

THE FIVE AGGREGATES.

By Ven Thubten Pende -----

This following teaching was given at Institute Vajra Yogini in France by Ven Thubten Pende, who is one of the most foremost scholars of Tibetan Buddhism. He is an American monk ordained for almost two decades. He is the head teacher at Nalanda Monastery in France.

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By Ven Thubten Pende This is the first of four lectures taking place this weekend, and the subject of this weekend's talk is the five aggregates.

There is a relationship with us, that's simply because we want to be happy and we don't want to suffer. I heard the words of a song recently which said "I don't mind dying it's living that scares me." All of us know the difficulties of life and we're trying somehow to minimize those. If what the Buddha said is true and this life is followed by another life and another and another and another then the problems are multiplied. Fortunately there was not only bad news from the Buddha, but he also found a way of escaping from this suffering, and that is the main reason why we are here.

So the Buddha found that all of suffering is derived from a mistake in cognition and that the actual antidote to that mistake is the cultivation of a certain wisdom, and that wisdom is known as the wisdom realizing selflessness, and it is this teaching on selflessness that mainly distinguishes the Buddha's philosophy from all other world philosophies.

Selflessness is referring to a

quality which all things possess and this quality is an absence; it is an absence of an illusion we have mistakenly projected on all things.

So all of the teachings of the Buddha are either directly or indirectly trying to lead the student to discover what that absence is. Teachings that are speaking directly about this subject, fall into the category of the perfection of wisdom scriptures, and in those scriptures we find such statements like "the five aggregates are empty of self". It is our task to find out what that means, so we have to first of all begin by finding out what the five aggregates are.

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In general the five aggregates are a way of classifying the body and the mind. The two main constituents that make up any person are the body and the mind. Rather than merely saying the body and mind the Buddha mentioned five classifications, and when he was teaching this he was using handfuls of grain to say there is this aggregate and this aggregate and this aggregate, five all together. The Sanskrit word is skanda, and what it means is a pile, as in a heap or pile of rice, and those five are the aggregate of form, feeling, recognition, compositional factors and consciousness.

The first three of these he mentioned in particular, because of their relationship with desire. In addition to mentioning that the source of all our sufferings is in a misknowledge of reality, at other times the Buddha said that the source of all of our problems is desire. However we should know that he was not referring to all desire. For instance the desire to be happy is not a source of problems. The desire to escape one's problems is also not the source of suffering. So he was referring to a specific type of desire, and that being a desire whose object appears as the source of happiness when in fact it is not. So it is a desire with respect to or, a desire towards an hallucination, and the means of eliminating that desire is by discovering that the object is an hallucination.

So what are the types of objects that this negative desire arises towards? Well, one is bodies, our own and others. It's not uncommon that a body can appear in an exaggerated way, causing it to seem as if it is the source of happiness, and not only the body but also all the objects of our senses. So in order to discover the actuality of the objects of the senses then the Buddha taught, or The Buddha mentioned the aggregate of FORM.

Then desire arises for those things that feel good. In fact the desire that motivates most people arises from pleasant experiences, such as with the thought "This feels good therefore I want to never be parted from it." What a common thought! Where the mistake arises is in this expression "never being parted from it", especially if this object is something impermanent, and that there is no way that the contact can be preserved forever.

Consequently the desire is setting oneself up for disappointment.

Therefore in order to explore such feelings the Buddha mentioned the second aggregate the aggregate of FEELING.

Another object to which people become attached with desire are ideas. The disputes that scholars get into can get very heated, because these scholars become attached to their ideas and discriminations, regarding their own as superior and other's ideas as inferior, causing them to desire for their idea to be recognized as the supreme. This fuels the actions of speech and so forth that make the various disputes that one gets and can come to such extremes as causing closed mindedness, losing the ability to openly examine other's ideas. In order to explore such discriminations or ideation the Buddha mentioned the aggregate of DISCRIMINATIONS.

There are many other functions and emotions of the mind, so he heaped all of those in the classification known as COMPOSITIONAL FACTORS. In some texts the compositional factor aggregate is called VOLITION, and volition is one of the functions of the mind that is contained within that class. This is an example of giving the name of a member of the group to the whole group. VOLITION was chosen rather than any of the others because of it's importance, and this is because desire for instance can only bring about experience once it is put into action, and the way it is put into action is through volition. For instance one can have the desire to possess something, but it is only when

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one generates the actual will to get it that the action follows and such volition or will is what is known as karma. The word karma is used colloquially to refer to the experiences that occur to people. Technically those experiences are known as the results of karma, and technically karma is referring to the action which is the cause of such experiences. Karma then is referring to volition or will, as well as the actions of body and speech motivated by such will, and once you have set the action in motion then you're bound to the result, like the turning of a wheel. So as this is something important to analyze and come to know the Buddha mentioned this aggregate of compositional factors.

The last aggregate is the aggregate of CONSCIOUSNESS and this is referring to the six consciousnesses, visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile and mental, which are the main means we come to know the various objects that compose reality.

So this also is very important to investigate.

So that was a brief presentation of the five aggregates.

In the doctrine of selflessness there's said to be two types.

The selflessness of person and the selflessness of phenomena, and the person is said to be the I that is designated in dependence upon any of the aggregates such as in the expression "I am sitting here." That I is a person which is being designated in dependence upon the form aggregate, because it is being designated in dependence upon the body which is included in the FORM aggregate. Without the body you wouldn't be able to have the thought "I am sitting here." The great Indian master Nagarjuna who elucidated The Buddha's teaching on selflessness said that the misconception of the self of a person arises by depending upon the misconception of the self of phenomena. By phenomena there he meant the five aggregates, and for example because of mistaking the way in which the five aggregates exist, such as the body, mistaking the way in which it exists then we mistake the way the I exists which is dependent upon those aggregates. By mistaking the way the I exists one mistakes the way others exist, and by mistaking the way others exist then such perverse thoughts as clinging and ill will arise. Due to the arising of such emotional addictions there comes volition, the acting out of those emotions, and due to such action one is bound to experience the result, which creates a cycle or vicious circle of death and rebirth, over and over again.

Nagarjuna mentioned that, in his book "The Precious Garland Of Advice To The King." In there he tried to clarify what the mistake of self of person is, and what the mistake of self of phenomena is, in order to generate the wisdom of selflessness of person and phenomena in order to put an end to this vicious circle of existence.

So studying such a book has benefits, but in order to make sense of Nagarjuna's arguments you have to have some appreciation of the world view that he held. For instance when Nagarjuna was describing phenomena he did so in terms of the four elements; earth water, fire and air. Such a presentation has not been employed in Western education for a long time! Now, if you're looking for elements you look in the Periodic Table which has dozens of elements, which requires having a certain love of chemistry to penetrate. So the presentation of things in terms of four elements seems simplistic in comparison with the Periodic Table But on it's own it has it's own elegance and if you understand it then you'll be able to understand the arguments set forth in the Buddhist classics such as the "Precious Garland".

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It is not necessary to read such classics in order to gain the wisdom realizing selflessness. For instance one can do it by relying on the words of a master who has the correct understanding of selflessness and can present it in contemporary terms, but there is a benefit in being able to appreciate the presentations in those classic texts which is that such texts are the scriptural authorities that masters have been relying upon for generations and thus if your understanding, if you can see that your understanding is supported by those classic texts you'll have that much more confidence in your understanding. It's always nice to know what the contemporary masters are relying upon to get their understanding. This helps a lot to avoid cultism, because such knowledge is not the personal property of anybody and if you discover that such knowledge can be generated by the study of a timeless wisdom then you know it is not the sole property of one individual whom you have to please in order to get drops.

So are you following me so far? Okay.

So now we begin the detailed presentation of the five aggregates. The first is the FORM AGGREGATE. It consists of eleven items.

Q: What is the difference between volition and mental consciousness? A : I'll give a quick answer now and later there'll be more details. So mental consciousness is included in the fifth aggregate and volition is included in forth aggregate, and volition is a function you find in all consciousness. Mental consciousness has the function of volition, so you should see mental consciousness as something that is merely knowing it's object whereas volition is a way in which that mental consciousness relates to that object or functions with respect to that object. More information comes later.

I mentioned there were eleven divisions of form and I should say that the source that I'm taking most of this information from is the book " Meditation On Emptiness" by Professor Jeffrey Hopkins.

So if you're being frustrated by not being able to take notes as fast as I am speaking you'll find all the information in that book.

So we have the eye sense organ, lets not use the word organ lets use the word power, or eye sense faculty, or eye power or eye faculty whatever you choose. Choose one of them rather than all of them, it takes too long.

Eye faculty, Ear faculty, Nose faculty, Tongue faculty, Body faculty. That's five so far. Then there's visual form, sound, smell, taste, tactile objects and the eleventh one is form for the mental consciousness.

So then with respect to those first five what's meant by faculty? Well if it's a form it's made up of particles. So we can say atomically constructed. That's what we mean by form here and the faculty here is a form that enables consciousness to have access to it's respective objects. For example the eye faculty enables visual consciousness to function within the field of visual form or visual objects, and the ear faculty allows the auditory consciousness to function within the field of sound. You have to distinguish between the eye faculty and the eye ball in which the eye faculty is found. Similarly with the ear faculty and the fleshy ear and so forth. These faculties are composed of particles and are subtle, subtle in that not just anybody can see them. Whether or not they can be seen by machinery I don't know.

The texts say that clever persons with certain types of super knowledge can see these forms and thus certain shapes have been attributed to them. Such as the eye faculty is

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shaped like the bud of a ? plant. Whatever that is. The ear faculty is shaped like the knot of a birch tree. I'm mentioning this just to say that these faculties have been seen by somebody who thought that they could be distinguished by their shapes. They didn't stop with the mere designation of a name. The nose faculty is shaped like two hollow needles at the root of the nose. Then the tongue faculty is shaped like many half moons the diameter of the tip of a hair, each one is the diameter of the tip of a hair and are found in the middle of the tongue. The body faculty is shaped like skin or hide pervading the body. Such faculties then have the function of enabling their respective consciousnesses to access their respective objects.

What consciousnesses ? The five sense consciousnesses.

Somebody might have remembered that I mentioned there were six consciousnesses in the consciousness aggregate. Therefore someone might wonder does that consciousness have a faculty? Does that mental consciousness have a faculty? It does, because it has to have that which enables it to access it's object. These faculties are necessary conditions for the arising of consciousness, and the faculty is known as the dominate condition, because of giving that consciousness power with respect to it's object, causing that consciousness to operate only in that one field rather than another field. For example due to the eye faculty visual consciousness can only see visual objects it cannot see sounds.

So mental consciousness also has a mental faculty that functions as it's dominate condition, but unlike the five sense consciousnesses the mental faculty is not form. That is unlike those five faculties I've mentioned being form, the mental faculty is not composed of particles.

I hope I'm not going too slow for some of you, but as there is so much information here it would be better to go home with something, rather than only remembering a blur of sound.

So that mental faculty is a previous moment of consciousness such as a visual consciousness that enables the mental consciousness to access visual objects. So therefore that visual consciousness would be considered a mental faculty and dominate condition for the arising of the mental consciousness perceiving visual objects. All kinds of interesting things to discuss arise from such a presentation but there isn't enough time

Okay so we have here in the case of the visual faculty the function that enables visual consciousness to access visual objects. So what are the visual forms that are the objects of visual consciousness? There are two main types: shapes and colors: white, blue, red and yellow; these are said to be the color of the four elements. Air is white, water is blue, fire is red and earth is yellow. There is another presentation of eight secondary colors. It's a bit bizarre though, such as the color of cloud, the color of smoke, the color of mist, the color of illumination, the color of darkness, the color of shadow and the color of sunlight.

These two lists of divisions of color are obviously not exhaustive. So these are the color visual objects. Then there are shapes of which you have different kinds, such as long shapes short shapes, such as a long board or a deep well. Then there's high and low, there's a shape known as square but it can refer to any polygon. That's also an example of the name of a part given to the whole. So although it's called square shaped it can refer to the shape of a dice, it can also refer to the shape of rectangular boxes and so forth. Then there's the round shape which can refer to anything egg-shaped and can also refer to the so called flat circle. There's the level shape, like the shape of the surface of this floor.

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Then there can be the non level shape, such as the shape of a ploughed field that is irregular.

Shapes and colors is what visual conscious sees. The question arises :

Can you see that vase there ?

And of course one would say "Yes" But technically speaking what the visual consciousness is seeing is just the shape and color of the vase, and the vase is not a shape or a color. So because one has come to associate a vase with such a shape then the visual consciousness can immediately give rise to the thought thinking vase. This cognition thinking vase that employs the word vase and thus is being done with a conceptual consciousness is called "seeing a vase", simply because of the close relationship between the seeing of the color and the shape of the vase and that conception thinking vase that arises as a result of it.

So this is an example of giving the name of a cause to the result. The cause being the visual consciousness and the result being a mental consciousness that is a conception. If this sounds very mechanical and concrete it is. It is based upon the Sautantrika view of Buddhist tenet. They have a very concrete view of the world. It's very logical and categorical. They like to keep their categories straight without mixing, and as we all know nothing is that clear. But just as a person interested in particle physics and quantum mechanics must first pass through Newtonian physics to get there, likewise it's very useful for us to see the world from the Sautantrika point of view before we get into bizarre explanations of the higher schools of Buddhist thought such as the Prasangika. Just as quantum mechanics arose because when you explore the view of Newton and his mechanics, you discover on extremely tiny things, and also on vast distances in other words, on the very limits of that view, there are some problems. Likewise when you explore the limits of the Sautantrika view you see the need to jump to a higher view. I use the example of physics as if I knew something about it, but it was one of my worst subjects actually.

Sound is defined as the object of auditory consciousness, and there's different ways of dividing it.

One way is sound that arises from elements conjoined with consciousness and sound arising from elements not conjoined with consciousness.

The sound that arises from elements conjoined with consciousness would be the sounds made by a human being. Amongst sounds made by a human being there's two types, articulate sounds and non articulate sounds. Articulate sounds are sounds that denote a meaning such as words, and of articulate sounds there's two types pleasant and unpleasant. A pleasant articulate sound might be good poetry, an unpleasant articulate sound might be criticism.

The non articulate sounds don't denote any meaning in particular, and there are two types; pleasant and unpleasant.

A pleasant one might be the snapping of fingers, an unpleasant one might be the sound of a hand slapping a face.

Then amongst sounds arising from elements not conjoined with consciousness there are two types; articulate and non articulate.

The definition is the same as before, one denotes a meaning and the other doesn't. Of the articulate there are two types pleasant and unpleasant. What might be a pleasant one that's an articulate sound? There's the legendary dharma drum in the heavens. The

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beating of it produces dharma discourses. An unpleasant articulate sound, now I'm going to merely guess here. Decide yourself whether I'm right or wrong, and that would be an echo that is criticizing you. An echo's coming from a cliff, that's a sound arising from elements not conjoined with consciousness. So I think it possesses the definition. Then the non articulate sounds, pleasant and unpleasant. A pleasant one would be the sound of a well played musical instrument, and the unpleasant one would be the sound of a not well played musical instrument. I used to be in an orchestra once and to hear a person just learning to play the violin was just painful? Of course when they get good it's a different story but in the beginning..... So that's sounds.

Then the next is odors. These are defined as objects perceived by the olfactory consciousness. There's different divisions, such as fragrant odors and unfragrant odors. This refers to something that smells nice and something that doesn't smell nice, and of these there are two divisions.

Those that are equal and those that are unequal. An equal odor whether it is fragrant or unfragrant would be one that is equal with everything else, it doesn't dominate. Whereas the unequal one in the case of a fragrant odor would be a perfume that dominates everything else when you enter a room. In the case of the unfragrant dominate odor, an example would be the smell of garlic.

So we have all these different divisions; products of the Indian mentality, in particular Indian scholars, who sat down and tried to figure out everything that could be known and then put in it's proper category. So if you sat down to analyze odors it's not just a question of odors; it's a question of fragrant odors, unfragrant odors, subtle odors, strong odors etc.

Then we come to tastes, an object of special fondness in this country. There are six types; and by the way taste is defined as the object of gustatory consciousness. Sweet and sour, hot and salty, bitter and astringent. What's that spice from Solu Khumbu? Erma! Astringent would be the flavor of erma. Actually erma is said to have all the flavors. The astringent somehow dries your tongue, shrivels it up.

So these different objects including the tastes are made up of the four elements. For example the sweet taste arises from a preponderance of the earth and the water element, sour from fire and earth, salt flavor from water and fire, hot from fire and wind, bitter from water and wind and astringency from earth and wind.

We then come to tactile objects which are the objects perceived by the tactile consciousness. There are two groups: the elements and the tangible objects that are arisen from the elements. The elements are as mentioned before earth, water, fire and wind. Earth is hard and obstructive; water is wet and cohesive; fire is hot and burning; air is light and moving, and the thing is you never have one of the elements without another one. The smallest particles are said to be made out of eight things. They're made out of the four elements, and they are made out of the visual object, olfactory, the gustatory and tactile. There's no auditory particle because sound is not something which can produce a continuum of itself as the other one's can. So the particles that make up all forms are when you get down to the smallest particles are particles made up of these eight components, but those particles will have a dominance of one element over another. So therefore when you see a fire it doesn't mean that there is no water element there. It is only that the fire element is dominating at that time. For example a fire's ability to support a piece of paper or a leaf. For instance if you throw a piece of paper or a leaf in a fire it doesn't immediately float down, it's held. That ability is

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the function of the earth element part of fire. Also the way that all the tongues of the flames of the fire can all merge together, that's the water element of the fire. The fact that the fire can move is the air element part of the fire, and of course the fire is something that you can see, touch and so forth. Even though fire is defined in terms of the tactile consciousness, it is still something that you can see, so that is something that is included in those other components of fire.

Now how might water contain those other elements? A body of water, how might that contain all the elements ? For instance water can support a ship, that's it's earth element, and if you put a plant in water eventually it will decay and that's it's fire element. Water will flow down hill and that's it's air element.

Wind's earth element can support all kinds of objects, such as leaves, and when the wind blows, your clothes will dry, that's it's fire element. The wind of a tornado moves together, that's it's water element.

When you take two stones, certain stones and hit them together you get a spark, that's the fire element in earth and the fact that all the parts of a board hold together, the cells don't disintegrate but hold together, that is the water element of Earth. Things like trees can move, that's the wind element or air element. I didn't mean walking! they move when they grow.

So like that whenever you have the one element you have the other elements, you may find that one of the elements dominates the other ones. There's other tangible objects too, besides the elements; such as smooth, rough, heavy, light, cold, hunger, thirst and they are said to arise from the four elements.

Smoothness arises from a dominance of fire and water, roughness from earth and water, heavy from earth and water, light from fire and wind, cold from water and wind, hunger from wind or a dominance of wind, and thirst from a dominance of fire. These particles can be seen and their color is depending on which element is dominating, and the shapes depend upon the arrangement of the color particles.

So then what about these forms for a mental consciousness? These are forms that are objects only for a mental consciousness. One is called form arising from aggregation or collection. The small particles that make up gross objects that we can see and hear and so forth can't be seen by the senses, however our mental consciousness can know of such particles. For

instance I don't think anybody has seen an electron, but we know about them don't we? So those would be form for a mental consciousness and in particular this one form arising from aggregation.

Another one is called space form, this one is difficult to appear to my mind, but it is similar to the space that appears to a visual consciousness. For instance there is a space that appears to our visual consciousness such as the gap between ourselves and some object across the room, and that gap is something that is changeable. It can change color for instance, it can get dark, it can get smog colored, in a city for instance, or it can be clear. So this is something that is a changeable phenomena and can be seen with the eyes, and likewise, when one is using only the mental consciousness you can see space. Such as when you shut your eyes and you imagine something far away. Then aren't you cognizant of the space between you and that object far away as in the distance? So that one is not appearing to your visual consciousness that's appearing to your mental consciousness, that is the space form included as the object of mental consciousness and

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one should distinguish such space from what is known as permanent space. A permanent space is a negation of obstruction to extension. For example there is a space that we can see in the middle of this room, and somebody might wonder is there enough space to pass through, and you look there and you look at the size of that person say, and you see that there is no obstruction there that should prevent the person passing. That absence of obstruction is known as a permanent space. It is called permanent not because it will last forever, but rather because it is not a thing that changes from moment to moment. It is not some dynamic energy, it is a mere absence of obstruction, therefore it is called permanent.

There's nothing permanent about the five aggregates! The five aggregates are said to include all impermanent phenomena. But there are other than impermanent phenomena, such as permanent phenomena.

Then another type of form contained in the form for a mental consciousness would be the form arising from a promise. For example when a person takes a vow, it is said a subtle form arises, which certain people with super knowledge can see. I often wonder what my form created from taking vows looks like after twenty years. Maybe like a very holey rag!

So these forms do not just arise when one is making virtuous promises either. In dependence upon a butcher's physical and verbal actions in killing animals and the selling of their flesh also such a form can arise.

Maybe this may have some relationship with what are known as auras.

Then there are imaginary forms such as the elephants of a dream.

It's a form but not really, because it's not actually made out of particles, physical particles, so that's why it's called an imaginary form and it just appears to a mental consciousness.

Then there's the forms of one with meditative power, and this would be a form that some person with a special power can generate which others can see. There's different types here; there's the type that only lasts as long as the meditator is concentrating and then there's the type that can remain even when the meditator is doing something else.

Okay so that deals with the form aggregate.

Let's take a break.

Talk two So I'd like to begin this afternoon with any questions that came from this morning's lecture.

There was a lot of information, so long as it's not a question like could you repeat what you said this morning I would be happy to answer. Was it clear? Q: This morning Pende said that the first three of the aggregates were linked to desire. Why is the fourth one Volition, not linked to desire? A: The fourth one is explained mainly on the basis of volition as I mentioned and I said that volition is the same thing as karma, but in fact you can't say that all volition is karma, only the volition that is under the control of ignorance is known as karma. And thus as negative desire is a product of ignorance then the volition which is controlled by desire is certainly this phenomena known as karma.

There is a way of course, a way of relating the fourth aggregate with desire, but it is not entirely necessary, in that The Buddha when he was explaining the five aggregates, he did so in such a way as to point out how a person who has acquired the five aggregates is

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bound to cyclic existence. A person is bound in cyclic existence by both the mental addictions and karma. Okay..

So for instance we can say that volition is controlled by desire thus when we investigate volition it is important to see how that is the case, and wherever the volition goes that's where the six consciousnesses go, because that's the specific function of volition, that is to take the consciousness to its respective object. Another question? Q: What do you mean by volition? A: Okay, that's coming up. We could even say it's the same thing as will power, or intention.

Q: Why isn't the auditory object, sound, included in the same way that other sensory objects are? A: The answer given before was that sound doesn't produce a continuum of itself, but that was insufficient.

So here sound is understood as something that arises from for instance hitting one object against another, but if those objects don't come in to contact there is no sound produced, so in the case of this one foundation particle, which is composed of eight parts sound isn't included in there because that object is not making a sound. That is, there is no separate particle in addition to those eight, that you could say is sound, but if two of those particles collided then it is possible that a sound could be produced.

Q: So if there is nothing which can produce the sound, it's the same for the other objects like tactile objects or olfactory objects, so if I don't see something, if there is not an object,

a visual object I cannot see it, if there is not a taste object I cannot taste it.

A: Here, it's not that there is nothing that produces the sound, sound is produced. For instance when a particle strikes the ear drum then sound is produced. Now the types of particles that are moving through space that will strike the ear drum we call sound waves. Now in this system it is thought that these foundation particles as they move can bring about sound, but there is no particular particle which is sound, whereas there is a particular particle that is a visual form, and there is a particular particle that is an odor and so forth. Those particles are said to be evolution, to be developments of the four elements. A visual particle and so forth are somehow made up of the four elements, and so you can take some object and touch it, and the reason why you can touch it, is because of its tactile object quality, or you can taste it and so forth, but when you listen, the sound that you might hear is not due to a particle of sound, but rather to the movement of all these other particles.

That's the best I can do.

Q: How can it be that good desires don't give birth in cyclic existence? A: So this mental factor of volition I said is called karma in the case of being under the control of ignorance. In cases where we read that in order to become liberated we have to cease karma, it does not mean that we have to bring to an end all instances of this mental factor of volition. It means we have to bring to an end the dominance or the control of volition by these mental addictions, so volition having the basic function of taking the mind to its object whatever it is, is also operating in the mind of a Buddha, because without volition the mind would not be able to make contact with any object. Thus The Buddha would not know things, and The Buddha would not have a compassion which perceives sentient beings. So volition is a necessary function of consciousness. If you want to know something, if it's not particularly easy for your mind to know an object, then you have to have the wish to do so. That wish can be desire, we can call it aspiration, and that

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motivates that will to do it, to discover that object. Then of course all the actions following that hopefully will bring you to the object that you want to experience, and some objects are worth experiencing and others are not. When this wish, aspiration, or positive desire is brought about by a wisdom consciousness of clear intelligence then it is not going to get us in trouble. In particular if it is brought about by a wisdom consciousness that perceives reality, then it won't cause the type of volitional activity that brings about the uncontrolled death and rebirth known as cyclic existence.

So it is interesting to contemplate existence without any desire at all. Why would you do anything if you had no desire whatsoever? The only types of actions that would happen would be actions like falling down. But of course if you had no desire whatsoever you would never have stood up. Now because of such observations there are those who thought that the path to liberation was the end of all desire, and thus engaged in the practice of total inactivity, which they sought to achieve by stopping their mind from generating any desire. In the process of doing that they discovered it takes some time to stop the mind from generating desire. If they pursued this practice of total inactivity they might starve to death before they reached the mental state of no desire, then there had to be some desire employed to get up and get food and stuff, and that type of activity was not seen as activity that was leading to bondage but was leading to liberation. So now the interesting question then becomes what is it that they are going to do to stop the mind of desire? For instance if there is no desire whatsoever, which is the same as saying no aspiration then what would the liberation that this person is seeking look like? Would it be some kind of a state of utter non-existence? Because if there is no movement taking place at all then it would be just that. Perhaps our idea of this type of liberation is based upon our experience of deep sleep. That state that we have no direct experience of but we infer from our memory of when we lost consciousness and when we regained it again this is not a perfected state, this is not the experience of Buddha. A Buddha is quite active, benefiting sentient beings.

For instance a Buddha has to want to benefit sentient beings, so we have to cultivate that now as practitioners. So this is the problem of trying to distinguish between the negative desire and the positive desire, and it often happens that we refer to negative desires as positive desires. It would be much easier if we could just sort of block out all desire whatsoever, and say it's all negative. But would that be nearly as attractive as the ultimate goal? Such an ultimate goal is the plan of most materialists. They are betting that after death there is nothing.

They can achieve that without even meditating one minute, it's just going to arise naturally when the breath stops. Of course it's interesting that there is nothing that we know that is like that. It seems like everything always remains something, such as in theory of the conservation of energy, no energy is ever lost it just transforms into something else. But that belief of the materialist is just like any dogmatic belief. There's no evidence for it, nobody has ever come back from the state of nothingness to say how it was.

Okay any more questions. No. Then I have a question.

If it's a color is it necessarily an object of the visual consciousness? A: There are for instance the very small particles, they have a color but the visual consciousness can't perceive those, they're objects of mental consciousness. Now the objects of mental consciousness are called phenomena, visual objects, sounds, smells and so forth are also

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phenomena aren't they ? So does that mean that the objects of the mental consciousness are the same as the objects of the other five consciousnesses? The answer to that is that the phenomena which are the objects of the mental consciousness is referring to all the other objects that aren't included as objects of the first five sense consciousness's, such as the color of the very small particle, or even the very small particle itself etc., other consciousness's and so forth Q: Can a mental consciousness perceive a visual form, a gross visual form not just the subtle? A: Yes it can, I mentioned an example of it how a visual consciousness perceiving a blue color can be a cause for a mental consciousness.

What do I mean by a gross object? Does that mean something that's disgusting? No not in this context. Although sometimes that's what I mean by gross, but in this context a gross object means an object that's composed of many particles, such as a table. It's made up of many particles, and the basic particle that forms a table is that eight fold particle. Then you can think that the hardness of this table comes from the earth element, and that the wood all sticks together this comes from the water element. If you rub this wood with another piece of wood theoretically fire will come this comes from the fire element, and there must be some movement there otherwise I don't think you'd get a nail to go in the wood, and that's the air element. You can see the table and that's due to the visual particles. I think you could even taste the table due to the taste particles and so forth.

Now if visual form, sound, and smell and so forth, if these are all made up of particles which are themselves developments of the four elements why are the four elements contained as tactile objects ? Why aren't they included amongst visual objects or odors or something like that? This is because it is through tactile consciousness that we mainly know those elements.

Earth is known through it's hardness and hardness is known through tactile consciousness. Water is known through wetness and that is perceived by tactile consciousness. Fire is known by it's being hot and that's perceived by tactile consciousness, Air by it's lightness and that's experienced by tactile consciousness. So without tactile consciousness there would be no way to know those elements. So that's why they are included as objects of the tactile consciousness.

So if you keep those questions and answers in mind you should be able to pass the test on Sunday afternoon. I'm only joking.

Now we leave the form aggregate behind and deal with the four aggregates that are included in mind.

First of all what I mean by mind is that which is clear and knowing. Clear describes it's reality being formless. Buddhism asserts then, that mind is not made of form, it is not composed of physical particles, therefore it can not be reduced to electromagnetic energy. So therefore it is not the brain, it's not neurons and it's not the electrical energy passing through those neurons, nor is it a mere name referring to those objects.

There is one theory that mind is merely an Epi phenomena, which is just a name but it is referring to, for example, according to this way of seeing a chair could be called an epi phenomena because what a chair in fact is, is the legs the seat and the back and that's what a chair is. But we talk about a chair as if it were a gestalt, something greater than the sum of it's parts, something other than the sum of it's parts. Likewise, when we are talking about mind these people would say that all we're really talking about is these electro- chemical responses going on in the body, but they run into some trouble

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philosophically with that position, because when we are talking about mind, we are not talking about the body. We are not talking about the electrochemical responses going on in the body. Those materialist reductionists would like to eliminate the language of the mind from all language. They would just like to eliminate it, but they can't, so they would like to say that type of language is in itself meaningless, it has its own internal consistency, but what's really going on that accounts for experience and so forth is the electro-chemical reactions in the body. When you press some body who adheres to this philosophy for some observable evidence that they base their philosophy on, they would give examples of cases where through injecting certain chemicals in the brain, or removing certain parts of the brain and so forth you can bring about these different experiences like making a cat fear a mouse, a mouse being so brave that it will attack a cat.

Or by brain damage you can eliminate memories of whole parts of one's life, or through the electrical stimulation of different parts of the brain you can cause such things as gustatory consciousness to arise, or various memories to occur.

So a person who adheres to the non physical nature of the mind will say that such events are merely describing the relationship between the body and the mind, but not the identity of body and mind, that through stimulating a physical organ then a mental experience can take place. Such a relationship is already asserted by Buddhism. For instance, as I said there are five physical faculties upon which the five sense consciousnesses depend. If those faculties are damaged in any way then the consciousnesses will be affected, but they are also quick to point out it's not only that the body affects the mind but the mind can affect the body. For example by visualizing certain channels in the body and concentrating on certain visualized points in those channels you can change the temperature of the body radically. Of course that's an extraordinary example but there are many ordinary ones. For instance the reason why we came here was not necessarily a physical itch, but rather there were reasons in our mind for coming here. While there are certain mental diseases that are treated successfully with chemicals, there are many mental disorders that are best treated by using the mind itself. For example if you desire a BMW., say 240 Turbo drive, black, tinted black windows with a lot of trunk space. If you desire that, but you do not have the money to pay for it, then the best solution is not to take Prozac or some other chemical agent, but rather it's to contemplate the difficulties you would experience being in debt for the rest of your life, how that would last longer than the life of the car, how having that car will not solve all of your problems, that there'll still be you driving it, alone, hungry, looking for some place to drive to and running out of gas.

So thinking like that can replace this image of that car being the most important thing in the world, and although it may not replace that desire it can work on it slowly. Whereas the chemicals may deal with that desire by causing some euphoric state where you may think you don't need anything any more, or it may cause a dullness in the mind where you couldn't bother yourself to generate such desires, but when you come off the chemical those desires once again arise, so at best they can be seen to be temporary solutions, and everybody recognizes that the best solution would be a mental solution such as an insight that sees the reality of the situation.

That insight is gained through a thinking process. It's not gained by taking pills, or by a well balanced diet, with exercise. So that in itself shows the difference between the mind

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and the body. You can have a person who physically is very healthy, but mentally is a mess. Likewise somebody who is mentally very clear, friendly, soft etc. but physically is a mess.

Those are kinds of examples that illustrate the difference in nature between the mind and the body, and there's many others.

Some of the more dramatic examples you find in the experiments that take place in parapsychology, which are phenomena that can't be explained by any physical laws, nor can their existence be denied, but you shouldn't take my word for it, this is something you have to study for yourself. For some people this is very obvious for others it's just a belief but it's not something that is supported by any conviction, in particular a conviction that's based on sound reasoning or direct observation, consequently that belief could be easily shaken, or at the back of the mind there might be a subtle hope that at the time of death every thing ceases, and one won't have to worry about all that bad karma one has been accumulating. For while the mind is clear, (meaning formless), it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. It exists because it has the function of cognition. It apprehends objects, an apprehension which is known as knowing, or cognizing and it is dynamic, it is energetic, it is not a physical energy, but it is non the less functioning obviously. So why not apply the law of conservation of energy to it. There's no reason why it should suddenly stop while all other physical energies keep going in one way or another. Well you can make anything sound reasonable, just because something sounds reasonable that doesn't mean that's the way it is. Yet there are examples of people who seem to confirm the existence of this continuum of mental energy, such as the children who remember former lives, and whose reports are corroborated by authoritative researchers.

Anybody ever heard of a great philosopher and mathematician named Pascal? "Pascal's Wager". Have you ever heard of Pascal's wager ? You're going to. For the benefit of those who haven't heard of it, I think he was French, he said that if you prepare for the next life and there isn't a next life then you'll have no regrets because you won't be around. If you don't prepare for a next life and there is a next life you'll have big regrets. So there's nothing to lose by preparing for the next life and everything to gain! So what I mean by mind then is what is clear and knowing. You know what knowing is right, the opposite of not knowing is knowing. Do you know the exact population of France this moment? Nothing comes to mind does it. That's not knowing, there's not an apprehension of an object, such as an appearance that can be seen by the eyes and so forth. Do you know the human population of your house? Suddenly something comes to mind, so that's knowing Inaudible.....

The mental factors are mind that function to perceive the qualities of the object and respond in various ways to the features of the object. Main minds and mental factors are related by being one substance, that is for any main mind there are mental factors which are of the same substance of that main mind, or we could say that mind in general, this thing which is clear and knowing has various functions one of those functions is called main mind and the other functions are called mental factors. So if we take any moment of mind that moment's knowing of the object or the entity of the object is called main mind, and that moment of mind's knowing the various features that make up that object is called mental factors.

This two fold division of mind into main mind and mental factors is likened to a community. Within the community there is a director whose job is to know what's

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happening in general in the community, and also in that community there would be a cook whose job it is to take care of the preparation of the food. So the director has to know something about what's going on in the kitchen but he doesn't have to know everything, that's the job of the cook. That's an example I heard a long time ago when I first studied this stuff. It's a little bit illuminating but not much.

Rather I prefer the explanation that if you have a moment of mind then it's different functions are being divided into main mind and mental factors, so while you can distinguish main minds from mental factors or one mental factor from another in the way of distinguishing one function from another function they're still all functions of the same moment of mind. For instance.

That main mind and it's attendant mental factors, have five similarities to them. The first is that they have the same object of observation, for example take the visual main mind and it's attendant mental factors that are perceiving blue color. The blue color is the object of observation so the visual main mind and it's attendant mental factors are all taking as their object of observation the blue color.

The second similarity is similar aspect, the aspect means when a mind perceives an object then an aspect or an image of that object appears in that consciousness, such as when an object is placed in front of a mirror an image of that object appears in that mirror, in the case of the example that image is called a reflection, in the case of consciousness that image is called an aspect. It is said for instance if you take a piece of clear crystal like one of those nice pieces that are cut with different facets around them and it's clear, if you put that on some nice

blue clothe then that crystal will appear to be blue in color.

Likewise when a consciousness is perceiving it's object it takes on the aspect of that object, this is not to say that when we are perceiving objects all we are perceiving is aspects in the mind, we are perceiving those objects.

So the main mind and it's attendant mental factors have the same aspect, they also occur simultaneously, therefore they do not have a cause and affect relationship. A main mind and it's attendant mental factors will have the same faculty as it's dominant condition. For example a main visual consciousness and it's attendant mental factors both have the eye faculty as their dominant condition.

They are also said to be of similar substance, for example the feeling mental factor that would be an attendant of a visual consciousness would not be found in some other consciousness.

The reason for mentioning those five similarities is to just get away from the idea that main minds and mental factors can be operating independently of each other at different times, they're all of the same substance.

There are six main minds from visual to mental main minds and those are what constitute the CONSCIOUSNESS aggregate, the fifth of the five aggregates. The mental factors are what compose the second third and fourth aggregate.

How are we doing ? I know there's exhaustion, but so far are you following me? Q: Can you repeat the five please? A: Object of observation, Aspect, Time or duration, (the duration is simultaneous), dominant condition, similar substance.

There are fifty one mental factors, I hope you have a lot of ink in your pens, actually there's a lot more than that but fifty one were mentioned to just give you an idea of these various functions in the mind. And these functions were identified principally from the

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perspective of what brings happiness and what brings suffering, and then from the perspective of someone in a meditative tradition. So from another perspective you may be able to find many other mental factors, and even from the perspective of this tradition there are other mental factors beside the list of fifty one.

Those fifty one mental factors fall into five categories.

The first is known as the omnipresent mental factors. The second is the object ascertaining mental factors, then the virtuous mental factors, then the next is the root afflictions, the next are the secondary afflictions and the last is the variable mental factors. So there was five plus one.

There are five omnipresent mental factors according to either, the Abhidharmakosha or Abhidharmasamuccaya. The Abhidharmakosha has a different list of five similarities. What I'm saying is that the presentation I'm giving here is based upon certain texts. Not all authoritative Buddhist scholars have the same presentation. For instance the fifty one mental factors mentioned by Asanga in his text Abhidharmasamuccaya. His younger brother Vasubandhu wrote a text Abhidharmakosha, and in that text he only mentioned forty eight mental factors. If I remember correctly one text has a group of five similarities between main minds and mental factors that's different from the other ones, and one text says there's five omnipresent mental factors and the other one says there's ten.

Lord Buddha is the one who gave the monks vows, he's the source of the monk's vows, there are a number of different traditions that have arisen over the years of such vows. For instance the tradition of the discipline that exists in Tibet is known as the Mulasarvastivadan.

In Thailand the tradition is known as the Theravadan tradition .

In the Mulasarvastivadan tradition there are 253 vows for a fully ordained monk, whereas in the Theravadan tradition there are 227.

So it seems like the Tibetans have more vows. So where did they get them from if it was all based on The Buddha? Well in fact all of those are contained in 227 of the Theravadan tradition. They just have a different way of enumerating them. So like that you have these different scholars that have different ways of enumerating these things, so we can't say the differences indicate that one is right and the other is wrong, they usually have their reasons for their own system.

Omnipresent means that with every moment of mind there are these five omnipresent mental factors operating, therefore one can know implicitly that every moment of mind does not necessarily have all 51 mental factors operating, but it will have these five omnipresent ones.

There's feeling. When you hear the name don't immediately assume you know what it means because we employ names that already have common usage in our respective languages but they have specific definitions in this context. Here the definition of feeling is a mental factor which is the nature of experience, individually experiencing the fruition of virtuous and non virtuous actions.

All will become clear shortly.

It's objects are pleasure, pain and that which is neither pleasure or pain. So feeling is the mental factor that experiences pleasure, pain, and neutral experiences. Pleasure is that which when it ceases you want to meet it again. Pain is that experience when it arises you want to separate from it, and the neutral experience is one that when it arises you neither

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want to separate from it nor to meet it again. Experiences arise from previous actions that we have undertaken. It is the virtuous actions that produce pleasure and the non virtuous that produce pain, in fact the words virtuous and non virtuous are used merely because one produces pleasure and the other produces pain. What we want is pleasure or happiness, an action that brings that is called virtuous it's not because it was declared virtuous by an omnipotent being, it's just another word for good because it gets us what we want, whereas the non virtuous action produces pain.

So this emphasizes then that our experiences of pleasure and pain do not come without causes, nor are their causes some unrelated entity. It's not that our pain or happiness is something that is bestowed upon us by some deity, rather they come from our former actions, so therefore we ourselves are the creators of our future experience, and the person who was in our

previous continuum was the creator of our present experiences.

There is no need to visit a clairvoyant and pay a lot of money to know what you were in your former lifetime and to know what you're going to be in your next lifetime. Look at your present experience and you'll know what kind of person you were in the past, look at your present activity and you'll know what kind of experience you'll have in the future.

It's chilling! So, the knowledge, the certain knowledge that virtuous action brings happiness and non virtuous action brings suffering is highly esteemed, having that certainty is something which is highly esteemed. It's praised as the basis of all auspicious doctrines and it's called the correct view of all Buddhists.

Buddhists vary in what they call the correct view of reality, but they all agree that virtuous actions bring happiness. Buddhists disagree about what they regard as the correct view of reality, reality is one of those subtle things and because it's so subtle The Buddha gave very different accounts to the different disciples who came to hear him and consequently you have different philosophical schools, but they all agree that virtue brings happiness and non virtue brings suffering. A happy life, at the end of which one could say, "Not bad, it could have been worse", is created by a virtuous action. The experiences that occur during the life, good or bad, are also created by actions, virtuous or non virtuous. We can develop conviction in this, but it is very difficult to know exactly what all those actions were .

Okay so let's stop there today. Let's just sit quietly for a few minutes, give it a chance to all sink in.

So while listening to the subject, it's important to listen in such a way that the teaching becomes in itself an antidote to the causes of our problems. Among the numerous causes of problems we can say there's two types: external and internal. The external causes of our problems are all familiar to us, such as bad weather, obnoxious people, all of these kinds of things that we hear complaints about every day, we read about in the papers and see on TV. and so forth. And if happiness was dependent on the elimination of these outer causes of problems then the whole task would be hopeless, because there's no definite guarantee that any external condition will not become a cause of problems. For instance our best friends, they can turn against us, a beautiful home can become a prison, a tropical beach can become boring, a holiday can become a death sentence. There's nothing to trust in the external circumstances.

Then there are the internal causes of problems. These internal causes of problems such as anger, clinging, and so forth, jealousy, these sorts of minds. So long as we have such

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disturbing uncontrolled states of mind, then there's going to be misery, but if such uncontrolled disturbing states of mind are eliminated then even poor external conditions can be easily tolerated. It's like the story of how shoes were invented in China. There was an emperor who was raised in the plush environment of his palace, and he decided to go outside one day into his kingdom to see what it was like, he was not wearing any shoes and while walking he stepped on something sharp. He'd never experienced such pain before and it made him very angry. When he returned to the palace he summoned all his ministers, and he declared that they should cover his whole kingdom in leather, thinking that by so doing he would be able to go for a walk without stepping on something sharp. The ministers realized that this was hopelessly impractical and at the very least would cause bankruptcy for the whole empire. One particularly bright minister had a good idea, he thought why not just cover the emperor's feet with leather, it will accomplish the same purpose and be much cheaper. The emperor accepted this idea and thus shoes were invented. The moral of this story is that if one tames ones own inner mind then no matter what external circumstances one might meet good or bad the mind remains stable and at peace. The question is however, is such a thing possible? Nobody wants to be angry but despite that we all from time to time get angry, so how might it be possible to eliminate anger? Similarly no one wants to experience a great loss and yet often it happens that people due to being controlled by desire give up something of great value for something of less value, as if they were temporarily insane. This is just the effect of desire. So although we only want to profit and never lose, still such desire can arise and overcome us.

However such persons as the Buddha demonstrated that it was possible to eliminate these negative minds. So long as they are not eliminated there will not be happiness. When they are eliminated there will be happiness. One thing that is definitely true is that we all want to be happy and not to suffer, therefore at some time we have to pursue this path of eliminating the inner causes of suffering, by whatever means. So long as we avoid that then we will be contradicting our own inner wish. However even the Buddha had to admit it's not easy, and it takes a lot of time. For instance once He generated the spirit of Enlightenment, Bodhicitta it still took three countless great aeons to become a Buddha. I don't know how many years constitute a great aeon, I know that countless is the largest number in the Indian system of counting. It might be similar to that mythological number in English known as zillion which means huge, so a zillion times three aeons, and that was after he had developed a spontaneous Bodhicitta and was a real Bodhisattva. This was after He had spent lifetimes in pursuit of higher states of mind. Giving up kingdoms to meditate in solitude in the mountains, dressed in tree bark, internally generating a conviction in paths leading to liberation, conviction in karma, conviction in the existence of future lives, a dedication to the welfare of others, having more concern for others than himself. So he was already a saint before He became a Bodhisattva, and yet it still took an awful long time to become a Buddha.

So if you feel like it's an enormous undertaking you're right, and if you feel like it's too much to accomplish in this lifetime you're also right. So generally what's done is that a person looks at their worst fault and tries to minimize it, and if at the end of the life you've had any success at all at weakening that thought you can be satisfied, and that's a realistic approach to the spiritual path. If you think that you won't be satisfied at the end of the life unless you've some remarkable

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attainments like clairvoyance, passing through walls, flying, or with the attitude that is completely disillusioned with the whole of cyclic existence, Bodhicitta or the correct view of reality.

If that's what it will take to make you feel satisfied with your life you might be disappointed. For instance if Bodhicitta is the goal to achieve in this lifetime any time you desire something just for yourself you've failed. For instance in the lunch line, at the end of the lunch line there's the plate with all the fruit on it and they're all oranges and apples but only one banana and if you have the thought " I hope nobody takes that banana before I get there! " You've failed ! Or when you walk into the cinema and all the seats in the middle are taken and you get upset you've failed. So how miserable such an aspiration will make one.

We shouldn't put these time limits on ourselves. Generating realizations is not like boiling an egg. You can be sure that after four minutes you've got a hard boiled egg, but it's unsure how many years of your practice is going to produce a realization. We read in the biographies of former saints of somebody who suddenly gains a high realization while chopping wood or by looking at a stone as they're walking on the road.

This might produce the wrong view that at any moment as you go about your ordinary daily life a realization will dawn without having done anything to create it. We don't know how many lifetimes those saints in biographies spent practicing. You can be sure there were a lot. Take the great yogi Milarepa for instance. Before he met his guru Marpa he killed over thirty people, and yet in that very life he became a Buddha. That might generate the thought that well I haven't killed anybody so I should be able to become a Buddha too, easier, faster. Of course when you read Milarepa's biography you discover that he killed those thirty people by practicing black magic. He could make animals hallucinate. Can you stop a dog from barking just through the power of your mind ? He could cause hail storms. Could you make a cloud cover the sun for just one minute of shade? The master who taught Milarepa black magic regarded Milarepa as the best disciple he'd ever had, and then when he entrusted himself to Marpa, Marpa worked him harder than a mule and yet Milarepa never generated any contempt towards Marpa. He had some pretty unusual qualities that he was born with. How come he was born with those qualities and not me ? In a former lifetime, the life time before he was Milarepa he was a Kadampa Geshe, given up the affairs of that life, dedicated himself to studying and practice, had generated at least the correct intellectual view of reality.

So even to do that he must have had some great qualities to bring into that lifetime, which he must have cultivated in a former lifetime and so on.

So while we're listening to a talk on the dharma which is information that is by its very nature stimulating the good qualities and opposing the bad qualities, then we should at least try in this occasion as much as possible to cultivate the antidotes to the inner sources of our problems. There's all kinds of things that we have probably thought we should practice, such as practicing using ourselves as a resource for other's happiness. That's not necessarily a very common aspiration but it's a very interesting one.

When I was a child I used to pray all the time, not that I was a little angel or anything. I used to pray to get the things I wanted. I'd pray to get toy guns, and all those kinds of prayers that kids usually make, and my prayers would often take the form of "If I was God I would certainly give me these things." Well as I got older I stopped relying on such

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an omnipotent being and thought that it might be better if I became the kind of person who could supply others with the things that they needed because if you see something that's missing why trust somebody else to fill it? Why not do it oneself? So the problem is that there's just not enough help.

There's so many problems in the world and there's just so much need, and if you look around you see so many people who are requesting help. So we could join them and be just one other voice in that great Sea of Plea! Or one could be trying to become the answer, that which fulfills those supplications, and increasingly make oneself a better and better resource for the welfare of others.

Well a thought might arise that the needs or demands of others are endless and it might seem quite a daunting task to become something that can respond effectively. Well The Buddha is pretty incredible, but that's how one becomes a Buddha so a person who has dedicated themselves to become a Buddha for the sake of all beings has a great appreciation of his or her capability. So if one's having the attitude, "Oh I couldn't do that." then one is far from generating the thought of becoming Enlightened. So even if it's just using the past Buddhas as a reason one can just think well I can become a Buddha because they did, because once upon a time they were just like me and if they can develop such perfect qualities then I can too. When I was a teenager I was involved in sports. It was my path to liberation from studies and I remember before we would actually play an opposing team our coach used to give us a pep talk, encouragement. There was one team we were going to play against, they were a lot bigger than us, and in American football it matters if they're bigger than you. I remember something that he said to encourage us, he said " You can beat these guys, they're no different from you they put their pants on one leg at a time just like you." The Buddhas were at one time just like ourselves, they'd get completely carried away by their delusion just like we do. They'd be only concerned with the happiness of this life just like us, but despite all that they were able to achieve such an exulted accomplishment, so we can do the same thing. The very teachings we have at our disposal are the same teachings that they rely on, as far as the explanations and techniques that are available, nothing is missing. It's not as if there was once a certain type of technique to achieve Enlightenment and now there's not.

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In fact there may be more techniques available now than there were in the past, so from the outside everything is there. Now all we have to do from our side is generate the determination and keep it. It's not easy, but so long as we don't generate such a determined attitude, or if we let go of our determination then we're only undermining our wish to be happy and be free from suffering.

Okay so yesterday we finished with FEELING, the mental factor of feeling. We went through the form aggregate of which there were 5 physical sense powers mentioned. There were the objects of the five sense consciousnesses and there was the form which is the object of mental consciousness. So we went into detail yesterday of what all those eleven things were.

The second aggregate is that of Feeling, which is the experience of the maturation of karma of which there are three types, pleasure, pain and neutral feelings and there are some other divisions of feeling, for instance there is the feeling which is the base of attachment, and this is a feeling that accompanies attachment to the attributes or qualities of the desire realm.

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The desire realm is one of three realms. These are called desire realm, form realm and formless realm. Here we should understand realm as a state of mind. So the desire realm is a state of mind in which there is desire for the pleasant objects of the senses.

So we know what the objects of the senses are, I mentioned those yesterday. Visual forms, sounds, odors etc. and amongst pleasant and unpleasant giving rise pleasurable feeling and painful feeling. So the desire realm is the state of mind that regards such pleasurable feelings as the best. So as long as one is regarding such objects in high esteem then one is a person in the desire realm.

Form and formless realms refer to states of mind that have lost such esteem for the objects of the senses. I shouldn't say lost it, they've transcended it by seeing the shortcomings of such experiences and seeing the superior qualities of the experiences of meditation. The form realm gets its name from the objects of meditation having form. The formless realm mentality is said to be higher than the form realm, it has transcended the mentality of the form realm by seeing the shortcomings of such a mentality and seeing the superior qualities of the formless realm.

So as there is one feeling which is called the base of attachment, accompanying the attachment to the attributes of the desire realm there is another feeling which is the base of deliverance, and this is a feeling that accompanies the mentality of the form and formless realm, that being the feeling which is the base of deliverance. So the feeling that is the base of attachment is pleasant feeling, pleasurable feeling with respect to objects of the senses and this causes the clinging attachment to arise. Such a pleasurable feeling is viewed unrealistically as true happiness. It is not true happiness. One reason why it is not true happiness is because it can't last, but because it is seen as true happiness the mind grasps onto it and will not let it go and will do anything to keep in touch with it. This is the major obstacle for the human being, of all the various faults

this is the main one. In a *thangka* known as "the Wheel of Life" --that last one hanging up there, it is often painted with a Buddha in each of the five or six realms of cyclic existence and each of those Buddhas is carrying something that represents the antidote to the main suffering of the respective realm, and the Buddha in the human realm is carrying the staff and the bowl of a monk whereas in the hungry ghost realm he's carrying water and food. That is because the hungry ghosts suffer from hunger and thirst mainly, and for the humans it's because humans suffer from desire. That's not such a gross generalization because if you eliminate the conditions of war and illness and poverty, those extremes of human suffering that you find in the world, then you see so many human beings that are destroyed by their desire.

Sometimes marriages fail because of desire for somebody other than the partner, because of adultery, and that may result in one or both of the people who are married falling from the level of status in the society that they were in. Or politicians who were honored in society, well how about supreme court judges, high court judges who are honored in society, but because of their sexual misconduct then there's a big scandal and they fall from their position. Teachers who have sexual relations with students and then lose their position as teachers and so on. And these are all people who have plenty of food, clothing and shelter and medicine and all that stuff.

So it's like all those people who are trying to end war where they are, just like at Sarajevo in Bosnia Hercegovina. Well once they eliminate the war then they can look forward to suffering like every one else. Right now they're suffering in a gross way, but

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then comes the suffering of the uncontrolled desire, where there's always something missing. So this is something that we all try to transcend and generally the main way in which we do that is by weighing the disadvantages against whatever benefit we'd get if we followed the desire. If the disadvantages are really horrendous and the advantage of following the desire is very small, then it's much easier to give up that desire.

Unfortunately it's not always that clear, and so consequently it's difficult to give up the desire and it stays, and then one just has to endure it. So there arises the thought "I wonder if there is a state of mind free of such desire, where it just doesn't arise and one could just cruise through this life like the wind. You touch things but leave them as they are not carrying them with you just free".

There's a Zen story. Two Zen monks a master and his disciple come up to a river, it's an old story you may have heard it before. There's a beautiful woman who's trying to cross the river but she needs help. So the master picks her up and carries her across the river. According to the discipline he shouldn't be touching a woman and this is what the disciple was thinking, so on the other side of the river the master and disciple carried on their journey but after sometime the disciple couldn't hold himself back anymore and he said to the master " How could you pick up that woman?" and the master said " The important thing is to put her down when the river was crossed, which I did, you on the other hand are still carrying her." So can you imagine being free of desire? How free you would be!

You could enjoy anything but put it down with no second thoughts and I'm not talking about the attitude of a cad, I don't know what you'd call it. I'm not talking about the attitude of somebody who has love affairs and then just disposes of them like that, one night stands. I'm not talking about that. There's nothing high about that, that's somebody who's really possessed by desire, they can't get satisfaction. I'm talking about something quite different. Freedom from desire exists, you get it when you enter the form realm, when you generate this form realm mentality, the desire for the objects of the senses doesn't arise any more.

To generate a form realm mentality requires a cultivation of concentration, the type of concentration where you can stay single pointedly on an object for hours. It generates it's own kind of mental and physical ecstasy, which eclipses the pleasure of the desire realm. Unfortunately it's not very easy to cultivate. Well at least it's nice to know it's possible, but because it's not so very easy, there's very few people who have that freedom from desire and consequently even those people who make it their profession of being desireless have a hard time.

That's when we here of all the scandals in religious orders.

Their main way of controlling desire is just like everybody else's. The only advantage that they may have is the amount that they separate themselves from the objects of desire, in for instance cloisters. Usually the scandals occur with those people who don't have such separation.

So in the good old days concentration was easier to cultivate they say, I'm not so sure, I think it was always a bit difficult.

In a monastery of a thousand people there were probably only a handful who could do it, but the thing is all of us have the same problem, so as long as we have the pleasurable feeling then attachment can arise unless you've abandoned attachment. So lets say we

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have attachment, what it likes is pleasurable feelings, so whenever pleasurable feeling arises, there's danger of attachment. If attachment arises you've lost your freedom. Usually I don't buy many things, consequently I don't have much interest in shopping so when I walk down a street of shops the impression in my mind is just things, but when I do go shopping, for instance to buy a computer, then if I walk by a shop that sells computers even after I've already bought a computer I can't just walk by that shop thinking thing. My mind gets stuck there I have to stop walking, look at all the things, especially the price to see if I paid more for mine. I might get upset, all of these things that didn't have to happen. So that's a simple example, there are many other examples, where, when the attachment arises your mind gets stuck to the object. Then throughout the day your mind keeps on that object, it comes up again and again, you find your mind plotting in order to get that object. You find that your voice of reason is getting weaker and weaker, your voice of cleverness is getting louder and louder, so you're stuck, you've lost freedom, therefore The Buddha said we have to guard the doors of our senses.

So it's not that a pleasurable feeling is negative, it's the attachment that's negative, the feeling has no ethical quality.

Pleasurable feelings aren't virtuous, painful feelings aren't non virtuous. It's just that pleasurable feelings tend to give rise to this mind of clinging attachment and painful feelings give rise to anger. It's also interesting to keep in mind that if a pleasurable feeling is the result of virtuous karma, if that's the case then the object which was a cause of the pleasurable feeling, enabled this pleasurable feeling to occur, such as sunshine. From one point of view, the pleasurable feeling experiencing the sunshine, depends upon the sunshine, but the source of that pleasurable feeling being pleasurable was a previous virtuous action. It's like you can't have a crop without a field, so keeping that in mind, rather than regarding the various objects as sources of happiness, one should pursue virtuous action with the same kind of enthusiasm that we use to pursue those pleasurable objects.

Okay so then the next aggregate is DISCRIMINATION. This is also a mental factor and is an omnipresent mental factor and this one apprehends the uncommon signs of an object. Each object has characteristics which it shares in common with other objects and characteristics that are unique to it, and it is those unique characteristics that enable us to differentiate one object from another. So discrimination is the function of the mind that apprehends those unique characteristics, and there is discrimination that we find accompanying sense consciousnesses and those accompanying mental consciousnesses, and of the mental consciousnesses there are the conceptual consciousnesses and it is the conceptual consciousness of a person who knows a language that has the discrimination that can differentiate objects by means of names. So it is this discrimination mental factor that applies names, identifies objects with names. Sensory consciousness doesn't name objects but it can nonetheless be clear about different objects. It can clearly differentiate say yellow from red.

Discrimination enables us to recognize and differentiate the objects that make up reality.

This is the one that functions when sensory consciousness is operating and on the basis of having clear and distinct perceptions a conceptual discrimination mental factor will name different objects and similarly when hearing true words, then in your mind you're

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identifying certain things, and giving names to those things you're identifying and that's also discrimination.

Also when you identify something as good by depending upon it having the signs and the reasons that's also discrimination.

So there's a discrimination, a reasoned discrimination. This is one that is skilled in relating names with their objects and also that is able to observe the appropriate qualities such as sound is impermanent. Also there's a discrimination that has a clear aspect and a clear object. This is opposed to an unreasoned discrimination, such as one that is unskilled in relating names

with their meaning, such as a child who is yet to learn any language, or a discrimination that thinks that sound is permanent, or a discrimination that lacks any clear subjective aspect or object.

That last type of unreasoned discrimination is the discrimination that operates in the highest level of the formless realm, where there is no clear aspect and no clear object appearing to the mind. It's really not a very useful state to generate, but it comes from the belief that discrimination, this faculty of discrimination is a source of the problems.

It's not uncommon to read criticism of discrimination. For instance in a number of spiritual texts that would describe the ultimate state as somehow a unified state. With such expressions as all is one. Now of course discrimination differentiates, identifies and differentiates, which seems to contradict an all is one experience, and that description, based upon the mere description of some high state of mind as all is one, some psychologists have misunderstood what that high state of mind is.

For instance in child psychology there is a recognition that as an infant, the child doesn't discriminate between subject and object. A clear subjective ego awareness is yet to arise in the child. This is sometimes called oceanic awareness. In one place Carl Jung thought that the high realizations of these yogis was recovering that state of mind that is possessed by the infant.

Which is elevating a primitive consciousness to an exulted state.

(That's not what he said), and in another place Freud referred to such high experiences of the yogis as infantile regressions thinking that they were non other than what the infant has. This would be devaluing an exulted state and making it a primitive state. So there's a big difference between lacking discrimination and transcending discrimination. So the infant doesn't have discrimination of subject and object. The yogi does have such discrimination, but within that discrimination has been able to discriminate something that transcends both subject and object and in order to do that, you have to have even more powerful discrimination than other people. So far from achieving high states of mind by eliminating discrimination, such states of mind are achieved by making one's mind that much more powerful.

Another type of discrimination is called discrimination of the small, which is discrimination in the mind of a person in the desire realm. There's another discrimination known as discrimination of the vast, which is discrimination in the mind of a person in the form realm, so from the point of view of the form realm the experiences of the desire realm are small and quite insignificant. Then there's discrimination of the limitless, and this is discrimination that is found in the first two states of the formless realm, where one discriminates limitless space and limitless consciousness. And then there's discrimination of nothingness, which is third state of the formless realm, where one doesn't discriminate

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anything and that state is like being unconscious. Also a mistake. These different states of mind have been achieved by people who are striving hard for liberation, and in their striving having discovered that the secret for liberation was in the mind itself, or the key for liberation was in the mind itself. They stumbled upon the tremendous capacity for concentration and having this amazing tool tried to achieve liberation merely by it. Concentration that enabled them to turn off parts of their mind, trying to achieve liberation by making themselves unconscious for instance. There's no pain if there's no experience. Experimenting with all kinds of manipulation of the mind with concentration, and by means of this they could achieve what's known as the peak of cyclic existence, in which all of the various disturbing negative thoughts of the desire realm, form realm and the formless realm below the peak, cease functioning. They become free of all that. The only problem is that faults of the peak itself remain, and it doesn't have anything higher than the peak to get rid of those faults, unless you use something else besides concentration. The thing that they miss is the wisdom perceiving emptiness and if you have the wisdom realizing emptiness you can totally abandon all the faults of cyclic existence even without having to generate such a high power of concentration.

So that's the discrimination aggregate.

Any questions ? Q: As you explained it seems as though we are a community of different tendencies. So how is it possible to have this feeling of oneness ? And this feeling of a self of permanence? A: So first of all seeing our self as one thing. This is a very common phenomena to think of and it comes from our capacity to conceptualize by means of which we can categorize different things, for instance a crowd of people is actually many people but we can differentiate one crowd from another crowd. We can have one crowd or many crowds and that can have some practical functions, so this capacity is something that is useful. So for instance we are composed of a body and a mind. And when we say body, body includes many things, but rather than having to list all those things for which there's no end because there are just countless atoms in the body and even those things we can see, that is those things we can see under a knife of discrimination are still too many to mention. So we have this capacity to think body by means of which we can be including all the parts of the body or just some of the parts of the body. and also for ourselves it can be useful to refer to that which possesses the body and mind as in the expressions "my body" and "my mind". We don't mean that we are something that can get up and walk away leaving our body and mind behind, the way the owner of a car can get up and leave the car, but it's just a way that we organize our experiences and describe our actions, so this ability to construct things with thoughts can be useful, and by means of this we can differentiate one thing from another. The problem occurs is when we take the thought constructs and forget that in fact they are thought constructs and start thinking that they have an independent life of their own. And based upon the belief that it has an independent life of it's own and also based upon the fact that it doesn't appear to change that one can view it as permanent, we refer to ourselves as I or me, using those same pronouns day in and day out, and also thinking of ourselves in the past, thinking I did this then, and referring to ourselves in the future I will do this, when, and thus it appears that this I is not changing at all, it is exactly the same. And further more, if it exists with a life of it's own, then it would have to be permanent. It wouldn't be depending on anything else such as causes, to exist, but when we analyze this point closer, we see that although

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the name may remain the same we have indeed changed. In fact it would be a sad state if we remained exactly the same as we were when we were children. The thing is that we seldom analyze and just take things as they appear. So this person, the person, ourself, which is just a thought construct, having functions in terms of practical discrimination and language appears to have a life of it's own, and then it is actually apprehended as having a life of it's own. This apprehension is the ignorance or misknowledge which was recognized by The Buddha as being the root source of all the suffering. Is there anything more to that question that I could address. It's good ? Okay !

Q: You described the different levels of concentration according to each realm, can you repeat them please ? A: The interesting one would be form and formless realm. First there's desire realm, that has concentration but it's not distinguished, that is it is not special. And the discrimination associated with that one is called the discrimination of the small, that is the objects it can recognize are small in quality in comparison to the objects that are recognized in the form and formless realm. Then with the form and formless realm we start to find very special types of concentration. In the form realm the discrimination there is known as the discrimination of the vast, that is the objects that are identified in the form realm are vastly superior to those of the desire realm. Then the formless realm is said to be superior to the form realm because it is without the faults that are found in the form realm, and within the formless realm there are different types of discrimination.

In the formless realm there's four levels known as limitless space, limitless consciousness, nothingness and the fourth is called neither sensation nor no sensation. That fourth level is also called the peak of cyclic existence. The discrimination found in the first two of those is known as the discrimination of the limitless and then that found in third level is known as the discrimination of nothingness and the discrimination found in the fourth level is a type of unreasoned discrimination. It is the type in which there is no clear subjective aspect and no clear object of observation. So let's take a break.

The next aggregate is the one known variously as Compositional factors or Intention and all of the other mental factors are included in this aggregate. I'm using by the way, volition, intention and will synonymously.

We'll begin then with this mental factor of Intention which some people consider to be the most important of the mental factors, and it is defined as the mental factor that moves and directs the mind that accompanies it to it's object, and it has the function of engaging the mind in virtue, non virtue, or those activities that are neither virtuous or non virtuous.

It's something which is extremely powerful, it causes the mind to engage in an object helplessly, like metal filings have to helplessly follow a magnet. If you drag a magnet over metal filings then they just have to follow it, they have no choice.

Sometimes it happens that a person notices that they're just not in control of their life, they would like to go in a particular direction but they are helplessly going in another direction.

That can be striking because it makes you wonder, who's in charge? We have these expressions "this is my body and this is my mind." "I want to do this, I don't want to do that ". " So how come my body and mind don't go the way I want them to go ?"

Remember when I described this I, this person, as a mere mental construct, aside from qualities that we might conceptually give it, it doesn't have any qualities itself. For

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instance when you have the thought I am walking, it's ability to walk is actually borrowed from the body or in other words because the body is walking one can have the thought I am walking. It's not like the body is walking and also I am walking and we're sort of walking hand in hand. And likewise when there is the thought I am going to do it, in fact it is the mental factor that is thinking do it, that is the impulse that produces the activity and on the basis of that impulse we can have the thought "I" am doing it. So it's that impulse that's the actual creator of things, and that's why it's considered so important, because there's also the I that's designated by depending upon feeling, such as I feel pain or I feel pleasure, so we can have such thoughts because there's the Feeling mental factor experiencing pain or pleasure and then there is this conceptual process that invents this character known as ""I" on the basis of that.

Now the experiences then are derived from this creator function of intention. We would like to have it that the only kind of feelings we would have would be the pleasurable sort as the basis of our thought "I". In order for that to happen then this creator intention has to be only going in a virtuous direction and thus we can only be a virtuous person if our mental factor intention is directing us virtuously.

Now is the mental factor Intention susceptible to persuasion ? Of course! It doesn't exist on it's own independent of the other mental factors. Often it is something that arises after a considerable amount of thinking. Like if you have to make a decision about whether you go on a long trip or not. There you use your faculties of discrimination and so forth to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of such a trip. When you think about being in such a place a pleasurable experience may arise causing the desire to meet with such an object which also influences the thinking process. There might be a painful experience associated with the place you're staying in, causing the thought to separate from it as soon as possible. This can also influence the thinking process and at a certain point all of this thinking concludes in this intention to do it. Then that intention starts taking the mind in that direction and at that point you're just along for the ride, like a surfer on a wave, or more accurately a thought construct designated on the basis of this intention that's in motion.

Every conscious action we do has intention going in either a virtuous or a non virtuous way or a neutral way. So we are acting continuously, throughout the day we have numerous intentions that we set, and those intentions don't necessarily cease immediately.Let's say in my example of going to a place the intention of going to that place can take you to that place but it is not the case that that process of intentionality totally stops once you get there. That whole process is something that's remembered in the mind and it can repeat itself, and has many different effects. Anyway this whole thing is the subject of karma, so I'm going to have to move on. But for instance you can have effects even after this life, for instance at the time of death it's said that as a person goes through the death process they can have numerous visions, people who have had near death experiences report having had the experience of their whole life flashing in front of them. And having seen their life flash in front of them it causes to make some evaluation. Certain things in their life stand out more than others, they identify more strongly with a certain type of behavior than other behaviors, that they witness in such visions. Or in using the language of this description of Intention, there arises from it's latent state, a process of intentionality, that had been operating in the past but then went latent, and then due to the circumstances of death it became active again, and due to the association that

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we have with the thought "I" in relation to that intentionality process, there you go again another ride, but in this case the intentionality as it takes "you" the mere thought construct on the basis of it. It's taking you without your body because you've left that behind now.

However it may be the case for this intentionality to get to it's object, to get to it's aim it will need a physical body. But it only uses a physical body which is necessary to get to it's aim, and there's a great many varieties of physical bodies. If your aim (in my other example of intention) of going on a trip was to go south in the winter and that was the intentionality that happens to resurrect itself at the time of death, then maybe all you need to accomplish that again is the body of a bird, because the mind is not linked with any specific type of body. The body is only a vehicle for the mind, and each body due to it's own nature, allows certain kinds of mental experiences to take place.

In some ways we could say that the rebirth is the dominant condition for the experience of life, that is the mind coming together with a certain kind of body then gives that mind access to a certain kind of experience. The unique characteristic of the human body is that it's nervous system supports an unlimited development of intelligence. Therefore the human body is the best sort of body for the person who is aspiring for liberation, because in order to get liberation you have to develop this penetrative insight into the way things exist. This doesn't mean just any kind of human body. It has to be a human body that has all it's senses working properly, and a human body in a place in which it is not too easy and not too difficult to find the necessities of life. It can't be too difficult because if that's the case you never have any free time to explore such questions as why do things exist the way they do ? And we know such people that just dismiss such thoughts as useless philosophy and they have to get on with their work of making money and supporting their various responsibilities. But if life is too easy then that is also a problem, because the mind gets sluggish, and thus there's no incentive for the cultivation of intelligence, so it has to be somewhat challenging as human beings rely upon their intelligence to survive. That's why the practice of a person who is mainly trying to achieve a higher rebirth consists of the practice of ethics.

There are many types of ethics, one type of ethics is the ethics of restraint, which is restraining yourself from an action that will bring you some immediate pleasure, because you recognize in the long run it's going to be problematic, and although the experience of denying oneself this pleasure is painful, one can see that in the long run there is going to be great benefit. So even an animal can see what's immediately in front of it, so in this case for the person practicing ethics what's immediately in front of this person is pleasure to be had and pain if I don't take it. What enables a person to restrain themselves and not be miserable is the ability to imagine something in the future which the animals can't do. That requires quite a development of intelligence.

So one then is exercising this intelligence in order to get a greater benefit even at the cost of a short term sacrifice. That is especially the case for the person who is sacrificing the potential experiences of this life in order to get even better things in the future life, because this life is tangible, it is something that you see and you have, whether there is a future life you can't tell by seeing, tasting and smelling. You can only know that with intelligence. So for the person who is trying to get a good rebirth and avoid a bad rebirth, all of this is done through the power of their intelligence and this person is putting a higher priority on the use of their intelligence than just the instincts of taking what is

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pleasurable and trying to get rid of what is immediately painful. So such a person is likely then to be reborn with the type of a body that will support the further development of such intelligence. They would get for instance, a human body, in a place where they would have access to the type of education where they could learn about higher and higher states of happiness.

Any questions about that? I wish I was wrong ! But I think that's what the dharma says. That's what The Buddha had in mind. Even though I hate to hear it ! Due to the kindness of my teachers I just can't help myself but I have to say those things.

They say that the dharma is like a mirror, in that a mirror is something that you use to see if you have any dirt on your face, so that you can then wash it off, and similarly the dharma is

something that you can use to see if you have any faults, any mistaken conduct and so forth. Then you can eliminate those faults and change your conduct. So the fact that one might squirm a little bit or feel uncomfortable when one is hearing the dharma doesn't mean that it is wrong.

Q: Is it possible that Volition can bring us to activities helplessly and is it possible to influence the volition and in this case is this influence an intention ? A: There are many other mental factors beside intention, and for instance when I was talking about generating the intention to go somewhere there was a whole thought process that led up to that.

It is not an absolute that a specific intention has to arise, it's not like a whole package ready to go, it's dependent upon various conditions, for instance through the power of intelligence you can determine that the aim of a specific intention is undesirable and therefore you don't allow that intention to arise. Also the intention is usually taking place within a context of a person and that person's environment, and so that person has various likes and dislikes and then the intention is the means by which that person is able to get what they want and avoid what they don't want, so the force of the intention is dependent upon the way in which that person is perceived. For instance if you're dreaming, and you're chased by some monster in the dream, then the intention to get away from that monster is dependent upon you believing that you are real in that dream.

Then the intention to get away doesn't arise because there is nobody who has to really escape from any thing really frightening. So like that the Buddha discovered that the degree of reality that we attribute to ourselves is more than is actually there, and when we discover that we are empty of that extra reality, then all of the intentionalities that were created in the past that were dependent upon this exaggerated view of oneself no longer have any control over oneself. That's when one is liberated. That's why the whole thrust of The Buddha's teachings, or the emphasis of The Buddha's teachings is the discovery of the actuality, of the true reality of the person.

Sometimes when people hear about the teaching of karma there comes in their mind the idea of predetermination, as if they are locked in an experience or a process that you can't do anything about, but as intention is something that arises on it's causes and it's conditions, and these causes and conditions are not things that are fixed, we can get control over this karma. In other words we can get control over this intention.

Did you have a question? (Complicated question asked)_ It's only when you study a lot that it all becomes clear because the Buddha dharma has so many topics within it. We have an expression that you can't see the forest because of the trees, which means that

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when you're in a forest and you see the individual trees there's so many of them the idea of forest doesn't come to mind and likewise as we're studying all the details of the dharma a unified view, an overview doesn't come to mind. So for instance yesterday I talked about how there must be a continuation of mind and although it wasn't everything that can be said about it I'm not going to spend any more time on it.

What you said today about the possibility of there being animal mind, preta mind and so forth, that's true. Just as it's the case that a human being can generate a mind of the form realm and formless realm, which are also actual states of rebirth because a human being can generate the certain types of concentration that are concentrations of the form and formless realms, so also the human being can generate animal minds, hungry ghost minds and just as a person takes rebirth in form and formless realms because of generating the form and formless concentrations, so the human being can take rebirth as an animal because of generating an animalistic mentality. There are certain times in our life where these states of mind appear evidently and we even have expressions for that like a person is behaving unreasonably fearfully we may say they're "chicken" and there's a lot of these expressions, animal names that are given to certain types of behavior, and that's because that behavior doesn't conform with the dignity of the human being.

So if one dies with that type of mentality active then you get the body that best accords with that mentality and likewise with liberation. Liberation is a state of peace, one has been pacified of the disturbing negative thoughts, and being forced uncontrollably to take rebirth. So the source of the disturbing negative thoughts and karma is the ignorant misconception of the self. So when the person through the cultivation of a special insight into reality is able to completely abandon that conception of self and thus all the other afflictions and karma by virtue of eliminating their foundation, then that person is said to be liberated even though they are still a human being, and after death who knows where that person goes. Their mental continuum doesn't cease. They still have the experience of liberation. The continuum of mind is not something that is dependent upon ignorance, as ignorance is mind that is distorted, so all we're doing is correcting the distortion. So all of this experience like our whole life experience here, is like when we got off the highway to get on a shortcut and we got lost, and it became a nightmare. So when you get liberated it's like finding your way back home again. What you do there, we who are still lost can only just guess.

Remember the definition of mind, clear and knowing. Mind, consciousness, are synonymous and main minds and mental factors are minds, because they are clear and knowing. They are products as we know. The visual consciousness for example arises by depending upon a visual object, an eye sense faculty and the immediately preceding moment of consciousness.

So then the mind that we have now what is its original cause (our present mind today thinking in this moment)? What is its original cause? That would be the first moment of consciousness in the womb.

That would have been a mental consciousness (Missing approx. 4 minutes.)

in all three realms, desire, form and formless realms it comes in the general category of mental factors known as object ascertaining mental factors and it is defined as a mental factor of fine discrimination, which can discriminate between whether a thing is virtuous or non virtuous. Now this definition is a biased one, it is biased from the point of view of

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how intelligence should be employed along the spiritual path. Using the faculty of mind to discriminate what sort of story you are going to tell somebody in order to convince them to buy your product might be the same mental factor but it doesn't have this definition. So this intelligence, mental factor in Sanskrit is called prajna, which is often translated as wisdom, but you can also translate it as intelligence based upon the definition of being fine discrimination which is something which sounds like intelligence. But if we call it wisdom we certainly put it in a different category than the cleverness of buying and selling things and it is a mental factor that you only find with the mental consciousness.

The five sense consciousnesses do not have this mental factor of intelligence, also for example concentration that's also another object ascertaining mental factor and this enables one to focus single pointedly on an object without being distracted by excitement or laxity, this too is only a mental consciousness, you can't develop your concentration merely by looking at something with the eyes, there has to be a mental thought for instance going on that produces an image or that you use to focus single pointedly with. This mental factor concentration is said to function to increase wisdom, intelligence, because if you can focus single pointedly on something for a long time then that enables you to analyze very finely all of the qualities and characteristics of a thing, particularly determining whether the thing exists in the way it appears.

Concentration is something that depends upon another object ascertaining mental factor which is known as mindfulness.

Mindfulness is the factor of not forgetting and it functions in the way of holding any object without letting it go. In this context it's mainly referring to virtuous objects as this is a presentation of mind and mental factors that are either supportive or destructive of the path to liberation. So if you want to have good concentration then you have this ability to bring to mind an object and hold it there. To do that you need effort, which is found in the category of virtuous mental factors, this effort is the mental factor that delights in virtue and it functions to cause new qualities to develop and old qualities to reach perfection. It's essential in the bringing to conclusion any virtuous work. It is a specific type of endeavor, not all types of endeavor are this specific mental factor effort. This one is delighting in virtue, delighting in making money is not the same thing, due to delight in making money a person can generate a lot of energy and also use up all their time. From the point of view of the definition of effort that was given here, that type of endeavor is called laziness, the type of endeavor of rejoicing or delighting in making money is called laziness. Now

from the point of view of the person who delights in making money, the person who's spending all their life meditating and studying is lazy. The person who is devoting their life the meditation and studying can regard this other person as lazy, both are exerting effort but they have different results. The industrialist has the result of great wealth, the spiritual practitioner has the result of liberation and Enlightenment. So after the industrialist gets all of their money are they happy? No they're not, and they will say so. So therefore they've wasted their time. The person who gets liberation and Enlightenment is happy. So they didn't waste their time.

So if we judge laziness or not being lazy on the basis of getting the results you want then this person who delights in virtue is the one who is not lazy and so from this point of

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view engaging in other activities is a laziness and that laziness undermines their effort. There's different kinds of laziness.

Laziness is a mental factor that you find among the twenty secondary afflictions. It's defined as the mind that does not delight in virtue and it has different types. Such as delighting in the non virtues, delighting in doing nothing. Delighting in doing nothing is something that you discover when you're relaxing in your favorite chair in front of the television and somebody asks you to do something, then you discover how much you enjoy sitting in that chair doing nothing. There's other forms of laziness, one of which is self discouragement, such as thinking that you can't possibly enter into the spiritual path, thinking like I just couldn't do it. "That's okay for those high beings but not for me." Okay so that thought is a form of laziness. The Buddha said that "even if a mosquito made the effort it could become a Buddha, you human beings have more capacity than a mosquito all that's lacking is effort". Remember effort is delighting in virtue. So this is the key. Sometimes the expression of putting effort into something appears to the mind like drudgery, like work, sweating, breaking one's nails. There's expressions like I don't know if you have in French. We have an expression for a person "working like a mule." "working like a mule" If you ever watch a mule work it's real drudgery.

But here idea of effort is delighting in virtue. Enjoying it, this comes from aspiration which is an object ascertaining mental factor, which is a mental factor that having ascertained a virtuous object then seeks it. This mental factor arises from the virtuous mental factor of faith. The virtuous mental factor of faith is a mind that causes peace with respect to a valid object, it's a mental factor that has a valid object and causes all the disturbing thoughts to be removed from the mind when you focus on that object. There's different types.

One is the faith of conviction which arises by depending upon reasons, such that one's mind has penetrated to whatever that object is, so that is you know what that object is. Then there is a purifying faith that with respect to the qualities that one sees the object having causes the mind to have a peace or tranquillity that arises in the heart, a kind of joy. Like for

instance sometimes when you read biographies of great saints and there you become aware of the qualities that such a person exhibited and that causes a kind of joyful energy in your heart then from this can come the aspiration to achieve such qualities oneself. The mental factor of effort sustains that aspiration.

There's another object ascertaining mental factor called belief and that mental factor takes as it's object an object that has been ascertained and holds that object in the face of all discouragement. So if somebody were to tell you no it's not true , but if you have this mental factor of belief then it wouldn't matter what they said you'd still hold that as true. So by depending then on faith the aspiration arises so faith will arise by coming to know for instance the different qualities of an object or the different reasons that validate the existence of the object and that's obtained by for instance listening and studying. Some conviction comes from thinking about what you've been studying and listening to. Aspiration then arises. Then effort comes, with that effort seeing the various qualities, the various functions that say concentration can give you and you aspire to achieve that. Then you generate the effort to do so.

Through this effort one cultivates mindfulness and through mindfulness you'll be able to hold the object throughout the whole meditation period. Then through another mental

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factor called introspection which is a type of intelligence you analyze whether or not any subtle factors are affecting the concentration, any subtle negative mental factors are affecting the concentration such as the secondary afflictions of excitement and laxity. We are then through the exercise of the virtuous mental factor of conscientiousness which is a combination of four other virtuous mental factors, those being the mental factors of detachment, non anger, non ignorance and effort. Then one avoids any kind of action that is not conducive to the spiritual development and thus applies whatever antidotes are necessary to eliminate these adverse factors of excitement and laxity, until one arrives at a place where these negative mental factors don't occur at all. Then you have to break the habit of utilizing this mental factor of introspection, because although it was helpful at the time, it still divides your attention between the object of concentration and the state of mind you have. For this you employ the virtuous mental factor known as equanimity, which is a state of mind that remains in an equal state free from excitement and laxity, which sounds like a type of contentment, which then counters this impulse to resort to introspection. Then through this, one arrives at single pointedness, which is achieved through the power of familiarity, which is brought about through the mental factor of mindfulness, of being able to hold the object without losing it. This single pointedness then gives rise to the virtuous mental factor known as pliancy, which provides one with the ability to use the mind in whatever way you want.

Pliancy is said to be the actual antidote to laziness. Although laziness and effort counteract each other it is pliancy that eliminates any danger of laziness because then you can use your mind to do any virtuous activity without any resistance, like for instance if there was an opportunity to take precepts in the early morning, a person who generated pliancy, as soon as they have the thought to take precepts then the mind would just go there. Without pliancy then when the thought to take precepts arises it might be followed by the thought to not take precepts.

This mental pliancy can produce a physical pliancy in which the body also gives no resistance to virtuous activities, in particular this meditative activity. The body feels extremely light, like a cotton ball. There's no pain in the knees or the back or any thing like that. Then due to the physical pliancy then that gives rise to a physical joy, then that physical joy gives rise to a mental joy. So those two joys indicate that one has arrived at the type of concentration that is known as calm abiding, which is in the category of an actual dhyana which is a mind of the form realm. Then by means of this state of mind one can cultivate intelligence with respect to the object reality, that is then using the mental factor of fine discrimination, and when that fine discrimination enhances one's concentration instead of dividing it one achieves penetrative insight or higher seeing. This is also known as the yoga or union of calm abiding and penetrative insight. Quite a high achievement. With such an achievement one enters into what's known as the path of preparation, and due to the force of familiarity, that penetrative insight perceiving reality (which at this stage is still just a conceptual mind) will become a direct experience of reality, known as the path of seeing. When you achieve the path of seeing you longer create any more karma and you don't take rebirth through the force of karma. You're not done yet though.

There's still the path of meditation to go before you reach the path of no more learning. The path of no more learning is the state of liberation. It gets it's name because you no longer have to learn anything more to achieve liberation.

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So there was a little presentation of how these different mental factors are operating. There wasn't enough time to go into all of them, but you get some idea. The last aggregate, the fifth one is these six main minds which I mentioned before. Somebody asked at lunch whether or not there are any more than six. According to say, the Prasangika school of Buddhist philosophy there are only six, but within mental consciousness you can divide between gross forms and subtle forms. In the Cittamatrīn school that follows scripture, you find a presentation of eight consciousnesses. There is another school whose presentation asserts there is only one consciousness, and it just looks out through the different doors of the senses like one person in a house with many windows.

In the presentation of eight consciousnesses, there are the six that were first mentioned, then a seventh one, known as the afflicted consciousness and the eighth one known as the foundation consciousness. So there are these different schools of thought. The Cittamatrīn following reasoning just asserts six consciousnesses, so even the same school can't agree. The Cittamatrīn school following scripture would refer to such scriptures of the Buddha as the Lankavatara sutra which mentions the eight consciousnesses. But the great logician Dharmakīrti who had a special psychic power by means of which he could never be defeated in debate, (much to the annoyance of many non Buddhists) could not accept that there were eight consciousnesses. He found that the afflicted mind was part of mental consciousness, and that the various functions for which the foundation consciousness was asserted to be responsible could also be explained by the mental consciousness.

You might be attending teachings on tantra and you might hear such expressions as "clear light consciousness". The Prasangika's would say that this would be an example of a subtle mental consciousness and also all the conceptual or thought consciousnesses are mental consciousnesses. Dreams would be a mental consciousness, although we can sometimes talk about hearing and seeing in dreams, such hearing and seeing should be properties of auditory and visual consciousnesses shouldn't they? The Prasangika's would say dream visual consciousness and dream auditory consciousness, they just use conventional expressions.

According to them there doesn't have to be any more validity for a thing than just how it's used conventionally, because they say that all things are existing merely by name and thought. But that's all a subject of next month's seminar, so you have to sta