold of with when f.ex. wants or craves or desires a particular sense object, one so to speak takes hold of it, one as a result obtains what one desires.

As an individual desires any of the five sense-objects f.ex., which is a visual form, a pleasurable sound, a nice smell a.s.o., he so to speak takes hold of the object at hand. He indulges himself in it or involves himself with it. That is what is meant by taking hold of.

Then we come to the second category relating to this process of taking hold of whatever one desires. Related to viewpoint there are two types of viewpoint: An eternalistic outlook or a nihilistic outlook. The individual, based on whatever of these viewpoints he adheres to so to speak takes hold of reality within that framework.

The third category which, as we saw, may involve different types of discipline. One adheres to a set of ethical rules, which results in that one turns away from negative types of behaviour.

There is mention of what one may call an extreme type of discipline or conduct, where the individual may dress in a certain way. He, in terms of ordinary activities such as eating and drinking, may also do so in an extreme way using a certain type of behaviour. These different types of behaviour also involve engaging in different kinds of hardship or austerities.

For the fourth type there was mention of the misperception of there being a real person or a self-entity. In fact there is no real basis in dependence upon which one can designate a real person, a truly existent individual. However, due to a mistaken perception, the individual relates to the five skandhas as being this truly existent individual or self-entity.

In brief what is at hand is, as was said, the mistaken perception, which takes the five skandhas to constitute a self-entity.

Gunamati explain what we just went through in the following way. One may desire something, one may aspire to obtain something, one may crave something. That is how taking hold of works in the context of the four situation that we just went through. The first involving the five sense-objects, the second involving a particular viewpoint, the third involving different types of discipline or conduct where also different kinds of extreme

conduct where mentioned and the fourth context where taking hold of operates in the context of the notion of there being a truly existent individual, an ego.

It is wanting that produces taking hold of. When one wants, craves or desires something, that will compel one to try to obtain whatever one desires or craves of. Taking hold of is the phase where the individual has this intense desire to obtain something as a result of which he engages in actions by means of which he can obtain whatever he desires. In this way he so to speak takes hold of what he desires or wants.

There are these phases that we have discussed, wanting, craving and taking hold of. One should not see them as though they occurred throughout a long period of time. What is at hand is a constant change where one follows the other. It is only a question of contact occurring for a moment. That moment where there is contact between object, faculty and perception produces a sensation. That sensation produces wanting. As we saw, that relates mainly to a pleasurable sensation and wanting produces the next phase taking hold of. Each step may only last for a moment.

Question: Going through some certain kind of discipline one will experience suffering. Even if it is suffering, we want to go away from suffering, but still we continue. How is that?

Answer: If one looks at a particular discipline such as the one of Milarepa. He lives in the mountains sustaining himself on nettles. He had no comfort whatsoever and when someone looks at his situation, one must have the impression that he must have suffered immensely. However, his aspiration to practise the Dharma was so great that the possibility for him to do so and to develop would so to speak satisfy him. For him it may not have a state of suffering. A sensation of suffering in general is not something that one can suppress. As it appears the individual will undergo the suffering at hand. It is not possible to do away with suffering unless one perceives its true nature.

Question: Will all beings be enlightened one day?

Answer: Yes it is possible. The potential is there.

Question: If the predominant factor, which brings about clinging or wanting is pleasant sensation, what about unpleasant or

neutral sensations? Do they also lead to wanting?

Answer: There is the realm of no form which has four levels. Beings in this realm experience no pain whatsoever. In fact they are completely absorbed in a state where neither pleasurable nor unpleasurable feelings are present, there is a neutral sensation. Being in this realm actually want or crave this kind of sensations.

Question: Wanting was connected with the three realms, desire, form and formless realm. In the form realm is was mentioned to be not present in the fourth level of samadhi. Is there no connection to the fourth level of samadhi in the form realm and the formless realm?

Answer: In the form realm beings do not undergo pain nor pleasure. They rest in a neutral state. Whether that is a sensation or not may be subject to discussion, but that is not the point here.

The point is that beings in this realm experience neither pain nor pleasure. They rest in a state which lacks any agitation or turmoil. What is at hand, are only the four non-material skandhas. Therefore this realm is referred to a formless in that they have no physical body.

Question: Couldn't one define wanting also as a mode of rejecting?

Answer: If one takes a feeling of affection to someone, that can be so intensive that it can be painful. Does one still refer it as painful or pleasurable. If one loves a person to such an extent that it hurts, it that a pleasurable or a painful sensation?

Of course different people may regard different things as pleasurable or painful. If one looks at ordinary people in the world would feel that the pleasurable feeling from being with someone of the opposite sex is desirable. A person in the world craves or wants that sort of feeling. Whereas an ordained person sees it as a hindrance and tries to avoid it. One also has to look on the context in terms of how one tries to avoid pain. It is depending how one defines pain and pleasure. In various depending on the situation.

Question: It seems in the case of those ordained beings that they perceive a more subtle kind of suffering in the existence than the other beings who do not perceive this suffering. Is it a difference in the definition of suffering in the context of ordained and not ordained persons?

Answer: Ordinary beings would not suffer of what they have no knowledge of. There is mentions of three main types of suffering, the suffering of change, the suffering of suffering and the all-pervading suffering. These relate to different situations and the different levels of existence that being are in and the associated perceptions in these levels. That classification that any given individual would experience all three types of suffering. The different types relate to different perceptions and different situations.

Question:

Answer: Ordinary beings experience suffering of suffering. The noble being perceives that someone who f.ex. is on the third level in the form realm in fact is in a state of suffering. However, the person in that realm doesn't experience it the same way. That is the way the noble being sees him and his situation.

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Today the phase of the process of dependent occurrence called **impulsion into the next phase of existence** will be explained. It has three aspects. One relating to the desire realm, one relating to the form realm and one relating to the formless realm.

This particular phase in the process of dependent occurrence relates to the five skandhas or psycho-physical constituents. Beings in the desire realm and form realm only have four skandhas.

In other sutras there is mention of seven classes of existence, being the hell realms, animals, pretas, human beings and celestial beings. There is also mention of the existence relating to the intermediate state and then karma as the basis for existence.

One finds all seven types of existence in the desire realm. In the form realm there are three of these, celestial beings, the intermediate state and karma as the basis of existence. In the formless realm there are just two, celestial beings and karma as the basis of existence.

This particular phase of the process of dependent occurrence called impulsion into the next phase of

existence relates to the particular types of existence that beings are reborn in and the causes for being reborn in these different types of existence.

This particular phase in the process of dependent occurrence relates to the kind of existence that one may be reborn into and the cause that propels one into that particular type of existence. It involves both the different types of existence there are as well as the cause of the, the karma.

This particular phase dealing with existence in its various forms relates to being reborn into a particular type of existence, hence it is referred to as impulsion into the next phase of existence.

There is a previous phase in the process of dependent occurrence, actions and the karma they accrue. One may wonder what the difference between the impulsion into the next phase of existence and that one is, since both relate to actions and the karma actions accrue.

With respect to karma there are two aspects or even phases. One relates to the essential nature of actions, what they are in essence and one relates to habitual tendencies.

When speaking of the previous phase in the process of dependent occurrence, actions and the karma they accrue, we saw that there are certain actions which are presented as a basis in dependence upon which karma is accumulated. One has to distinguish the different aspects of karma. There is this basic type, which acts as a cause for engaging in actions as a result of which one comes to experience a certain result. That result in the second aspect, which as was said relates to habitual tendencies. It relates to habitual tendencies in their manifest form. In terms of the lay and karma there is cause and effect. So essence relates to cause and effect to manifest habitual patterns, experiencing the karmic results.

The precious phase in the process of dependent occurrence called actions and the karma they accrue, where karmic seeds so to speak are accumulated in the mindstream or the conscious stream. These karmic seed are the basis in dependence upon which habitual patterns and tendencies will ripen in the future at which point we are dealing with the phase in the process of dependent occurrence we are discussing today. The previous phase relates to karmic seeds and today's phase relates to these seed having ripened, so that the karmic results will be experienced.

There is also a phase that we discussed yesterday. The one called taking hold of. It is in dependence upon this particular phase that the karmic seeds so

to speak are activated and that the individual comes to experience the karmic results.

The Indian scholar Gunamati said that if there is wanting or desire, that is to say the inclination to take hold of something, because of desiring something, impulsion into the next phase of existence will be produced. Again it is because of the previous phase, taking hold of the impulsion into the next phase of existence comes about.

Taking hold of, as we saw yesterday, is produced by wanting and wanting is produced by sensations, that one craves or wants to have a pleasurable sensation. Of course one may say that someone wants to get rid of suffering. However, when you want to get rid of suffering, you are actually wanting to obtain a pleasurable sensation. In essence that is the same as craving pleasure.

When one wants to obtain pleasure and avoid pain, that as was said involves desire or craving, which in turn then produces wanting and taking hold of, which in turn produces impulsion into the next phase of existence.

If someone engages on different activities without any intention of doing so for the sake of avoiding pain or obtaining pleasure, one does not accumulate karma through these activities or these actions.

However, as we saw yesterday, in the context of taking hold of there was mention of what one may call different types of attachment. These related to, as we saw yesterday, the five sense objects, different philosophical speculations or viewpoints, adhering to different types of conduct and the fourth being the kind of attachment or desire, which is based in the notion of there being a self-entity in both the individual and in other phenomena. These different kinds of attachment are the basis for the phase taking hold of. Without this phase, impulsion into the next phase of existence would not be produced.

Today's phase is mainly caused by taking hold of and the different types of attachment that this in itself involves.

One may speak of liking something without being particularly attached to whatever it is that produces joy in ones mind, a sense of well-being. Through that type of liking something one does not accumulate karma when engaging in actions in that frame of mind. It is through desire and attachment that one accumulates karma. It is not through just liking something in general.

In terms of taking hold of something that one wants to obtain, there are two principle causes for that to

occur. The wish to possess something and the intense desire to obtain what one wishes to obtain. Between these two there is a progression in terms of how intense the state of mind is. Obviously attachment or desire is stronger than the previous one.

Then we have the next phase which is **rebirth**. What is in question is rebirth in one of the six realms. First the individual is conceived in the womb of his future mother. There is the phase of conception. The fetus develops in the womb of the mother so that the different faculties become developed, after which the child is born. That is followed by the next phase which constitutes that individuals lifetime. That is from the moment of birth until death. Rebirth includes all these stages.

There are further characteristics given in relation to this particular phase rebirth. It involves for the individual the obtaining and the full development of the skandhas, the dhatus and ayatanas. In addition to which there is what is called the faculty of the life-force a.s.o. Different characteristics are given in order to describe this particular phase called rebirth.

From rebirth comes **ageing and death**. Rinpoche says that these two phases are quite obvious. There is no need for any detailed description of them.

This has been a very brief explanation of the different phases of the process of dependent occurrence. There are other explanations in other texts such as one called the Gateway to Knowledge. Some of you may have studied this particular text. Those of you who had, could maybe explain to your fellow student here how this process and the characteristics of its different phases are presented in that text.

There is a commentary by the Indian scholar Kamalashila on this sutra. He categorises the different phases of the process of dependent occurrence in the following way:

The three first, being basic unawareness, action and the karmic seeds that colour consciousness, as the phases that propel the individual towards taking rebirth in a certain existence. The phases that follow these three, namely the four non-material skandhas and the physical form, the six sensory-cognitive faculties, contact and sensation, in terms are produced by the previous three. They bring about wanting taking hold of ,and impulsion into the next phase of existence, which in turn produces rebirth. Rebirth is what results from these. The phases ageing and death may be referred to as shortcomings in that they mainly relate to suffering.

You have the three first phases that so to speak are indirect causes of rebirth. Then you have the direct



causes. As we saw these are wanting, taking hold of and impulsion into the next phase of existence. They are more directly related to the other three.

In the Abhidharma is another categorisation. It speaks of basic unawareness, wanting and taking hold of as being obscuring states that produce suffering. Actions and the karma they accrue and impulsion into the next phase of existence relate to actions. The remaining ones being the four non-material skandhas and the form, the sensory-cognitive faculties, contact, sensation, rebirth, ageing and death are the basis for both karma and obscuring states.

The next part in the sutra is as follows: When basic unawareness stops, action which accrue karma stop. When actions which accrue karma stop, the formation of tendencies which colour consciousness stops. When there are no tendencies which colour consciousness, the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus are not produced. When these are not produced the six sensory-cognitive faculties are also not produced. When the six sensory-cognitive faculties are not produced, contact does not occur. When contact ceases, sensation ceases. When sensation ceases, wanting stops. When wanting stops, taking hold of stops. When taking hold of stops, impulsion into the next phase of existence stops. When that phase stops, rebirth stops. When rebirth stops, ageing and death stop along with agony, keening, physical and mental suffering and psychological turmoil. This is how what is nothing more than massive suffering is brought to an end. This the Buddha, the Bhagawan explained is the process of dependent occurrence.

Kamalashila in his commentary explains the statement basic unawareness stops in the following way: It is not a matter of literally removing basic unawareness and replacing it with something else. If one has a disease, one would take medication in order to cure the disease. Similarly, in order to remove basic unawareness one practises the path, through the power of this the opposite, namely insight or enlightened awareness is produced. However one should not think of basic unawareness as some sort of solid entity that one removes from ones mind and replaces with its opposite. What happens when one practises the path it that a process of change takes place. That process of change is similar to the following analogy, namely that darkness cannot exist in the face of daylight.

In terms of explaining this process of dependent occurrence it was mentioned that basic unawareness is the main cause for this process and when basic unawareness ceases, then this samsaric process also ceases. However, if one looks at practise, where one aims at putting an end to this samsaric process, the

progression is different. It is very difficult, as has been said before, to recognise basic unawareness, because it is quite subtle. In terms of practise, one starts with suppressing different types of ones sensation. Through ones practise one suppresses wanting, one suppresses taking hold of etc. and as result obscuring states of mind will be cleared away so that one is able to recognise basic unawareness and then proceeds in doing away with it. In terms of practise, the progression is different from the progression in this explanation.

These teaching then are a method by means of which, when put into practise, one will be able to give up obscuring states of mind. That is the point of this kind of teaching. In terms of how to practise these teachings, Rinpoche will explain it tomorrow.

Question: The fourth part is name and form and the eleventh one is rebirth. In both cases similar things were explained, like in the fourth one that the fetus is developed a.s.o. In the eleventh it is said that birth includes six aspects. One of them was conception. What is the difference of these two?

Answer: What distinguishes rebirth from name and form or the phase called the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus, is the actual birth from the womb.

Question: Name and form are related to the bardo, the mental body, and that the development of the fetus is then connected with the eleventh one.

Answer: Obviously the intermediate state would be before conception, before one enters the womb of ones mother, so it can't relate to the development of the fetus.

Question: In that presentation the twelve links were connected to two lifetimes.

Answer: In essence the intermediate state is something of its own. It doesn't have anything in particular to do with what was explained.

It might be confusing to go into the different kinds of intermediate states, bardos that there are. Rinpoche says that he prefers not to go into that subject right now, because it will just be confusing.

Question: In the commentary of Kamalashila and in the Abhidharmakosha there is the description of how the twelve links are interconnected. Kamalashila presents five groups and in the

Abhidharmakosha there are three. How come?

Answer: Inaudible.

Question: In relation with the desire realm, there was a mention of seven phases. One was that based on karma. What does that exactly mean?

Answer: It is the phase called impulsion into the next phase of existence from among the twelve phases in the process of dependent occurrence.

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Today we continue with the sutra, which says the following: What constitutes the Dharma? It is the eightfold Path of the Noble Ones. In terms of the Dharma there are two aspects, the path that one practises and the result that one attains.

The following aspects make up the eightfold Path of the Noble Ones: Right understanding, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right samadhi.

**Right view** is based on the realisation of the true nature of all phenomena, what the nature of all phenomena in fact is.

**Right understanding** is understanding based in the realisation of the true nature of all phenomena. It is the ability to understand and realise the nature of phenomena.

**Right speech** relates back to the two previous, namely right view and right understanding, both being based in the unmistakable realisation of the true nature of phenomena. The individual that has attained this, will never tell lies f.ex. His speech will always be appropriate.

**Right action** mainly concerns physical actions. That involves giving up taking the lives of another being a.s.o.

Then there is **right livelihood**. If ones livelihood is right is means that one does not obtain ones livelihood through deception or hypocrisy.

As was said right speech and right action mainly concern the actions of our speech and our body, These were followed by right livelihood, which is concerned with both physical and verbal actions. These three together relate to the paramita of discipline. The two first, right view and right understanding relate to the paramita of wisdom.

The next is **right effort**. It is giving up inappropriate motivations when engaging in

different kinds of action. In terms of the paramitas, it concerns the paramita of effort.

**Right mindfulness** contributes towards maintaining ones realisation and viewpoint of the true nature. It is by means of mindfulness that one arrives at a definitive understanding of the true nature of all phenomena and maintains that understanding and realisation. Without mindfulness it is possible that one might turn away from the right view and adhere to a wrong view. Right mindfulness relates to the practise of Shamata (tib.: Shine), resting in a peaceful state. Mindfulness relates to the paramita of samadhi, stable meditation states.

The eight part of the eightfold Path is **right samadhi**, which is synonymous with that paramita.

**Right view**, the first of the aspects of the eightfold path, as we saw, is realisation of the true nature of all phenomena. By means of right view, wrong views are eliminated.

**Right understanding** is what brings about understanding in other beings, because it involves explaining what one has understood to other beings, so that they may come to the same understanding, the same realisation.

**Right speech, right action and right livelihood** bring about a proper behaviour so that other beings will feel confidence in one, because of ones behaviour being proper.

Through **right effort** one purifies oneself of obscuring states of mind.

**Right mindfulness** removes laxity and agitation in ones mind as one attempts to develop samadhi or a stable meditation state. Right mindfulness counteracts circumstances adverse to developing samadhi.

**Right samadhi** contributes toward the individual developing qualities that will enhance his samadhi.

There is a commentary to the Sutralankara written by one of Vasubandhu foremost disciples, Lodrū Tenpa. He says that the Eightfold Path of the Noble Ones has two aspects. There is behaviour and resting in an even state. That is to say, engaging in the practise of meditation.

According to him, the aspect of behaviour relates to engaging in positive actions, accumulating merit. In ones daily life one engages in various activities, such a walking around, sitting around, sleeping, eating a.s.o. The three, namely right speech, right action and right livelihood are important in that they relate very much to behaviour in one's daily life. It is important to maintain a proper practise of these.

The second aspect relates to resting in samadhi, a stable meditation state. There are two main aspects of practise, Shamata and Vipassana.

Right view in this context is what is meant by the actual practise of Vipassana, in that right view is synonymous with perceiving ultimate truth. Right understanding and right effort are associated with the practise of Vipassana, but they are not what is meant by actual Vipassana practise.

Then there are right mindfulness and right samadhi. Both relate to the practice of Shamata. However, right samadhi is synonymous with Shamata and right mindfulness is associated with Shamata in that it contributes towards being able to develop that practise.

The sutra goes on to say that the eightfold path of the noble ones includes both attaining various levels of fruition and attaining Nirvana. This the Buddha, the Bhagawan said, constitutes the Dharma. As was said in the beginning, the Dharma has two aspects. The practise of the path and what is attained as a result, fruition. The sutra mentions that in terms of fruition there are two divisions. There is what is attained by those following the Shravaka path and the Pratyakabuddha path. In terms of that fruition there are four levels. It also includes attaining Nirvana. Nirvana here is synonymous with Buddha, the enlightened state, which is beyond both samsara and the incomplete Nirvana of Arhats, that is merely a peaceful state where the individual does not engage in activities for the benefit of others. Therefore the four levels of fruition according to the Shravaka- and the Pratyakabuddha-path are said not to be ultimate, whereas buddha, the enlightened state is ultimate. It is unparalleled.

This sutra is a mahayana sutra. Therefore it does not go into an explanation of the different levels of fruition in the Shravaka- and the pratyakabuddha-path. However, it goes on to explain what is meant by unparalleled fruition, that is buddha, the enlightened state. It asks: 'What is the enlightened state, the Buddha, the Bhagawan? Full realisation of the true nature of phenomena is what is called Buddha, the enlightened state.'

The Dharmakaya, the wisdom insight of the Noble ones, the enlightened state clearly comprehends the entire path, the stage learning through the stage no more learning. Buddha, the enlightened state, is synonymous with the Dharmakaya. The wisdom insight it involves clearly comprehends the entire path, the stages learning through no more learning.

There is the commentary on the Sutralankara that was mentioned before. It brings out the following;

that an enlightened individual perceives what causes the attaining of Buddha, the enlightened state, as well as what Buddha, the enlightened state is. As we saw, Buddha, the enlightened state, is synonymous with the Dharmakaya and it involves the wisdom insight of the noble ones, by means of which the enlightened individual, the Buddhas clearly comprehends the entire path, the stage learning through the stage no more learning. Kamalashilas commentary speaks of three aspects in this context.

The three aspects are the following. The first is called the profound aspect and it relates to a realisation of the essencelessness of phenomena. It is the realisation of the essencelessness of the individual. Such realisation is not found in non-buddhist traditions. The third aspect is called 'beyond samsara' in that it relates to the realisation of both aspects of essencelessness. The essencelessness of phenomena and the individual.

The Dharmakaya is defined as follows. It is the Dharmadhatu, which is synonymous with the mirrorlike wisdom, which manifests once the individual has overcome all dualistic notions of perceived and perceiver. Such notions occur in the fundamental consciousness, which is the eighth aspect of consciousness.

Then there are the Sambhogakaya and the Nirmanakaya. Both depend upon the Dharmakaya. In fact one can say that these two Kayas are functions of the Dharmakaya.

There is mention of the wisdom insight of the noble ones. The literal translation of the word used in the sutra is the eye of wisdom. Buddhism mentions five different kinds of eye. There is the physical eye of the Bodhisattva who has developed to the point, where he is able to through the physical eye perceive that exist. All forms in the three directions and in the past, present and future.

By means of the second type of eye, the magic eye, the Bodhisattva perceives all forms in the ten directions and in the three times.

Then there is the eye of wisdom, which is synonymous with nonconceptual wisdom.

The fourth, the dharma-eye, relates to perception of twelve aspects of the Buddhas teachings.

The eye of the Buddha or a Buddha's eye is the perception of everything. Whether one speaks of pure or impure phenomena. Whether one speaks of compounded or un-compounded phenomena. A buddha perceives all types of phenomena.

When speaking of these different eyes one is not speaking of physical eyes that may be either square or round or whatever. Eye is a metaphor for insight. When one speaks of insight, one may either say that one knows something or that one perceives or sees something. In ordinary terms that means that one sees something with one's physical eye. Here on the other hand it is the wisdom insight of an enlightened being that sees. It is not a matter of a physical eye.

The sutra asks: How should the process of dependent occurrence be truly understood? It goes on to give the following answer: The noble Dharma is truly understood by the individual, who sees that the process of dependent occurrence permanently lacks inherent existence, it is not an alive entity, it has no independent structure or life of its own a.s.o.

All phenomena are unborn. It means that they have never truly come into existence. Hence this process, which includes all phenomena, permanently lacks inherent existence, never had nor will have inherent existence.

The sutra goes on to say that this process of dependent occurrence does not involve what is literally called a life-entity. That goes back to a school of thought that existed at the time of the Buddha. Its name is the Jain tradition. This tradition speaks of a life-force as a permanent entity that is the basis in dependence upon which all phenomena arise and abide. In order to point out that the process of dependent occurrence does not involve such an entity, the Buddha said that the process of dependent occurrence does not involve such an entity.

Question: A question with respect to how Buddhism is presented in general. Usually when we speak for instance about right conduct, the way one approaches this topic is to explain what kind of conduct is a negative one and how this is to be avoided. One usually approaches the teaching from this negative aspect, saying this should not be done or this is incorrect. Indirectly one explains by this the correct aspect. Why do we have this approach in Buddhism?

Answer: It is of no great significance whether one in terms of explaining Buddhist conduct tells the students what they should not do or what they should do. If one looks at how the Buddha taught conduct in his days 2500 years ago, he started out teaching followers conduct. That was what he began with. A lot of rules came about, because members of the

Buddhist community engaged in different negative actions. In order to prevent that occurring again, the Buddha made a rule that one should not do such and such a thing. It is because of those circumstances that the Buddha himself started out so to speak telling followers what they should not do.

One of the first teachings of the Buddha was that he told his followers never to engage in a negative action, but to make all efforts towards engaging in positive actions. If one knows what negative actions are, one will naturally engage in positive actions. On the other hand, if one doesn't recognise what negative actions are, it may not be that easy to avoid them and engage in positive actions. Maybe this is the reason for pointing at to begin with what one should not do rather than what one should do.

Question: From the different types of eyes, the fourth one was the so called dharma-eye. In that it was spoken about the twelve aspects of the Buddha's teachings. What does that mean?

Answer: There are twelve aspects. Rinpoche says we won't go into the details of each and everyone right now.

Question: Inaudible.

Answer: With respect to the first that this person mentioned, it relates to perceiving all different forms that exist in all their variety. The latter relates to perceiving their true nature, because that is the perception of a Buddha. The previous is the perception of a Bodhisattva. Rinpoche says he won't go into that now, because it is not really related to what we are doing.

Question: Regarding the Eightfold Path of the Noble Ones, is to the succession in which the different aspects are explained connected to a meaning, because if one takes for instance the presentation of the paramitas, it seems that one starts with the more simple ones and then goes to the more difficult aspects? In this case it seems that there is no such obvious succession or that the more deeper ones, such as the right view is at the beginning.

Answer: In order to be able to perceive the nature of the process of dependent occurrence right view is indispensable, because it relates to comprehending the nature of reality, perceiving the nature of reality. Once there is such perception, the aspect of conduct comes into play. Through proper conduct one will progressively do away with obscuring states of mind, different kinds of obscurations. This is one way of looking at the practise. There are other ways of looking at it, where one from among the three, viewpoint, meditation and conduct, may emphasise any of the other, f.ex. meditation or conduct.

Question: Relating to the twelve links of the process of dependent occurrence it is usually said that the prior links is the main condition which brings about the following link. However, if there was no basic unawareness, none of the other links would occur. Form that reason, shouldn't one say that it is always basic unawareness, which brings about each and every of the remaining twelve links, instead of the respective prior link?

Answer: Basic unawareness is the root of all the others, however it is not the direct cause of each and every phase in this process.

As we saw yesterday, these twelve phases may be divided on three lifetimes. One may also look at them as all of them arising in one moment. The point is, as was said, there are direct and indirect causes. Basic unawareness is the root of all the others, indirectly. However, it doesn't act as a direct cause of each and every of these phases that make up the process of dependent occurrence. Also it seems that these different phases always arise in a sequential order.

It may be easier at the beginning to start out focusing on a sensation. Whether it is one of pain or one of pleasure. In terms of what this sensation is and the reason for it occurring. One contemplates this different phases of this process of dependent occurrence. As a result of such a contemplation, one will come to realise that basic unawareness is the real source of such a sensation, of such a feeling. One contemplates the different phases that make up the

process of dependent occurrence and in this way develops understanding or awareness of what f.ex. a sensation is. What has caused it a.s.o.

Question: It was mentioned that the twelve links of the process of dependent occurrence are included in one instance. What does that really mean, because from the practical side it is hard to understand?

Answer: When speaking of the twelve phases that make up the process of dependent occurrence in terms of occurring together in one moment, one should understand that in fact what is at hand is a series of instances. Maybe one cannot speak of those occurring in just one moment. However there is a sequential order of instances or moments. If one takes the example of taking the life of another being, for that to occur, the individual must first have an intention to do so. There has to be the intention to take the life of another being. That intention occurs because of obscuring states of mind. Obscuring states of mind occur because the individual does not have a proper knowledge of what should be adopted and what should be rejected. What is proper to do and what is not proper to do. That is based in basic unawareness, the first of the twelve phases. Due to this intention of taking the life of another being, a certain mental pattern or habitual tendency will occur in the mindstream. That followed by committing that deed, by taking the life of another being. That act of taking the life of another being produces a karmic imprint in the individual's mindstream, which again will impel the individual into another phase existence. That again, as we saw yesterday, will produce rebirth a.s.o. There is what one may call this chain-reaction that occurs where the different phases occur in a progressive order, in a sequential order.

Question: The Buddha taught this sutra by holding a rice-seedling in the hand. He used that as a basis to present dependent occurrence, but the ... is speaking about consciousness and basic unawareness a.s.o. With respect to this rice-seedling its matter only, so one can't speak about consciousness or unawareness. How is this connected?

Answer: One cannot know for sure why the Buddha, while looking at a rice-seedling explained the twelve phases of the process of dependent occurrence. However, the Buddha at that point had perfect and complete realisation of the fact that all phenomena without exception are essenceless, insubstantial and unreal. One may deduce that the Buddha, while looking at the rice-seedling, thought to himself that all phenomena in the relative world manifest without fail. A rice-seedling will always produce, will always grow into a rice-seedling. What is it that produces that process? Thinking about what it is that produces this process, the Buddha may have come to reflect upon the true nature of existence. This may be how come the Buddha, while looking at a rice-seedling, spoke of this process. That is to say, he may have contemplated the two aspects of reality, relative and absolute, while looking at this rice-seedling and hence he through explaining this process also pointed out that in fact there is nothing that is real, that has any substance.

As we have seen, these twelve phases are comparable to a chain-reaction. If we look at the recessed growing into a rice-seedling, there is also a kind of chain-reaction, where there are certain causes and conditions creating other causes and conditions.

If one looks at time and space, time is merely a mental fabrication. One speaks of past, presence and future. One speaks of presence in dependence upon the past and one also speak of the future in dependence upon the future a.s.o. In fact there is no real basis. Time is merely a concept without any basis in reality.

Question: When speaking about meditation on the twelve links of dependent arising, which kind of meditation is meant? Should one first of all contemplate or reflect on the meaning of the respective links and then rest ones mind in the understanding attained or how is that meditation meant practically?

Answer: One starts out contemplating what each of these phases that make up the process of dependent occurrence. At first there is the understanding of what they are. One then sits down and tries to see if one actually when thinking in

detail f.ex. the statement basic unawareness is the root of samsara, if this really is the case or not. If one becomes convinced of that this is the case or not. If one becomes convinced of that the case is really that basic unawareness causes samsara, one will then want to eradicate basic unawareness. One will then want go on to looking for methods by which one is able to do so. That is how one at the outset contemplates these different phases that make up the process of dependent occurrence, in order to acquire a personal conviction of what this process involves.

We are all followers of Buddhism. As such, it should be clear to one why it is that one desires to follow that tradition. Ones reason to do so is individual. Some may want to practice Buddhism, because it will result in a state of well-being which is sort of a temporary benefit resulting from following this tradition.. Others again may want to follow Buddhism, because they truly want to attain Buddha, the enlightened state. Whichever is ones choice is something personal. When following Buddhism it is very important that one has confidence in this path. in order to gain such confidence one must analyse and examine these teachings. One should not follow this just because one is told that this is a good approach to follow. One shouldn't believe the buddhist teaching just because someone tells that these teachings are very good. One must gain a personal conviction through analysing and examining the teachings oneself.

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Yesterday's question will be answered first.

In terms of the question relating to the twelve phases of the process of dependent occurrence. As being present as one given is done can be described as follows: If one takes the action of taking the life of another being, not knowing that this is a negative, non-virtuous action is based in ignorance or basic unawareness.

Then there is the action which is the second link or the second phase of the process of dependent occurrence, which obviously relates to actions and the karma they accrue.

Then there is the intention to take the life of another being which relates to the third phase of the process of dependent occurrence, being consciousness and

its associated habitual tendencies or mental patterns.

Then there are the four non-material skandhas, the physical form of the person, the six sensory-cognitive faculties. Without these the following phase in the process couldn't occur. Their presence in the condition, which produces the remaining phases in the process of dependent occurrence.

Then there is the next phase being contact, which relates to the contact between the person which intends to take the life of someone else and what he uses, i.e. the weapon with which he touches the person or being is about to take the life of.

The next phase in the process of dependent occurrence is the sensation of pain produced.

The satisfaction of having been able to take the life of someone. That satisfaction relates to the phase called wanting or craving.

The next phase is called taking hold of. That means the persons desire to take the life of another being is very intense, very strong.

Existence is the phase in the process of dependent occurrence relating to the five skandhas of the person, the individual.

As well as the karma that actions accrues which so to speak will be stored within the mindstream of the individual, i.e. within one of the five skandhas of the individual.

Rebirth means that the karma accumulated through this particular action will in the future bring about a particular rebirth, It will result in a particular rebirth.

The next two phases in the process of dependent occurrence are ageing and death. As the person that is being murdered is struck by whatever weapon is used, that is the process of ageing and results in his death.

Then there were the twelve aspects of the Buddha's teachings:

The first of these is a section that contain a number of what one may call lists of names and terms that are easy to understand.

The second section is a presentation of the teachings in a poetic form.

The third section contains predictions about different Arhats.

In the fourth section the teachings are presented in verse.

The fifth section contains a variety of particular teachings, particular subjects.

The first five sections mainly relate to the Shravaka path and its scriptures.

Then there is the section of teachings where one finds historical records. The background of a certain teaching-situation in the past. It introduces that history or background to a certain subject.

The section of teachings which in order to describe something uses different analogies.

Section eight contains records of accounts of different situation in the life of different Bodhisattvas.

The section which contains the records of different lives of different Bodhisattvas.

The four that were just mentioned relate to the Vinaya.

The tenth section contains vast and extensive teachings, i.e. the teachings on the six paramitas, the different aspects of a Bodhisattvas way of life which involves both a profound viewpoint as well as vast conduct.

The section which contains descriptions of very unusual or extraordinary events in the lives of different Bodhisattvas.

These two relate to scriptures of the Bodhisattva-path.

In the scriptures the last section contains one arrives at a definitive understanding of the true characteristic of the true nature of all phenomena.

These are the Abhidharma of both the Shravaka and the Bodhisattva- approach.

The most extensive explanation of these texts is given in the text called Abhidharmasamuccaya. They are also given in the Sutra-Alankara and there is a brief description of them in the text called the 'Gateway to Knowledge'.

Of course these twelve sections can be relates to the three baskets, relating to the Sutras, the Abhidharma and the Vinaya.

We go back to the sutra which at this point asks the following question: How should the process of dependent occurrence be truly understood? The question relates to the nature of the process of dependent occurrence.

The Buddha said that the individual, who sees the nature of the process of dependent occurrence as permanently lacking inherent existence, sees the true nature of this process. As has been mentioned, the process of dependent occurrence is unborn, it has never truly arisen, hence in terms of its actual

nature there is no change. To perceive that is to perceive the nature of this process.

As was said yesterday, there is a non-Buddhist school called the Jain-school, where the existence of a self-entity is asserted. This self or self-entity is according to this school of thought a permanent or unchanging entity. As we saw in terms of the nature of the process of dependent occurrence it is stated that this quality is stated in order to make it clear that it is not the same quality of not changing that the Jain school of thought speaks about. It is stated that the process of dependent occurrence is not so speak sustained by such a self-entity. The process of dependent occurrence does not involve a notion or a perception of a self-entity.

In terms of the viewpoint of the Jain tradition, it speaks of what one may terms a life-force as an entity separate from what they refer to as the supreme self, which is, according to that tradition, the creator of everything. However, when one looks at these two concepts and analyses them with Buddhist logic, one will see that in fact this life-force is not separate from the supreme self, said to be the creator of everything. When looking at a life-force, the question of what it sustains arises. A life-force would sustain the five skandhas, the five psycho-physical constituents. The point made, when saying the process of dependent occurrence is not sustained by such an entity is that this process does not involve such a life-force.

That characteristic makes clear that in the Buddhist viewpoint there is no difference between what one in the Jain school may call a life-force and the individual self. The next characteristic in the list again says that this process is free of such a life-force, that is to say such a self-entity. If one looks at the notion of truly existent individual self, it is by this characteristic that is mentioned pointed out that the notion of the individual self is merely an imputation, a mental fabrication. One takes that which has no self-entity to have one. It is pointed out that such a self-entity is not part of this process of dependent occurrence.

When saying that the process of dependent occurrence is not sustained by a life-force, what is pointed out by the associated explanation is the nature of non-self. The second, where it is said that this process is free of such a self-entity, points out that this process in no way constitutes a self-entity. The first describes the nature of non-self and by the second it is stated that there is no self within this process in terms of its actual nature.

Then there is the next characteristic of this process. The sutra says that this process is unfabricated. What is present is what is in fact the case in terms

of ultimate reality. In the same way as this process does not involve a self-entity as was described by the two previous characteristics, it is in terms of its absolute or ultimate nature completely unfabricated.

And this process is precise or clear in that it involves no mistakes. That is based on the three types of direct clear perception.

That relates to Perception in general as it has been explained in the morning teachings. You have direct clear perception based in non-conceptual states of mind, you have inferential clear perception and you have direct clear perception based in an understanding of the scriptures. There are these three types.

Since we are speaking of these different types of direct clear perception, there is no mistake at hand in terms of the nature of the process of dependent occurrence.

In terms of the quality unchanging one may wonder what that quality means in the context of the process. The next characteristic describes that. The ultimate nature of the process is referred to as unchanging, in that it has never truly arisen. It has never truly arisen. It has never truly come into existence.

Rinpoche has based his explanation on a commentary by the Indian master Kamalashila, who was a master of the Svatantrika school of thought. This characteristic that is mentioned, Kamalashila then of never having truly arisen explains in the context of the Svatantrika school of thought, where the viewpoint that not a single phenomenon has ultimately truly come into existence is maintained. There for relative appearances or relative phenomena are merely like a reflection in f. ex. a mirror. They have no substance.

Another sutra explains this as follows: Any phenomenon that is produced by certain conditions has in fact or ultimately never truly arisen, has never truly come into existence.

If this process of dependent occurrence has never truly arisen, meaning that therefore it does not exist in the present as an entity, isn't it the case that it may have come about at a point in the past?

The answer to that is that just as this process in terms of its nature is not an entity that has truly come about or has truly arisen in the present, in the very same way it has also not arisen at some point in the past.

If there is no true arising in the present and there has been no point in the past when this process truly



arose, isn't it then the case that some creator would have created it? A creator such as Ishvara.

The present discussion as we have seen relates to what is perceived once the true meaning of the process of dependent occurrence has been perceived. Since there is no true arising ultimately, there is no process of dependent upon causes and conditions.

In terms of ultimate reality there can't be a creation by any supreme being such as Vishnu or Ishvara. As we have seen, that type of being is said to be a permanent, unchanging phenomenon. However, a permanent phenomenon such as Vishnu or Ishvara can't be the creator of phenomenon in general, as these phenomenon are impermanent in that they are so to speak created in a progression. The nature of the creator and his creations is not the same. They are in fact two opposites, permanent and impermanent, which is when analysing that situation an impossibility.

Even though what is perceived when one perceives the ultimate aspect of the process of dependent occurrence is not created by a being such as Vishnu, isn't it the case that what was perceived, can have been created by a variety of causes and conditions and therefore be a compounded phenomenon? The answer in the sutra is that what is perceived in the ultimate aspect of this process is uncompounded.

That which is perceived then in terms of the ultimate nature of this process is not a creation of causes and conditions.

The next characteristic relates to that emptiness is unobstructed. The next question may arise: Even if it is the case that all phenomenon are unborn, that is to say that it has never truly come into existence, isn't it possible that somehow with respect to a certain aspect the opposite may hold true. The sutra give the characteristic of being unobstructed, making clear that in fact all phenomenon are pervaded by emptiness. So that possibility does not arise.

The following question may arise: If this is what the process of dependent occurrence truly is, how come all being do not perceive that nature. It has certain qualities as we have seen. It is unborn a.s.o. The answer is that this ultimate nature is beyond the intentional character of dualistic mind. It is not perceptible in a conceptual framework. In is in that sense not referential.

It can only be perceived by the wisdom that is beyond the world. A state of mind that is free of mental fabrications.

In terms of perceiving what is in fact the case on an ultimate level, one is speaking of something that is in fact not perceptible.

The next characteristic involve the statement that this understanding constitutes peace of mind. Again that in terms of the process of cultivating an understanding of the ultimate reality of the process of dependent occurrence refers to that it is free from the flaws of obscuring states of mind, hence, what is achieved, is peace of mind.

Those who desire to free themselves of obscuring states of mind should meditate on the ultimate reality of this process of dependent occurrence. In doing so, one removes wrong views that are the source of obscuring states of mind.

In another sutra there is mentioned that in terms of an individual who wants to understand both aspects of reality, relative reality and ultimate reality and ultimate reality, the progression is as follows. In terms a analysing relative reality one should follow the ways of the world. Relative phenomenon are to be understood as understood be ordinary worldly individuals. In terms of eradicating obscuring states of mind, that process relating to ultimate reality, one should cultivate a realisation of ultimate reality itself. One should make efforts in terms of seeking out what brings about perception of ultimate reality.

In terms of fear that may be developed by worldly individuals who are not able to comprehend emptiness in terms of a state free from the notion of perceived and perceiver as truly existent entities. Upon hearing these teaching a worldly individual may develop fear, failing to grasp what is being explained. In terms of the individual who perceives what the process of dependent occurrence truly is on an ultimate level, there is no such fear.

The sutra goes on to say that the perception of ultimate reality is unfailing. The following question may arise: Isn't it the case that when encountering negative associates, that through their influence again obscuring states of mind may recur? Obscuring states of mind such as desire a.s.o. The answer is that perception of ultimate reality in infallible, hence obscuring states of mind do not recur once that perception has been achieved.

Once that perception of ultimate reality has been attained, there is no longer any causes for applying an antidote that would remedy the agitation of conceptual mind. There is nothing that one need to attempt to pacify once that perception of ultimate reality has been attained, because that perception in itself is a state where all obscuring state of mind have been satisfied. There is no need for further

attempts to pacify something, in that an object of pacification no longer exists.

Question: What is the reason for that characteristic of complete pacification?

Answer: In terms of ultimate reality, as was said, there is complete pacification of any obscuring state, of any obscuration, hence there is nothing one needs to attempt to pacify. In terms of the nature of ultimate reality there is complete pacification. There is nothing more to be added or anything else to be removed. It is a state of complete pacification of all obscuring states of mind. Hence the sutra says it is characterised by there being nothing left to pacify.

Question: The question relates to the previous characteristic, where it is said that ultimate reality is infallible. Once perception has been achieved, negative friends cannot influence one. There are no adverse circumstances that could make obscuring state recur. Hence that perception of ultimate reality is infallible. Even though that is the case, someone may ask himself: Isn't it possible that the individual regresses because of his own personal negative conduct?

Answer: Negative conduct never comes about, once perception of ultimate reality has been achieved. Why? Because it is a state of complete pacification. Obscuring states no longer occur, hence there is nothing to pacify. The first to that a self-entity has no self nature. The second relates to that ultimate reality and its perception are completely free of the notion of a self-entity.

Question: In connection with the theory of perception, one speaks about the concrete object, which is defined as something which performs a function, is impermanent and is the object of direct clear perception. He thinks the twelve links of the process of dependent occurrence can be directly and clearly perceived. For this reason they are a concrete phenomenon, therefore they perform a function. Which function does the process of dependent occurrence therefore fulfil? What is the purpose of it?

Answer: In terms of performing a function in relation to the twelve phases of the

process of dependent occurrence for example sensation is a concrete phenomenon that performs a function or produces an effect. There are also the six sensory-cognitive faculties in dependence upon which one can smell something, hear something a.s.o. In dependence upon those one is in a process where one experiences the performing of a function or the producing of an effect of a concrete phenomenon. One may f.ex. speak of becoming attached to an attractive form or disliking an unpleasant sound a.s.o. From that we can see there is a producing of different effects in the contexts of these phases.

Question: In the context of the eight aspects of (right) phenomena, there is always a mention of right view, right understanding, right etc. How do we know that it is right, because that seems to be based upon a certain judgement, which in our western context would refer to conscience. That due to certain standards know that this is moral. In the context of the five skandhas, which is the basis for all our experience, there is no mention of such a function in our mind, which refers to moral standards. How can we be sure that we have a right, right understanding etc.?

Answer: If one looks at f.ex. right speech, right action and right livelihood, these would correspond to what is regarded to as good moral in society in general. Right speech involves not telling lies. Right action involves giving up taking the lives of another being, adultery etc. Right livelihood means that one does not create ones livelihood on the basis of deception and hypocrisy. If one looks at the aspect of the eightfold path of the noble ones, they relate to a person, who has the capacity to perceive things very cleanly or sharply. There was a mention of the analogy of sharp perception in relation to having a hair in ones eye and the acute pain that causes dull perception. And of things in relation to having a strand of hair in the palm of ones hand, which doesn't produce any sharp sensation. The eightfold path of the noble one relates to a person which has very sharp perception, whose perception is very clean.

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Last time ultimate reality of the process of dependent occurrence was explained and there was a list of characteristics. The next part in the sutra explains the ultimate nature of the Dharma. The characteristics are the same as for the process of dependent occurrence, as both cases relate to ultimate reality. The noble Dharma is directly realised by that individual who ultimately sees the Dharma as permanently lacking inherent existence as having neither a life of its own nor any life-force of its own; who sees the nature of the Dharma as it is; that this path of the Dharma in terms of its ultimate reality is unmistakable, it has never arisen or come into being; it is something that has been created in the past. It is not something created by a creator; it is not produced; it is unobstructed; cannot be grasped as a reference point; it is a state of peace that is without fear; it is infallible; inexhaustible and there is nothing that is to be pacified. Whomever sees ultimate reality of Dharma as such has direct perception of its nature.

As the sutra mentions, the individual who perceives the ultimate reality of the process of dependent occurrence, perceives the ultimate reality of Dharma. That individual will also perceive Buddha, the enlightened state. Perception of the ultimate reality of these three is related to one another in that order. Whoever sees the ultimate reality of the process of dependent occurrence, sees the ultimate reality of Dharma, as a result that individual sees Buddha, the enlightened state.

The individual who sees the ultimate reality of Dharma, sees or perceives Buddha, the enlightened state. In that perception of the ultimate reality of the Dharma is insight which fully comprehends ultimate reality as it is. That insight is referred to as perfect wisdom. Perfect wisdom is synonymous with the Buddha's wisdom. Perfect wisdom has five aspects, that is of the five wisdoms: The wisdom of Dharmadhatu, Mirrorlike Wisdom, etc. One of these five wisdoms is the Wisdom of Sameness or Equality. That wisdom perceives no difference between the essential nature of the process of dependent occurrence, Dharma and Buddha, the enlightened state. For the individual who has perception of ultimate reality, there is no difference in the essential natures of these three.

The following question may arise: If the process of dependent occurrence ultimately is uncompounded, that is to say it is not being produced by causes and conditions, how come one speaks of a process of dependent occurrence? As was said, in terms of ultimate reality, this process, the Dharma and Buddha, the enlightened state are the same in terms of essential nature. When one speaks about the unobstructed play of relative appearances, on the

other hand the question 'What is referred to?' may arise.

The answer is that one speaks of a process of dependent occurrence in that nothing comes into existence causelessly. There is always a set of causes and conditions that bring about or produce appearances or the relative level of reality.

In terms of ultimate reality there is mention of different aspects. The aspect referred to as accountable and the aspect referred to as unaccountable. Accountable ultimate reality is referred to as such. Because it is the aspect of ultimate reality that is described through using different examples and names etc. That aspect of ultimate reality is in fact conceptual. One gives an account of something in order to describe it. Then there is the second aspect, unaccountable ultimate reality, which is the absolute ultimate reality so to speak in that it is beyond conceptual framework. The sutra mentions that ultimate reality of the process of dependent occurrence, Dharma, Buddha, the enlightened state, has the characteristic of never having truly arisen. The question just mentioned then may arise. How come that one speaks of the process of dependent occurrence, if ultimately there is nothing that has truly arisen. That question brings us back to the relative aspect of the process of dependent occurrence, where it was said that relative phenomena do appear, however since they are the product of the coming together of various causes and conditions, they are illusionlike, they are like a reflection in a mirror. They have no substance. Even though they have no substance, they do appear and manifest. Relative appearances, are caused by certain causes and certain conditions. Each and every relative phenomenon has its own set of causes and conditions that pertain to its coming into existence. A certain cause will bring about a certain effect. It is not the fact that any cause would cause any effect to arise. In terms of relative reality there is this ceaseless manifestation of relative appearances caused by various causes and conditions. Each phenomenon has specific causes and conditions and that aspect is what one refers to as relative reality. One should be aware of these two aspects of the process of dependent occurrence, relative and ultimate.

For the reasons that were mentioned, there is no contradiction in speaking of different teachings of the Buddha, such as the twelve phases of the process of dependent occurrence, the six paramitas etc. In terms of relative reality there is also the worldly aspect. Where there are what one may call the ways of the world. There are different presentations of things. Such as a person doing farming. He sows seeds. These seeds will grow into

a crop etc. These different aspects relate to the relative aspect.

Relative reality also has two aspects. The correct and the incorrect. What was just described is referred to as the correct aspect of relative reality. The text goes on to speak about the mistaken or incorrect aspect of relative reality, which relates to opinions and assertions about reality that are not accepted even in the world. Such as some non-buddhist traditions, claiming that phenomena come into existence without cause, causelessly. Again other traditions claim that impermanent phenomena are the creations of a permanent being, who is said to be the creator of the universe. These assertions are what is refuted.

A dependent occurrence is something that has come into existence through the coming together of causes and conditions. It has not come into existence without causes and conditions.

The text mentions that the process of dependent occurrence has five defining characteristics. 1. A dependent occurrence is something produced by a cause. 2. A dependent occurrence is produced by many causes that are impermanent. 3. A dependent occurrence is without self-entity. 4. It has been brought about through a variety of conditions, that have the capacity to produce an effect. 5. There is no creator as the conditioning influence for dependent occurrences to arise.

The sutra said that the process of dependent occurrence involves causes. The first defining characteristic is precisely that. Namely that a dependent occurrence is produced by a certain cause or causes. By that statement the viewpoint that phenomena come into existence causelessly, as asserted by certain non-buddhist traditions, is refuted.

The sutra continues to give a brief definition of this process of dependent occurrence. It says that conditions themselves are effects. The implication of that statement is that a cause is a dependent occurrence, a condition is a dependent occurrence and the effect produced by a cause and a condition is also a dependent occurrence. It is pointed out that these elements are mutually dependent upon one another. One can't exist without the other. A cause which would not be a dependent occurrence cannot exist. A condition that is not a dependent occurrence cannot exist and an effect which is not a dependent occurrence cannot exist. These elements that make up the process of dependent occurrence do not exist and cannot function in the absence of one another. This is what defines 'process of dependent occurrence'.

The sutra goes on to say that whether the Tathagatas come into being or whether they do not come into being, the process of dependent occurrence is the way things always have manifested and always do manifest. Whether Tathagatas in the past have come into being or whether they will come into being in the future makes no difference in terms of what the process of dependent occurrence truly is.

The sutra speaks of the nature of this process of dependent occurrence. It uses the word nature and goes on to say that this nature stays or abides. In meaning there is no difference. Both refer to the fact that the nature of the process of dependent occurrence is always the same. The reason for mentioning this twice is that different individuals give rise to understanding of a subject by means of different statements.

The next characteristic is unchangingness. It can be related both to the ultimate and the relative aspect of the process of dependent occurrence. In terms of ultimate reality its nature is always the same. It is unchanging. In terms of relative reality, the same term relates to the fact that a relative phenomenon has its own specific causes and conditions that produce that particular phenomenon. The point in terms of relative reality is that there is always a specific set of causes and conditions that produce a relative phenomenon.

A dependent occurrence is always produced by a certain set of causes and conditions. A dependent occurrence is not causeless, not unconditioned.

The next characteristic relates to ultimate reality. That is in this case, how the process of dependent occurrence in fact is. There are two aspects. There is the perception of this in meditation, which relates to a direct realisation or perception of that. Then there is the cause of such a perception, which relates to an understanding of the true nature of this process, which acts as a cause for attaining realisation of its true nature.

Then there is the true nature of this process of dependent occurrence in terms of being unmistakable. There is the mention of unmistakable for the reason that this defining characteristic will negate the opposite, namely there being a mistake at hand.

This process of dependent occurrence can never be anything else. This statement implies that there are no phenomena that would be dependent occurrences and then other phenomena that would not be dependent occurrences. All phenomena without exception are dependent occurrences.

It is nothing other than authentic. This process, as it has been decried, is authentic.

It is valid and genuine in that it relates to a perception of Buddha, the enlightened state.

It is ultimate truth in that if one looks at the perceptions of Shravakas and Pratyekabuddhas, their perception are also referred to as valid or genuine, but they are not ultimate in that they do not perceive Buddha, the enlightened state, the ultimate state. Their perceptions are therefor incomplete and in the ultimate sense not valid and genuine.

It is not flawed. It involves no errors in that what is at hand is a perception based in ultimate wisdom or ultimate awareness.

There has been frequent mention of that this process of dependent occurrence involves a variety of causes and conditions. The sutra goes to say that the process of dependent occurrence involves two parts. Causation and the presence of secondary conditions. That relates to the second of the five characteristics that were mentioned at the beginning. The defining characteristic involving a variety of causes that are impermanent.

These two parts of the process of dependent occurrence relate to causes and the presence of secondary conditions.

These are connected by being dependent upon one another. This points to the fact that a dependent occurrence is caused by many causes. It is produced by the coming together of many causes that are impermanent. Therefore one cannot speak of a permanent cause as the producer of phenomena. By talking about a group of impermanent causes, producing an effect, one refutes the position that a phenomenon may be created or caused by a single permanent cause.

Each of these has an outer and an inner aspect. So one speak of outer causes and inner causes and outer conditions and inner conditions.

That relates to the third defining characteristic, namely that this process does not involve a self-entity.

Worldly individuals take what is called the inner ayatanas to constitute an individual self. In terms of the outer ayatanas, they regard them as phenomena belonging to that individual self. That brings us to the idea of the individual as an entity, a truly existent individual and outer phenomena as an entity and in that sense taken to be truly existent entities. The inner ayatanas relate to the five skandhas. As was said worldly individuals regard these five skandhas as a truly existent individual and that which is perceived by the individual as

truly existent entities. To enable individuals to give up the mistaken notions of a truly existent individual and the notion of truly existent outer phenomena, the process of dependent occurrence, the fact that phenomena arise in dependence upon a variety of causes and conditions, was taught.

The individual, that is to say the truly existent individual, is regarded as a static, permanent entity. That quality of being permanent would in effect prevent the process of dependent occurrence it would obstruct this process, which is not static. It is the opposite. It is a dynamic process, involving a variety of causes and conditions. The notion of the five skandhas as a truly existent individual would prevent the coming together of causes and conditions that produce dependent occurrences.

The sutra goes on as follows. It asks: What is outer causation in terms of the process of dependent occurrence? It is like this. A seed produces a sprout. The sprout produce a first tiny leaf. The first tiny leaf produces a shoot. The shoot produces a stem. The stem produces a bud. From the bud comes a flower and the flower produces a fruit.

That relates to the fourth defining characteristic mentioned previously. The characteristic which involves a set of conditions, which have the capacity to produce something.

This points out the fact that a certain cause or condition will produce a certain effect.

The opposite would be that, without a seed there cannot be a sprout through the whole process that we went through up till the flower which produces the fruit. So, without the flower, there can be no fruit.

As was described a specific cause will produce a specific effect. If the cause is not there, the effect will not be produced. Mentioning this does away with the mistaken notion that causes and conditions cannot be inherently other. That is to say not related in terms of nature.

As was said, a single permanent cannot produce an effect in that it is permanent, that is to say static. Such a cause cannot perform a function such as producing an effect.

In terms of a phenomenon coming into existence one may look at different alternatives in terms of the source of a phenomenon. Some may believe that a phenomenon is produced from itself. It may be produced from something which is inherently other than this phenomenon, a combination of these two or from no cause at all. The four alternatives and the related alternatives will be explained tomorrow.

There seems to have been a question about the dedication prayer. ... of which beings are freed from the ocean of samsara. It is the merit or the positive potential, which brings about freedom from samsara. In terms of positive potential; that is based on the practice of the six paramitas etc. through which beings are freed from the ocean samsara and attain the state of omniscience.

All beings that are innumerable, that are in number as vast as the sky, are to be freed.

These beings are to be freed from samsara, which, as we have seen earlier is made up of the three realms. Samsara is spoken of using a metaphor, namely the ocean.

The ocean of samsara is stirred up by the waves of birth, ageing, sickness and death. If there is a storm the ocean will be stirred up. In addition one can imagine there being numerous ferocious animals, such as crocodiles etc. That would induce fear. It would be a very fearful situation. Similarly the ocean of samsara is continually stirred up by the waves of birth, ageing, sickness and death.

In order to be able to free other beings from this ocean of samsara one must have the proper means. This means to say one must have attained the state of a buddha, the state of omniscience. One prays that one attains this state through the merit or the positive potential accumulated.

In order to attain that state it is necessary to conquer the enemy of obscuring states. That is why the dedication prayer mentions this.

One then contemplates, as one does this prayer, the wish to free all beings from the ocean of samsara. In order to be able to do so, one needs to accumulate the positive potential by practising the six paramitas. As a result of that practise, one will remove obscurations, obscuring states of mind that produce suffering, and as a result attain the state of omniscience.

The sutra goes on to say that it is not the case that a seed intentionally creates a sprout. The meaning is that there is no individual selfentity. Such an entity, if present, would occurred in the mindstream. It would be a mental occurrence. By saying that a seed does not intentionally create a sprout, is pointed out that this process of dependent occurrence does not involve a self entity. There was a mention of it not involving a life force, which as we saw is synonymous with a self. This process is completely devoid of such a self entity. It is not stained by the notion of a self-entity. It is completely devoid of it. That is the implication of this statement. Thus it is not the case that a seed intentionally creates a sprout.

As we saw yesterday there is a process where a sprout is produced a sprout, that, in turn, produces a first tiny leaf etc. The statement that no intentional

creation is at hand, applies to each of the steps in that process.

The process of dependent occurrence has five defining characteristics. The fifth is that in the process of dependent occurrence there are no intentional creations. An intention may be developed by an individual based on the notion of an individual self or by a creator. What was just discussed, relates to that fifth defining characteristic, which points out that this process is devoid of any intentional creation.

As has been pointed out, this process involves the presence of a cause or of a variety of causes. However, causation is not intentional. There is no intention of an individual or an external creator. One should at these two, cause and intention, in terms of being identical or essentially different: If these two were identical, there, would be no meaning in speaking of these two as two things. Namely referring to one as a cause and one as an intention. If they are essentially different, one should be able to determine what each of them, so that their own otherness may be established. In that this is not possible, so one can not speak of them as essentially separate entities.

As was said, the process of dependent occurrence does not involve intentional creating based on an entity of some sort or something other. In terms of different non-buddhist traditions, different entities are presented as the creators of things. The Samkya tradition speaks of what one may call the primal substance, which is asserted as a permanent or static entity. If things were produced by such an entity, the intention to produce could not act as a cause, because it coexists with the effect. If one were to speak of an intentional creation in relation to anything else (no connection between cause and effect) it follows that anything could act as a cause for the production of any effect, which again is an untenable position, when it is an absurd consequence, because then anything could produce anything. When saying that a seed does not intentionally create a sprout, the point is that the process of dependent occurrence involves no entity that would intentionally create whatever effect is at hand. The implication is that in the process of dependent occurrence a combination of elements produce an effect. These elements are dependent upon each other, hence one speaks of a process of dependent occurrence.

The sutra says: If there is a seed, a sprout can manifest and this continues until the process results in a flower from which comes a fruit. Yesterday there was a mention of five defining characteristics of the process of dependent occurrence, through which it is established that even though a dependent

occurrence ultimately has never arisen, a dependent occurrence does manifest without fail. This process of manifesting does not involve any intention, on the part of an entity or anything else.

The sutra goes on to say: The process of dependent occurrence in terms of outer causation should be understood in this way.

Then the sutra asks: How should one regard the process of dependent occurrence in terms of the presence of outer secondary conditions?

The sutra goes says that it involves the conditioning influences of the six factors earth, water, heat, air, space and time. When these secondary conditioning factors function together, outer occurrences manifest.

The functions of these factors are as follows: the function of earth is to provide ground for the seed to grow in, the function of water is to provide moisture for the seed, the function of heat is to provide warmth for the seed, the function of air is to enable the seed to grow, the function of space is to provide room for the unobstructed growth for the seed. The function of time is to allow the seed to go through a series of changes as it grows.

The sutra points out that, if these secondary conditions are not present, even though the principal cause for a seed growing into a sprout is present, the seed will not grow into a sprout. The sutra says: If these conditioning influences are not present, the seed cannot grow into a sprout.

However, when the outer factors earth, water, air, heat, space and time are present and are present in a form which is sufficient, when all these factors are combined as conditioning influences the seed gradually grows into a sprout.

The sutra then goes on to make the point, that was just made, in terms of principal causes. Namely that there is no intentional creation. It says that during this process the factor earth does not intentionally provide ground for the seed to grow in. The factor water does not intentionally moisten the seed. The factor heat does not intentionally warm the seed. The factor air does not intentionally enable the seed to grow. The factor space does not intentionally provide room for the unobstructed growth of the seed. Time does not intentionally perform the function of allowing the seed to undergo changes as it grows. The seed does not intentionally create the sprout and the sprout is not an intentional result of these secondary conditions. If these secondary conditions are present the seed will gradually cease to exist and the sprout can begin to develop. This

process will continue to unfold such that if there is a flower, the fruit is produced.

These factors earth, water, warmth, air etc. are of course not animated beings in that these factors have a mind that could intentionally create something. The reason for speaking of these factors in those terms is that this process of dependent occurrence is in no way connected with some sort of self-entity in any form.

There was a mention yesterday of four different alternatives on the basis of which a phenomenon may be produced. The first of these was production from a selfentity. If one asserts this, one must define what that selfentity is. One may relate it to some other entity so that one gets the pair self and other and possible production of either of these alternatives.

There are these two alternatives, production from a self-entity or from some other entity. When looking at this pair one should then examine how these two exist in relation to one another.

The relationship between a selfentity and some other entity is one of mutual dependence. One cannot exist without the other. Neither exist independently of the other. Hence, assertions of production from a self-entity are untenable.

You have these different possibilities of determining what the self or an entity is. Either you determine it in relation to something other or you determine it on the basis of the five skandhas.

If one asserts that this selfentity is the individual self of a person, which persons self is one speaking of? Shariputras or Devadatas or somebody else.

If one comes to the conclusion that it is Shariputras self, it follows that his self would be the source of all phenomena, which would be an absurd conclusion.

Then it follows that the individual self of other individuals, such as Devadata, would be defined as some other entity. In terms of that then he would end up with Shariputras self with the definition of what is meant an entity or a selfentity. Then any other individual self would become different from Shariputras self.

An individual self could never be the source of phenomena.

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If speaking of an entity as the source of all phenomena, a self-entity such as presented in the

Samkya tradition, then one may ask the question: What is meant by other in relation to that self entity?

If a permanent or unchanging entity is asserted as the source of phenomena, one must either determine if it is a mental phenomenon or a physical phenomenon. As a mental phenomenon it must be based on the five skandhas. As matter it must be based in the factors that were mentioned before, water, warmth etc. There are no other possibilities.

There is no basis of designation in dependence upon which one can define such a selfentity, in that it cannot be proven to exist either as a mental phenomenon nor as matter. There is no basis of designation in dependence on which its existence can be proven.

It is neither mind nor matter. Therefore one cannot speak of such an entity as an active phenomenon that is the cause or creator of phenomena.

It is a non-existent phenomenon. Such a phenomenon couldn't be the source or the creator of a phenomenon.

Nothing is produced by such a selfentity.

Questions and Answers:

Question: Last time it was said that nothing can exist as such, nothing can exist as result. This relates to the example that a sprout is produced from a cause which is a seed. What is at hand is rather a change that takes place, namely that the seed changes into becoming a sprout. There is no primal coming into existence involved in that example. He is not sure whether the first coming into existence could not happen from something which does not exist to begin with, because what was said now doesn't really fit to the example given in the sutra, where one rather refers to matter which undergoes a process of change, but not to a first coming into existence of something.

Answer: One has to determine what the self entity that different schools of thought assert as the cause of the universe. Is it something that first existed and then became subject to destruction or is it something that has never existed to begin with. The answer is that it is something that has never existed to begin with. As we saw, the Samkya school of thought speaks of

what they call a primal substance, the inner gnostic being. These are names of what they assert as the inner source of everything. They are spoken of as a selfentity that never changes. Even though unchanging it does involve all phenomena. It involves a process of action. In the buddhist viewpoint, such an entity can never have existed to begin with. It is completely non-existent, it is merely a mental fabrication, a conceptual label.

Question: He said that there are gods in the form-realm and simply because they have a wish things spontaneously manifest, hence arise from out of nothing. How is this to be understood. It seems to be that things come into existence from out of nothing.

Answer: It is because of previously accumulated merit that these things manifest when these beings think of them. So they do have a cause.

Question: Why can something not arise out of itself or out of something other? Could this be repeated please?

Answer: There are these different self-entities asserted by various non-buddhist traditions which, when analysed through logic and reasoning, are found not to exist, are found to be merely conceptual labels, mental fabrications. There was the previous question in relation to how one defines such a self-entity. If it is defined in relation to what is its opposite.

In the buddhist viewpoint, these two, self and other, are mutually dependent. Self exists in relation to other and other exists in relation to self. Hence neither of them can be a truly existent phenomenon, the source of all other phenomena.

The second question arose, whether when looking at a self entity, is this the self then. As we saw that as well was an impossible alternative. According to the buddhist tradition a self entity cannot be the source of phenomena.

Question: When saying the process of dependent occurrence it was said that any given cause additionally requires contributing conditions, which make this cause cease and hence the respective results will occur. That was said to be



necessary in order to have a result brought about from the cause. With respect to the gods in the form-realm or, a more practical example, a Mahasiddha, who is able to manifest things, it seems that not always these contributing conditions need to support that process of production in that a cause brings about the result. Are these six contributing condition, such as the elements, indispensable or not?

Answer: The six factors that were mentioned relate to production in terms of relative reality. There are what one may call the creations of a Mahasiddha. They are of course not brought about by the conditioning influences, such as the six factors that were discussed. However they are not without cause. It is because a Mahasiddha has attained realisation of ultimate reality that he has the capacity to f.ex. change fire into water or water into fire. These creations are caused by the power of the realisation of ultimate reality that he has attained.

Question: In the example that was given in the sutra there was the seed which develops into the sprout etc. On the one hand there are the causes and on the other hand there are the contributing conditions. There are other situations in the world, for example that a human being has a certain intention and then performs a certain activity. Also in that case causes and conditions come together. Where is the aspect of consciousness, the intention, which one particular person has, which then induced his activity to perform this and that action. So, consciousness would be which kind of cause or condition?

Answer: If one speaks of intention in terms of generating bodhicitta, that motivation brings one to requesting instructions and the practise of these instructions, which results in ones attaining of fruition. The intention is not the direct cause for that attainment. It is the condition that contributes towards the individuals attaining of fruition. The direct cause of that fruition is the practise of the path. In that context intention is the conditioning influence. If one looks at the process of dependent occurrence, it is made up of a series of instances, where the impetus of each instance produces the next instance, In

that sense each and every instance is a dependent occurrence in that it, for its coming into existence, is dependent upon its previous instance.

Question: Regarding the Samkya tradition: It was a mention that one should analyse whether this entity is matter or consciousness. Couldn't it be that it is both matter and mind?

Answer: A phenomenon that is a combination of mind and matter doesn't exist. It was established that an eternal creator, as asserted by f.ex. the Samkya tradition is neither mind nor matter. Since it is neither mind nor matter it could also not be a combination of both. Hence a combination of these two is not possible

Question: Is it correct that in this context now matter was considered as something being completely different from mind. Matter and mind as different entities. If this is the case, then is there an explanation regarding of how different kinds of matter interact with each other. Physical effects such as gravitation, which is a phenomenon of just matter. Secondly, is there an explanation of how different mental states interact with one another? How e.g. one mental reaction causes another one to arise? Is there an explanation how matter interacts with matter and how mind interacts with mental phenomena?

Answer: In speaking of mental reactions producing other mental reactions there is the process of dependent occurrence, where basic unawareness causes actions and the karma they accrue a.s.o. This is one example of how different mental functions produce other mental functions or phenomena. Then there is a presentation of fifty-one mental events. F.ex. an individual who hears a sound he doesn't like will react with aversion. Similarly, if the individual hears a sound he likes, he reacts with pleasure. These are examples of how mental events produce other mental events.

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We are going to continue from yesterday. In the English text we are on page five. *Nor does it occur through the action of some other entity.*

Yesterday we had the point about that the sprout does not occur from itself. Just as when we wanted to analyse what itself means, in the context of self and other, similarly, today we start by defining what other is when the question is if a sprout comes from something other..

Is it in relation to a self that we have other or not?

If 'other' is defined in relation to 'self', then self has to be already there, in order to talk about other. This means that if self is already there, then one actually doesn't need this. When you have 'self' and 'other', then one depends on the other. You can only talk about either one, if the other one is there. If the question is, if something has arisen from itself or from something else, then if its own cause is already there you do not need another cause.

One can't say it occurred, because it already happened. If we define other as being completely different from itself, then it would mean that anything could occur from anything. Then a vase could occur from a pillar. Fire could occur from water. If the cause would be completely different from the effect, then there is no limit to what could arise from what. Either everything could arise from everything or nothing from anything. It doesn't make sense, It is not possible.

The next part is: *Nor does it occur through the combination of the two above.*

This is also logical, because if it can't occur from itself or from something different, then of course it can not occur from both itself and something other than itself.

The fourth possibility is then that *it arises neither from itself nor from something different from itself* and that would mean it arises without a cause, which is also no the case. You cannot have a result without a cause.

This kind of reasoning actually brings us to the understanding that there is no real entity or real self. We analysed if a phenomenon arises from itself, from other, from both or from neither itself nor other. It was proven that there is nothing established, which is alone, which is an entity, which is independent a cause. Once we have understood that a single entity is not possible as a cause, then naturally there will also not be some other entity. That brings us to the understanding that whatever appears, appears through the process of dependent occurrence, through causes and conditions. It is not based on one entity.

How come that, even though there actually is no self entity existing, one clings to this concept of it being there. This is because one does not understand the way it is there, there is not understanding of the nature of things. This not understanding the nature is ignorance. Due to this ignorance one clings to the idea of a self and once this clinging is there, that which is not the self is the other. Then you have the duality, you have the self and you have other object. Once there is the duality, the disturbing emotions arise and based on the disturbing emotions, actions are performed. Then all the action and occurrences happen. That is how the dependent occurrences happen.

Through understanding this process of dependent occurrence or through being introduced to it, one develops the wish to stop the process of dependent occurrence. One understands the need of stopping it. Then one searches for a way to stop it and that is the path. Once one practises the path, which allows one to stop the process of dependent occurrence, one is able to develop the realisation. One sees what ignorance is, one gets the experience and through this full enlightenment, the state of buddha-hood.

That is actually exactly what is explained in this sutra, where it is said that through seeing the process of dependent occurrence one sees the Dharma. Through the Dharma one attains full enlightenment. It is describing what the Dharma is. The Eightfold Path of the Noble Ones. It is explained that by practising this path one attains enlightenment and that buddha-hood contain all the qualities. This is exactly what this sutra is showing us.

Essential is that by understanding the process of dependent occurrence one starts to see that everything is composite, everything is changing. By integrating the meaning in ones mind and really understanding what the process of dependent occurrence means, the Eightfold path makes sense. By understanding that everything is a matter of dependent occurrence, ones conviction that it is true is also going to develop. As the conviction develops and becomes stronger, one's effort, wish and joy in the practise is also strengthened and one will proceed on the path and will get to the result. One starts by trying to integrate the meaning of dependent occurrence.

The main point is to start by understanding what dependent occurrence means. It is not enough that one just learns that there is the process of dependent occurrence and it has twelve links starting by ignorance and going on until ageing and death. That kind of knowledge will not benefit us. Also if we just intellectually understand that one thing acts as a seed and as a result the next one arises, such as after

ignorance comes consciousness and after actions comes consciousness, it is not enough.

What the sutra means with seeing the meaning of the process of dependent occurrence is to really understand the meaning. One has to integrate it in the mind. One has to understand that this is how things are. Everything in the mind arises through the process of dependent occurrence. There is no real arising, no real existing cause and no real existing fruit. That is the whole point. Therefore it is necessary to learn the reasoning we just went through. It teaches us that, if it doesn't arise from itself, something else, both or neither, it doesn't arise, because these are all the possibilities that are possible. Through that one gets to the conclusion that there is no real arising and no real cessation either. That is the real point.

When looking for the origin of things, which is what we are actually doing, then we could see that non-buddhist give other explanations. Like the Samkya school and others. They talk about a supreme being like Ishvara or Vishnu or they have a creator, which is permanent. Actually they are just talking, just giving names to something, where there actually is nothing outside of the mind. That is their way of saying it.

When we analyse it in the buddhist way, then we see that the cause we talk about can never be different from the mind. We should look for the essence of this cause and since there is no essence to this cause, we look for the mind. When we look for the mind, we try to see where does mind come from, where is it right now and where is it going. We can meditate on that to get an understanding of this. When analysing, if it comes from itself, something else etc., is exactly the same. It is another way of analysing, but it is very close to directly meditating on the essence of the mind. It can help us to understand what the nature of the mind actually is. The point is that one finds out that there is nothing really independently existing, also not the mind.

This is how we should practise. Topga Rinpoche is emphasising the fact that the whole meaning is to practise it and to use it for understanding and to integrate it in this way.

What the sutra says until what was explained now is: A sprout does not occur of itself, nor through the action of some other entity, nor through the combination of the two above.

It goes on: *The sprout is not the creation of some supreme being such as Ishvara truly existent entity such as time. The sprout does not appear merely because it is its nature to do so; nor in the absence of a cause.*

That shows again that the cause of thing can't be what some non-Buddhists say, like a supreme self.

Also, like some non-buddhist schools say, it cannot be that things have no cause, that they appear out of themselves. These are the nihilists who believe that

How does it the happen? The sutra continues:

*When the secondary conditioning factors earth, water, air, heat, space and time function together, a seed gradually comes to an end and a sprout comes into being.*

This is describing the dependent occurrences. This is how things come about. Not through the causes we just went through, but through the combination of the causes and conditions.

It then says. *This is how one should understand how outer secondary conditions function to produce dependent occurrences.*

One should see that it is cause and condition coming together, which makes things occur and that it is not, as the non-Buddhists say, created by somebody or created without a cause

This is explaining how relatively things occur.

Now follow five characteristic qualities, which demonstrate how from an absolute point of view these dependent occurrences are taking place.

One has here the root text to which there are different commentaries. In the commentary by Kamalashila two kinds of absolute reality are explained. The accountable and the unaccountable absolute reality.

Unaccountable absolute truth can't be communicated. It is the essence of emptiness, that things are neither eternal nor non-existent.

The accountable absolute truth is that what leads to the unaccountable ultimate truth. This can be communicated and that is explained here in the sutra.

As to relative reality, it is subdivided into correct relative truth and incorrect relative truth

Then the sutra continues: The process of dependent occurrence has five characteristic qualities -- these qualities are: 1. The occurrences are not static; 2. They form part of an ongoing process; 3. The shift from one phase to another is not the result of sudden transmutations; 4. A small cause can produce a relatively large effect; 5. Typical causes produce typical results.

These points will be explained one by one. This way of explaining is connected with the ultimate but also with the relative level.

First is the question: *In what way is the process of dependent occurrence not static?*

It says: *The seed and the sprout are two different entities -- the seed is wholly other than the sprout.* By defining that the sprout and the seed are two different entities, it is already clear that it means that it can not be something static or permanent.

Because if would be static, there couldn't be any difference. Things would stay the same.

E.g. if one sows seeds of rice one will get sprouts of rice. The seed itself and the sprout are different and therefore they are not static. The process is not static.

Actually it means that the entity as such is not really existing also.

It goes on in the sutra saying that the process of dependent occurrence is not static: *It is not the case that the seed stops and the sprout appears; nor is it the case that the seed does not stop and the sprout appears. Just exactly at the very time that the seed is ceasing to exist, the sprout is then coming into being. In this way the process of dependent occurrence is not static.*

That is again proving that the process of dependent occurrence is not something static, because in order to talk about a sprout, it must be different from a seed. For the sprout to be there, it is the moment that the seed ceases to exist that the sprout occurs. The sprout does not exist before the seed stops to exist. Also the seed does not exist anymore once the sprout exists. In the moment the seed has ceased to exist, the sprout is there. This means that it is not static, because there is an interruption, it is not static

This we should also see with the background of some other viewpoint such as the non-Buddhists who claim that is some creator like Ishvara, who has created the world. At the same time they say that Ishvara is permanent. Then one could ask the question that, when the world is created, does any action take place or not? Is there anything going on at that time or not? For the world to be created there is some kind of energy or something that happens. This kind of ability to create the world, is this permanent or impermanent. They will then claim that Ishvara is permanent, he is not changing. But if analysed it is not logical, because how can a permanent creator create something, if the act of creation is not permanent? Just the fact of creating something make a change and makes it impermanent. There is a change, hence it is not logical when they say that the creator is permanent.

So we can see that there is no permanent creator. It is not logical

The second defining characteristic was, that the occurrences are uninterrupted, dynamic, that there is an ongoing process. It is said in the sutra:

*How is the process of dependent occurrence a dynamic, ongoing process? A sprout is not produced by some seed, which has not ceased to*

*exist some time ago. Nor is it produced by some seed that has not ceased to exist.*

This is then showing that there is an interruption. The sprout is not there until the seed has ceased to exist. It is a dynamic process. It is going in that the seed ceases to exist and then the sprout comes into existence. This is not interrupted, it is ongoing.

It says further in the sutra: *Just exactly at the very time that the seed is ceasing to exist, the sprout is then being born. Like the shifting movement of two pans on a scale. The process of dependent occurrence is ongoing and uninterrupted in this way.*

This is also showing the quality of the mind being a continuous stream of consciousness. The mind is not interrupted. It is the mind which is accumulating the karma, which gives rise to the disturbing emotions and the thoughts etc., which leads to the accumulation of karma. The mind is functioning all the time and there is no break in the stream of consciousness.

Then comes the third defining characteristic in the process of dependent occurrence: The sutra says: *What does it mean that the process of dependent occurrence involves no sudden transmutations? A seed is one entity; a sprout is another entity entirely. A sprout is wholly other than the seed. The process of dependent occurrence does not involve sudden transmutations from one thing into an entirely different thing.*

That is emphasising the fact that during the time of the seed there is no sprout and when there is a sprout, there is no seed. In that way they are actually different entities. You cannot say that the seed is transforming into the sprout, because the seed is different from the sprout.

For the fourth point the sutra says: *Within the process of dependent occurrence, is it the case that a small cause can produce a relatively large result? From sowing a small seed, a large result can be brought into being. In this way, from smaller causes relatively larger results can occur.*

This is showing how dependent occurrences happen unmistakably. That from a small seed something like a big tree can grow. The causes and conditions can give the result of a big fruit.

The fifth quality is: *Typical causes produce typical results within the process of dependent occurrence. When a typical kind of seed is sown, it brings about its typical fruit. The process of dependent occurrence in this way involves a continuum of similar instances.*

That is explaining again how cause and effect are always unmistakable. From a certain seed you will

always get a fruit, which corresponds to the seed. It is not that from any seed you can get any result.

That were these five characteristic qualities.

Question? Are there differences between the fourth and the fifth defining characteristic?

The commentary was the same for both.

Answer: In one it says that from a small cause you can get big results. But it is being emphasised that the result will always be in correspondence with the seed. There is no different fruit from its seeds.

It is just to make it clearer because it was said in both cases that it is showing the unmistakable quality of cause and effect. That is why he thought it was the same. The fourth characteristic is that even though the seed is small it can get big result. In the fifth it is said that the result is always the same as the seed.

Question: With respect to the third defining characteristic, no transmutation, no change is the characteristic. He thinks when looking this, it is not the case. When we observe a seed a change takes place He does not agree with the third characteristic.

Answer: One has to see these different explanations on the background of what was already given to explain the different phenomena. That characteristic relates especially to explaining that it is not as the Samkyas say. They say that the fruit is present during the time of the seed and when the conditions are present it will come out. The Buddhist reasoning says that this is not the case, because if the fruit is already present in the cause, there would be no need for the fruit to come into existence.

Question: When looking at this presentation, it seems that any kind of development of phenomena is a matter of causes and conditions, which bring about the respective results. Looking at the karma of an individual, that would mean that any kind of activity is fixed, in that certain causes and conditions will lead to the respective results. Isn't there a point where the individual has the free choice to act independently from its karmic preconditions. Is there anymore a free choice to act in a certain

direction, without being preconditioned by one's previous actions?

Answer: One has to make some distinction, if one has some kind of education or not and one is using it for a certain purpose. In a worldly sense whatever education you get is to improve something. In the outer world when it is about seed and sprout you can use a certain knowledge to improve e.g. harvest. That is a very concrete level.

If it is about mind, when you learn about the mind how cause and effect works. How you are creating karma and how the results of karma are, then you can use this knowledge in order to improve your karma. In this way it is nothing fatalistic, because you are making your karma yourself and you are using it.

If one is not involved in any education, then the trees and the flowers grow wild and you don't interfere in what is going on out in nature. Also if you are not educated about the mind, then you don't interfere on this level. Then whatever karma you accumulate, you will get the result. In that case it is actually true that you don't have much freedom. You are just doing things and react on them.

You have to make the distinction between these two kinds of situations.

Question: Regarding a certain kind of free choice. Suppose one has a certain amount of knowledge and makes up one's mind to use this situation in a very positive way, even if it might be difficult. Does that making up one's mind come about by chance or is it karma again or is it a combination of both?

Answer: You answered the question yourself. It is a choice to use the situation or not.

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Now we continue in the sutra. We have come to the point where the process of dependent occurrence is explained in the inner aspect which involves two parts which are the cause and the secondary conditions. First the sutra says: *What is inner causation? Due to the presence of basic unawareness, actions occur and karma accrues. This process continues through rebirth, which brings about ageing and death.* That means that it is caused by ignorance that actions and karma accrue and due to that consciousness etc. occur; down to ageing and death. That is the causal condition, where unawareness is described as a

cause and each of the links in the process of dependent occurrence is the cause of the next one arising.

This kind of process means that these links are interdependent. To understand that it continues is the sutra: *If basic unawareness is not present, actions that accrue karma do not occur etc.* Each link of this process depends on the other one. It will not arise if the other one is not there. That is why they are called dependent occurrences.

*Similarly, if rebirth does not occur, there can be no ageing and death.* In order for something to arise there will always be a previous cause which makes the later result appear. If this previous cause is not there, then there will not be a result arising. It continues in the sutra: *From the presence of basic unawareness, actions occur and karma accrues, with this process continuing on through rebirth, which results in ageing and death.*

The point is that this process is happening unmistakably. When there is a previous cause, then there will be a later result. In connection with the twelve links of dependent occurrence it means that there is no intention from the side of either part of the process. It is said: *Basic unawareness does not intentionally create karma, nor is accrued karma and intentional result of basic unawareness.* There is no intention behind it. It just happens that the causes create the result.

It continues by explaining how also the actions which are accruing karma and all the different phases are not intentional. The point which is shown and which the Buddha is teaching is that by explaining that the process of dependent occurrence is happening unmistakably without intention, it means that it is not the same as if you had some supreme being or a creator. Like with Ishvara or Tsowo. The concept of a creator of the world involves an intention of the creator to do so. Otherwise you can't talk about a creator. The process of dependent occurrence is completely different. It just happens that the causes lead to the result and there will be the dependence on each other and the occurrence will happen.

It goes on:

*This is the same through ageing and death -- that is, ageing and death are not intentional creations of rebirth.* The whole way through it is the process of dependent occurrence without intention behind it.

The sutra is kind of repeating it: *Because of the presence of basic unawareness, actions occur and karma accrues, with this process continuing on through rebirth, which results in ageing and death. This is how one should understand inner causation*

*within the process of dependent occurrence.* It is the same fact being repeated several times.

When the sutra says that this is how one should understand the inner causation it refers also to the defining characteristics we had before. It is not static, dynamic, no sudden transmutations etc. That is how we should understand the inner causation of the process of dependent occurrence.

The point again is that in the process itself what is first there has to cease and then immediately the next process arises. It is not that before the cause has ceased that the fruit arises. This point is again proving that it is different from a creator god or a Tsowo, because when a so-called permanent creator god is creating something impermanent he changes. The creation as such is a change and so it is a contradiction. This we can also understand through seeing how the dependent occurrences are arising.

The concept of something permanent or lasting means that something was there and will continue to be there. That is the definition of permanent. It also denominates something non-composite and non-conditioned. In connection with the Shravaka path the fruit of meditation, which is called cessation, which is identical with the understanding of emptiness, is also called permanent. This is another context in which the term permanent is used. One sees that there are different definitions on the concept of permanence.

That means again that if something is permanent there can't be a process of dependent occurrence. Because for something to happen and to be dependent on each other, there is naturally the fact of impermanence. There can't be any action related to permanence. There will always be the factor impermanence in the action and the process of dependent occurrence.

Similarly, when we talk about impermanence, then impermanence is something composite, something conditioned. Just as something arises, it automatically disappears again. You can't have arising without disappearing. Therefore it is impermanent.

That is why dependent occurrence is possible, because whatever arises will again disappear. That is how these appearances will arise and disappear continuously, because every moment is impermanent. That is why you can have dependent occurrence.

Now we go back to the sutra because we have finished the explanation on the causal conditions. Now come the secondary conditions. The sutra says: *How do inner secondary conditions function*

*within the process of dependent occurrence ? This involves the conditioning influence of six factors. These factors functioning together constitute inner secondary conditions within the process of dependent occurrence. Just like in the explanation of the outer dependence occurrence, where we had the seven causes and the six conditions, then for the process of the inner dependent occurrence, we have also the causes, which were the twelve links and six conditions, which are very similar to the outer conditions.*

Each of these six inner secondary conditions are being defined. It says in the sutra:

*With regard to inner secondary conditions, what is the function of matter( or earth) etc.?*

1. *That which, when combined together with other factors, produces the body's materiality, is called the factor matter.*
2. *That which provides a liquid medium which binds the body together is called the factor water.*
3. *That which digests and assimilates liquid and solid nutrition is the factor heat.*
4. *That which is responsible for respiration and the circulation of air within the body is called the factor prana.*
5. *That which is responsible for the bodies cavities is called the factor space.*
6. *That which is responsible for the fresh production of the physical form of the fetus and the four non-material skandhas is called consciousness, which has been coloured by the obscuring states of mind.*

Regarding the sixth secondary condition, we talk about consciousness as a factor. The consciousness condition is including the four non-material skandhas. First you have the five consciousnesses related to the five sense-faculties, i.e. eye-, ear-, nose-faculty, etc. and then you have the consciousness related to the mental faculty. It is decried here: *The various element within that category mutually support one another as do the supporting legs of a tripod.* That means for the consciousness to function, all six kinds of consciousnesses have to be there. The mental consciousness is the main factor, because only this can actually perceive, but if the consciousnesses of the faculties are not there, then perception can't take place. If one is missing a perception does not take place.

When it is mentioned that the consciousness is including the four non-material skandhas, one has to know that these non-material skandhas are not different from the mind. They are all related to the mind. They are the sensation, the conception, the compositional factors (mental events) and

consciousness. They all have to do with the consciousness

The consciousness is called 'sak che', which actually means contaminated, when the mind is deluded. The literal translation is 'fallen down'.

An example of the opposite, the non-deluded mind is highest wisdom.

When these inner secondary conditions are present, it is possible for a body to form. When they are not there it can't form. It is said in the sutra: *In the absence of these secondary conditions, the body cannot be produced. When the inner factors matter, water, heat, prana, space and consciousness all function properly together, the body is produced.* It means that for the body to be produced, these conditions have to be present.

Just to clarify the conditions are repeated again. This time stressing the fact that also the conditions are not intentional. There is nothing much to add to what is written in the sutra. *The factor matter does not intentionally create the body's materiality. Similarly the factor water does not intentionally act as the liquid medium which binds the body together. The factor heat does not intentionally digest and assimilate liquid and solid nutrients. The factor prana does not intentionally act to circulate the air within the body and to breathe. The factor space does not intentionally provide space for the bodies cavities. The factor consciousness does not intentionally create the physical form of the fetus and the four non-material skandhas. The body is not an intentional creation of these secondary conditions. On the other hand when these secondary conditions are present, the body is produced.* It is kind of explaining the same again

Now follows the reason why the secondary inner conditions are not intentional. The first point is that the matter or earth factor has no concept of a self. In order to have that there must be a mind or a consciousness. Since there no mind, there is no sense of individuality, no sense of a self. It says in the sutra: *The factor matter has not individuality.*

The whole point of this sutra is to focus on the illusory nature of the concept of clinging to a self. The sutra is meant to dissolve that concept.

When we talk about a self, then it is this identification, thinking of yourself as 'I' and of things as 'mine'. When you think of yourself then everything else will be other.

If one does not get to the roots of this wrong concept of 'I' and 'mine', it is not possible to get rid of the concept of the self. One will not be able to

understand that phenomena as such do not have a real existence and are not truly established.

The sutra continues to describe the inner secondary conditions. *Matter or earth is not a sentient being.* When one talks about sentient beings, one means the beings in the six realm of existence. Of course matter is not within that category.

If there is a sentient being then one talk about it being alive or not alive, sick or not sick, but since matter is not a living being, the next point is that *It not something with a life force of its own.*

Also the next point that *matter or earth does not have a creating quality. It is not a creating agent. It does not have the capacity to create.*

It is not a creation.

It doesn't have any own power.

The sutra goes more into detail in describing that it is not an individual.

It is not male, nor female, nor neuter. It does have an ego. It can not own anything, It cannot have the notion of being the creation of somebody else.

All these points in short mean that there is no individual, no self involved in the secondary conditions of the inner process of dependent occurrence.

Question: Since everything we do is conditioned by karma? Whatever we do is therefore preconditioned. Therefore there is in fact never any situation were we can speak about a hundred percent free will, where there is no karmic predisposition whatsoever. People who have a knowledge about karma and cause and effect, might be able to make certain decisions, but sill these decisions are not hundred percent free of karma.

At which point does this change that one frees oneself from karmic disposition and is free in the sense of ones decisions? Does the Dorje Sempa praxis work in such way that one will free oneself from such predisposition's?

Answer: We start by first defining what freedom of choice means. One can understand it in two ways. First one can understand it in the way that one can just do whatever one likes. The other kind is that which was asked about. That one

thinks it means not being bound by your karma. This does not work, because in order to become free one has have to abandon the karma which is binding one. Once one does that, one automatically will be free. But in order to purify your karma, one has to firstly understand what the cause of the karma is. The cause of karma is ignorance which causes disturbing emotions and that again gives rise to actions. One has to understand this whole process and then one has to try to get rid of the unawareness and has to purify the negative karma.

The Dorje Sempa meditation was mentioned. It is one of the methods the Buddha taught in order to purify negative karma and the obscurations.

Here Topga Rinpoche says that within the Vajrayana one applies the method of using mantras. Of course the mantra has some power to remove negativity, but it is also important that one understands what one is doing. It is important no to only rely on the mantras. Through the effect of doing the Dorje Sempa meditation ones wisdom, ones ability to understand the teachings of the Buddha's by teaching, studying and meditating will also increase. One has to ultimately get rid of the unawareness, because then the understanding of emptiness will come about. This then means that the karma, which binds one is gone. Then one is free.

When we apply a method like the Dorje Sempa meditation, we are actually praying to Dorje Sempa. We are asking Dorje Sempa to purify all our negative karma, all our obscurations. It means we are relying on the blessing of Dorje Sempa. Dorje Sempa is a buddha-aspect on the Sambhogakaya-level. It is a buddha-aspect in the Kriya-Tantra level. The Buddha gave four Tantra classes. Dorje Sempa is a Yidam within the dorje-buddha-family. When we pray to Dorje Sempa for his blessing, then the one who is praying to Dorje Sempa has to be also suitable. One can not just disregard any kind of negative karma. There has to be some effort from the side of the one who is doing the praxis. It is not that forcefully all karma is purified and one is totally liberated. It doesn't work like that. One should not think that.



The Tantra classes were mentioned. For those who are not familiar with the term, the Buddha gave two main classes of teachings: the sutra and the Tantra-teachings. Just like you have different kind of schools, like Theravada and Mahayana, also in the Tantra there are different levels of teachings. There are the four Tantra classes. Within the four classes the Kriya Tantra is the first one.

Now you have been asking a lot of questions about karma. Rinpoche says that all that are present here now are, by being here and following this course, show that you have the right intention. You have the motivation. You have decided to learn what the Buddha taught. Instead of going on a holiday and doing nothing, you are willing to put an effort and go through all the difficulties that might be. Actually you don't have to worry so much. You can be sure that, since you have the right intention, just listen and try to understand and your questions will be answered, it will be OK. If you think too much about karma, or what karma are you creating, it is actually disturbing. You get too many ideas, which again blocks your concentration.

Question: Is the knowledge of how the mind works a dependent occurrence, because it is caused by something?

Answer: Yes.

Question: The consciousness in the context of the twelve links of the process of dependent occurrence is considered to be a cause which brings about the next step, whereas in the context of inner dependent occurrence, consciousness was explained as a contributing condition. Where is the borderline between something being a cause and something being a contributing condition?

Answer: There are a few things connected with it. One thing is that the third factor of the twelve links is the consciousness. Here is meant the basic consciousness (tib.: *kān shi*). Today, when we had the conditions, then the consciousness mentioned is the last of the four non-material skandhas. That is the five consciousnesses connected with the sense-faculty and the consciousness of the mental faculty. The reason that

consciousness is here a part of the contributing conditions is, that if it is not present, then the production cannot happen. That it is a necessary contribution. Actually consciousness has both the causal and the conditional function.

Just to define: If you speak of causes and conditions. Then the causes will always be conditions, but the conditions will not always be causes.

Question: Practising Vajrayana it seems to be important that one gains more and more certainty in one's buddhanature. This is then trained by various methods, e.g. to identify oneself with a pure buddha-aspect, in order to be more and more certain that these buddha-qualities are in fact qualities of the mind. There are other methods such as the guru-yoga where one visualises the teacher in his human form. The question is: If one meditates upon one's particular teacher, is it necessary that this teacher is accomplished or not? Or is it rather a question of how far oneself is able to consider the teacher as a real buddha?

Answer: It will be a very general answer: If one has a teacher like the Karmapa, like Rinpoche himself has, it is quite simple. Generally, the purer you can see the lama, the more blessing you get.

Question: Let's say one's teacher is a Bodhisattva and there is another teacher on the tenth level. If one meditates on a Bodhisattva on the third level, does one receive the blessings or qualities of the third level only or can one receive the full range of blessing, as a Bodhisattva on the tenth level has.

Answer: It depends on the disciple. If one is able to see him pure, then one will get the full blessing. There will not be a difference.

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Yesterday we finished the explanation of the factor matter. That is was defined as not having individuality, it is no sentient being; it is not alive, it is not created, it doesn't possess any creative capacity, neither male, female, neutral, no ego, incapable of possession and it is not creation of Ishvara or any other supreme being. *Similarly the factors water, heat, prana, space and consciousness have no individuality, are not*

*sentient, are not alive, are not themselves creating agents, nor are they products of an energy, not are they individuals produced by this. They are neither male nor female nor neuter. They do not have an ego, they are not capable of the act of possession; they are not the creations of 'Ishvara' or any other supreme being.*

Now we go through the characteristics of these twelve links. Just as before there were the five characteristics of the outer causes and the outer process of dependent occurrence. We are going now through the definitions of the links in the process of dependent occurrence. There are five characteristics:

I. The definition of itself.

II. The word definition

III. How they are connected with the other links.

The fourth and the fifth one will be explained later.

**I.** We start by defining what unawareness is.

When its own characteristics is being defined, it is in order to explain what basic unawareness is. What is it doing? What is its function and its nature?

In the sutra it then says: *What is basic unawareness? Basic unawareness includes various mistaken beliefs, such as mistakenly believing that the factors above constitute a single entity.* That has to do with that, as we just saw, there are the six conditions in order for dependent occurrences to happen. It were matter, water, air, heat, space and consciousness. Even though there are all these different factors coming together, one is not aware of that. One has the notion of it being a single entity. One can't see them distinctly, even though they are there. This is the first definition of what basic unawareness is.

The second one sounds quite similar, because in this case one is mistaking the body as a solid entity, even though it is something composite. The body comes about due to the accumulation of a lot of particles and different aggregates, but one clings to it as being one self, one body.

As the consequence that once one believes that outer different conditions to be one thing and once one believes the inner conditions to be one thing instead of seeing that they are the accumulation of many different parts, then automatically the third notion will arise. One gives it a permanent quality. If there is something there which is one thing, one will also cling to it as being lasting or permanent.

The next kind of wrong notion which is a sign of basic unawareness is, that one gives a stable quality to the outer and inner phenomena. That means that one does not understand that they come about

through causes and conditions. One can't see that they are occurring from something, because one thinks it is something solid there. That means one gives it a quality of stability, which has no origin or arising and which is just there as a stable factor. It is not depending on other causes and conditions.

Seeing outer and inner phenomena as being permanent and stable, the next consequence is that one sees them as something unchangeable. If they are permanent and stable, one has excluded the possibility that is cause and effect. That means that one thinks that arising from a cause can't happen, because it is stable and permanent. One thinks that as the time of the cause, the fruit is already included.

The next mistaken notion which happens as a consequence of the others is that one does not understand that everything is composite, that it is conditioned. That means that one has not understood that it is impermanent. That in turn means that even though worldly happiness is something which will change into suffering. One clings to the idea of it as being happiness. One believes something to be happiness, which is not real happiness, because it has suffering in it. It will always change into suffering.

Regarding all these wrong understandings, e.g. the last one taking something to be happiness, which is actually means one does not understand that happiness is suffering. That relates to all of them. If one takes outer and inner phenomena to be permanent, again it means one does not understand that they are impermanent. That goes for all of the factors we went through. You understand it in a certain way, which is not as it is, because you are unaware. You have wrong understanding.

Because one has this wrong understanding, it follows that one believes in the notion of a self, of that the composite five aggregates constitute a really existing self. Once one clings to that notion, one will also believe that there is something else, which belongs to oneself as 'mine'.

This self, that one believes to be real, one regards to be a sentient being.

Once believing it to be a sentient being, one believes it to be alive.

Once one thinks it is alive, one thinks it can create something.

Once one has the clinging to it being a self and alive, then automatically one will believe it to be live sustaining.

One has the notion of it as a person. That can be on any level; as an ordinary person or even if you personify a supreme being, like a god etc.

One believes it to have an ego, to be able of the act of possession, to be a creation etc. What this definition show is that there is this unawareness, which means that one has a wrong understanding, that one believes non-singular things to be singular, things to give happiness even though they only give suffering and that one believes in a self and something else. This basic unawareness starts on a very subtle level and get more and more gross, it the way that it leads to more and more results, because it is based on a completely mistaken notion. That is what is being described here. Based on unawareness and wrong views various philosophical schools are founded. One solidifies it so far that one even has theories about it. It becomes more and more elaborated, from starting on a very subtle level. All ideas about how oneself and the things are created are based on unawareness.

In the sutra it finally says: *And so on*. That means one can't even speak of the unawareness going up to a certain point and stopping there.

In the sutra this part was: *What is basic unawareness? Basic unawareness includes various mistaken beliefs, such as mistakenly believing that the factors above constitute a single, solid, stable, unchanging entity. It is to regard these factors as being sources for satisfaction rather than as being inherently sources for suffering. It is to regard them as constituting a truly existing individual, to regard them as being sentient, as alive, as creating agents. It is to regard the six factors which sustain the body as being truly existent, as constituting an ego, as being capable of the act of possession, and so on.*

It continues that: *Based on these kinds of unawareness, attachment or desire, aversion, and stupidity or obviousness occur in relation to ones phenomena.*

Because one is unaware, attachment, aversion and not to know how to act upon the object occurs. This again will lead to actions. These action are done because of the obscurations that one has in ones mind.

At this point, it would be useful to go more into the different ways the mind works, when it is unaware. There are the 51 different mental events. This Rinpoche will explain apart from the sutra in the next class.

The actions will result in the different kinds of consciousness. That means the different way in which one experiences things, as being singular and being other than oneself. Here, the experiencing

consciousness is meant to be the all-base-consciousness.

That is what was called coloured consciousness, which in turn will give rise to the four non-material skandhas. The sutra expresses is like this: *Action (via the karma which those action accrue) result in separate instances of subjective experience. This is what is meant by the formation of tendencies which colour consciousness.*

The four non-material skandhas are not different from the mind. They are not described separately. They are sensation, conception, mental events and consciousness.

Just to repeat briefly: Sensation was the pleasant, the unpleasant and the neutral sensation. The conception dealt with perception. That the mind distinctively perceives something. The compositional factors are connected with the actions one does, based on the different mental functions. Consciousness relates to the six kinds of consciousness. The five consciousnesses of the sense-faculties and the mental-consciousness based on the mental faculty.

Based on the four non-material skandhas the inner sensory/cognitive faculties arise. The occurrence of the sensory/cognitive faculties makes perception possible.

Based on the presence of the object, the sense-faculty and the mental-faculty contact will occur.

The experience, which arises through contact, is sensation.

The attachment to the sensation which arises, may it be a pleasant sensation one want to have or an unpleasant sensation which one wants to get rid of, is wanting.

Wanting leads to the next phase. One takes hold of the object and is impelled into the next phase.

That means one takes rebirth through the skandhas. Once one has taken birth, ageing and death will follow.

Due to ones strong attachment, death will be experienced as very painful. Usually it is combined with strong suffering.

It is even described that one is wailing, cries of agony. This pain is connected to the attachment to ones body. When the body dissolves there is physical suffering. At the time of death then there is also a mental suffering.

This final state of complete panic, suffering and turmoil in ones mind has to do with all the different disturbing emotions and how the mind is functioning. It is the root afflicted emotions and the secondary afflicted emotions, all the different negative ways the mind works, which produce the result of confusion, pain and suffering at the time of death. These mental events will be explained later.

This was the explanation of the first characteristic. The own characteristic of each of the twelve links.

Question: It seems to me that cause and effect are presented as separate. How can there be then a dependent occurrence.

Answer: This explanation of how from the seed the sprout arises etc. is one the one hand making clear that everything that arises has a cause and that the result will always correspond to the cause. On the other hand, once one understands that, one sees that there is no creator for the things and that things are not causeless. The process of dependent occurrence is an ongoing process.

Also it shows that while the cause is present, there is no fruit. Cause and fruit are not simultaneous. The moment the cause ceases, the fruit comes in to being, not before.

On Wednesday there will be more explanations about cause and effect.

Question: How does the Dorje Sempa praxis work? Does it dissolve the karmic imprint totally or do they inevitable come to ripen, maybe then in a weaker sense?

Answer: We are doing negative actions, the physical, mental and verbal one. Eventually the karma of that will ripen. So we need to purify our karma. There are different ways to do it. There are direct antidotes to the negative actions. The antidote to anger is patience. Through meditating on the antidote of the problem, you purify it and get rid of it.

Another way is to meditate on Dorje Sempa. As was explained the other day, the Dorje Sempa meditation is to focus on this pure buddha-aspect and to pray for the blessing to be purified. The combination of trust, confidence and ones praying and that there is the compassion and the blessing of the Buddhas will help in the purification. In that way it is possible to purify the karma. But you cannot say that practising Dorje Sempa today means

that tomorrow your karma is purified or that one always must use an antidote for a certain disturbing emotion. This is very individual. But one just has to apply all the different methods in order to purify the karma.

Actually you can look for yourself. You are doing the preliminaries and some of you are doing the Dorje Sempa meditation. Maybe you have even done 100.000 Dorje Sempa mantras. You can look for yourselves how much is purified and how much is unpurified. You can look at you own experience what is actually happening.

Question: Is fear classified somewhere in the buddhist tradition? E.g. as a mental event.

Answer: It is not a manifest disturbing emotion. At the same time you say that fear always arises due to causes and conditions. Fear is the result of something and no the cause of something. The causes can't be exactly defined, because there can be so many different causes. There can be outer causes. Sometimes there is fear without outer causes. Fear is put within the category of suffering, which is subdivided into three kinds; the suffering of suffering, the suffering of change and the all-pervading suffering. The suffering that arising due to fear is a feeling of loss.

It is something we will understand better in the next class, when the different mental events are explained.

Question: Inaudible

Answer: When meditating on the antidote of anger, one can actually suppress the anger, but that doesn't mean that one hour later, one doesn't have the anger. When the anger arises, in that moment there is no cause for patience. There you have to learn how to apply the patience. It is seeing how the mind functions.

E.g. you talk about the kinds of actions; positive, negative and neutral. During the neutral actions the mind is neutral, but if it is completely neutral, how can it cause something? How can it create karma? Then we can analyse what is means when the mind is not positive, negative or neutral. Is that still a feeling or not? In this way you can learn a lot about the mind.

To return to the Dorje Sempa meditation. When you do a Dorje Sempa meditation, you are meditating on a buddha-aspect. You are praying to him. You are visualising how the nectar is flowing down through you and how all your negative karma and your obscurations are purified and that they are actually leaving your body as different substances. This doesn't mean that the negative and the obscuration have a certain form. These are methods. You are using certain methods, which work if all the conditions are present. When you do the Dorje Sempa meditation, then there is the power of the method itself, which is in the Vajrayana methods themselves. Then there is the compassion of the Buddhas, there is the blessing. Then from your side there are the trust and the confidence. When all these conditions come together, then it happens, it is possible to purify negative karma. You cannot say that it is not possible to purify negative karma then. At the same time you cannot say that all the time when you do the Dorje Sempa meditation, then this and that happens. It is not so fixed. It is methods that have to be applied properly and then they give results.

If the results of the practise come about or not, is up to each individual to see in his practise. After having recited a certain number of Dorje Sempa mantras and having done the Dorje Sempa practise, they can get some signs themselves, which shows that the purification has taken place. Maybe there will be some signs in dreams or even physically sometimes, that something will grow on top of ones head. Different signs can be there. It means that the methods are there and everybody has to apply them as well as one can. Then even though there is no immediate effect. Sometimes one gets upset, one gets greedy or one is angry or whatsoever. Then anyway one has to see relatively, if one is improving or not. Then according to if one is doing the practise properly or not it is not that fixed. One has to see that it is a gradual process. As you apply the methods you will see that they have their effects. You can't say it is not beneficial, even though you don't have immediate effects.

There is a story of somebody, who had done a complete three-year retreat. When he came out he told his friends that he had completed the retreat and didn't have any anger anymore. But then he was still worried what would happen if he met some robber or thieves. When he actually did, he was the most aggressive one of all.

When he himself said that he had no anger anymore, it was said because he was actually convinced himself. What he had achieved was to be able to suppress the anger completely. It is not the same as having completely dissolved the anger. He had suppressed it, but it was still there.

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Today the different **mental events** will be explained.

In terms of this there are five categories with different mental events. The first category is called minds various patterns. The second is called minds virtuous patterns. The third is called minds virtuous obscuring patterns that produce suffering. The fourth is called minds non-virtuous patterns and the fifth is called minds lesser obscuring patterns.

There are different presentations of different mental patterns. One according to the Abhidharmakosha, which will be explained today and one according to the Abhidharmasamuccaya.

The first of the five categories, **mind's various patterns**, involves ten mental patterns that are present in any perceptual situation: sensation, directionality of mind, to know by association, purpose or aspiration, contact, intelligence, capacity to maintain focus, to hold the mind to what has become its reference, interest, concentration.

1. Sensation or feeling is defined as the process of experiencing. It is classified as painful, pleasurable or neutral.

2. Directionality of mind is a mental activity that induces its mind to turn its attention towards its object.

3. To know by association is defined as knowing by way of taking up the defining characteristics of the object at hand and distinguishing these.

4. Purpose means to have interest in something. This mental event is the basis for making efforts.

5. Contact is the contact between an object of perception, the sense faculty and the perceiving mind. It is the basis for sensation.

6. Intelligence is defined as intelligence in the sense of having insight, the capacity to discern. Its function is to dispel doubts and hesitation.

7. The capacity to maintain focus is that what one knows does not slip away from one's mind. Its function is to prevent distraction.

8. To hold the mind towards what has become its reference is a mental event which has the function to hold the mind to what has become its referent. It is similar to the previous one, however, here the particular function is to focus on a specific object.

9. Interest relates to strong interest in terms of a specific object or the teachings of the Dharma.

10. Concentration means one-pointedness of mind., to maintain concentration of whatever object of perception is at hand.

These are the ten mental patterns that are present in any perceptual situation, whether the situation is based on f.ex. desire or anything else.

As was said, all of them are present in any situation, however, one of them may be predominant in a certain perceptual situation, yet, the remaining nine ones are also present.

Secondly the **mind's various virtuous patterns**.

There are ten different virtuous patterns: confidence or trust, concern, thorough refinement through training, equanimity or a balanced state, modesty or decency, decorum, non-grasping or non-clinging, non-hatred, no intention to harm and sustained effort.

1. There are different kinds of confidence or trust. The kind one may refer to as perceptive, the one may refer to as trusting and the one may refer to as longing. However, we will not go through the details of the different types of confidence. In general, confidence is a mental event involving trust or believe.

2. Concern means concern for cultivating virtuous attitudes, virtuous kinds of behaviour a.s.o. It induces the capacity to discern between what is to be adopted and what is to be rejected and concern for doing what is right and rejecting what is wrong

3. Thorough refinement through training is a process of refining both mind and body to the extent where obstacles or hindrances for developing

concentration or samadhi are removed. The two main hindrances are states of agitation or states of laxity or slackness. Both states are counteracted by refinement through training. Therefore it functions as the basis for concentration.

4. Equanimity is a balanced state. Its function is not to provide occasions for emotional and other instabilities.

5. Modesty or decency is to refrain from what is objectionable, that is to say non-virtue by having made oneself the norm.

6. Decorum is a sense of propriety. It is to avoid negative actions, having made others the norm. The function is the same as the function of the previous mental event, modesty or decency.

7.+8. Non-grasping and non-hatred are the two roots of virtue. Non-grasping means that one doesn't cling to or hanker after sensual pleasure. Non-hatred means that one does not have hatred towards anyone.

The Abhidharmakosha does not mention bewilderment as a separate mental event. It says that lack of bewilderment is synonymous with insight. Thus, there is no need to speak of it separately from insight.

9. No intention to harm has the function of conquering or doing away with hatred.

10. Sustained effort is based on having inspiration to practise that which is positive or virtuous. It is joyous effort and that effort becomes sustained, because there is inspiration.

These virtuous patterns in terms of an ordinary individual are to be cultivated one by one. If one looks at an individual on any of the bhūmis, these events arise simultaneously. F.ex., if there is no grasping, there will also not be any hatred a.s.o.. However, for an ordinary individual it is necessary to train progressively.

The mind of an individual who is on the first bhūmi is always virtuous. It is not the case that at times he has a virtuous attitude and at other times he has not.

The third category gives a list of **mind's various obscuring patterns**. These are: delusion, lack of concern, laziness, lack of trust, gloominess and agitation or excitement.

1. Delusion is the force of all obscuring states of mind. It is defined as an unclear state of not knowing.

2. Lack of concern is the opposite of concern means that there is no concern for cultivating virtue. It is an unfavourable condition in terms of cultivating the virtuous mental event called concern.

3. Laziness has no inspiration whatsoever. It work against sustained effort.

4. Lack of trust means that there is no confidence.

5. Gloominess is a dense state of mind characterised by laxity or slackness. It is defined as a subjective tendency in which both physical and mental heaviness and sluggishness dominate. It prevents refinement through training.

6. Agitation or excitement obstructs quietness. It is a restless state of mind where the individual jumps from one thing to the other. The previous one, gloominess, and this one, agitation or excitement, both obstruct the development of concentration.

These different obscuring patterns are stronger in an ordinary individual than in an individual who is in the process of going through the different paths or bhūmis. In terms of giving them up, one applies a remedy and works with them so that they are gradually removed.

The category of **mind's various lesser mental events** are: anger, resentment, dishonesty, jealousy, spite, slyness, avarice, deceit, self centeredness and malice.

1. Anger is a perturbed state of mind with the intention to harm.

2. Resentment is one aspect of anger. It is the continual intention to harm, to retaliate.

3. Dishonesty is the intent to conceal one faults or shortcomings. As a result one is unable to remove ones faults, unable to give up ones shortcomings, which in turn results in that one is not able to practise the right path.

4. Jealousy is associated with all the three main mental poisons, passion, aggression and ignorance. It is an extremely negative mental pattern where the individual cannot bear seeing that others have good qualities or wealth f.ex.. It is an attitude which cannot bear seeing the excellence of others. It is an attitude where the individual fails to accept the good qualities of others, fails to accept the virtue of others a.s.o.

6. Spite combines both anger and resentment. This is a very strong mental pattern, which takes over, consumes the individual.

7. Slyness is when the individual is concealing his faults. It is associated with wanting and dense states of mind. It prevents the individual to practise virtue, because in order to be able to practise virtue you must give up your faults. If you conceal your faults, you won't be able to develop or practise virtue. It prevents the individual from regretting faults.

8. Avarice is being what in simple words is called tight-fisted, which is to say that one wants to hold on to possessions a.s.o. One is unable to be content with what one has. In terms of the different parts of the Eightfold Noble Path, there is mention of right livelihood, right speech, right action a.s.o. Avarice prevents practise of these.

9. Deceit makes one hypocritical, make one pretend what one is not. It is what so to speak encourages wrong livelihood, wrong speech a.s.o.

9. Self-centeredness is based in desire and is a mental pattern where the individual delights in his own qualities and regards others as inferior, looks down on others.

10. Malice is based in anger: It is a lack of kindness, which makes one abuse others, harm others.

The next category is called **mind's various non-virtuous patterns**. There are two, shamelessness or arrogance and lack of propriety.

1. According to the Abhidharmakosha, shamelessness or arrogance prevents one from perceiving the qualities of others. There is no respect for the good qualities of others.

As was said, it is the inability to respect the good qualities of others. The individual fails to recognise the good qualities of others. Failing to recognise the good qualities, the individual will be unable to recognise what his faults are. Hence he will have no shame. He will be an arrogant person, failing to respect others for their good qualities, failing to see his own faults.

2. Lack of propriety is the tendency not to avoid negativity where others are the norm. The individual has no intention to practise the virtues advised by others. He does not fear involving himself in non-virtuous actions.

The individual fails to see the shortcomings that are said to come from non-virtuous activities.

The last category is **the eight varying mental patterns**. These mental patterns change from situation to situation.

They are regret, drowsiness or sleep, anger, attachment, indecisiveness, pride, selectiveness and analysis.

1. Regret is a mental pattern, where one regrets a mistake f.ex. This occurs because one again and again thinks about the mistake one did.

2. Drowsiness or sleep is what one may refer to as a neutral state. Mind is not concerned with any object.

3. Anger one also may call hostility or illwill

4. Attachment.

5. Indecisiveness or doubt is based in not knowing. It is being unable to discern.

6. Pride makes the individual very self-centered or haughty, taking delight in his or her qualities.

7.+8. The last two, selectiveness and analysis, are related as coarse and subtle. Selectiveness is a less detailed mental process. It is a less subtle process in terms of referring to an object.

Selectiveness may be defined as selecting or singling out an object of perception, that is to say an object as a whole.

Analysis may be defined as a more subtle or more perceptive process, where one is aware of the details of that object.

These mental patterns work through the medium of the different sense faculties. So in that respect, they are based in the sense faculties.

They involve a focus in that they are associated with the perception of an object.

They involve a process of being aware of the specific aspects of the focus, the object of perceptions.

In terms of the process of perception there is the principal state of mind which is accompanied by the different mental events. The mental event and the principal state of mind equally share the different components of the process of perception, such as object, sense faculty a.s.o.

In the Abhidharmasamuccaya there is a presentation involving fifty-one mental patterns. There the virtuous mental patterns involve eleven rather than ten events. One can also look up the presentation in a text called 'The Gateway to Knowledge'.

However, in terms of a single instance of perception, there are many different functions and aspects. Therefore one cannot determine one specific number of mental patterns. In fact they innumerable.

Question: In the first category there was a mention of sensation and distinction. The question is whether these two are identical with the two immaterial skandhas, the skandha of sensation and the skandha of distinction?

Answer: Probably.

Question: Which of the two presentations of the mental patterns should one take?

Answer: Both are good. The Abhidharmasamuccaya existed prior to the Abhidharmakosha. If you want to make that a reference point. The Abhidharmasamuccaya is the basis for the Abhidharmakosha. There are different details. If one looks at f.ex. the mental pattern laziness, the absence of laziness implies the presence of sustained effort and the absence of f.ex. forgetfulness implies the presence of mindfulness. The Abhidharmakosha, looking at these implications, mentions less mental pattern, because the absence of one would imply the presence of another a.s.o. Whereas the Abhidharmasamuccaya mentions both and leaves out any implications.

Question: Some of the mental patterns in the first category sound similar to the links of the process of dependent occurrence. Is that on purpose? Is it the same?

Answer: It is the same.

Question: In the context of the Abhidharmakosha we had also doubt, pride, aggression. How can they be sort of connected with all of them, since they apparently seem to be negative functions?

Answer: If one takes f.ex. wanting or desire, it may be present in a virtuous state of mind, it may occur either in a negative or a positive perceptual situation. An ordinary individual, who practises virtuous, may have the desire to obtain something from that f.ex. Desire is present in a virtuous activity ever though in general it is something negative. However, if one looks at an individual on any of the ten bhūmis, that is not the case.

Question: In the context of the mental pattern that produce suffering, we have anger, etc. Why are these considered to be of a minor quality?

Answer: In that category, when they are considered as lesser states, anger means



the intention to harm. It is not yet full blown, so to speak, it is not yet apparent. it is the intention to harm.

Question: It was mentioned that some of the mental patterns are also part of the twelve links of the process of dependent occurrence. The process of dependent occurrence is the way of sentient beings. On the other hand there was a mention that only a realised, a Bodhisattva, is capable to deal with these different mental patterns in one moment. Isn't this contradicting to what was mentioned first, namely that in the twelve links of the process of dependent occurrence some of these are anyhow included?

Answer: These mental patterns are conceptual. A conceptual perception always involves a progression. There is never the simultaneous perception of the object as being attractive and blue f.ex. These distinctions arise in a progression. There was a mention, Rinpoche says, that an ordinary individual cannot do that, because he relates to things in a conceptual way, which always involves a progression. If one f.ex. looks at a person who quickly recites a sutra, the person in fact has to perceive and recognise each and every syllable he is reciting. However, the process of reciting is so rapid that one has the impression of the words almost being said simultaneously. However, this is never the case, because a conceptual state of mind always involves a progression.

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Today the different aspects of cause, conditioning influences and effects will be explained.

There are **six aspects of 'cause'**.

**1.** The first aspect relates to compounded phenomena that serve as a cause in that they do not obstruct the production of something else.

The Abhidharmakosha gives the following simile to describe what is meant by this general definition of cause. A king who looks after the welfare of his subjects, serves as a cause for their well-being. Even though the king is not the direct cause for their well-being, he serves as a cause for their well-being, in that he has no intention to harm his subjects. He has the opposite intention ,namely looking after their welfare.

**2.** The second aspect of cause speaks of co-existing causes, where there is a mutual dependence between the different causes. What is at hand is a group of causes that co-exist and that are mutually dependent. That relates to f.ex. the nature of something and the phenomenon itself, such as a vase, which is f.ex. impermanent. Another example is the mind and mental events.

These causes are mutually dependent. what is as hand is that they act as a group so to speak. Even though one of these causes in the group may not produce any of the other, they do co-exist and they are mutually dependent.

There is a need for a specific group of causes to co-exist and interact in order to produce something. If one of the causes in the group is lacking, the phenomenon, that would otherwise be produced, would not be produced.

**3.** The third category is cause consistent with its effect. Here cause and effect are of the same type. Such as a virtuous actions originating with a virtuous attitude or a barley seed growing into a barley plant.

**4.** There are five functional co-relations in terms of cause and effect. Cause and effect share the same basis, referent, observable characteristic, time and stuff or essence.

That involves five functional co-relations with alike basis, alike referent, a.s.o.

**5.** Another aspect where cause and effect are alike is that obscuring states of mind produce other obscuring states of mind. Obscuring states of mind are a cause that produce other obscuring states of mind, the effect.

**6.** Cause as the potential that brings about the ripening of a result. That relates to the relationship between action and the effect that the action produces. Action contaminated by obscuring states act as a cause that brings about a result that is also contaminated by obscuring states. That relates to both virtuous and non-virtuous actions.

These six aspects of 'cause' relate to the different aspects of karma, that certain actions will be the cause for certain results.

For example co-existing causes and cause consistent with its effect are not very different when looking at them. However, they do relate to different types of actions that will produce certain results. In term of karma one needs to give up actions that produce karmic results. In order to enable individuals to recognise the different actions and the associated stages, these different divisions were presented.

However, there is no essential difference between them.

We now come to the **five types of effect**.

**1.** The first is called a ripened effect. It is the effect produced by a specific action in the past. In terms of the different aspects of cause there was the cause of potential that brings about the ripening of a result. This is the corresponding result. It involves all the different experiences of pain, pleasure a.s.o. in samsara.

**2.** The effect which acts as the capacity to bring about something. That relates to the first aspect of the six aspects of cause, where something serves as a cause. A king, who serves as the cause for the welfare of his subjects. The king has the capacity to bring about the welfare of his subjects. Effect here relates to that capacity of having the power to bring about an effect.

**3.** Effects consistent with their cause. In terms of the six aspects of cause, they relate to number three, cause consistent with its effects, and number five, which was more or less the same, though the context was specific in that it related to obscuring states of mind producing other obscuring states of mind. There is the same relationship, consistency between cause and effect.

**4.** Effects in relation to the following two aspects of cause: co-existing causes and causes involving five functional co-relations. There is an analogy given to describe this kind of effect. An individual's function cannot be separated from the individual, similarly cause and effect in this category cannot be distinguished as separate entities.

**5.** The fifth aspect of effect relates to an effect brought about by an individual's analysis of something to the extent that what has been analysed ceases to exist. That relates to the process where insight separates states of mind that are to be given up from mind and as a result a state of mind free from what is to be given up it attained.

One shouldn't always understand effect as something that is in all cases produced by a specific cause, such as seed producing a sprout. If one looks at the fifth aspect, where insight is attained by means of relying on the path, the effect, insight, is attained in dependence upon having cultivated the path.

**The four aspects of condition:**

**1.** Causal condition relates back to the first aspect of cause, where something serves as the cause for producing something else.

**2.** The second aspect of condition is called the immediately preceding condition. It is the immediately preceding instance of mind's continuum, which produces the next instance of mind's continuum.

In dependence upon this, one continually accumulates karma.

An Arhat's last instance of samsaric mindstream is not called an immediately preceding condition, because it does not produce another samsaric instance of mind. The Arhat, when attaining Arhat-hood, attains insight or wisdom which is different from the nature of the instance of mind that preceded it.

If someone goes beyond samsara, this conditioning influence will cease to operate once the individual is beyond samsara, the samsaric mind-stream is interrupted.

**3.** The third condition is the external object that serves as a condition in a perceptual situation.

**4.** The conditioning influence based in a capacity. It relates back to the first aspect of cause, where we saw that something served as a cause for something else to be produced. It is that capacity of producing something in the context of a conditioning influence.

These teachings on causes, effects and conditions in their various aspects were given in order to make clear that all phenomena are dependent occurrences. Phenomena are brought about by a variety of causes and conditions.

As we saw, the sixth aspect of cause was cause as a ripening factor. That aspect was taught in order to make clear that a specific action will bring about a specific result. Thus one speaks of cause as ripening factor.

The third aspect of cause, where cause is consistent with its effect illustrates that a cause, without fail, will produce an effect similar to it.

Cause, in the context of obscuring states of mind producing other obscuring states of mind was taught in order to make clear that obscuring states of mind are not part of mind's true nature. Obscuring states of mind are fleeting phenomena produced by other obscuring states of mind. Therefore there is the possibility to give these up, to remove obscurations.

The second aspect, involving coexisting causes, a group of causes producing something. That aspect of cause was taught in order to counteract the idea that a cause is something real and solid, is something involving the intentional creation of

something else. When speaking of a group of causes that co-exist, there is not a possibility of something real and solid or any intentional creation.

The fourth aspect involving five functional co-relations counteracts the idea that mind is a solid entity, that mind is an unchanging solid or single entity involving intentional creation. By pointing out that it is a process involving many components, such as mind and mental events, these misperceptions are counteracted.

The first aspect, where one speaks of something serving as a cause for the production of something else, sums up all the different aspects in a causal relationship. It points to the fact that all phenomena are the products of a principal cause in combination with conditioning influences.

The different aspects of effect:

The first is called a ripened effect. It is taught in order to point out that everything is the product of previous actions.

The aspect of effects consistent with their causes was taught in order to point out that cause and effect are always related in that way. That an effect will be similar to what caused it.

The fourth aspect of effect was taught in order to point out that it is not the case that only previous actions determine a situation or something. Present actions will act as causes for yet other effects. The analogy given was the function of a person and the person itself, these two one cannot really separate. Similarly, actions continually produce effects. One should not relate all situations to just previous actions.

These different aspects are included in the second aspect, where one spoke of effects as a capacity. All compounded phenomena can be included in this category.

The second, where the effect relates to a capacity that is simply the absence of obstructing the production of something, includes all the other aspects. It is a general definition of effect.

As was said, it includes all conditioned phenomena. Liberation is referred to as an unconditioned phenomenon. However, it comes about in dependence upon having practised the path. That relates to the fifth aspect.

These different aspects describe or illustrate the relationships between cause and effect in terms of mind and outer phenomena. All this is in described in the Gateway to Knowledge.

Question: Referring to the fourth kind of cause, could you please give another example to illustrate the meaning?

Answer: Mind and mental events involve five functional co-relations. In any perceptual situation are different elements. There is the basis, being the sense organ, the referent, the characteristic of the referent, the duration of time of that perception and its substance so to speak. Mind and mental event both arise in dependence upon the same basis, the sense organ. They also have the same referent. They perceive the same observable characteristic of that referent. They occur simultaneously, so their duration is the same and they are made up so to speak of the same stuff in that they are both of a mental nature.

Question: Are the students questions the conditioning influence of the following teaching? Is it responsible for making the teaching in a certain direction?

Answer: The sounds of the words in the question will influence the person who is going to answer. However, the thought behind the question is not evident to anyone. It is the sound of the question that influences the direction of the teaching, not the thought.

Question: Are there habitual tendencies of the way of questioning inherited from the father and mother?

Answer: If one has difficulties with posing questions, that may happen because of different things. Such as that one hasn't really understood what is being discussed. If is not clear to one it is difficult to ask a question. If there is sort of a lack of comprehension of the subject matter it will be difficult to ask the question. However, there are no inherited genes so to speak that make you unable to ask questions.

Question: The sixth point of causes the potential of the ripening. In every case there is a result, but couldn't it happen that without other conditions, these never would ripen?

Answer: If one takes the obscuring state hatred, in its manifest form it produces karmic imprint, a habitual tendency in ones mind, which later on will ripen into a certain situation, when specific causes and conditions come together. The different stages in that process have

each their specific causes and conditions. A variety of causes and conditions is always needed for something to manifest or be produced.

Question: From among the five types of results, one is the one consistent with its cause, the fourth one. Could you explain that again in detail?

Answer: Another interpretation of the fourth aspect of effect is that one speaks of effects that arise in dependence upon the individual. If we go back to the two aspects of cause that relate to this effect, the one called co-existing causes, which involves mind and mental events and the aspect of cause involving five functional co-relations in relation to mind and mental events. Hence the effects produced by these two aspects of cause always relate to the individual. Therefore one may speak of it as effects related to the individual.

Question: How is it possible that a high realised being is able to take away karma from others. Like Karmapa taking away the illnesses of others?

Answer: There was this aspect, which mentioned that not all is the product of precious actions. There are what one may call circumstantial conditions that may suddenly produce a disease f.ex. If one is talking about a Bodhisattva helping one to overcome his disease, it is very difficult to recognise whether the disease is caused by previous karma or circumstantial conditions that appear suddenly. However, a Bodhisattva may have the capacity to influence the course of events, so that the disease can be pacified f.ex.

Question: Looking at the answer given now, you differentiated between karma that goes back to previous lifetimes, accumulated due to negative actions on the one hand and temporary difficult conditions, which might cause a certain disease. But also in the latter aspect, temporary difficult conditions, isn't that also some kind of karma, because also the temporary conditions must go back to previous karma, otherwise they wouldn't occur?

Answer: The Bodhisattva, such as Karmapa, in order to be able to influence the disease of someone, must know what its cause is. Whether it is caused by previous

actions or whether it is a disease caused by circumstantial conditions. Once there is knowledge of what has caused the disease, the Bodhisattva is able to influence the disease, so that it may be pacified. But it is necessary for the Bodhisattva to be able to perceive what has caused the disease.

Circumstantial conditions are not related to previous actions, they are merely circumstantial. If a disease would be purely caused by previous actions, it is your fate to be sick. It would follow that then we couldn't cure it with medication. Nothing is to a hundred percent karma, there is always the aspect of circumstantial conditions. Otherwise you could not change anything. If one believes that previous actions are responsible for everything in one's life, it follows that Rinpoche speaking here, getting up from the chair, walking away and so on, all these insignificant actions would be predetermined. This is not the case. It is not that each and every aspect of one's life is predetermined by previous actions.

Question: Anger could be a cause or a conditional influence for an action. Where do I have more influence. Is it more connected to being causal or conditional?

Answer: Anger is an effect produced by a combination of causes and conditions. If one recognises what the cause and condition that bring about anger are, one may pacify anger in that one does not give rise to it, having seen the causes and conditions for it.

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**II.** Apparently there has previously a mentions of five characteristics. Today we have come to the second which deals with presenting the different definitions on the twelve phases of the process of dependent occurrence. **The word-meaning of each of phase of the process of dependent occurrence is given.**

1. First the definition of basic unawareness basic unawareness is given. The sutra says: Basic unawareness consists in vast blindness. If one is unaware of something, it means that one fails to perceive something. One, in this case, fails to perceive what is in fact the case, namely the true

nature of things, because of vast blindness, which obscures ones mind.

2. This vast blindness is the condition that brings about actions that accrue karma. That is what is meant by actions occur and karma accrues.

3. The third phase relates to coloured consciousness, which has the function of perceiving distinctly objects of perception.

4. This coloured consciousness it is the basis for the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus.

As we have seen before, the four non-material skandhas are referred to as name and form. They are referred to with their names, because they cannot be directly perceived in that they are immaterial. A name is a basis in dependence upon which individuals are able to distinguish between different phenomena. It is a basis for distinguishing between one phenomenon and another phenomenon. There names such as tree, stone, fire, earth a.s.o. These names are the basis in dependence upon which the individual is able to relate to these different phenomena. In that sense ones speaks of names being a support for that process.

5. The doors for perception and cognition are the faculties which serve as the media for the arising and development of sense perception and cognition.

6. Contact means just that: contact. It is quite obvious, so no elaborate definition is necessary.

7. The experience that results from contact is sensation.

8. Addiction to sensation makes for wanting. It is like being thirsty. Attachment to sensation produces wanting.

9. To insist on retaining hold is taking hold of. As a result of this phase the individual accumulates karma.

10. Ones actions generate ones samsaric experience, thus one speaks of impulsion into the next phase of existence.

11. Rebirth is the recurrence of the skandhas.

12. Ageing is the process of these skandhas playing themselves out.

The disintegration of the skandhas is death.

Agony is defined as being consumed by the agony of being subject to death.

Being tormented by the agony of being subject to death is expressed in words, which is called keening.

Physical suffering is defined as physical pain, that which harms the physical body

Mental pain is called mental suffering. It is that which affects one mind.

States of mental disturbance are called psychological turmoil.

**III. The next part gives a description of how these twelve phases are linked with one another.**

Previously in the commentary of Kamalashila, when speaking of basic unawareness, there has been mention of the mistaken notion of an individual self. The definition which we go through now relates to both the individual and other phenomena, believing that all phenomena entail a self-entity.

1. Basic unawareness is failure to realise what is in fact the case. When speaking of what is in fact the case, one speaks of an unmistaken understanding. In place of such understanding there is an inverted understanding, which means that the individual fails to perceive the essencelessness of both the individual and other phenomena. That failure is called inverted understanding.

As was said basic unawareness is the failure to perceive what is in fact the case. It is an inverted understanding in that the individual fails to perceive what is in fact the case, namely that both the individual and other phenomena lack inherent existence, they are beyond conceptual framework. They are empty of inherent existence. Failing to perceive this produces an inverted understanding, which is not knowing that phenomena, both the individual and other phenomena are essenceless, insubstantial and unreal. However, when saying not knowing does not imply that there is no awareness whatsoever. What is implied is the failure to perceive what is in fact the case.

Inverted understanding is a state of not knowing. When speaking of an inverted understanding one does not speak of a mistaken understanding in the sense that one fails to understand something as a result of analysis. When looking at the notions of a truly existent individual and of truly existent phenomena, there is the failure to perceive that in fact both lack an essence, are empty of inherent existence. That mistaken notion or inverted understanding is not a result of a process of analysis. It relates to a situation, where an individual has applied no examination at all to the nature of reality. It is simply a state of not knowing what is in fact the case.

The individual fails to perceive what is in fact the case. It is possible to perceive the true nature of phenomena, but due to basic unawareness the individual fails to do so. The individual is unaware of what is in fact the case. In that sense it is a mistaken or inverted understanding.

2. The presence of basic unawareness, defined as vast blindness, triggers off action and the karma they accrue. There are different types virtuous, non-virtuous a.s.o. When there is such basic unawareness actions occur and karma accrues.

When there is such basic unawareness present actions occur and karma accrues. Actions and their accrued karma are of three types: Actions which accrue merit, actions which fail to accrue merit actions which accrue karma that inevitably results in rebirth in the two higher realms of samsara.

3. Actions which accrue merit result in a colouring of consciousness, which tends toward merit. A virtuous actions sows a seed so to speak in the individuals consciousness so that it tends towards accomplishing virtue.

A question may arise: If basic unawareness is an inverted understanding, how come an individual with basic unawareness would practise virtue or virtuous actions?

In terms of basic unawareness, an inverted understanding, there are two aspects: The failure to perceive the relationship between cause and effect and the failure to perceive what is in fact the case.

When speaking of meritorious or virtuous actions. There are virtuous action that are contaminated by obscuring states of mind, there are based in obscuring states of mind. Such actions produce positive potential or merit. However, they will not produce perception of the two aspects of essencelessness, the fact that the individual and all phenomena are essenceless, insubstantial and unreal. Even though basic unawareness is present, the individual may engage in virtuous actions, however, these virtuous action are contaminated by, or based in obscuring states of mind.

Actions, which do not accrue merit, result in a colouring of consciousness which fails to tend towards merit.

Actions, which result in rebirth in the two higher realms of samsara, produce a corresponding colouring of consciousness.

4. The physical form of the fetus and the four non-material skandhas, being the skandha of sensation, distinction, mental events and consciousness, arise

from and coexist with the coloured consciousness. This is what is meant by the four non-material skandhas and physical form occurring due to the colouring of consciousness.

5. When the four non-material skandhas and the physical form continue to develop, the six sensory-cognitive faculties develop. These six serve as the media for the arising and expanding of consciousness.

6. In dependence upon the six sensory-cognitive faculties six forms of contact occur.

This is what is meant by contact due to the conditioning influence of the six sensory-cognitive faculties.

7. As contact occurs, a corresponding sensation occurs. That may be a sensation of either pain or pleasure f.ex. This is what is meant by sensations due to the conditioning influence of contact.

8. One undergoes different types of sensations such as longing, attachment, intense attachment. That undergoing of different types of sensations is what is meant by wanting due to the conditioning influence of sensations.

9. Form experiencing sensations, from longing, attachment and intense attachment, comes an intention not to relinquish that what one finds attractive, an intention never to let of that which gives one pleasure. This is what is meant by taking hold of due to the conditioning influence of wanting.

10. This intention results in actions of body, speech and mind, which impel one into the next phase of existence due to the conditioning influence of having taken hold.

11. Such actions, which result in the fresh production of the five skandhas are what is meant by rebirth due to the conditioning influence of impulsion into the next phase of existence.

12. Rebirth, the recurrence of the five skandhas involves the maturation of the skandhas and the playing out and the final disintegration of them. This is what is meant by ageing and death due to the conditioning influences of rebirth.

Thus the process of dependent occurrence involves phases where cause follows cause and conditions follows conditions in a progressive series as was described above.

These dependent occurrences are not lasting in that they come into being and come to an end.

However, dependent occurrences do endure and persist in that the continuum of dependent occurrence is ongoing and in that sense lasting.

Furthermore, dependent occurrences are no ones intentional creations.

On the other hand dependent occurrences are not unconditioned or uncaused.

Dependent occurrences are neither uncaused nor unconditioned.

Dependent occurrences are not events occurring in the subjective experience of some creator in that they are not intentional creations.

The process of dependent occurrence does not come to an end in that for as long as there are proper causes, effects will ensue.

The process of dependent occurrence is not subject to destruction. It doesn't just fade away all the time. As long as the proper causes and conditions are present, dependent occurrences will arise.

The process of dependent occurrence is unstoppable. For as long as the proper conditions for it coming to an end are not present, the process is unstoppable. It comes to an end when an individual f.ex. attains the state of an Arhat. That it its opposing or unfavourable condition, for as long as this condition is not present, this process does not come to an end.

The process of dependent occurrence has no beginning in time. It has been functioning since time out of mind. It is like the continuous flow of water in a stream, ongoing and uninterrupted.

For as long as causes and conditions are present, it is ongoing and uninterrupted.

The questions of the Germans are like the process of dependent occurrence, unceasing.

Question: What are the distinctions between positive karma and merit?

Answer: Positive karma is called merit.

Question: Contaminated actions might be of a positive nature, merit accrues but this does not lead to realisation of the true nature of reality, because it is based on the notion of a self. Is that correct?

Answer: For an action to produce perception of the essencelessness of the individual and other phenomena, it is necessary that any virtuous action, such as f.ex.

generosity is embraced by the understanding of that the person who gives, what is given and to whom that is given lack inherent existence. Perception of that will be a cause for attaining perception of the essencelessness of the individual and all phenomena.

Question: With respect to positive actions: They can either be accumulated just because one wants to help others in a general sense or they might be accumulated, because it is based on bodhichitta. In a Mahayana sense or in a general sense. In both cases, it is contaminated. There is a failure to realise the essencelessness of phenomena. Is there a difference with respect to the result of these actions?

Answer: If your actions is based in bodhicitta, the effect never comes to an end, because it involves the intention to free all beings from samsara. Beings in samsara are in fact innumerable and one resolves to do whatever one can to free them from that suffering. Until samsara has been emptied, one resolves to work for their benefit and one will give anything that one can give with respect to body, speech and mind. An actions based in that intention produces a result which never comes to an end. One vows to work for the welfare of beings until samsara has been emptied. A true Bodhisattva continually practises the six paramitas in order to achieve this goal. It is not the case that he practises the paramitas one day and the following not.

Question: What does neutral type of karma mean? Is it in relation with celestial beings?

Answer: Actions that result inevitably in rebirth in either of the two higher realms, the realm or the realm of no form.

Question: Are actions that fail to be virtuous just negative actions?

Answer: Yes.

Question: What does form and formless realm mean? How do neutral actions lead to such a rebirth?

Answer: The kind of action that results in rebirth in these two realms, when looking at mind and its workings, these actions do not involve a great variety mental events, such as the fifty-one that were explained the other day. Hence that

type of action does not involve a great deal of what one may call mental movement or mental activity. If you look at beings in the formless realm, there is hardly any mental activity that involves conceptualising, something perceived a.s.o.

Question: If there is no ignorance, how can a Bodhisattva be reborn as a human?

Answer: A Bodhisattva free from basic unawareness can take rebirth in a physical form out of his compassion. However, as we know there are ten stages of Bodhisattvas. The first seven are referred to as the impure stages. During these stages the Bodhisattvas are not completely free from basic unawareness.

Actually it depends on the individual situations. One cannot give one framework and say it applies to all individuals. There are different situations. For example, it is said that an individual who has attained the third stage of the path of unification will not again be reborn in any of the three lower existences. If one looks at a Bodhisattva on any of the ten bhūmis, there may be the effect of a specific past action, that makes him reborn in a certain form. It varies from individual to individual. It can't be generalised.

Question: Concerning the formless realms: Is there only the skandha of consciousness left?

Answer: Rinpoche thinks it is actually only the skandhas of consciousness left. If one wants to know for sure, one has to study the meaning of the three realms. If there is time after the sutra, it will be explained.

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#### IV.

Thus the process of dependent occurrence involves twelve phases wherein cause follows cause and conditions follow conditions in a progressive series as was described in above.

Dependent occurrences are not lasting, however, dependent occurrences do endure and persist.

Dependent occurrences are not intentional creations, however, dependent occurrences are conditioned in that they are created by causes and conditions.

Dependent occurrences are not uncaused.

They are not unconditioned.

They are not events occurring in the subjective experience of some creator.

The process of dependent occurrence does not come to an end by itself.

The process of dependent occurrence does not just fade away over time and it is unstoppable.

It has been functioning since time out of mind. It is like the continuous flow of water in a stream, ongoing and uninterrupted.

That concludes the explanation of the fourth defining characteristic of the process of dependent occurrence.

**V.** Now we come to the fifth defining characteristic of this process, which sums up **the twelve phases of this process of dependent occurrence in terms of how many of them act as a specific cause.** The twelve phases can be summed up in four causes.

For of the twelve phases of the process of dependent occurrence function as principal causes, which encompass and determine it. The four are basic unawareness, wanting, actions and their accrued karma and the formation of tendencies which colour consciousness.

As we saw the twelve phases can be summed up as four principal causes. The two phases wanting and taking hold of are both of the nature of attachment, hence they are both counted as just wanting. Actions and the karma they accrue and impulsion into the next phase of existence are both of the nature of action, hence they are included in the category called actions. The remaining phases are included within the category consciousness.

It is important to recognise these different phases of the process of dependent occurrence. If one does, one will be able to remedy them using an antidote, which in turn will result in that one will perfect the qualities of the path. As was said, the twelve phases of this process can be summed up as four principle causes. The ones that were mentioned. In terms of being able to give them up, it is important to recognise what they are.

One should then investigate these for principal causes in order to be able to see what their functions are. The sutra says: The coloured consciousness by its very nature acts like a seed.

Action and their accrued karma, by their very nature act like fertile soil. The coloured consciousness is planted in the field of actions.

Basic unawareness and wanting by their very nature act as states which obscure mind. As we saw coloured consciousness is regarded as a seed. A seed has no potential to grow into something



without capacity. In terms of consciousness the capacity is obscuring states of mind and wanting.

If there are no actions and no obscuring states of mind, consciousness will not be produced. These act as causes for producing coloured consciousness. Actions based in these obscuring states of mind are responsible for the formation of coloured consciousness, which acts as a seed.

Up till now we have discussed these aspects of the process of dependent occurrence in the context of cause. The following explanation relates to the context of conditioning influences. The sutra says that these actions and the karma they accrue act as fertile soil for the coloured consciousness. The fertile soil in a field is the conditions which act as that which nourishes coloured consciousness.

Wanting acts like water for the seed that is coloured consciousness. Just as water nourishes a seed, wanting nourishes coloured consciousness, is the conditioning influence for it.

Basic unawareness implants the seed that is coloured consciousness. That is how ignorance or basic unawareness functions in relation to coloured consciousness.

Basic unawareness is what fails to perceive minds true nature. It is what prevents us from perceiving minds true nature. It produces a state of not knowing, which results in the development of various kinds of obscuring states of mind. These obscuring states of mind produce attachment, which as it develops becomes stringer and stronger to the point where the phase of impulsion into the next phase of existence occurs. In order to counteract this process it is necessary to recognise each of these elements. One should recognise basic unawareness, so that one understands what it is. One should recognise obscuring states of mind so that one knows what they are. One should contemplate the nature of attachment and how it causes impulsion into the next phase of existence. Contemplating this process will weaken that process to the point where one is at the stage of vajralike samadhi, which uproots this samsaric process. One can liken this process to digging a ditch around a tree. If you dig up the earth around the tree you will damage its roots and finally the tree will die. Similarly, if you contemplate the nature of this process, you will weaken it to the point that it will die away.

Without the conditioning influences that we went through the seed coloured consciousness cannot exist.

It is again pointed out in the context of these four principal causes that the process of dependent occurrence does not involve intentional creation. The sutra says: Actions and their accrued karma do not intentionally act as fertile soil for the seed that is consciousness. Wanting does not intentionally act like water for the seed that is consciousness. Basic unawareness does not intentionally implant the seed that is consciousness. The seed that is coloured consciousness is not an intentional product of these causes.

Nevertheless, the seed coloured consciousness is firmly supported by the soil, actions and their accrued karma. Wanting acts like water for the seed, consciousness. Basic unawareness acting like fertiliser nourishes that seed. The entrance of the coloured consciousness into the womb of the mother results in the fresh production of the non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus.

These freshly produced skandhas and the physical form of the fetus do not occur of themselves, nor do they occur through the action of some other entity. Nor do they occur through the combination of the two above. The non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus are not the creations of Ishvara or any other supreme being, nor are they the products of the transformation which occurs through the agency of a truly existent entity such as immense time. Similarly the non-material skandhas and the physical form of fetus do not appear merely because it is their nature to do so, nor in dependence upon any creator, nor in the absence of any cause,

However, when the proper conditions are present, such as the male and female copulating, doing so at the time when the female is most fertile a.s.o., when all required causes and conditions are present, the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus are produced. However, they are not productions of a creator. They do not involve the action of possession. They are not under the control of a creating agent. They are like space, empty by nature.

They are like space in that by nature they are empty of inherent existence. Their emptiness is their natural condition. However, when these causes and conditions come together, something is produced. In that context one should understand that they are of the nature of an illusion, they are illusionlike. Hence, they are spoken of as being like space, empty by nature.

When all required causes and conditions, which by nature are illusionlike, are present, the consciousness enters the womb of the future mother

and the seed, which is consciousness, develops into the four non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus, so that they are produced anew.

Rinpoche will give a short explanation of karma, actions and their effect. In terms of this are different types. There is the type of action, which produces a result in this very life. There is the type of action, which will produce the experiencing of its result in the very next life. Then there are actions which will ripen after a few lifetimes.

In terms of karma there are two aspects. There is the type of action which will propel one into a certain type of existence. It so to speak flings you into a certain kind of existence. There is the aspect of karma, which relates to your environment. In terms of the first aspect, virtue propels you into a superior existence. An existence where you find happiness and good circumstances. Non-virtue propels you into inferior existences, entailing a great deal of suffering.

The second aspect one finds in both inferior and superior existences. There may be a person who is born into a superior existence, however, the second aspects of karma, relating to his present situation, may have been the actions that brought about his present situation may also involve non-virtue, even though he is born in a superior kind of existence. An example of that would be a person, who is born as a human being, however, he may be handicapped or physically deformed or anything else like that, which indicates the presence of previous non-virtuous actions.

There may be a sentient being, whose negative actions propel him into a rebirth in one of the lower existences. However, the second aspect of karma may bring about the result of good circumstances, such as being wealthy. An example of that would be being born as naga. As a naga, you are born into an inferior type of existence. However, nagas are said to be immensely wealthy. Their circumstances, their living standard, their environment is the result of virtuous actions.

At the beginning there was a mention of three types of karma. One, which you experience in this life. One, where the actions that caused it occur in the very next life and one, where you experience the result after a few lifetimes. The Abhidharma mentions a fourth type, which is as follows: It is not certain that one will experience the result of the action. One may or may not. It is uncertain whether or not one will undergo the karmic effect of the action.

In terms of an action, there are different conditions that determine how serious the actions is. If one

takes the action of taking another beings life, that may occur accidentally, which means that one didn't have the intention to do so a.s.o. Hence, what is at hand is an action which does not include all conditions for it to be considered as a serious action. Another type of action is where the conditions, such as having the motivation to do the actions a.s.o. are present. These are considered more serious in that the results they produce will be stronger than the result of the first type.

There is the first type. One does something, however, it is done without an intention to do so, such as f.ex. dreaming that one takes the life of another being, When dreaming this, there is no intention to take the life of someone. Similarly, one may be forced to do so. If one is forced to take the life of someone else, there is no intention on the part of the person to do so. Also in terms of the Vajrasattva practise, by doing this meditation, one may weaken a karmic result.

There may be the situation, where the individual intends to take the life of someone else. He plans how to do it a.s.o., but actually never does it. It never happens. Someone has the intention to do something. There is the intention, however, that intention does not come to fruition, he doesn't do it.

The third aspect of karma, where both are present, the intention to do something and it is done, such as stealing something f.ex.

There are certain actions that one will have to undergo the karmic result of. In that respect there is the aspect of time. The time between the action being done and the result of it being experienced.

For example an action done in this life. One may experience the result in the same life, so it is very short time between the action and experiencing the result. Then there is the action, where you experience the result in the very next life. That is a longer period of time between the action and its result. Then the sort of action, where you experience the result after a few lifetimes. Again there is an even longer period of time, before you experience the result of the action.

That related to actions, where one without doubt will experience the results. However, there is a difference in time. The time between the action and the experiencing of the result.

This will be explained in detail in the teachings next week. It is just to give an outline of what will be explained.

Question: Is there a system whether karma comes to ripen or not?

Answer: It is certain that you will experience the results of an action, that you did and that you intended to do. However, it is not certain that you will experience the result of an action that you intended to do, but never did.

Question: We keep in mind our plan to murder a certain person, but we never came to do it. In that case the effect will not come to ripen. However, on the Mahayana-path it is always recommended to do wishing prayers, due to which one will be able to accomplish the benefit of beings. If there is no result, why do we do them? It seems to be not a real activity taking place, but merely something happens in our mind, either to kill or to help someone.

Answer: The intention to help someone in the context of bodhicitta is different from the person just thinking about helping someone and not doing it, because if the person has developed bodhicitta, there is awareness of the person one wants to help as having been one's father or mother. The mental attitude is different. However, the capacity to accomplish this wish to help others depends upon how you develop the power of your samadhi.

There may be the intention to harm someone, however one doesn't come to do it. The intention to harm is a negative state of mind and will result in this negative tendency.

Bodhicitta is the same. Even though one just wishes to help others will create positive tendencies in one's mind.

Question: In general the whole world is a projection of our mind. Doesn't that contradict the explanations with respect to karma? It anyhow just mind. Whether I commit an action or whether I simply wish to kill someone. Both is my mind only. The effect should be the same, since it is a mental projection only.

Answer: If an individual has direct realisation of everything as merely mind, then the individual will not take the life of someone else. If someone has carefully looked upon what is mind, he would not commit a non-virtuous action.

In terms of all phenomena being merely mind, this one can arrive at a definitive understanding of either through the process of meditation or through studies of that viewpoint. However, in both cases there must be a personal experience of the truth of this. As was said, such a person, who has experienced the truth of this, will not engage in non-virtuous actions. This is not the case with everyone. It is not that all people have perception of that all phenomena are merely mind. If one doesn't have that perception, it means that one will take other objects to be truly existent and that one will take oneself as an individual to be truly existent. That in turn will produce different thoughts of attachment and aversion, pain, pleasure a.s.o., as a result of which the intention to take the life of someone will

occur and will be done. That negative process relates to relative truth. It relates to the process of dependent occurrence. It will produce a certain result without fail, because of the lack of the perception of what is in fact the case, namely a person that has understood that all phenomena are merely mind, either through meditating or through developing an understanding of that viewpoint. Once someone has developed an understanding of that viewpoint, that in itself is not sufficient. The person needs to cultivate that understanding to an extent where it becomes a living experience. In that way one may determine whether phenomena are merely mind or not.

Question: What can I do, when an insect appears in my flat?

Answer: Do whatever you think is best.

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The occurrence of a visual perception requires five principal causes: the physical eye, the physical form, light, space and cognisance.

The physical eye acts as the medium through which visual perception functions. The physical form is that upon which perception focuses. Light makes the process possible. It makes the object at hand evident. Space allows room for the process to occur and cognisance makes for subjective experience.

A visual perception cannot occur in the absence of these influential causes. On the other hand, the presence of all these together, the eye, which serves as a medium for the perception, a physical form, the object of perception, light, space and cognisance, when these come together, they will produce visual perception.

The next part deals with pointing out that this process of dependent occurrence does not involve an intentional creation. The eye does not intentionally act as a medium for visual perception; a physical form does not intentionally act as the focus for a perception. Light does not intentionally make a perception possible. Space does not intentionally allow the room for the process to occur. Cognisance does not intentionally make for subjective experience. Visual perception is not the intentional creation of these conditions. Nevertheless, due to the presence of these secondary conditions a visual perception can occur.

The process is the same for the remaining four faculties. If one takes the perception of sound, the sense faculty is the ear, the object is a sound. If one takes f.ex. the perception of a smell, the faculty is the nose, its object is a smell, a.s.o. The process

described in terms of a visual perception, is the same as in relation to the other sense perceptions.

There are the objects of the five senses in dependence upon these one develops attachment. Manifest attachment produces different kinds of habitual tendencies. These habitual tendencies are what will make one experience the result of actions. In dependence upon the strength of actions one may come to experience the result in this life, in the next life or after many lives.

There are examples given in the sutra that illustrate what experiencing a karmic result in the same life as the action way done entails. Then there was the experiencing of karmic results in this life or in the next life. These experiences are implied in the text.

The next part deals with talking about karmic result experienced in the same life as the actions that caused them were done. Whatever phenomenon one considers, it involves not having transmigrated or transferred on to another life. When based on previous actions and the accrued karma appropriate causes and secondary conditions are present, the karmic result will be experienced.

The karmic result is experienced in that very life. It becomes evident in the same life as the action that caused it was done. The sutra gives one example to illustrate this: When one's face appears as a reflection in a mirror, it is not the case that one's actual face has transferred onto the mirror. Rather, one's face appears because of the presence of appropriate causes and conditions such as that one's face has been put in front of the mirror, the mirror is functional, there is light a.s.o.

Similarly, even though there is no entity that transmigrates after death, when based on previous actions and the accrued karma, the appropriate causes and secondary conditions are present, the resulting effects appear. That is to say the karmic results.

For example, the moon is located in space 42.000 paktse away. It is a Tibetan measure, which means very far away. When the moon appears reflected in a bowl filled with water, it is not the case that the moon has transmigrated or transferred from space into the bowl. The reflection of the moon appears due to the presence of the appropriate causes and conditions.

Similarly, there is no entity that transmigrates after death. It is rather the case that when based on previous actions and the accrued karma, the appropriate causes and secondary conditions are present, the resulting effects appear.

For example, if all requisite causes and secondary conditions for making a fire are not present, no fire can occur. Whereas, when all requisite conditions are present a fire will burn. That analogy according to Kamalashila's commentary relates to the karmic results of actions that may or may not produce a karmic result.

Similarly, all phenomena contained in the process of dependent occurrence are not the productions of any creator.

Similarly, the skandhas, the psycho-physical constituents of an individual, do not involve an ego.

The ego may regard the skandhas, the psycho-physical constituent of an individual, as the possession, of the individual. That notion occurs in relation to the notion of an ego, a truly existent individual. However, one's own skandhas, in relation to another individual, are the skandhas of an individual other than that individual. Hence, the notion of an ego exists only in relation to something else. It is dependent for its existence on something else. Hence, it has no substance, no reality of its own, no independent existence. Even though the ego has no substance, the individual's attachment sees the ego as something having substantial existence.

In non-buddhist traditions that speak of the existence of a self it is not the case that they have failed to realise that ego only exists in relation to something else and therefore has no substance. In order to avoid that defect, when presenting that viewpoint, they speak of what one may call a cosmic self that pervades each and every being.

When analysing these different viewpoints in terms of a creator, it becomes obvious that a supreme self that is a static entity that pervades everything is not possible. If something is static and permanent it is inactive. Not being able to assert that, other viewpoints were created, such a supreme being like Ishvara being the creator of the universe. Ishvara is said to be a supreme being with miraculous powers and immense capacity. That is another non-buddhist viewpoint. There is mention of 360 different schools of thought that present different creators of the universe. All these different viewpoints seem to have come about as a result of a process of analysis where the exclusion of one has produced yet another one a.s.o.

In fact, as the sutra points out, there is no creator. There is merely a process of dependent occurrence, where certain causes and conditioning influences come together and produce such appearances. Within the process of dependent occurrence one can speak of phenomena coming into being and ceasing

to exist. The point is that their coming into being and their ceasing to exist are both the outcome of the synchronous meeting of causes and conditions. They are not the creations of some creator.

If one looks at the notions 'I' and 'mine', they only exist in relation to one another. If one looks at the notion 'I' and 'other' the relationship is the same. They only exist in the light of one another. Hence, one cannot speak of a substantially existent individual, self or creator.

Basic unawareness is the origin of the notions of 'I', 'other' a.s.o. In dependence upon which the notion of other comes about. That in turn produces attachment, wanting a.s.o. In this way beings wander in this cycle of samsara which is nothing but a process of dependent occurrence. Therefore the Madhyamakavatara says in terms of describing this process: Being wander helplessly in samsara in the same way as a wheel in a watermill turns.

There is the tendency to take the self, the individual, to be truly existent. That is merely a delusion where the individual fails to recognise what is in fact the case. The process of dependent occurrence does not involve the notion, which attributes existence to that which in fact does not exist.

If one looks at ultimate reality, the sutra says that it is like space. It is unborn, and empty by nature. What we were looking at namely samsaric delusions are merely mental fabrications where the individual attributes existence or reality to that which does not exist, which has no reality. This is what is referred to as samsara, relative reality. Ultimate reality is free of those mental fabrications. It is like space.

If everything is like space, why is it that we make efforts? If a farmer sows seeds, these seeds will grow into a harvest that he can make food of. If everything is like space, wouldn't these efforts be without meaning? Wouldn't this world be without meaning? Wouldn't liberation be without meaning, if everything is merely like space, empty or void? The sutra says that causes and condition that produce these appearances are illusionlike. They have no reality or substance. Even though they have no reality or substance, they do produce appearances. It is not the case that there is nothing, that there is just a void. In terms of relative reality illusionlike causes and conditions will without fail produce appearances, will produce phenomena. In terms of relative reality there is the experiencing of these and the associated situations, which relates to correct relative truth. However, in terms of mental fabrications, these do not have any foundation whatsoever not even in relative reality and are therefore referred to as incorrect.

Existence is the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness. Reality does not involve a creator a.s.o. It does not depend upon something specific for it coming into being. What is at hand is this process of dependent occurrence, which is made up of these illusionlike causes and conditions that produce phenomena.

There is the inner aspect of the process of dependent occurrence, which relates to the presence of illusionlike causes and conditions. In this case it is the presence of coloured consciousness, which is the seed, actions and their accrued karma, obscuring states of mind and the mother's womb. These being present together produce the non-material skandhas and the physical form of the fetus.

Question: If a partnership is the result of a karmic connection, what does it depend on for how long this result can last?

Answer: If the relationship is a result of previous actions, the first aspect of karma, where one talks about an action propelling you into a certain situation, would be responsible for the duration of the relationship.

If the relationship is very short, it is probably not the result of previous karma. It is probably an incidental occurrence.

Question: In a statement the Buddha once said that the intention is the action, because it is due to ones intention that one will act through body, speech and mind and hence accumulates karma. If the intention itself is the action, how does this go together with the two aspects of karma that were explained last week, where, if there is no intention, there will not be an effect?

Answer: There has to be both the intention and the action. Just to intend something may not necessarily create a karmic result. If one intends to take the life of someone but actually never does it, the karmic result will not be the same as if one had taken the life of someone. A mental action alone does not necessarily create a karmic result. However, verbal action, such as abusing someone verbally, will create such a result.

Question: Is a samadhi a mental action which produces a karmic result?

Answer: Yes. It has the capacity to enhance or develop the different types of samadhi that one can engage in. In dependence upon samadhi, one develops qualities resulting from practising that path. In dependence what type of samadhi you practise. Non-conceptual samadhi that involves experiencing clarity and bliss do not produce rebirth in the two higher realms. Whereas samadhi, which involves interrupting the stream of thoughts occurring in ones mind so that what is at hand is a

state of absorption, produces rebirth in the two upper realms. It is a specific result that we are talking about.

Question: It was said that the type of Samadhis, which aim at interrupting mental activity lead to rebirth in higher realms. What is the other kind of samadhi?

Answer: A proper samadhi is defined as a samadhi that is a non-conceptual state involving the experiencing of clarity and bliss. The kind of samadhi that produces rebirth in the two upper realms is not regarded as perfect Samadhis

Question: Why is time, which is a conditioning factor in the outer aspect of the process of dependent occurrence, no element of the inner conditioning factors of the process of dependent occurrence?

Answer: The inner aspect relates to an inner process of consciousness, whereas the outer aspects relate to outer appearances.

The presence of time is implied. The aspects of the inner process depend on the aspects of the outer process and vice versa. It is a matter of explaining one or the other. One emphasises a certain aspect, but they are not unrelated.

Question: The sutra talks about matter as not being a sentient being, having no individuality a.s.o. Then it talks about consciousness as also not having these attributes. To me consciousness seems to have a connection to being sentient and having intentions. How is that?

Answer: Consciousness is mind. Consciousness as a factor is not a sentient being on its own. A sentient being would be any being in any of the realms of samsara. What is implied is that the factor consciousness is not a creative agent such as asserted by the Jain school of thought. It is to refute that school of thought. It is not meant in general. The point made is that the factor consciousness is just the outcome of certain causes of conditions. In general of course consciousness is alive. The point is to refute the notion of a self-entity as a creative entity. One can't speak of consciousness as alive in terms of a certain duration such as a a.s.o. A consciousness alone couldn't be a sentient being.

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The sutra says that this is how one should understand the inner process of dependent occurrence. This process has five defining characteristics that are as follows: Such occurrences are not static; they form part of an ongoing process; the shift from one phase to another does not involve transmigration or transference; a small cause can produce a relatively large effect and typical causes produce typical effects.

This listing deals with **ultimate reality**.

How is the process of dependent occurrence not static? That, namely the process of dependent occurrence not being static, is related to the fore phases of existence. The first of these is the intermediate state, the phase between death and a new rebirth. The second is the phase of existence of birth, which is the moment an individual is born. The third phase of existence being the lifespan of an individual, That starts the second instance of that lifetime. The first relating to birth and ends as the individual dies. The phase of existence of death itself. The moment of death itself.

The skandhas, which eventually disintegrate at death and the skandhas that come into being are different entities. The skandhas which disintegrate at death are wholly other than the new skandhas that come into being; they are not the same. They disintegrate upon death and others come into being. Thus the inner process of dependent occurrence is not static. In relation to the four phases of existence two are mentioned here, namely the moment of death and the moment of birth.

Now we come to the second defining characteristic. How is the dependent occurrence a dynamic, ongoing process? The skandhas that come into being are not the result of some previous skandhas, which ceased to exist some time ago, nor are they the result of some skandhas which have entirely passed out of existence. Just as the skandhas disintegrating, during the process of death, fresh skandhas are coming into being. Like the simultaneously shifting movements of the two pans of a scale. The ceasing of the skandhas at the time of death results in the coming into being of the skandhas of the next life. In this way the process of dependent occurrence is ongoing and uninterrupted.

What does it mean that the process of dependent occurrence doesn't involve transmigration or transference? There is no transmigration or transference of the skandhas from one lifetime to another; since the skandhas that have been produced anew can take rebirth in different circumstances and categories of sentient beings, according to accrued karma.

What does it mean to say that a small cause can produce a relatively large effect? A relatively insignificant action can result in the experience of a far greater consequence. Thus from a cause that is relatively small a significantly greater result can come to pass.

A typical kind of action brings about a typical kind of result. The process of dependent occurrence, in this way, involves a continuum of similar instances.

A typical action, whether good or bad, will bring about a typical kind of result.

That concludes the listing of the five defining characteristics of this process. The sutra goes on as follows: Noble Shariputra, the process of dependent occurrence that involves twelve phases is thus perfectly described by the Buddha, the Bhagawan. The Buddha described this process without any mistake. He perfectly described it and it is directly and unmistakably realised by that individual who, on the basis of authentic insight, sees the following: An individual who sees what the process of dependent occurrence truly is does so by means of authentic insight and he sees it exactly as the Buddha described it.

In terms of seeing this process by means of authentic insight. That would involve seeing that the process of dependent occurrence in fact always is without any life of its own. This perception of the process of dependent occurrence involves seeing what is in fact the case, there being no mistakes whatsoever with regard to this perception.

It involves seeing that this process is unborn, that it is not a fixed or static entity that abides or endures. It is to see that this process has not been brought about by any creator or creative agent. It is to see that this process is not conditioned, that it is free from obscurations and is beyond the duality of perceived and perceiver. It does not involve a specific occurs in the context of duality. It is beyond the conceptuality of dualistic mind.

In terms of ultimate reality this process is a state of peace in that is beyond birth, sickness ageing and death. That perception of its ultimate nature is completely beyond fear. It is infallible in that that perception cannot be influenced by obscuring states of mind. It does not come to and end. Ultimate reality is always present. There is nothing to be pacified

What comes after deals with **relative reality**. In terms of relative reality it involves seeing that dependent occurrences do not truly exist. The five skandhas do not truly exist. They are essenceless, an mere effigy, an empty shell. In terms of the previous discussion there has been mention of a self or a self entity. These characteristics just listed point to that such a self-entity, such a self does not exist.

This self is like a empty shell. This self or self-entity, asserted by some, is said to be a permanent or static entity. It is pointed out that this is not the case, it is merely like an empty shell. It cannot perform f.ex. the function of perceiving or turning

its attention to an object. It is merely an empty shell.

The skandhas are a state of disease; they are like a metastasising tumour.

They are a persistent state of suffering. They are the source of subtle constant pain, since they themselves consist in nothing but karma and obscuring states. Hence they are sources for negativity.

The next part relates to the truth called suffering. It says that the skandhas do not last, they are impermanent. That means that the moment that something comes into existence it is subject to change. Coming into existence itself implies change, implies impermanence.

The mere fact of existence itself encores suffering. Here, as we have seen, there is a list of three types of suffering.

The skandhas are mere conceptual labels. Them being nothing but mere concepts points to that, in fact, they are empty of inherent existence.

The skandhas are empty of inherent existence. That can be described as follows; A house which is empty does not contain, however, it doesn't mean that the house is not there.

The skandhas do not constitute an 'I', a substantially existent person.

That individual, who sees the process of dependent occurrence in this way, who truly sees how relative and how ultimate reality is, will not speculate about whether the 'I' or the self has existed in precious lives or has not existed in previous lives; nor will he speculate about what type of being he might have been; nor what kind of circumstances he might have been born into.

Such an individual will not speculate about what will happen to the self, to the 'I' in future lifetimes or what will not happen in future lifetimes. Nor will he speculate about what type of being he might become or what circumstances he might be born into.

This person will not speculate about the following: He will not speculate about what this self is in essence. What it might be like and what it is that exists now in the presence; nor what will become of this self or 'I'.

This person will not speculate about the specifics of a self.

That person won't speculate about what it is that exists not in the presence, in that the self, the 'I' cannot be defined in terms of existing substantially

He will not speculate about what will become of the self, the 'I'.

Such a person will not speculate about where sentient beings come from nor what will become of them.

Question: With respect to the self consisting of the five skandhas only negative statements were made, such as it is suffering, pain etc. How does that go along with seeing the own body as pure, as a buddha-palace?

Answer: It is evident that the five skandhas are of the nature of suffering. With respect to them being the opposite, a state of well-being, that might relate to some Yidam-practise, where one no longer sees the five skandhas as their ordinary form. One sees them as of the nature of the five kinds of wisdom. At that point the samsaric skandhas no longer exist. They are not relevant in that situation.

It is important to understand the symbolic meaning of the elements of such a Yidam-practise and not to equal them to the physical form.

Question: With respect to daily practise, it is often recommended to see the world as a pure expression, that all beings are in fact Buddhas. How is one able to train in a pure vision, if one focuses on the five skandhas as being suffering only?

Answer: No matter how much one thinks about that all beings are Buddhas, unless one has experienced the truth of that, it won't change anything. However, when the individual being of a nature of suffering is recognised, the individual will develop the desire to free himself from that suffering, which brings him to recognise what the skandhas and their suffering entail. That again will bring him to the methods by which he will free himself of that suffering. On the other hand, just contemplating that oneself and all other beings are in fact Buddhas, without a direct perception of that, will not change anything.

Question: Back to causes and conditions. With respect to the bardo-state after death, does it also happen that influential conditions influence ones future lifetime or are there merely causes responsible for ones development?

Answer: One just has a mental body in the intermediate state and nothing obstructs it in that it is a mental body. One can move to any place. Having been conceived in the womb of ones mother, it becomes a material body. In the intermediate state between death and the next life, there is just the mindstream. It is possible, if certain conditions come together, that the individual comes

to perceive ultimate reality during that phase of existence. If one has a realised teacher, he can get into contact with an individual in the intermediate state. That would be an example for a condition that influences the future life in the intermediate state.

Question: Is the pure realm Dewachen manifesting due to the power of Amithaba's samadhi?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Are the mundane siddhis also the product of samadhi?

Answer: Some of them yes, however others may be produced by the power of mantras or certain substances.

Question: How does the example of the shifting movement of two pans of a scale illustrate the process of dependent occurrence as being an ongoing process?

Answer: It is an ongoing process, because the skandhas at the time of death do not suddenly stop or come to a halt, then there being an interruption and the new skandhas are produced. Nor is it the case that they do not stop and that would result in the skandhas of the next life coming into existence. What happens is, that as the skandhas, at the time of death, ceases, simultaneously the skandhas of the future life come into being. The process of dependent occurrence does not involve an interruption between its different phases. In that sense it is an ongoing process. It has no interruptions.

Question: What is meant by substance as the cause for mundane siddhis? Answer: There are certain substances that are used as an ointment applied to the eyes. As a result, the person is able to see very far. He can see what takes place at a great distance. That is an example of substances. Also there are some substances that, when applied to the soles of ones feet, make one move very rapidly. These practises existed in Tibet up till the fifth Dalai Lama. Whatever happened later is not clear.

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The sutra says in the world Brahmins and other religious people hold various points of view. The sutra mentions these two groups. Brahmins may also refer to lay people and other religious people may refer to Buddhists. In either case, the point is that people in relation to various schools of thought adhere to various points of view. A point of view is defined as a conclusion arrived at through the process of analysis. Some points of view may be correct and some may be incorrect. Here, what will be discussed are different types of incorrect points of views. In Buddhism there is a mention of five incorrect points of view. The following part in the



text, as was said, will discuss various incorrect points of view. These five points of view that are incorrect all relate to different ways of perceiving the five skandhas, the psycho-physical constituents, that make up an individual. With respect to these incorrect points of view, these five different perceptions relate to taking the skandhas, that in fact are of a transitory nature, to be of a lasting nature. They are all based in that misperception.

In terms of these incorrect points of view, there is the viewpoint which says that a self really exists. That self may be imputed in dependence upon the five skandhas, the five psycho-physical constituents or what is at hand may be what the Jain-tradition calls the inner gnostic being, which they assert as a supreme self. There are many different assertions as what this self is. The point is that all of them say that the self truly exist. Then again other schools of thought, non-Buddhists, assert that there is some kind of supreme being who has created the universe. They speak of it as a sentient being, who is supreme, the creator of the world.

Again there is the Jain-tradition that regards this self as some sort of life-force that truly exists. Again there are others that speak of an individual self, such as one of the eighteen divisions of the Theravada-tradition (tib.: རྣ་མ་ཕུ་བ་). This particular subdivision asserts the existence of an individual self. That individual self, according to this Theravada-tradition, is inexpressible.

These are incorrect viewpoints. They have paths that those, who adhere to them, practise. Those who follow the Vishnu tradition where Vishnu is asserted as a supreme being, the creator of the universe, believe that victory in a war will please Vishnu. That is one of the practises of that path, based in an incorrect viewpoint, namely believe in Vishnu as the creator of the world.

There is mention in these different traditions about auspicious substances that the practitioner uses in order to attain liberation. The sutra wants to point out that these approaches are mistaken. There are based in incorrect viewpoints, due to which the mistake occurs.

In terms of incorrect viewpoints, there are two main groups. One where the viewpoint involves focusing upon a self, whatever type it may be, a supreme self, an individual self or a creator. Whichever the viewpoint this individual who adheres to that viewpoint, focuses on that truly existent self. Then the opposite, a nihilistic outlook, where the individual doesn't believe in anything. It is a process of denying the existence of things. The individual, in terms of his state of mind when adhering to that viewpoint, is very limited in that

the existence of cause and effect a.s.o. is denied, is annihilated.

Persons who have indulged in these viewpoints relating to an eternalistic or a nihilistic will, when truly comprehending the process of dependent occurrence, give up these viewpoints. They will turn away from these mistaken viewpoints. A complete understanding of the phases of the process of dependent occurrence cuts these primitive ideas at their root.

Thus, these primitive ideas will never again occur. It is just like lopping off the top of a tala tree: it never again regrows.

The sutra now goes on to **the concluding part**. Maitreya is speaking to Shariputra: *Noble Shariputra, he who recognises and accepts things in this way*. That deals with recognising and accepting the true nature of all phenomena, which is asserted to be the indivisibility of appearance and emptiness. The individual has not fear and hesitations in terms of perceiving that nature. He fully recognises and accepts that all phenomena are of this nature. This statement relates to the ultimate aspect.

*He who fully comprehends the process of dependent occurrence*. That relates to the relative aspect the process of dependent occurrence.

The individual who in this way comprehends both ultimate and relative reality, as was explained in the context of the process of dependent occurrence, will encounter the Tathagata, who will foretell his future attaining of Buddha, the enlightened state. The Tathagata is an individual, who in the same way as previous enlightened individuals have attained buddha, the enlightened state, has attained that state. He has arrived at that state. A buddha, an enlightened individual, is someone who has conquered the enemies being obscuring states of mind and as a result became a perfect and complete buddha. He has not stopped at the incomplete state of Nirvana of the Shravakas.

It was the historical Buddha who taught this sutra. The part we come to deals with **the qualities of a buddha**, of any enlightened individual. It is those qualities that are explained. Maitreya recollects the qualities of the Buddha.

The perfect or excellent teacher, the Buddha, has come into being in dependence upon certain causes. These causes relate to the Eightfold Path of the Noble Ones. This path is what enables the individual to develop an enlightened perception as well as allowing the individual to proceed throughout the stages that result in the ultimate

attaining of enlightened perception. That involves insight, which is developed throughout the Eightfold Noble Path, traversed by that individual.

Viewpoint in terms of the Eightfold Path relates to insight. The remaining seven aspects of the Eightfold Path are what the individual goes through as he proceeds towards his attaining of buddha, the enlightened state.

These two, insight and path, can also be related to the three trainings, being insight, discipline and samadhi.

Insight or supreme knowledge is like the eyes of an individual. Through insight one is able to arrive at a proper perception of reality. Samadhi and discipline are like the feet of a person that allow the person to go to his desired destination.

There is mention of the Sugata, which is another epithet of the Buddha. It implies that a buddha is an individual who has arrived at his final destination. The state he has attained, the enlightened, will never regress. That is to say that the individual will never return to samsara.

It is a state where all good qualities have been attained. Hence, the attainment is irreversible.

An Arhat can be referred to as a Sugata in that he has attained freedom from samsara. He has gone beyond samsara. However, he has not attained the unobstructed wisdom of a buddha, the wisdom or insight, which perceives the true nature of all phenomena.

There is mention of qualities relating to the activity of an enlightened individual. The sutra says that a buddha serves as the inseparable guide for all beings, who are to be tamed.

The sutra mentions that an enlightened individual fully comprehends relative existence, which means that such an individual has the capacity to discern what individual in this world has the fortune to be taught and who has not that fortune.

An enlightened individual continually perceives what takes place in samsara. That individual perceives who suffers in the three lower existences, who undergoes painful experiences, what type of activity would free a certain individual from his state of suffering a.s.o. A buddha, enlightened individual, perpetually perceives and knows by what means he could be able to free beings from their sufferings.

Such an individual serves as the guide for all beings who are to be tamed.

Such an individual is a guide of beings in that he knows the different temperaments of beings and what methods are appropriate for taming those different individuals.

Ordinary individuals may be trainers of f.ex. elephants. They train the elephant so that it responds to the different indications given by the individual who trains the animal. He is able to tame the animal and then guides the animal with his different indications, the methods he uses, so that it responds to these.

He is unparalleled in guiding beings, because he has knowledge of the appropriate methods.

He is an unparalleled guide in that he has no hesitations in terms of applying the appropriate methods that lead the individuals to the attainment of Nirvana. Hence, he is referred to as unparalleled, as outstanding.

Such an individual has the capacity to prevent being from falling into the three lower existences. Even though it may not be possible to teach and guide them, however, the enlightened individual has the capacity to protect them from falling into lower existences.

Then there are individuals who easily change. It is not certain that they have set out to complete. The Buddha, the enlightened one, has the capacity to establish or lead such individuals to Nirvana.

He is the guide of gods and human beings. He has the capacity to teach them so that an understanding of reality as it will be produced. Gods and human beings are the vessels for his activity.

With respect to buddha there are two aspects. Cause relating to causes for freeing beings from samsara and attainment, which is the attaining of buddha, the enlightened state, where all obscuring states of mind have been given up. With respect to the first, cause, that which causes freedom from samsara for sentient beings, there is mention of the perfect teachings. The Buddhas teachings are perfect or excellent in that they lead to freedom from samsara.

Then there is the second aspect, attainment, where there are two things. There is what has been given up and what has been attained, namely the wisdom of a buddha. In terms of what has been given up, that relates to having given up all obscuring states of mind that are regarded as enemies.

One refers to obscuring states of mind as enemies in that they prevent the practise of virtue.

In terms of these obscuring states there is mention of four types of demonic force. The first demonic force relates to attachment to sense pleasures that prevents the individual from attaining liberation. The second demonic force, being obscuring states that cause the coming into existence of the samsaric skandhas. Then there are the five skandhas themselves that are considered as a negative or a demonic force in that they produce perpetual suffering. Then there is the demonic force of death, which causes the ending of the five skandhas.

The second aspect of attainment is the perfect wisdom of a buddha, which truly perceives the nature of all phenomena. Hence, one speaks of the perfect and complete buddha.

An individual who possesses these qualities is a perfect individual. There is mention of six aspects. There is perfect capacity, perfect form. One speaks of perfect form in relation to him being adorned by the major and minor marks of perfection.

A perfect buddha has the following qualities as well. There is perfect entourage, relating to the individuals surrounding him. A buddha has perfect or excellent renown in the world. He has perfect wisdom involving knowledge of things as they truly are and knowledge of phenomena in the full extend. And finally a Buddha's activity is perfect or excellent in that he accomplishes the welfare of beings.

That perfect buddha, who possesses the qualities, that were just listed, foretells that the individual who truly comprehends the process of dependent occurrence in its relative and ultimate aspect shall become a perfect buddha.

Maitreya says: Thus does the Buddha predict complete, perfect enlightenment for such individuals; the individuals who have comprehended the process of dependent occurrence.

After the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva Maitreya had spoken these words, noble Shariputra, gods, men, asuras and gandharvas and the whole world rejoiced and praised the Bodhisattva-Mahasattva's explanation.

#### **That ends the explanations on this sutra.**

Question: What is the difference between the first two of the four demons?

Answer: The first is regarded to be more subtle.

Question: The Buddha makes predictions about the future enlightenment of people who understand the

process of dependent occurrence. But isn't it that the understanding of the process of dependent occurrence is enlightenment itself, that enlightenment is nothing that follows later on?

Answer: There is mention in the sutra of the Buddha stating that the individual who fully comprehends the process of dependent occurrence will attain buddha, the enlightened state. By saying so the Buddha encouraged striving for that attainment, pointing out that without fail that individual, who attains realisation of the process of dependent occurrence will attain buddha, the enlightened state. The word „prophecy“ in Tibetan is also used when one speaks of the command of f.ex. of a king. One should not understand this as a prediction about the future in a specific case. It is a statement where the Buddha says that anyone who attains such realisation will certainly attain enlightenment.

Question: Is it possible to have some Theravadas, who assert an individual?

Answer: They speak of a truly existent individual on the basis of the five skandhas.

Question: A buddha, being perfect in his knowledge, sees the different capacities of beings. Why making a difference in that all beings have the buddhanature, the cause to attain enlightenment?

Answer: A buddha perceives the different dispositions of beings. In that respect are three main levels. These approaches correspond to the fact that beings are different and develop differently. It is because the Buddha was able to perceive these differences that he taught the different methods and approaches.

Question: At the end of the sutra, the rejoice of Shariputra and all beings was stated. What does this really mean and how can we develop rejoice in the qualities and luck of others?

Answer: A highly realised Bodhisattva such as Maitreya, teaches all kinds of beings, such as human beings, gods, asuras a.s.o. simultaneously. When an ordinary person teaches, it is not the case that all these different kinds of beings gather together. Since Maitreya is such a developed individual, he has the capacity to make those who listen comprehend what he is teaching. Hence, they naturally rejoice. This is not the case when an ordinary individual teaches.

Question: In the Theravada-tradition the modern ones don't accept the seventeen old schools as Theravada and vice versa.

Answer: These eighteen subdivisions are subdivisions of the Hinayana. Actually, Hinayana is a term made up by people teaching the Mahayana. The Hinayana propounders don't like this term.

Question: What are Gandharvas?

Answer: They are neither humans nor gods. They are individuals who live of smells.

There are the stories of the lives of the Buddha prior to his enlightenment. Once he was he was born as the king, who in Tibetan was called Nor Sang, whose queen was Yi Dro Ma, 'the one who steals away the mind'. Her father was said to be a Maitreya.

Question: Are the four demons illusions that have to be overcome or are they outer things. If one is overcome, the most gross, is one then on one of the stages of a Bodhisattva?

Answer: They don't exist externally. The more they are overcome, the higher is ones realisations.

Question:

In order to attain enlightenment it seem that different factors play an important role: On the one hand the potential each and every sentient being has, i.e. the buddhanature, on the other hand there are factors such as developing compassion, training on the path, focusing upon enlightenment. Which among these various factors are considered to be causes and which are considered to be a contributing condition?

Answer:

On the one hand you can refer to the buddhanature as being the cause since the buddhanature pervades the minds of all beings. You can speak about this in the context of the third wheel of the dharma which is said to express the ultimate meaning of the dharma. However, you will find various presentations. As you know there are presentations given by the Madhyamikas. From among them, the Prasangika-Madhyamikas presentation will vary from the so-called Shentong-Madhyamikas presentation. Again there is the so-called Svatantrika-Madhyamika presentation. Each will present the subject matter in a different way, because those masters, who introduced these various presentations, had their personal viewpoint about that subject matter. It is their understand, which they formulated into a philosophical system. In the context of the third turning of the wheel of the Dharma you come across what is referred to as the buddhanature. Where the buddhanature is considered as the basis and in that context can be understood as the main cause. Here the presentation is that upon this basis there are obscuring states of mind, obscurations, which need to be removed. The basis upon which the training and the removal of obscuring states of mind occurs is the buddhanature itself. In order to do away with these obscuration one first needs to understand what they are. One needs to identify them so to speak and then one needs to apply the respective methods in order to

remove them. The methods will be the practises of the six paramitas. The will be the development through the different Bodhisattva-bhumis and the different paths of spiritual development. In that context one can refer to the buddhanature as being the cause and the practise which is adopted by applying the six paramitas one can either call the path of practise or one could refer to them as the various conditions.

Question:

What is precisely the difference between the Cittamatra school of thought and the Shentong-Madhyamaka?

Answer:

The Madhyamaka-philosophy originated in India. During the time the Madhyamaka-philosophy blossomed in India, there existed two major schools. On the one hand the so-called Prasangika-Madhyamaka approach, on the other hand what is called the Svatantrika-Madhyamaka approach. The master who mainly presented these two subschool within the Madhyamaka were Nagarjuna as the representative of the Prasangika-Madhyamaka and Shantarakshita as the representative of the Svatantrika-Madhyamakas. At that time the term Shentong-Madhyamaka did not exist. There was no school in India which would present Madhyamaka from that angle.

Still back to India. There is another way to subdivide the philosophy at that time. Namely one, which was called the tradition of vast conduct, which was mainly introduced by the master Asanga. On the other hand the tradition of the profound, deep view, which was the Madhyamaka presentation as presented by Nagarjuna. These were the two major traditions.

It was only in later times in Tibet that the term Shentong-Madhyamaka came into existence. A master called Jonangpa Taranata who was one of the main proclaimers of the Shentong-Madhyamaka viewpoint, which at that period became quite widespread. This, however, does not mean that the Shentong-Madhyamaka did not exist in Tibet earlier.

As Shentong as such did not exist in India, later on when it was presented in Tibet, there were many debates and discussions as to whether or not the Shentong-Madhyamaka approach can be accepted.

Since Jonang Taranata the Shentong-Madhyamaka was quite widespread in Tibet. From among the Kagyepas it was in particular the eighth Situ Chukji Jungnay, who in fact was the lama of the thirteenth Karmapa, who proclaimed Shentong a lot. Similarly Jamgon Kongtrul Lodrup Thaye was one of the famous proclaimers of the Shentong-Madhyamaka tradition.

In the Nyingma-tradition there were also many masters who were following the Shentong approach, not however, in the Sakya- and the Gelugpa-tradition

So far as to the development of Shentong-Madhyamaka in Tibet and now we come to the presentation of the viewpoint.

One of the main criticism is the following: The viewpoint as presented by the Mind-Only, the Cittamatra school of thought, and the Shentong school of thought would be one and the same. This is one of the major criticisms. This e.g. is claimed by the Gelugpas. They therefore do not accept Shentong as genuine Madhyamaka in that it would not be something different from the Cittamatra viewpoint. They would say that the Cittamatra and the Shentong viewpoint would be identical. In the Sakya tradition there were different scholars. One was Sendok Penchen, who was a contemporary of the seventh Karmapa. He, in fact, proclaimed and accepted the Shentong viewpoint. So there are different viewpoints in the Sakya tradition.

When looking at the Shentong-Madhyamaka viewpoint, they give the following explanation: Their main theory is that phenomena are empty from something else. According to them the buddhanature, that is to say ultimate reality, is empty form something else. It is not empty by itself, but from something else. The basic notion therefore is that ultimate reality is the buddhanature, which is obscured by defilement but empty of these. The criticism is, that the Shentongpas fail to understand ultimate reality as being empty by its very nature. For this reason Shentong is sometimes considered as the same as Cittamatra. Their theories sound quite similar. According to the Cittamatra system there is no outer world at all. All phenomenon are merely an expression of mind itself, projections of mind. Therefore they are not different from mind. And mind itself, consciousness itself, has the quality of being dynamic and knowing. The Cittamatrins ascribe certain qualities to mind, namely the quality of being clear and knowing.

Similarly the Shentong-Madhyamakas ascribe to the buddhanature qualities such as being dynamic and knowing, being great bliss and permanent. Therefore the Shentong-Madhyamakas are sometimes criticised for failing to arrive at a genuine understanding of emptiness, the ultimate nature.

Another criticism is the following: In India the Shentong-Madhyamaka system did not exist as such. Those who criticise the Shentongpas say, since it did not exist in India, it cannot possibly be an authentic teaching by the Buddha himself, because otherwise it would have definitely needed to exist already in India.

What does Shentong really refer to? What is the source of Shentong? Basically Shentong-Madhyamaka is nothing different from Prasangika-Madhyamaka. They are so to speak both Prasangika-Madhyamaka. However, pure Prasangikas so to speak, emphasise emptiness as the main approach in explaining the ultimate nature of phenomena. Their philosophy and their path based on it emphasises the approach saying phenomena are non-existent, are empty by nature. Whereas the Shentong path puts the emphasis on another aspect. They emphasise the fact that emptiness of phenomena does involve clarity as well. It is the clarity which they emphasise in their presentation in that they refer to what manifests due to realisation of emptiness. Namely the various buddha-wisdoms, the buddha-kayas and the buddha-activity, which spontaneously and uninterruptedly benefits sentient beings. The emphasis therefore is different. In the Shentong path the focus is on the aspect of clarity based in emptiness. Whereas the pure Prasangika-Madhyamikas focus upon the absence of existence of phenomena, on emptiness itself.

One should understand that the Shentong-Madhyamaka approach is not a new invention by some scholars, as a new approach of philosophy. One should rather see that what is called Shentong-Madhyamaka does refer back to the sutras of the Buddhas. That it merely emphasises different sutra and emphasises certain explanations that the Buddha gave in his sutras regarding the aspect of clarity and not focusing the aspect of emptiness. As you know, the Buddha taught three wheels of the dharma. From among the three wheels of teaching the Buddha gave, the Prasangika-Madhyamikas base their explanations on the second one. Because in these kinds of sutras the Buddha emphasised ultimate reality by explaining the emptiness of all phenomena. Whereas in the third cycle of his teachings he presented ultimate reality from another angle. The angle in this third set of teachings was the clarity aspect. And it is therefore these sutras which the Shentong-Madhyamikas basically refer to. So Shentong was not newly invented in Tibet, but it is an authentic teaching the Buddha himself gave through his sutras.

In India, since the Shentong-Madhyamaka School as such did not exist, obviously you do not find any discussion between Shentongpas and other Madhyamikas. This did not exist in India. What we have from India are discussions between Madhyamikas and the Cittamatrins. The Madhyamikas that means both major traditions that is to say the Prasangika-Madhyamikas and Svatantrika-Madhyamikas. So they criticise the Mind-Only school of thought in that they maintain the Cittamatra-viewpoint to not embrace ultimate reality. They say according to them the Cittamatra

viewpoint fails to present ultimate reality, because they insist on consciousness itself to be really existent, to be real. Whereas the Madhyamikas claim themselves to be the ones who were able to present genuine ultimate reality, because they reject any kind of solid or real existence.

With respect to the Cittamatra viewpoint one has to distinguish two schools. One of these traditions maintains that mind and mental projections are both real, are both inherently existent. Mind is looked at from two angles. One angle is mind as the perceiver of phenomena. The other angle is the perceived phenomena, which are perceived by mind. So this Cittamatra-tradition maintains that both or these two aspects, perceiver and perceived, are real. Whereas in the other school of the Cittamatra a distinction is made between mind as the perceiver and the perceived object, which are mind as well. The difference to the previous one is that, the second Cittamatra school maintains only the perceiver to be real, not the perceived appearances. Looking at these two viewpoints within the Cittamatra school, the eighth Karmapa Mikyü Dorje mentioned that the second one is in fact Shentong-Madhyamaka. The second one are those Cittamatrins who speak about the perceiver as being real and the perceived object as being unreal.

The eighth Karmapa Mikyü Dorje, when he claims this subschool of the Cittamatrins, that speaks about the perceiver to be real and the perceived objects to be unreal, to be in fact Shentong-Madhyamaka, implies that the Shentong-Madhyamaka viewpoint, as it was presented in Tibet by masters such as Jonang Taranata or Sakya Chokden, failed to present Shentong-Madhyamaka genuinely. That they, in fact, with respect to their presentations of Shentong, merely presented this viewpoint of that particular subschool of the Cittamatrins, but nothing else. This statement of the eighth Karmapa implies a criticism regarding the Shentong presentation given by e.g. Jonang Taranata.

So that was the general presentation of what, more or less, is called the Cittamatra viewpoint and what is referred to as the Shentong-Madhyamaka. In order to have a thorough understanding, one would need to study everything in detail, which obviously is not possible at the moment. However, to once again point to the major difference between what is called Shentong-Madhyamaka and Cittamatra. As we have seen the Cittamatra school is subdivided into these two major views. One subschool which speaks about mind and perceived objects to be real and the other one, which refers to mind as the perceiver to be real but to everything what is perceived by mind as being delusion and hence unreal. This is supposed to be the most profound subschool within the Cittamatra viewpoint.

However, even though is the most profound one within the Cittamatrins, it is not logical. As mentioned before, their basic thesis is that mind itself must be real, must be inherently existent. At the same time this subschool maintains that manifestations of mind, everything what is perceived by mind is unreal. How can you ever speak about the projections of mind as being unreal, when mind itself, which perceives them is real. Whatever subschool you look at you will be able to criticise it because they involve logical errors.

When looking at the Shentong-Madhyamaka viewpoint, they speak about ultimate reality, which is the ultimate nature of mind and refer to it as that which lacks an inherent existence, which is therefore not real. It involves the aspect of clarity in that the buddha-wisdoms are the essential nature of mind. The Shentongpas explain that ordinary sentient beings fail to realise the true nature of their mind in that incidental defilements hinder beings to recognise themselves so to speak, to be aware of the true nature of their mind. This makes up the deluded state of ordinary sentient beings. Through practice one is able to remove the incidental defilements, such that the defilements will disappear. They are of the nature of the mind, but superficial, incidental only. What happens therefore is that mind itself as it is realised, comes to manifest. The enlightened state is therefore not considered as a result brought about newly through practice, but as that which spontaneously manifests as it always was, when the obscurations are removed.

According to the Cittamatrins' view the perceiver, mind itself, is real. The consequence is, that the nature of mind would therefore always be deluded. Why? Because according to their view it is real.

In short, according to the Shentong-Madhyamikas, the nature of mind, mind itself is free from any delusion, but in the state of ordinary sentient beings, the incidental defilements cause delusion so to speak, so they are deluded due to incidental defilements. Whereas looking at the Cittamatra viewpoint it would be the other way around, in that the nature would be deluded in that it is real and the manifestations of mind would be free from delusion.

The question is fact refers to a vast subject. It is impossible to go into more details today.