

**BUDDHIST
EPISTEMOLOGY**

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Prologue

The present paper is a summary of a very intense two-day course on Buddhist epistemology in the Buddhist centre, Karma Wangchuk Ling in northern Jutland, Denmark.

Buddhist epistemology – in particular the Kagyu interpretation is more or less unknown in Denmark. It is thus very fortunate that Khenpo Chodrak Rinpoche came here to give these teachings, which offer a deep knowledge of relative reality and the workings of our everyday-consciousness.

Khenpo Chodrak Rinpoche showed his great knowledge and overview by juggling the various viewpoints within Buddhist epistemology in a very elegant and skillfull manner. Ulrich T. Kragh no less brilliantly conveyed the meaning through his clear and understandable translation.

This paper is written in a very concise and abbreviated manner, as my aim mainly is to offer an overview of the teachings for the participants of the course. These teachings are open for all, but it is strongly recommended that the novice in Buddhist epistemology read more expansive material before reading this.

After most of the specific terms in the text, I have added the term in Tibetan (Wylie transliteration). It is done in order for this paper to be of some benefit to those familiar with Tibetan. Furthermore, as my translation and choice of terms isn't final or authoritative by far, it makes it possible to backtrack to the original terms.

It is my hope that Khenpo Chodrak's course may plant the seed of interest in Buddhist epistemology and that this paper may be an aid for that.

Copenhagen, 18-02-2000
Jørgen R. Jensen

Introduction

The Buddhist theory of knowledge (Tib. tshad ma) is the theory of consciousness and how consciousness perceives. The first syllable of the Tibetan word for knowledge, tshad, means 'measure'. What are measured are the states of mind that are confused and the states that are not. Tshad ma, therefore, is a measure of consciousness and its different states.

Buddhist epistemology divides consciousness into two types: accurate consciousness and inaccurate consciousness. An unconfused consciousness perceives phenomena as they are. Such consciousness is termed accurate knowledge (Tib. tshad ma). A confused consciousness does not perceive phenomena as they are. Such consciousness is termed inaccurate (Tib. tshad min).

1. The Four Schools of Thought

An understanding of the four Buddhist schools of thought (Tib. grub mtha' bzhi) is a necessary basis for understanding the theory of knowledge, because the theory of knowledge is inextricably connected with these philosophies.

1.1 **Definition of mind (Tib. blo):**

The mind is that which is vivid and experiencing (Tib. gsal zhing rig pa).

The definition of mind is the same in all four Buddhist schools. However, that definition is interpreted differently by each of the schools, and each school puts forth its own explanation of the nature of phenomena. These explanations of reality relate directly to our meditation-practice, which is the cultivation of an understanding of how things are – namely, the understanding that is taught by these schools of thought.

In Buddhism, one always explains truth from two perspectives, which are termed the two truths (Tib. bden pa gnyis): absolute truth (Tib. don dam bden pa), which is the way things really are, and relative truth (Tib. kun rdzob bden pa), which is how ordinary beings see things. Hence, the presentation of the Buddhist schools of thought is presented in these two perspectives.

The Madhyamaka view is the most profound of the four schools. It describes reality more precisely than the other schools. Thus one should especially aim at reaching an understanding of that school of thought.

However, on the relative level of experiencing we need to know our present state before understanding the true nature of reality. If one neglects relative truth and jumps straight into the absolute view of Madhyamaka, one lacks a method to go on from there. Madhyamaka postulates that the mind does not truly exist, but how is one to really understand that? This is done through an understanding of relative truth described in the three other schools of thought, especially in the two philosophical schools of the shravaka-path called the Vaibashika and the Sautrantika.

1.2 The Vaibashika School of Thought

Vaibashika (Tib. bye brag smra ba) is a Sanskrit word meaning 'the individualists'. To explain relative truth they present five fields of knowledge (Tib. shes bya gzhi lnga):

1st field: The field of appearances (Tib. snang ba): the kind of objects that we can perceive in the outer world. The outer world is said to be made of indivisible particles or atoms (Tib. rdul phran).

2nd field: The field of consciousness (Tib. rtso sems): consciousness is said to consist of six types or functions of consciousness (Tib. rnam shes drug).

3rd field: The field of accompanying states of mind (Tib. 'khor sems byung): there are said to be 51 or 55 states of mind.

4th field: The field of non-associated events (Tib. ldan min 'du byed): these are phenomena that are neither associated with the physical nor with consciousness.

5th field: The field of uncompounded phenomena (Tib. 'dus ma byas): these are phenomena that do not arise, remain and disappear.

The first field: The field of appearances.

On the relative level, the level of ordinary beings' perception, outer phenomena are said merely to exist relatively. They have no true existence because all outer phenomena are complex, that is to say, any phenomenon can be divided into its different parts and features. For example, a "table" is only the collection of the different components that make up the entity we know as a "table". There is no single, independent table to be found when analysing. Each of the components of any given thing can be further divided and nowhere will one find a truly existing phenomenon.

On the absolute level, the level where phenomena are analysed in terms of their essence, the process of dividing phenomena into ever-smaller parts is done to its greatest extent. It is said that at a certain point the minute particles cannot be divided any further; one reaches the smallest, indivisible particle.

That indivisible particle is a necessity for the formation of gross phenomena. If one could divide physical phenomena forever into ever-smaller particles, the basis for gross phenomena would be gone.

All things are made of indivisible particles. These are transient and thus everything is impermanent, changing on a subtle level from one moment to the next.

The second field: The field of consciousness

The mind is, according to its definition, that which is vivid and experiencing. 'Vivid' means that the mind does not stop at any point. It is a continuous stream of moments of experience that has neither a beginning nor an end. 'Experiencing' means that each moment of the mind stream perceives outer phenomena and inner experiences.

However, the Vaibashikas do not accept that the mind can perceive itself, a phenomenon that is termed apperception (Tib. rang rig). This will be explained in detail later.

On the relative level: The mind perceives outer, gross phenomena with what one normally would consider being one's mind. However, when it is analysed one finds that this mind does

not have any true existence on the relative level, because the mind is not one indivisible phenomenon.

Mind is active because it is vivid and experiencing. It performs the function of experiencing. Being active, the mind has to exist as a stream of moments. If the mind was one unchangeable thing, it could not act, because acting implies change. The only way not to be unchanging is to be a stream of moments. The mind experiences a new object of knowledge in each of its moments. Experiencing different things every moment implies that mind exists moment by moment. Thus the mind is not “one thing” with any true existence on the relative level.

On the absolute level: For the mind to be able to appear as an accumulation of experiences which make up *one* mind, it, just like the physical world, needs a basis, building-blocks. That basis is the shortest possible moment of experience, which according to the Vaibashikas truly exists. On the absolute level, the mind perceives the momentary nature of phenomena, i.e. the mind perceives phenomena as collections of ever changing indivisible particles.

The third field: The field of accompanying states of mind

There are said to be 51 or 55 states of mind that colour our experience of the world. Like the mind stream, they are continuous chains of moments of consciousness. A few examples of these are anger, dullness, laziness.

The fourth field: The field of non-associated events

An example of a non-associated event is to get a book. The non-associated event would in this example be the change from not having a book to having a book. Another example is obtaining liberation: it is neither something entirely physical nor something entirely mental, but rather a new state. Yet another example is the obtaining of the absence of something, such as the obtaining of the absence of disturbing emotions. The non-associated event here is not the absence itself but the act of obtaining. There are also a number of other non-associated events.

The fifth field: The field of uncompounded phenomena

An example of an uncompounded phenomenon is the absence of samsara when one has reached nirvana. Liberation is the removal of the cause of samsara and the attainment of uncompounded nirvana. This nirvana is not something that arises, remains and disappears again. Another example is uncompounded space, which likewise has no arising or end.

The practice of the Vaibashika view

The practice of these five fields of knowledge describe the Vaibashika’s viewpoint about reality, and that view leads to the goal of Theravada Buddhism, which is the state of an arhant (Tib. *dgra bcom pa*), one who is liberated from samsara. A Theravada practitioner works with this view through certain meditation techniques that remove his misunderstandings of reality and let him see its true nature.

When we normally perceive something, we see it as lasting and real. However, by analysing outer phenomena we will see that an object is not just one thing. It is an aggregation of many

subtle particles. Hence, there is no real object but just the name that we identify with the collection. On top of this, the accumulation of particles that constitute an object shift place with one another all the time. Thus an object is not lasting but impermanent, changing from one moment to the next.

In this way, one can also analyse one's mind. Normally, we see the mind as being *one* mind that is real and the same from day to day. By analysing the mind through the Theravada view, we see that the mind is not *one* lasting thing but that it consists of many small moments of experience. Each moment is a particular experience, which is different from the previous and the subsequent moments. When analysing it, one ultimately gets to the shortest, indivisible moment of experience. It is a chain or stream of such indivisible moments that makes up one's mind. Thoroughly understanding this, one realises that there is no true existence of either mind or outer phenomena. This realisation is liberation from samsara (Tib. thar pa) because this understanding removes ignorance, which is the cause for being reborn in samsara.

Being liberated means that the experience of samsara changes into the experience of the wisdom of liberation, the realisation that there is no truly existent self. Eradicating the cause for samsara's appearance removes the experience of samsara. Thus the experience of suffering disappears and there is only a state of peace left: nirvana. From the viewpoint of the shravaka path, one will then abide in nirvana forever.

Mahayana Buddhism, however, says that one will only abide in nirvana for a very long time, defined as ten kalpas (an Indian time measure of very long time). At that time one will be awakened from the rest and will start on the Mahayana path.

The four stages of realisation on the shravaka-path.

- 1) The stream-enterer (Tib. rgyun du zhugs pa)
- 2) The returner (Tib. phyir ldog pa)
- 3) The non-returner (Tib. phyir mi ldog pa)
- 4) The arhant (Tib. dgra bcom pa)

Each of these steps of realisation is divided into two levels: the moment where one attains the stage in question and the moments after one has attained the realisation. Each of the four stages has two levels, which makes eight steps of realisation in total.

The stream-enterer

The word "stream" refers to the stream of mind abiding on the path of seeing (Tib. mthong lam), that is to say, in realisation. The practitioner has at this point realised how things truly are; i.e. a realisation of the four truths of the noble ones (Tib. bden pa bzhi).

The returner

Samsara can be divided into three realms: the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm. The desire realm consists of six kinds of beings. These six kinds of beings are then divided into two groups: three higher kinds of beings - gods, semi-gods, and humans; and the three lower kinds of beings - animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings.

A returner has removed the causes for being continuously reborn in the desire realm, but he still entertains some obscuring states of mind binding him to the desire realm. Therefore, he may still be reborn in the desire realm a certain number of times.

From this state of realisation, there are different ways of continuing one's development, according to how quickly one progresses.

If a returner works very diligently and has good conditions, he might achieve the next stage, the non-returner, within his present life.

A returner without the conditions to practice much will have to be reborn in the desire realm a number of times before attaining the realisation of a non-returner.

The non-returner

At this level all karma connected to the desire realm is removed, but one still has the karma to be born in the two higher realms or in a pure land.

The arhant

There are two levels of arhant:

- 1) An arhant with remainder.
- 2) An arhant without remainder.

An arhant with a remainder has a remnant of samsaric experiences left. Becoming an arhant removes karma that has not yet matured, but not karma that has matured. For example, if a human being attains the state of an arhant in this life, his future rebirths in samsara will be eliminated, but he will still have the karma of his present life left. When he dies, he then will become an arhant without remainder, which means all karmic connections to samsara are severed.

Progressing on the shravaka path from the stage of a stream-enterer to attaining the state of an arhant can be done in innumerable ways. Some go through several stages in one meditation session, some in several lifetimes, and others attain a level of realisation during one of the states between two lives.

The goal of Mahayana Buddhism is non-abiding nirvana (Tib. *mi gnas pa'i mya ngan las 'das pa*). It belongs neither to samsara, because it is liberated from samsara, nor to nirvana, the state of peace. It is nirvana that does not abide in any of the two extremes; it goes beyond both of them. It is the fully realised state of a Buddha.

In Theravada Buddhism the term "non-abiding nirvana" is also used. That term is used to distinguish arhants' levels of realisation. Theravada Buddhism talks about two kinds of veils: the veil of disturbing emotions (Tib. *nyon sgrib*) and the veil that prevents resting in deep meditation (Tib. *snynom sgrib*). All arhants have removed the veil of disturbing emotions, but some arhants have not done away with the veil that prevents them from resting in deep meditation. They *are* liberated from samsara, but they are not able to perform certain miracles that require deep meditative states. These arhants are called "arhants without ornaments" and arhants who can rest in deep meditation and perform miracles are called "arhants with ornaments". Arhants with ornaments are in Theravada Buddhism said to have attained the non-abiding nirvana, because they do not abide in either of the two extremes, which Theravada Buddhists call the two veils.

The reason the differences between arhants with ornaments and without ornaments exist is because they have different capacities from the beginning. There are practitioners with the highest capacity, those with the middling capacity, and those with the lower capacity. A shravaka practitioner with the highest capacity, who may become an arhant with ornaments, will master both shamatha and vipashyana meditation. These arhants will remove both types of

veils. Practitioners with the middling or lower capacity, who may become arhants without ornaments are not able to master shamatha meditation completely, and they will attain a state within the desire realm called one-pointedness (Tib. 'dod khams rtse gcig). Arhants able to attain the ninth way of holding the mind, equanimity, reach the state called "preparation [for attaining the shamatha levels of the form realm]" (Tib. nyer bsdogs). It results in attaining the first level of concentration of the form realm (Tib. gzugs khams bsam gtan dang po).

Even without having completely perfected shamatha meditation, for instance, having attained the state of equanimity, they are able to start practising vipashyana and eventually master it. Thus they become liberated from samsara. These are the arhants that cannot abide in deep meditation (in deep shamatha) and thus cannot perform miracles. ¹

1.3 The Sautrantika School of Thought

When explaining relative reality, the Sautrantikas, the Sutra Followers (Tib. mdo sde pa) agree with the Vaibashikas' first three fields of knowledge. However, the Sautrantikas do not accept the Vaibashikas' fourth and fifth field as real existing phenomena. They only accept them as mental images, as ideas.

The Sautrantikas explain the first three fields in more or less the same way as the Vaibashikas. The first field is the physical world made up of indivisible, truly existing particles. The second and the third field are the mental phenomena. The second field consists of the six types of consciousness, and the third field consists of the 51 or 55 mental events. The basis for these two fields is the shortest, truly existing moment of consciousness. The mind and the mental events are streams of experience made up of such moments.

The Sautrantikas deviate from the Vaibashikas when interpreting the definition of the mind, i.e. that which is vivid and experiencing. In particular, there is a difference with respect to the term 'experiencing'. The Sautrantikas do not talk of the mind as only being conscious of outer phenomena but also of the mind knowing itself. This is called apperception (Tib. rang rig). It is said that along with any knowledge of something, there is simultaneously an awareness of the act of perceiving. This makes the Sautrantika presentation of the consciousness and the theory of knowledge different from that of the Vaibashikas.

The Mahayana schools of thought, namely the Cittamatra and Madhyamaka schools, have their own ways of explaining the mind and how the mind perceives, and thus they also have their own presentation of the theory of knowledge. However, their presentation pertains more to the absolute truth than to the relative truth about how we experience things.

¹ cf. Leah Zahler and Jeffrey Hopkins, 1983, „Meditative States in Tibetan Buddhism: The Concentrations and Formless Absorptions,, London, Wisdom publications, X + 277 pp. Chapter 4 and 5.

1.4 The Cittamatra school of Thought

The Cittamatra (Tib. *sems tsam pa*) or Yogacara (Tib. *rnal 'byor spyod pa*) is known in English as the 'mind-only school'.

The view of this school is explained through three aspects (Tib. *mtshan nyid gsum*): the imputed aspect (Tib. *kun brtags*), the dependent aspect (Tib. *gzhan dbang*) and the true aspect (Tib. *youngs grub*).

The imputed aspect

The imputed aspect is whatever we imagine to exist, but which is not real. What we imagine to be real is the outer world that we experience through our senses. According to the Cittamatra school, the outer world is merely an illusion in one's mind that arises due to karmic impressions. Everything that we imagine to be an outer world belongs to the imputed or deluded aspect.

The dependent aspect

This aspect is the phenomena that exist relatively, that is, the mind's different functions. The consciousness that experiences the illusory outer world arises in dependence on certain conditions, which is why the consciousness is termed the dependent aspect. These conditions are for instance the karmic impressions in the fundamental consciousness and the previous moment of the mind stream, which gives rise to the present moment (explained later). The Cittamatra school speaks about eight functions of consciousness.

1-5: Five kinds of sense consciousness (Tib. *dbang shes lnga*)

The first five are the five kinds of sense consciousness that perceive form, sound, smell, taste and bodily sensations. There is no outer object for a sense consciousness to perceive, since outer reality is nothing but imagination, i.e. the imputed aspect.

6: The mental consciousness (Tib. *yid shes*)

The sixth consciousness could be called the mental or the inner consciousness. Caused by karmic impressions, one experiences the outer, illusory world. These impressions of an outer world are registered by the sense consciousnesses. The mental consciousness identifies and labels these impressions conceptually. This conceptual mind (Tib. *rtog bcas shes pa*) does not arise in dependence on a sense faculty but in dependence on the mental faculty (Tib. *yid dbang*), which is a function of the mind. Because this sixth consciousness relies on the mental faculty it is called the mental consciousness.

7: The obscuring consciousness (Tib. *nyon yid*)

The seventh consciousness, which is termed the obscuring consciousness, has two aspects: the obscuring consciousness itself and the mental faculty. The obscuring consciousness is the mental function that perceives the mind as a self. It identifies the eighth consciousness, the fundamental mind stream with a limited self, thereby bringing about the disturbing emotions (Tib. *nyon mongs*).

The second aspect is the mental faculty, which functions as the condition for the mental consciousness to arise. A sense consciousness arises when directly perceiving something; For example, the eye consciousness arises when seeing a form. In the next moment, mental consciousness labels that form. The mental consciousness, however, needs a condition for

arising, which is the mental faculty. The mental faculty thus makes it possible for confusion to go on and lets the thinking process take place.

8: Fundamental consciousness (Tib. kun gzhi rnam shes)

The eighth consciousness is called the fundamental consciousness, which in Sanskrit is *alayavijnana*. It is described through four characteristics:

- 1) It is that which is vivid and experiencing, i.e. it has the definition of the mind.
- 2) It is not a particular function of consciousness but the fundamental capacity of awareness.
- 3) It is neutral, and thus neither positive nor negative.
- 4) It is impermanent. It is not static, but it consists of a stream of indivisible moments of experience.

According to the Cittamatra school, the fundamental consciousness is an unhindered stream of moments of mind, where each moment is absolutely existing.

The true aspect

The basic idea of the Cittamatra view is that everything is mind or – in other words – experience. Nothing exists apart from experiences. But for experience to appear, the mind must exist. The mind exists absolutely without any separation between subject and object. That is called the true aspect, which is here synonymous with apperception.

The Cittamatra school gives a particular interpretation of the definition of the mind, because the object of mind's awareness is never found outside mind. They say that all physical phenomena merely are manifestations of our own mind. Still we perceive something and the basis for that knowledge is that there is a connection between the perceiver and what is perceived. A connection between the two of them is only possible if they are of the same nature. If they have different natures, (e.g. mental and physical,) then they would never meet. The conclusion is that since the perceiver, the mind, is mental, the object of its knowledge has to be mental too. Experience and perceiver are merely two sides of the same thing.

Practice

When you are in a confused state of mind (i.e. samsaric mind), the seventh consciousness takes the eighth (fundamental) consciousness to be a self. This mistaken notion of a self happens in four different ways. First, one identifies the stream of experiences, the fundamental consciousness, with a self. Secondly, one feels that one is something special; one differentiates oneself from others. Thirdly, one consolidates the notion of having a self by thinking that this is reality; this is *my* consciousness. Finally, there is a feeling of being superior to others.

In Buddhism one cultivates the understanding that there is not such a self, that the fundamental consciousness is not a lasting self or a soul but that it is only a transient stream of experiences. When meditating on this idea, it is very beneficial to try to really understand what apperception actually is. It is good to think about these four ways of mistakenly conceiving of the self. When one begins to search for what makes up the self, one sees that one cannot separate the self from these four conceptions. When one analyses further, one finds that these four conceptions are mistaken since there is only a stream of experiences. At one point, one

realises that the concept of a self is just a misunderstanding. One discovers that all the disturbing emotions arise from this basic delusion or misunderstanding.

1.5 The Madhyamaka school of Thought

In the Madhyamaka school, reality is again explained on two levels: relative truth and absolute truth. In relative truth, all phenomena are dependent occurrences (Tib. rten 'brel), either as relative appearances (Tib. rten nas 'byung ba) or relative designations (Tib. rten nas brtags pa). On the absolute level, everything is empty of a true nature, which is termed 'emptiness' (Tib. stong pa nyid).

Relative truth

All phenomena are dependent occurrences. That means that a phenomenon only exists in relation to certain causes and conditions that make it possible for the phenomenon to appear. This applies to physical as well as mental phenomena. Each moment of consciousness is the cause for the next. This is dependent occurrence through cause and effect.

The Madhyamaka school does not accept the explanation of mind truly being a stream of moments; they say that the first moment and the second moment only exist in relation to each other.

Phenomena can also be dependent occurrences by being relative designations. That means that nothing exists as concrete phenomena, only as our own ideas, our concepts that are relative to one another. For instance, you cannot talk of a backside without having a front-side. Another example is left and right: they do not exist as something concrete, only as concepts existing in relation to each other.

Absolute truth

'Emptiness' means empty of a truly inherent existence. Because everything is conditioned, nothing exists in itself; it has no permanent essence or identity. Phenomena only exist through the conditions that have brought them about.

The Madhyamaka school explains the theory of knowledge in its own way. Just like the three other schools, the Madhyamikas define mind as "that which is vivid and experiencing."

But they also hold that phenomena are free from a true nature, they are nothing but dependent occurrences. Hence, they have no true coming into existence. The mind has therefore also never truly come into existence. It has no beginning, and this is what is meant by mind being 'experiencing'. Mind being 'vivid' means that mind is limitless; it has no ending.

In this way, the definition of mind can be explained in four different ways, according to the four different schools.

There are meditation practices through which one can cultivate the understanding of the Madhyamaka approach. Generally, the Madhyamaka view belongs to the Mahayana teachings. That means that one starts practising by taking the bodhisattva vow. Then, you can practice by either using Mahayana methods or apply Vajrayana methods.

2 The Theory of Knowledge

2.1 For any experience to happen, there are four conditions that must come together:

- 1) The causal condition, the consciousness
- 2) The immediately preceding condition
- 3) The main condition, the faculty
- 4) The object condition

The causal condition (Tib. rgyu rkyen)

There has to be a consciousness, the experiencer of a perceived object. That is the basis for any experience to take place. Consciousness is defined in the two Theravada schools of thought as 'the six kinds of consciousness' and in the Cittamatra school as 'the eight kinds of consciousness'.

The immediately preceding condition (Tib. de ma thag rkyen)

In order for knowledge to take place there must be a preceding condition. In the context of the different schools, it is explained slightly differently. In the small vehicle, one talks about a function of the 6th consciousness, the mental faculty, that allows for a new moment of consciousness to appear after the former moment ceases.

In the Cittamatra school, it is explained that the two functions of the 7th consciousness, the mental faculty and the obscuring consciousness, are the conditions for the experience to arise. When one moment has arisen, experienced and dissolved back into the fundamental consciousness, the mental faculty is the condition for a new moment to arise from the fundamental consciousness. The obscuring consciousness taking the fundamental consciousness for a self is the other condition for a new experience to arise.

The main condition (Tib. bdag rkyen)

To perceive an object, there has to be a condition that enables one to do so. That is a faculty. For example, when talking about a sense consciousness, its main condition is the sense faculty, without which that type of knowledge could not occur. Each type of sense consciousness has its specific sense faculty as its main condition. The main condition for a visual perception, for example, is the visual sense faculty, which is different from the ability to hear, taste etc. The sense faculties are considered to be physical. The term „main“ refers to the fact that a faculty has a specific function and not the function of another faculty. A faculty brings about a particular consciousness, which is different from all other types of experience. For example, the faculty for taste does not give the sensation of hearing or smelling.

The object condition (Tib. dmigs rkyen)

Without an object to perceive, there would not be any knowledge.

These four conditions for consciousness are not referred to as causes, because they only arise relative to each other. Thus, one cannot find any real causes; outer phenomena as well as consciousness itself are dependent occurrences. In other words, certain conditions come together that again in turn create new conditions etc.

2.2 Accurate knowledge

In this presentation of the theory of knowledge, states of mind are classified as accurate and inaccurate. First we will examine accurate states.

Definition of accurate knowledge (Tib. tshad ma):

An infallible awareness of something new (Tib. gsar du mi bslu ba'i rig pa)

What does “infallible” mean? Knowledge that is infallible is unmistakable with respect to the object that is perceived.

Why is the term “new” used? Because accurate knowledge can only know a concrete, present object. Therefore, memories are not considered accurate knowledge, because memories are only recollections of previously perceived objects. As was explained, objects are transient; an object perceived in one moment is not the same object in the following moment.

There are two types of accurate knowledge:

- 1) Clear, accurate knowledge
- 2) Inferential, accurate knowledge

2.2.1 Clear, accurate knowledge

Clear, accurate knowledge will be presented in two parts: first the definition and then the different types.

Definition of clear, accurate knowledge (Tib. mgon sum tshad ma):

An awareness that is non-conceptual and unmistakable (Tib. rtog pa dang bral zhing ma 'khrul ba'i rig pa)

Why clear knowledge is non-conceptual:

When perceiving an object, we lump together the different instances of the momentary object and take them for being one object. Then we label the object and end up referring to the label instead of the object itself. We are, however, not aware of doing that. We take the concept of the object and the concrete object to be the same thing. The next thing we do is to see the object as lasting. We ignore the momentary nature of the object. For instance, today's glass is identical with yesterday's glass.

Clear, accurate knowledge perceives phenomena without these concepts.

Why clear knowledge is unmistakable:

Clear, accurate knowledge perceives the object as it is, without making any mistakes.

The reason for this criterion is that there are also types of knowledge that seem to be clear, but actually are not. This type of knowledge can arise from having a defective sense organ. For instance, if you have cataracts you might perceive strands of hair in front of your eyes. These strands of hair are nothing but imagination. They are not concrete. Hence this knowledge is not clear, because clear knowledge always perceives a concrete object.

There are four kinds of clear, accurate knowledge:

- 1) Clear sense knowledge
- 2) Clear knowledge of the mental consciousness
- 3) Apperception
- 4) Clear knowledge of a realised individual

All schools of thought accept that clear accurate knowledge must be non-conceptual and unmistakable. However, each school explains the four kinds of clear accurate knowledge differently.

The Vaibashika School of Thought.

This school does not accept apperception as we saw in the presentation of the school.

The Sautrantika School of Thought.

The presentation of these four kinds of clear knowledge is set forth by this school; hence they accept all of them.

The Cittamatra school of Thought.

Within the Cittamatra school, there are two different opinions about the four types of clear knowledge. Both sub-schools agree that everything is mind. However, the sub-school of the “False Aspectarians” (Tib. *sems tsam rnam rdzun pa*) do not accept clear sense knowledge and clear knowledge of the mental consciousness. They say that outer appearances are not real and have nothing to do with the mind itself, which is pure and truly existing.

The proponents of the other opinion, the “True Aspectarians” (Tib. *sems tsam rnam bden pa*) accept all four types of clear knowledge. Their argument is that since all beings do perceive an outer world, even though it is illusory, it is acceptable to talk about sense knowledge and hence mental knowledge.

Other scholars, however, explain that all four schools necessarily have to accept all four kinds of clear knowledge.

As to the Vaibashika school, they say that, since they use the same definition of mind, “that which is vivid and experiencing”, ‘experiencing’ implies that mind is aware of itself. You cannot be conscious without being self-conscious. It is implicit in the definition.

As to the Cittamatra school they have to accept all four kinds of clear knowledge as well, these other scholars say. The Cittamatra school says that the outer world is an illusion created by our own minds. The illusions are created through certain impressions and habits that, when strong enough, create the illusion or the experience of the world. When a certain karmic impression becomes activated in our mind an illusion is created that we then are able to experience. This ability to experience is our sense faculties. Having the ability to sense experience you also have clear sense consciousness, and having that you will also have clear knowledge via the mental faculty.

2.2.1.1.

Definition of clear sense perception (Tib. dbang po mngon sum tshad ma):

An unmistakable, non-conceptual consciousness that arises from its main condition, a specific sense faculty.

(Tib. rang gi thun mong ma yin pa'i bdag rkyen dbang po gzugs can pa las byung ba'i rtog bral ma 'khrul ba'i rig pa)

All types of sense consciousness are non-conceptual; they are the naked experience of phenomena not coloured by any concepts. Although always non-conceptual, a sense consciousness can be classified as accurate or inaccurate/mistaken.

The object of clear sense knowledge.

What is experienced by clear sense perception is the form skandha, which is everything material. The definition of something material is that it is a compound of certain physical elements. Hence something physical is concrete; it will give resistance towards other physical things. You cannot place two physical things in the same place. At the subtle level, the indivisible particles have a physical mass and when grouped together these particles result in gross phenomena that also have physical mass.

There are two aspects of the form skandha: the causal forms and the resulting forms.

The causal forms are the elements that make up gross phenomena. There are four types of elements: earth, water, wind and fire. In the Theravada schools there are different opinions about these elements.

The Vaibashika school claims that a physical particle consists of all four elements. They also hold that physical particles are grouped so closely together that there is no space between them, according to the Vaibashikas.

The Sautrantika school says that a single particle only has the ability to be the four elements. When particles come together to make a gross object, the Sautrantikas say there is no distance between each particle, but they do not merge into each other.

The resulting forms are the gross phenomena of the form skandha. In general, one mentions ten types: the five types of sense objects and the five sense faculties. The five types of sense objects are visual objects, smells, sounds, tastes, and tactile objects. The five sense faculties are fine physical structures in one's sense organs that enable one to perceive the outer world.

However, Theravada schools say there are 11 types of resulting forms. These are the ten mentioned above and an additional one, which is the imperceptible form: the vow.

A vow is considered to be something physical because there have to be certain physical conditions present when taking a vow. For example, the teacher and yourself have to be present.

There are three types of vows:

- 1) The positive vow
- 2) The negative vow
- 3) The temporary vow

Any positive vow and any negative vow, such as the vow to kill one being every day, last for the rest of one's life. Temporary vows are vows one takes for a shorter period of time. It could be that for the next month one would not eat meat. When acting in accordance with a vow, the positive karma created is stronger than if you had not taken a vow. Taking a vow and not following it, even if it is a negative vow, accumulates negative karma.

Mahayana schools mention 15 resulting forms. They accept the five types of sense objects and the five sense faculties as well as five additional resulting forms that cannot be perceived through the senses.

The first of these are the minute structures that are made up of indivisible particles, and these structures are the building blocks for gross phenomena.

The second form is the vow, which as mentioned above.

The third additional resulting form is space or distance. When looking at an object, there is a certain distance or space between you and the perceived object. Thus space is of a physical nature.

The fourth additional form is various illusions or hallucinations, which are also considered physical because one can perceive them even though they are illusory. When looking in a mirror, for instance, you actually see something even though the reflection does not exist. Another example is hearing an echo.

The last form are illusions that are created by stable meditation states. For example, when meditating about water, you might appear to others as a pool of water. However, you have not transformed your own body into water. This final form is considered to be physical because others perceive a physical phenomenon, despite the fact that it is only an illusion.

The sense faculty

As mentioned above the sense faculty is a physical phenomenon. In each sense organ, there is a particular sensitive part (literally translated from Tibetan: clear, like water or glass), the sense faculty, that is the link between the object and the sense consciousness.

Each sense faculty has a characteristic physical form. In the inner ear, there is said to be a subtle spiral form that looks like a conch. In the nose, the faculty is described as a tiny copper needle in each nostril. The taste faculty is described as a fine physical substance partly at the edge of the tongue and in the middle of the tongue. The tactile faculty is spread over the entire body as a fine layer in the skin. This layer is compared to down.

According to Theravada Buddhism, these sense faculties are seen as physical, but are not the same as all other physical phenomena. What differentiates the sense faculties from other physical phenomena is their ability to be sensitive (or clear), enabling them to connect with consciousness.

In the Cittamatra school the sense faculties are expressions of mind brought about by karmic impressions. Your karma determines how well your sense faculties function.

There are two kinds of karma - stable impressions and unstable impressions - that affect the function of your faculties.

When ripened, stable impressions produce strong effects that last for the entirety of one's current life. For example, you may suffer from blindness or poor eyesight if in a former life

you had stabbed out someone's eyes. This blindness or poor eyesight cannot be cured and will last during your present life.

Unstable impressions do not produce as strong an effect and the effect is changeable. When ripened, unstable impressions can be counteracted during one's current life. For example, a blind man who could restore his sight with an operation.

2.a Definition of seemingly clear consciousness (Tib. mgon sum ltar snang)

A mistaken consciousness that may or may not be non-conceptual

(Tib. rtog bra ma 'khrul ba gang rung ma yin pa'i blo)

A seemingly clear consciousness is always mistaken about its object and can either be conceptual or non-conceptual. Thus it is any state of mind that is not clear. Dignaga spoke of seven types of seemingly clear consciousness. Dharmakirti grouped these seven types into four categories:

- 1) A thought consciousness involving words, i.e. the mental consciousness.
- 2) A thought consciousness that imputes an object to be something other than it is.
- 3) A thought consciousness involving an object not directly perceived. All inferential knowledge belongs to this group.
- 4) A consciousness arising from a faulty faculty.

The first three types are conceptual, and the fourth is non-conceptual.

The point is that seemingly clear consciousness never refers to the concrete object and thus cannot be classified as clear.

There is, however, a big discussion as to whether such types of consciousness are clear or not. The Gelug School of Tibetan Buddhism claims that they are, whereas masters such as the 7th Karmapa, Chodrak Gyamtso and Sakya Pandita say that they are not. They also say that they are in accordance with Dharmakirti's teachings.

To illustrate seemingly clear consciousness, let's take the example of someone who mistakes a rope lying on the ground to be a snake.

The Sautrantika school regards the first moment of perceiving the rope to be clear, non-conceptual sense perception. Because outer, material objects are considered to be real, this school says that only the later conceptual moments of perception are classified as seemingly clear consciousness. Only when you relate to the object through the concept can you talk about a misconception. In this case, it is a seemingly clear consciousness of the second type; one that mistakes an object to be something other than it is.

The following example illustrates seemingly clear consciousness explained according to the Cittamatra school.

A person sees a rope and mistakenly takes it to be a snake. First the object, the rope, is registered. That is essentially apperception; mind perceiving mind's projection.

However, because of our habit of a perceiver and something perceived the rope is seen as an outer thing. Since this example is given in the context of the Cittamatra school where outer objects are given no existence beyond what we falsely impute upon them, even the non-

conceptual sense-perception of the rope is seen as seemingly clear consciousness of the fourth kind.

In the next moment one thinks, “there is a snake in front of me”. That would be the second type of seemingly clear consciousness.

Seeing the same example in the context of the Sautrantika school of thought, the first moment of non-conceptual sense-perception of the rope would be clear sense-perception as in this school physical objects are regarded as real. Only the second moment would be seen as seemingly clear consciousness.

The non-conceptual seemingly clear consciousness can be divided into two types: one that is based on a mistaken sense consciousness and one that is based on a mistaken mental consciousness.

An example of the first kind could be the earlier mentioned eye-illness: cataracts. That is perception based in a defective sense faculty. In terms of cataracts, the first moment of perceiving the strands of hair in front of one’s eyes would be the fourth kind of seemingly clear consciousness and the second moment of that perception where one has labelled the perceived object “strands of hair” would be the second type of seemingly clear consciousness. Taking various intoxicants or hallucinogenic drugs can create such perception as well.

Dreams are another example of seemingly clear consciousness based on a mistaken mental consciousness.

2.2.1.2

Definition of clear knowledge of the mental consciousness, (Tib. yid mngon sum tshad ma)

A non-conceptual, unmistaken consciousness that arises from its specific main condition, the mental faculty.

(Tib. rang gi bdag rkyen yid kyi dbang po la brtan nas byung ba’i rtog bral ma ‘khrul ba’i rig pa)

The object of clear mental consciousness

The object of clear mental consciousness is the same as the object of sense perception; a concrete physical object. However, being more specific, the object of clear mental consciousness is sense impression or a mental image of the perceived object. When the senses are healthy, that mental image of the object is unmistaken with respect to the object at hand. That is why the object of clear mental consciousness conventionally is referred to as the concrete object.

Hence a blind person does not have either clear sense perception or clear mental consciousness, because both types of perception refer to the same object.

The mental faculty (Tib. yid kyi dbang po)

The term „mental“ consciousness emphasises that this type of consciousness arises from its main condition, the mental faculty, which is not something physical.

According to the two Theravada schools, the mental faculty is a function of the 6th consciousness, the mental consciousness. As with all other types of consciousness, the inner or mental consciousness consists of a stream of moments where each moment experiences something different than the next. When one moment of consciousness ceases, then the next moment needs a condition to arise. That condition is the mental faculty, which thus allows for the continuity of the mind stream.

The Cittamatra school does not classify the mental faculty as a function of the mental consciousness, because the mental consciousness, either with concepts or without concepts, is directed towards outer objects.

The Cittamatrins ascribe the mental faculty to one of the workings of the 7th consciousness, which is inwardly directed. Thus this 7th consciousness functions as the condition for the continuation of samsaric mind.

In the Cittamatra school the 8th consciousness, the fundamental consciousness, can be compared to the ocean, and the other types of consciousness can be compared to waves on the surface of the ocean. In this analogy a wave could be a visual consciousness that crests and falls back into the ocean, making it possible for the next moment of consciousness to happen. This next wave or moment of mental consciousness also crests and falls back into the ocean or ground consciousness. Thus, the function of the mental faculty is to let the waves surface from the ocean; in other words, the different moments of consciousness arise from the fundamental consciousness.

Types of clear mental consciousness

There are five types of clear mental consciousness that arise on the basis of the five sense consciousnesses. For example, a moment of clear mental consciousness arises on the basis of a visual consciousness.

2.b The relationship between mind and matter in the four schools of thought

Generally, all four schools say that the object of clear knowledge is always a concrete functioning object. ‘Concrete’ means that the object is not a product of imagination, but that it exists in itself and performs its specific function (Tib. don byed nus pa). The term used for such an object is a ‘specifically characterised object’ (Tib. rang mtshan). An example of what generally is meant with that an object ‘performs its specific function’ is a fire that is ‘hot and burning’.

In a more basic sense it means that an object performs the function of producing its next moment of being a concrete object. A concrete object exists as a continuity of similar moments. Each moment is a concrete object, which gives rise to the next moment as a concrete object.

All phenomena that are conditioned or compounded are impermanent. Something that is a compound is a concrete object, which performs its specific function. Being impermanent and being conditioned are essentially synonymous and both refer to concrete objects that are able to act. Hence, something that is not conditioned is not impermanent and not able to act.

This is the point where Buddhism refutes religions claiming the existence of an eternal creator-god. If the creator god were eternal it could not create the world, because acting implies change and thus the god would no longer be eternal, but conditioned and impermanent.

Vaibashika

This school says there is direct contact between the sense faculty and the concrete object. On this basis the sense consciousness arises. They explain that the clear or sensitive quality of the sense faculty makes the direct contact between the sense faculty and mind possible; thus consciousness perceives the outer world directly through the senses.

Sautrantika

This school refutes the proposition that consciousness can have a direct relationship with a physical thing.

In Buddhism, a relationship between two or more things is defined as “a phenomenon that does not exclude another phenomenon.” Analysing that one will get two possibilities for a connection. One connection is between phenomena that have the same nature and the other connection is a cause-effect relationship.

There are also only these two possibilities for a connection between the perceiving mind and the perceived object. The causal relationship is excluded because they are of different nature. An effect has to accord with its cause; a cause cannot create an effect of a different nature than itself.

The other possibility for a connection is that mind and matter are of the same nature, which they obviously are not. The Sautrantikas solve that dilemma through explaining that consciousness never directly perceives the outer world. When the sense faculties get in contact with the object, they produce a mental image of the perceived object. The clear or sensitive quality of the sense faculty has the capacity to produce the mental image. This mental image is of the same nature as the consciousness, thus the sense consciousness perceives the object indirectly.

Cittamatra

The Cittamatra school refutes the Sautrantikas' explanation that the physical sense faculty produces a mental image. The Cittamatrins use the Sautrantikas' own logic to expose the flaw in their argument: mind and matter cannot have a direct relationship with each other because they have different natures. The Sautrantikas claim that the physical sense faculty when encountering an object produces a *mental* image.

Again there is the claim that something physical is the cause for something mental which is not logically possible.

The Cittamatrins claim that everything is mind. Their argumentation goes as follows: There cannot be a cause-effect relationship between the perceived object (cause) and the mental image (effect), because the cause and the effect are of different natures. When a cause-effect relationship is not possible the only other possibility is that perceiver and perceived are of the same nature. Thus, the Cittamatrins instead claim everything is mind and an outer physical

world is an illusion. The only thing we perceive are the mental images of a seemingly outer world that are created from the karmic impressions in our ground consciousness.

As was said, a cause-effect relationship is only possible between two things of the same nature. Now that it is established that perceiver and perceived are of the same nature, one may presume that there *is* a causal relationship between the mind and matter. This, however, is not the case since a cause-effect relationship is only possible when the cause comes prior to the effect it produces.

In a process of perception the cause (the object and the sense faculty) arises simultaneously with the effect (the mental image). This excludes the possibility of a causal relationship.

Madhyamaka

There are different viewpoints within the Madhyamaka school. One viewpoint explains relative reality from the point of view of the Sautrantika school, another from the Cittamatra point of view. These schools are respectively called the Sautrantika Svatantrika (Tib. mdo sde spyod pa'i dbu ma) and Yogacara Svatantrika (Tib. rnal 'byor spyod pa'i dbu ma)

The Madhyamaka school of the Prasangikas (Tib. thal 'gyur ba), does not accept any value or substance given to relative reality. They say that when analysing you cannot find any existing objects because relative reality is nothing but the deluded perception of samsaric beings.

2.2.1.3

Definition of apperception (Tib. rang rig mngon sum tshad ma)

A non-conceptual, unmistaken consciousness perceiving itself

(Tib. rang myong rtog bral ma 'khrul ba'i rig pa)

Apperception is the mind experiencing itself. Mind knows automatically its own state because it is self-conscious. It does not need a mirror to find out how a particular experience feels. For example, one's mind automatically knows whether an experience is pleasant or unpleasant.

One could ask if this type of consciousness is logically proven. Buddhism does not prove apperception because it points itself out through our constant experience of it.

Apperception is the inwardly directed aspect of mind perceiving itself non-conceptually and unmistaken in each and every moment of consciousness. It is the nature of each and every experience one can have.

Meditation on apperception

Apperception is essential for us when meditating. In the beginning, it is through apperception that we are able to meditate. When we reach the path of seeing, the first bodhisattva bhumi, we can abide in non-dual awareness. But until then our meditation will always be through apperception.

When meditating on apperception one develops a growing understanding of the nature of apperception; unlimited and free from an existence as to any concepts. We need to cultivate apperception in meditation, because a mere theoretical understanding of apperception does not change our way of experiencing.

In order to realise the true nature of mind, we have to start by understanding conceptual mind. First, one practises the meditation called calm abiding (Tib. zhi gnas) that pacifies our ordinary confused state. After some training in this kind of calm abiding, one can shift to non-analytical calm abiding that is non-conceptual. Being able to rest in non-conceptual calm abiding, one slowly gets to know apperception.

When meditating on calm abiding there is the division between the experiencer and the experienced objects, such as the thoughts that keep coming up while meditating. One should try to stay free from following your thoughts and trains of associations. At this stage, one's meditation is still conceptual; the concepts of perceiver and perceived still exist

Cittamatra

In the context of the Cittamatra school, any perception is apperception since they do not accept an outer world. Apperception experiences its own manifestations. Ultimately, the mind stream consists of indivisible moments of consciousness; these moments are non-dual apperception. There is nothing different from mind, just mind continuously experiencing itself. The Cittamatras explain that in order for the mind stream to manifest, the shortest moment of apperception is given absolute true existence.

Madhyamaka

The absolute existence of the mind is not accepted in the Madhyamaka school. The mind is seen either as a dependent occurrence or a dependent designation.

The mind is a dependent occurrence. That means that a present moment of consciousness only exists in relation to prior and subsequent moments of consciousness.

The mind is a dependent designation. That means that the concepts with which we qualify consciousness or apperception are also insubstantial. The concept of 'a moment' of consciousness only exists in relation to the concept of past and future moments of consciousness.

If a present moment of apperception were truly existing, not relative to anything else, it would be eternal. Not being relative to a former moment, a present moment of apperception could not have a beginning and it would not end because a next moment of apperception would not follow. An absolutely existing moment of apperception, which would last eternally, would hence be unchangeable; a quality which contradicts the mind's nature.

There are two aspects of apperception. One aspect is the lack of inherent existence, or emptiness. The other aspect is its limitless nature: there is no end to the stream of experiences. These two aspects are the very nature of apperception.

2.c The process of perception according to the Sautrantika school

A perception is a process of several moments.

In the first moment of a perception, one of the five kinds of sense consciousness registers an object via its corresponding sense faculty. This registering of a sense object happens indirectly, namely via a mental image (Tib. rnam pa) of the object. When encountering an object, the sense faculty gives rise to the mental image.

The registering of the object is the first of the four kinds of clear, accurate knowledge: clear sense knowledge.

In the second moment of the perception, the second moment of clear sense consciousness arises perceiving the (mental image of the) second moment of the object. Along with that a moment of clear, non-conceptual knowledge of the mental consciousness arises perceiving the image of the first moment of the outer object. That knowledge is an example of the second of the four kinds of clear, accurate knowledge: clear, accurate knowledge of the mental consciousness.

In each of these externally oriented moments of consciousness, there is an internal facet of apperception. Mind is never merely outwardly aware; it is always aware of itself.

In the third moment of the perception, the non-conceptual knowledge of the mental consciousness has ceased. However, the physical senses are continuously present. Hence, sense perception is continuous. The third moment consists of the third moment of sense perception, together with the ever-present internal facet of apperception.

In the fourth moment of the perception, mind labels the object. The conceptualisation of the object cannot take place in the two first moments of the perception, because the mind at that point knows the object non-conceptually. In the third moment, apperception induces conceptual thought to arise in the fourth moment. For the concept to come about the non-conceptual knowledge has to cease. Only then can apperception produce the concept.

As apperception is the only aspect of the mind that never stops it enables the continuity of mind to go on and thus bridges the different moments of a perception. Neither sense-perception nor knowledge of the mental consciousness are continuously present, thus they alone cannot serve as the basis for concepts.

In fact, if non-conceptual knowledge of the mental consciousness were continuous, conceptual thought could not happen. In that case, there would be a sequence of non-conceptual moments of the mental consciousness. There would not be room for conceptual perception as the mental consciousness would be preoccupied with non-conceptual perception.

In this presentation of the process of perception, two aspects of the mental consciousness are seen: first, the non-conceptual knowledge of the mental consciousness that occurs in the second moment of perception; and secondly, the conceptual knowledge of the mental consciousness (Tib. rtog bcas shes pa) that occurs in the fourth moment. The concept is produced by apperception, but both moments of the mental consciousness have the mental faculty as their main-condition.

That the concept comes about through the mental consciousness does not explain what the concept itself is.

The label one attaches to an object does not exist independently; one can only talk about it in relation to other labels. Thus, a concept only exists through being different from other concepts. In other words, a concept excludes all other concepts.

For instance, the only way to think about a cow is to see it in relation to everything that is not a cow. A cow is not a 'horse', a 'sheep' etc. - it excludes all other things that are not a cow.

That process is called mental exclusion (Tib. gzhan sel brtag pa), and that is the way in which we know and ascertain objects.

One consequence of this presentation of perception is that the world one relates to is not the present world, but one that is four moments old; it is a past world. However, this fact is ignored because we think we relate to an object at the same time as we perceive it.

Furthermore, we take the object and our concept of it to be the same. Also adding to this

confusion we take the similarity between two moments of the same continuum of an object to be an identity. We see the glass we related to yesterday as being the same glass today, when actually every object is something new every moment, connected only by a continuity of similar moments. We, however, take that similarity to be an identity.

It is through these mix-ups that we are able to interact with the world, but also why we become emotionally involved with it.

2.2.1.4

Definition of clear, realised knowledge (Tib. rnal 'byor mngon sum tshad ma)

A non-conceptual, unmistakable consciousness arising on the basis of highest meditation.

(Tib. 'gom pa rab kyi mtha' las byung ba'i rtog bral ma 'khrul ba'i rig pa)

Explanation of the definition:

Highest meditation refers to the highest stage of the path of integration, which precedes the attainment of the first bodhisattva bhumi. The path of integration is divided into four stages, with the last stage referred to as 'highest state'. It is on the basis of meditation abiding in this state that realised knowledge comes about.

One's development in Buddhism can be described through the five paths. Through the three stages of the path of accumulation and the four stages of the path of integration, one's meditation on apperception progressively grows deeper until one reaches the highest level of dualistic meditation: the fourth stage of the path of integration. Going on from there one has a clear knowledge of the true nature of phenomena, that is, emptiness.

Persons who have clear realised knowledge of emptiness are called "noble" (Tib. 'phags pa).

There are five kinds of noble beings:

First, there are the stream enterers. The next two types of noble beings are the shravaka- and pratyeka-buddha arhants. These first three types belong to the Theravada path.

Next, there are the bodhisattvas who dwell in the bodhisattva levels (or bhumis) until they reach buddhahood. Finally, the last type is a fully enlightened buddha.

Only a fully enlightened Buddha has developed clear realised knowledge to its full extent. Attaining the state of buddhahood, there is no longer any difference between one's realisation during meditation and post-meditation.

For noble beings who are not yet Buddhas there might still arise ordinary states of mind in the post-meditative phase.

Types of clear realised knowledge

There are two types: Clear realised knowledge with appearance and clear realised knowledge without appearance.

Clear realised knowledge without appearance happens when the noble practitioner rests in meditation, directly and non-conceptually knowing emptiness.

In the post-meditative state, the practitioner has dualistic experiences of the different appearances that arise, that is, clear realised knowledge. However, the appearances are experienced as illusory.

Even though bodhisattvas rest on different levels, every bodhisattva has the same realisation of emptiness during meditation. The difference lies in the post-meditative states. During these states, bodhisattvas have achieved greater or lesser stability of their realisation of emptiness, depending on their bhumi. The more a bodhisattva becomes familiarised with emptiness the fewer dualistic experiences will arise in his mind during post-meditation

2.2.2 Inferential, accurate knowledge

In Dharmakirtis's main-treatise, The *Pramanavartika* (Tib. tshad ma rnam 'grel), there are two chapters about inferential, accurate knowledge (Tib. rjes pag tshad ma). One of the chapters describes inferential, accurate knowledge for one's own sake and the other chapter for the sake of others.

Inferential, accurate knowledge for the sake of oneself.

We practise the dharma in order to understand the true nature of reality. Since we cannot directly understand that, we have to go through a process where we indirectly see the true nature of reality. We do this by mastering the logical arguments that show the true nature of reality. In other words, we use inferential, accurate knowledge to arrive at an understanding of how things truly are.

Inference for the sake of oneself is to conclude something on the basis of a correct reasoning. A conclusion is only valid if it is based on a proper reasoning. For example, we can use two different kinds of reasoning to develop inferential, accurate knowledge: there is reasoning for establishing something, and reasoning for refuting something. For a reasoning to be valid, it has to fulfil certain requirements. In Buddhism one talks about three requirements.

Definition of an accurate reasoning for one's own sake (Tib. rang don rjes dpag tshad ma)

A mind that realises something new which has been established by a sign that fulfils the three requirements.

(Tib. tshul ba sum pa can gyi rtags las bsgrub bya gsar du rtogs pa'i rig pa)

The "sign" (Tib. rtags) is the reason by means of which one establishes something. For example, when seeing smoke, that is a sign for there being a fire.

The three requirements examine the connection between the three elements of a reasoning; the subject matter, the predicate that is ascribed to the subject and the reason, which establishes what one wants to prove about the subject. If all three requirements are fulfilled, the reasoning is accurate.

Subject (Tib. chos can) is what is being discussed.

Predicate (Tib. bsgrub bya'i chos) is what one wants to prove about the subject.

Thesis (Tib. dam bca') is the subject and predicate together, for instance "sound is impermanent".

Reason (Tib. gtan tshigs / rtags) establishes the thesis.

For example:

Subject	Given all sound;	or	Subject	Given all sound;
Predicate	it is impermanent,		Reason	it is produced,
Reason	because it is produced.		Predicate	therefore it is impermanent.

The first requirement is the property of the subject (Tib. phyogs chos); that the reason includes the subject.

The second requirement is the forward pervasion (Tib. rjes khyab); that the reason is included in the predicate.

The third requirement is the counter pervasion (Tib. ldog khyab); that the opposite of the predicate applies to the opposite of the reason. That means that the reason must never refer to the opposite of the predicate.

The reasoning, the connection between subject and predicate, is done in two steps. First the connection between subject and reason is established through the first requirement. Secondly the connection between reason and thesis is established through the two pervasions.

When examining the reasoning "all sound is impermanent, because it is produced" with the three requirements, one will see that the reasoning is accurate.

The first requirement is that one is sure that all sound is produced. One makes clear for oneself that there is no sound that is not produced.

The second requirement is that everything produced is impermanent. There must not be anything produced that is not impermanent. In this reasoning the predicate and the argument are ultimately synonymous.

The third requirement is that the opposite of the predicate, being permanent, is the opposite of the reason, being unproduced. There must not be anything produced that is permanent.

Going through these steps, one has acquired an accurate knowledge of that sound really is impermanent.

The other type of accurate reasoning has another rhetoric and is for the benefit of others. It will not be explained.

2.3 Accurate consciousness leading to three types of experience

Accurate consciousness can lead to three types of experience: an impure experience, a partially pure experience, and a pure experience.

The impure experience is the way we normally perceive the world and this is explained by the Sautrantika school. They say that there is an outer concrete object, and the mind, through a

mental image, perceives the object. The mental image and the consciousness are inseparable, thus it is an accurate experience of the object.

The partially pure experience is explained in the context of the Cittamatra school. They say, the perceived object does not exist as a real outer phenomenon. It is a mental arising from the ground consciousness because of karmic impressions.

This school explains that accurate consciousness is the five sense consciousness and the mental consciousness unmistakably perceiving its object. These types of consciousness are the result of the ground consciousness, the experiencer. Hence, what is perceived, the perceiver itself and the experience itself are all consciousness.

The pure experience of how things really are is explained in the context of the Madhyamaka school. What is experienced is mind's vividness, empty of any kind of dualism between experiencer and experienced. The experiencer is accurate consciousness and the result of this, the experience itself, is apperception.

Experience is explained in these three ways: That there is an outer world that is experienced; that there is only mind that is experienced; and that what is experienced is beyond any concept about mind or no-mind. These three different views are connected with any meditation practise, be it Sutra teachings or Vajrayana teachings. When practising the Vajrayana path, there are two viewpoints that make it a genuine Mahayana practise. One can either practise from the Cittamatra or the Madhyamaka point of view. When examining the history of Buddhism in India many masters attained realisation through Vajrayana-practise with either view.