

Continuing the review started on the 25.6.12 of the seven sections for teaching and learning Tenets:

5. Assertions about Subjects

(From the end of last weeks teaching: Except for Mind Only who posit foundation and deluded consciousnesses as well as the five sensory and one mental consciousness, all other schools, Vaibashika, Sautantrika, Savatantrika and Prasangika, are the same in agreeing that there are only the six consciousnesses; visual sense consciousness, ear sense consciousness, nose sense consciousness, taste sense consciousness, tactile sense consciousness and mental sense consciousness).

Consciousnesses for all schools

We have dealt with the foundation and the deluded consciousnesses which are only Mind Only school beliefs. Now we will deal with the six consciousnesses which all schools of Buddhism believe in.

Six Consciousnesses

They are as above; eye, ear, nose, taste, touch and mental consciousness.

Generally the following words are synonyms: consciousness, mind, primary mind
Namshe (Tib) means consciousness

Yi (Tib) means mind

Tso sem (Tib) means primary mind

Sem (Tib) means mind

All refer to the same thing.

Eg; eye consciousness can be mig gi nam she, mig gi yi or mig gi tso sem.

Eye consciousness arises dependent on its primary condition of the eye sense base which has three conditions. Its primary condition is the eye sense faculty. Similarly all remaining five consciousnesses arise from the prior conditions of their respective sense bases and mental base.

Of the six consciousnesses the first five are sensory (Tib: wang she) and the sixth is mental (Tib: yi she).

When one develops spiritual insight as one moves through the five paths and ten bodhisattva grounds realizations necessarily take root in the mental consciousness (Tib: yi she), and never in the sensory consciousnesses. Transformation for the better doesn't take place in the sense consciousnesses for they are affected by outer stimuli. Meditation cannot change for the better the sense consciousnesses. What it changes is the mental consciousness/mind.

Although some say there is the mental factor of desire as a concomitant of the eye consciousness it is debatable. Leaving that argument aside, we can conclude that all negative thoughts arise from mind and not in and around the sense consciousnesses.

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Assertions about Subjects continued:

Six Consciousnesses for all schools continued:

All consciousnesses have one thing in common; that is, they have:

Five omnipresent mental factors (5OPMF) accompanying them.

These are: feeling/sensation
discriminating awareness
volition/intention
taking to mind/registration
contact

There are five more mental factors which accompany only the minds which correctly understand their object. They are absent in any minds that do not. They are called:

Five object determining mental factors (5ODMF).

They are: aspiration (whose function is to seek the object)
belief (whose function is to appreciate the object)
mindfulness
concentration
wisdom/knowledge

If you have an eye consciousness looking at a vase and then correctly understands/knows the vase that eye consciousness has ten mental factors, the 5OPMF and the 5 ODMF. What about a visual consciousness which perceives horns on a rabbit? Or when you have double vision? Attending such a visual consciousness is only the 5OPMF and not the 5ODMF. Why? Because the eye consciousness is not perceiving the reality correctly.

Another important point is: When the OPMF and a primary mind observe the same object there are ***five concomitants in common:***

- concomitant time (the consciousness and the mental factor must be simultaneous)
- concomitant base (OPMF must depend on the same sense base as primary mind, eg; if the eye sense faculty is depended on as a base by the eye consciousness then the 5OPMF must also depend on the base of the eye sense faculty)
- concomitant substantial entity (Eg; when the mental factor of feeling accompanies a primary mind of eye consciousness the feeling has to be of one type for both, that is, it has to be one of either pleasant, unpleasant or neutral feeling for both)
- concomitance of the observed object (whatever is pursued by a primary mind must also be focused on by 5OPMF)
- concomitance of aspect (whatever aspect appears to the primary mind so does it appear to the OPMF. Eg; when apprehending a vase what appears to the eye consciousness is vase. Eye consciousness is generated in the image of a vase and so must the mental factors be also).

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Assertions about Subject continued:

Six Consciousnesses (of all schools) continued:

Bodhicitta is a primary consciousness. It would have as many as twenty mental factors accompanying it.

Questions:

The eye consciousness apprehending vase has 10 mental factors accompanying it does it?

Answer: Yes

Is concentration one of them?

Answer: Yes

Do all sentient beings have concentration?

By definition concentration is a mind fixed single-pointedly on its object. So how can eye consciousness do this? It can't.

Although the word 'concentration' (the mental factor) is the same as the one we use for calm abiding concentration/single pointed meditation that kind (calm abiding) is to be worked for and achieved after a long struggle. This mental factor of concentration is a brief fixation of the main mind such as eye consciousness on an object.

The first five mental factors?

Answer: five omnipresent mental factors

The next five?

Answer: the five object determining mental factors.

Consciousness is one of the three impermanent objects; form, non-associated compositional factors and consciousnesses.

To be called a consciousness it must take into consideration some objects;

eg; for visual consciousness to arise it needs four conditions: causal, immediate, main and object.

Causal condition (predisposition and main mind)

Immediate condition (previous moment of mental consciousness)

Main condition (visual sense faculty)

Object condition (the object of form/eg; vase itself)

The causal condition for visual consciousness it would be a prior predisposition which gives rise to it as well as its main condition, the visual sense faculty.

The object condition would be the vase for example.

The main/primary condition would be the visual sense faculty.

The immediate condition for visual consciousness would be the immediate previous mental consciousness thinking to itself, 'This is a vase' which leads to subsequent moments of mental consciousness.

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Assertions about subject continued:

Six consciousnesses continued:

For the mental consciousness the causal condition is the predispositions. The object condition is all impermanent things. The main condition is the mental sense faculty. The prior moment of mental consciousness is the immediate condition.

What is an example of ear consciousness which understands its object?

Answer: Hearing and recognizing the sound of voices in conversation.

What is an example of ear consciousness not understanding its object?

Answer: When it mistakes the rumbling of an earthquake for a truck passing by.

In such a case the ear consciousness is mistaken and distorted.

What are the four conditions of the mistaken ear sense consciousness?

Answer: Causal: predispositions. Object: sound of rumbling. Main: ear sense faculty.

Immediate: prior moment of mental consciousness, thinking, 'this is rumbling'.

How many mental factors accompany the nose consciousness which correctly understands the smell of a rose?

Answer: Ten

Say you are single pointedly concentrated on an object and a smell wafts by and you sense it, is that a nasal consciousness?////////////////////////////////////

Give two examples of mental consciousness, one correct and one incorrect.

Answer: a correct one would be nirvana is peace. An incorrect one would be all phenomena are inherently existent.

Can something be a sense consciousness and a mental consciousness?

Answer: No

Why not?

Answer: Because of the main condition. All sense consciousnesses must depend on their unique main condition of form. Eg; visual, ear, nose, tongue and body sense faculties are material/form but mental consciousness is not. It necessarily requires as its main condition a moment of mental consciousness. That is its unique main condition.

Main Points

Mental consciousnesses and sense consciousnesses are mutually exclusive.

There are 5 sense consciousnesses and 1 mental consciousness.

A comprehending consciousness understands its object and must have 10 mental factors.

No matter what the main consciousness it must have 5 omnipresent mental factors.

All consciousnesses, mental and sense, arise dependent on 4 conditions.

A question about Buddha's mental factors ceasing?

Answer: Buddha has mental factors but not attending conceptual minds because Buddha's mind is ever-empirically direct.