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Transcending the boundaries

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RANGJUNG DORJE'S VARIEGATIONS OF MIND

Ordinary awareness and pristine awareness in Tibetan Buddhist literature

Michael R. Sheehy

Buddhist meditative practices, in their magnificent varieties, recognize the importance of acknowledging one's interior life.¹ For there to be contemplative cultivation of the human mind, and total flourishing of one's capacities, there must be an honest assessment of the habits of awareness. In order to assess the ordinary habits of awareness, Buddhist contemplative traditions have devised introspective techniques and composed personal-guidance texts for the practical application and instruction of contemplatives in discerning what is psychologically demeaning from what is psychologically enhancing within the life of the mind.

Oscillating within the polarities of seduction to repulsion, hopefulness to fearfulness, attraction to aversion, living within this natural divide as if internal discursive dialogues were the only life of the mind, ordinary awareness remains trapped within its patterns of reactivity and obsessive self-preoccupation. Recognizing this divide, and the contemplative torque that follows acknowledging one's interior life, Buddhist contemplative and psychological traditions emphasize knowing how awareness can reify the repetitive patterns that create discursiveness and emotional upset – *samsāra* (*'khor ba*), and the conscious life that lies beyond those disturbing patterns of anguish – *nirvāṇa* (*myang 'das*).²

In order to differentiate everyday delusory conscious experience in all its multifaceted cognitive, affective, and conative dimensions from non-delusory pure lucid wakefulness, we will investigate the mind through our reading of a fourteenth century Tibetan text by the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje. Since Rangjung Dorje's treatise is concerned with clearly distinguishing buddha minds from the minds of non-buddhas, it serves as a support for meditators who wish to proceed towards buddhahood without confusion. Through our reading, we will examine how the 8 modalities of ordinary non-buddha awareness interplay with the 5 types of pristine buddha awareness in order to address the question: "What is the distinction between ordinary awareness and pristine awareness?" – or, as

Rangjung Dorje so succinctly asks at the onset of his treatise, “From what source does so-called ‘delusion’ and ‘non-delusion’ arise?”

The text

In his short text entitled, “Ordinary Awareness and Pristine Awareness, A Treatise on the Distinction,” the Third Karmapa Rangjung Dorje (1284–1339) discusses the differences between ordinary modes of awareness – *rnam shes* – and pristine awareness – *ye shes* – or the differences between non-buddha minds, and the mind of a buddha. Synthesizing psychology and metaphysics drawn from the Abhidharma, epistemology, Madhyamaka, and Yogācāra philosophy of mind with Vajrayāna understandings of consciousness and its transformations, this text, along with the author’s “A Precise Ascertainment of the Essence of Enlightenment,” and “The Profound Inner Meaning,” is regarded as one of the seminal texts of the Karma Kagyud tradition.³ It belongs to the genre of Tibetan Buddhist contemplative literature that clearly distinguishes (*shan ’byed*) the experiential topics necessary for accurately proceeding with one’s meditative praxis.⁴

Succinctly stating the intent and content of this treatise, Jamgon Kongtrul explains in his commentary:

This treatise explains the orientation of ordinary awareness and the orientation of pristine awareness by condensing their respective meanings. It explains how the root of delusion and non-delusion are the everyday mind, and it establishes how appearances are mind, it demonstrates how the mind was never born, and it explains how the causal condition of delusion is the eight modes of ordinary awareness.⁵

Our reading of my selected translated verses of this fourteenth century treatise will be accompanied by its word-for-word commentary (*tshig ’grel*) by Jamgon Kongtrul (1813–1899) entitled, “An Adornment of Rangjung Dorje’s Essential Intent” and its expanded commentary (*mchan ’grel*) by the Fifteenth Karmapa Khakyab Dorje (1871–1922) entitled, “Oral Advice of Manjushri, The Ketaka Gem of Untainted Radiance.”⁶

The basic dichotomy

Buddha minds and non-buddha minds

Within Tibetan Buddhist psychological and contemplative literature, there is a common phrase: “*sangs rgyas med cing sems can med*,” “without buddhas, there would be no sentient beings.” This is to say buddhas (*sangs rgyas*) are those who have cleared (*sangs*) away the darkness of both the cognitive and emotional obscurations while they have expanded (*rgyas*) the brilliance of both the pristine awareness that knows the nature of reality, and the pristine awareness that knows

the multiplicity of everything knowable.⁷ In other words, because the mind is capable of concealing and contracting as ordinary non-buddha awareness, it has the capacity to purify and flourish as the pristine awareness of a buddha.

Accordingly, non-buddhas or sentient beings are literally “those endowed with a mind” (*sems can*), a mind (*sems*) deluded by the perceptual distortions (*‘khrul snang*) that alter conscious experience, and inhibited by emotional and cognitive obscurations (*sgrib gnyis*).⁸ These double inhibiting forces obscure pristine awareness like a veil covering the buddha mind, creating a schism between awareness and its objects. Jamgon Kongtrul likens this schism to refracting representations in a mirror:

In a mirror, images appear – as if appearing to exist or not. By not knowing the appearances of mind, conceptual dividing gives rise to dichotic divisions. Because conceptual dividing and habitual propensities act in unison, multiplicities arise from the mind. Human beings, outward appearances, the realms of our world – they are all merely the mind.⁹

This dichotomous perception (*snang gnyis*), the ordinary habitual tendency of awareness to bifurcate conscious experience, is the basic schema that separates buddha minds from the minds of non-buddhas.

While the ordinary awareness (*rnam shes*) of non-buddha minds divides and discerns (*rnam*) the features of awareness (*shes*) according to its spatial and temporal referents, the pristine awareness (*ye shes*) of buddha minds operates without spatial or temporal (*ye*) designations of awareness (*shes*).¹⁰ In fact, the Tibetan technical terms for awareness reflect these meanings. For instance, the Tibetan term for ordinary awareness or consciousness is “*rnam par shes pa*,” a translation of the Sanskrit term “*viññāna*” that literally means, “knowing through divisions” and is commonly defined as “cognizing through discerning the essence of sensible objects.”¹¹ Choosing to emphasize the timeless, atemporal, and primordial connotation of awareness associated with enlightened beings,¹² early Tibetan translators opted to transfer the Sanskrit term “*jñāna*,” which is equivalent to the Tibetan term “*shes pa*” (“to know”) into “*ye gnas kyi shes pa*” which can literally be rendered as “timelessly abiding awareness,” and which has no Sanskrit equivalent; it is defined as “the empty lucent cognizance that abides through the natural continuum of all sentient beings.”¹³

This natural continuum is the common ground (*gzhi gcig*) from which awareness oscillates. Out of its active oscillation, awareness either strays into delusional (*‘khrul pa*) modes of objectifying phenomenal forms, or continues free from delusions (*‘khrul bra!*). As Jamgon Kongtrul writes in his commentary on the title of Rangjung Dorje’s treatise:

Just as the eight modes of ordinary awareness at the root of saṃsāra appear as sentient beings possessed by delusion – in the same way, the pristine awareness that is the nature of nirvāṇa appears as buddhas, free from delusion. Although their basis is the same, their differentiated ways of appearing are completely distinct.¹⁴

Though their modes of operation are distinct, buddhas and non-buddhas share the same basis. Without conceptual division (*rnam par rtog pa*), awareness would continue unaltered, but because awareness makes conceptual divisions, ordinary awareness is entrapped within the limits of its self-designed dichotomy.¹⁵

The dynamics of dichotomy

A typology of mind

To consider Buddhist contemplative techniques and introspective methods for discerning the life of the mind means to take into account traditions that have given priority to subjectivity and the immediacy of conscious experience. Within Abhidharma literature, there are intricate systems of classifying the phenomenal factors (S: *dharma*) of experience in accord with moments of the mind.¹⁶ Based upon first-person accounts of consciousness and the experiential correlates of consciousness, the Abhidharma systems developed extensive typologies of mind (*sems*) and the mental phenomena that arise from the operations of mind (*sems byung*). Since these typologies are based upon descriptive accounts, they offer an event-ontology rather than a substance-ontology, an experiential analysis of awareness that undermines the idea of a coherent, unified self.

Examining the continuum of personhood and the processes of perceiving, Buddhist analysis of mind generally classifies experience into two types: interior awareness (*nang gi shes*), and exterior referents (*phyi don*).¹⁷ More specifically, Abhidharma literature subdivides the dynamics of dichotic experience into 6 sense faculties (*dbang po*), 6 sensible objects (*yul*), and 6 modes of perceptual awareness (*rnam shes*). The 6 faculties are the sensory capacities of the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind; the 6 objects are the senses of sights, sounds, smells, tastes, textures, and mental phenomena; the 6 modalities of perceptual awareness are visual, auditory, olfactory, gustatory, tactile, and mental. Each of these specific perceptual modalities of awareness arises automatically when a particular sensible object comes into its corresponding sensory domain, and interacts (*reg pa*) with the correlative sense faculty.¹⁸

The six perceptual modalities of awareness operate as an integrative system to acutely attend (*rtog pa*) and sustain a reflexive attention (*dpyod pa*) of distinct external objects.¹⁹ In the immediately succeeding instance of unmediated sensory perception, these two subtle inseparable factors select and steadily consider the presence of discrete discontinuous moments of awareness – like a bumblebee hovering over, and inspecting a honeysuckle blossom.²⁰ Questioning this selective perceptual process, and its analysis of particular objects, Rangjung Dorje writes:

Ordinary conscious awareness of the five sense entrances, by having accepted and rejected forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures, have generated emotional disturbances. So, what are these so-called sensible

objects? If the wise carefully examine, they will not be able to establish the existence of anything external, such as atoms and so forth, as other than their own discerning cognitive awareness.²¹

Not the same and yet, not different, ordinary perceptual awareness and its objects co-create each other. In this way, duality does not occur due to either exterior objects, or interior awareness.²² Rather, it occurs due to the confluence of multivariable circumstances generating the conditions for dichotomy.

Noting the co-relational nature of perceptual awareness and sensible objects, Jamgon Kongtrul explains the conditions for their co-arising:

The “predominant condition” (*bdag pa'i rkyen*) allows for perceptual awareness in congruence with the five sense entrances of the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body along with immanent mental awareness. The “objective condition” (*dmigs pa'i rkyen*) allows for distinct sensible objects – the five external referents of form, sound, smell, taste, and texture to encounter and impinge, depending upon contact.²³

In order for a moment of perception to occur, a sense faculty and its respective mode of perceptual awareness must be present. Once these factors are present, a sensible object must occur in the field of one's sense faculty. In other words, the primary or “predominant condition” necessary for perception is the capacity to perceive. When this capacity is present, there must also be the presence of a sensible object or the “objective condition.” The nexus of these inter-relational factors allows for perceptual awareness, as such awareness occurs as a consequence of the concomitance of sense faculties and objects.²⁴

The subject–object complex

Observing that perceptual awareness occurs in concurrence with its sense faculty, and its correlative sensible object, Abhidharma traditions determined the consequence of the confluence between these three factors to be a dualistic experience – the experience of separateness between interior awareness and exterior referents.²⁵ As we have seen, when the conditions for perceptual awareness are present, the six modes of sensory awareness selectively perceive, setting awareness apart from objects. The structuring of this subject–object complex (*gzung 'dzin*) is based upon bifurcation of the percept from the perceiver at the instant of perception. For this to occur there must be subjective perceptual fixation (*'dzin*) on an object of fixity (*gzung*). When percept and perceiver are two, polarizing patterns of opposition ensue, inciting seduction and repulsion. As Jamgon Kongtrul explains

By having relied upon touch, desiring what is beautiful, melodious, and so forth, and by being seduced by what is enticing, disturbing emotions and lustful attachment arise. By not wanting what is ugly, unpleasant,

and so forth, and by being repulsed by what is disgusting, hostility and hatred arise.

By not realizing the nature of equanimity and balance, ignorance arises and karma is accumulated. So, having accepted this, beings continue to wander throughout saṃsāra, creating affection for attractive appearances, as if they were real.²⁶

When an object of sensation (*yul*) and its subject of sensory awareness (*yul can*) are split, this schism incurs a perceptual division that results in attraction towards what is lust inducing, repulsion away from what is disgusting, and indifference in regards to what is neutral. In this sequence, what follows is a dichotomizing perceptual process that situates subjective experience in contrast to objective reality. With subject and object divorced, a protective impulse to fixate onto one's sense of self (*bdag 'dzin*) against something "other" succeeds.

As the centerpiece of experience fixates onto its sense of self-importance, patterns of reactivity and defensiveness are stimulated, and discursiveness is initiated. Fixating activates cognitive and affective responses resulting in neurotic thought (*rnam rtog*), and emotional upset (*nyon mongs*). Intending to transform neurosis and disturbing emotions through ameliorating the conditions that generate dichotomizing perceptions, Rangjung Dorje returns to his earlier question: "So, what are these so-called sensible objects?" To deconstruct the common conviction that external reality is not the mind, Rangjung Dorje examines as follows:

If the substance of sensible objects were simultaneously other than conscious awareness, then they could not have the same nature. Because inert material substances do not arise from invisible immaterial cognition, their arising cannot be related. By accepting that sensible objects are other than awareness, it is illogical to think that sensible objects would appear from conscious awareness.²⁷

Addressing the reductionistic and theistic tendency to view sensible objects as being in some way absolutely other than awareness, Rangjung Dorje argues that if matter were entirely different from cognition, then cognitive awareness could not perceive material forms – the sensible objects of sight, sound, smell, taste, and texture. For the mind to perceive matter, materiality and conscious perception must share a common nature. If material objects and conscious awareness did not share a common nature, then they could not relate, and there would be no possibility for perception.

Rangjung Dorje recognizes the perplexity of the "mind-body problem" that reduces awareness to an interior substance and sensible objects to an exterior substance, leaving the two irreconcilably different.²⁸ If we do not consider the causal-conditional matrix for awareness, and we are unable to account for the

neurological correlates of conscious experience, we are left with two lines of thought: either consciousness is an emergent property of matter, or matter sprang from consciousness.²⁹ In either case, the nature of interior awareness is equated with pure consciousness while the nature of exterior objects is equated with pure matter. Knowing the relationship between awareness and matter either shares the same nature or is of a different nature, Jamgon Kongtrul reconciles this fundamental dilemma:

If material exterior sensible objects such as forms and so forth were to exist as actual referents other than interior awareness, then awareness and objects would be two, and a relationship of the same nature could not exist.

If this were so, then a relationship between the sources from which they originate would not exist. This would make it impossible to demonstrate any involvement between objects and awareness, and immaterial discerning cognition could not be established as tangible matter.

Without cognition being able to produce inert material substances, these two divisions demonstrate themselves to be contradictory. The consequence of this line of thought is that materials would produce physical results from non-physical causes. Since this deduction is logical, it makes sense to accept that awareness and objects cannot exist without a relationship among the sources from which they originate.³⁰

Because the essence of awareness is not consciousness and the essence of objects is not matter, a relationship can exist between the two. Since they arise from the same source, they cohere, and share a relationship of the same nature (*bdag nyid gcig pa'i 'brel pa*).³¹

Refuting the reductionistic tendency to assert that facts about cognitive events are reducible to physical facts, Kongtrul continues to explain how perception cannot occur through the logic of reductionism:³²

In this way, the consequence that would follow is that visual awareness and the other perceptual modalities, as well as forms and the other sensible objects could not appear. There would be no reason for them to appear since they share no relationship to each other.³³

Following this logical consequence, Kongtrul concludes that since sensory perception accompanies sense referents, awareness and matter are inseparable. Regardless of their seemingly bipolar identities, awareness and matter – mind and body – relate as a subject–object complex.

In response to this assertion that awareness and objects share the same nature, the rational line of thought that follows is: “Since I can see and feel that objects are physical, and that my mind is not physical, they are two different things,

aren't they?" Anticipating this question, Rangjung Dorje replies:

Because of this, whatever appears is not a sensory object different than awareness. The occurrence of these objects is similar to the experience of cognizant-reflection. In fact, even the appearance of minute indivisible particles and vast openness are mind. Since their existence cannot be established externally or separately, the realization is that creators such as Brahmā and other such creator gods do not exist.³⁴

The natural deduction of Rangjung Dorje's verse is that whatever appears objectively cannot be ultimately determined as outside the purview of awareness, leaving ultimate interiority and ultimate exteriority as equally false constructs.³⁵

The merely dreamlike mind

Although an unreflective mind will remain entangled within its self-deceptive discursive schemas, our interior life is knowable through reflection. Due to the mind's capability to know itself – its capacity for cognizable reflexivity (*rang rig*) – awareness is able to cognize awareness.³⁶ Likewise, just as awareness has introspective access to its own private sphere of subjectivity, awareness also has access to the objective sphere. In the same way as a mind can know its own conscious lifeworld, a mind can know the outward world of appearances.

For this reason, as Rangjung Dorje mentioned, being conscious of one's own awareness is like being conscious of externalized things, whether this is the subtlest speck of matter, pervasiveness, or a tremendous creator. In this way, whether a mind cognizes non-objectified reflective mind forms or objectified forms such as an atom or a god – whether a mind concretizes awareness, or concretizes phenomenon that seem to be outside awareness – these experiences are similar. In describing this nature of conscious experience metaphorically, Rangjung Dorje writes: "Furthermore, the relationship between one's mental awareness and phenomena are similar to the experience of a dream. This is to say, this relationship is consumed by the mind fixating onto referents that have no true reality."³⁷

Once the five modalities of sensory perceptual awareness directly apprehend a sensible object, the sixth mode of perceptual awareness cognizes the object apprehended. Though mental awareness (*vid kyi rnam shes*) cognizes sensory perception or apperceives, it does not directly perceive sensible objects. Operating synchronously with the five modes of sensory perceptual awareness, mental awareness perceives the cognitive phenomena (*sems byung*) immediately proceeding instants of sensory perception. These mental acts are what characterize and qualify conscious experience; they are the activated events that make up the phenomenal contents of mental awareness.³⁸

Mental awareness relates to these mental factors in a dream in the same way that it relates to these factors as waking awareness. Dream phenomena arise within interior awareness, and are conceived by mental awareness as being

exterior phenomena. When one awakes from a dream, one knows that what was perceived during dreamtime was not real – yet while dreaming, it was conceived as real. This is exactly how mental awareness cognizes. Khakyab Dorje explains:

While asleep, the habitual propensities of being awake are subdued beneath the threshold of waking awareness. While dreaming, one continues to directly experience perception of sensible objects. For instance, previous habitual propensities of one's mental awareness can bring forth the recollection of a vase.

That very instance of perception is a crucial juncture. As soon as sensory perception occurs, the habitual momentum related to that objective referent will continue as the following thought. Without examining one's perceptual experience of the vase's presence, it ends up that one conceives reality as concrete, without establishing its actual realness, other than mental awareness.³⁹

Whether we are awake or dreaming, mental awareness associates what is perceived according to the habitual propensities (*bag chags*) accumulated during previous encounters with objects of awareness. At this instance of perceptual recollection, these propensities are reactivated. As the momentum of mental awareness is propelled by habitual force of thought, cognitive propensities perpetuate the dichotic dynamic. By conceiving what is perceived, mental awareness seizes onto objects as if they were real (*bden zhen*), and this cyclic process of cognitive re-occurrence re-initiates the subject–object complex.

Describing how this reifying habit of awareness generates the entirety of experience, Rangjung Dorje states

Likewise, the six modes of ordinary perceptual awareness, the appearance of exterior referents, living beings, self-importance, cognitive discernment, and the manifestation of whatever appears are not produced from anything else; they are not produced from themselves, they are not produced from both themselves and others, and they are not produced from the absence of themselves and others. In the same way, the victorious one taught that everything within *samsāra* and *nirvāṇa* is merely the mind.⁴⁰

As we have discussed, the exterior referents of awareness cannot be ultimately separated from awareness itself. They are not produced from anything other than awareness. Once this is understood, Rangjung Dorje considers how awareness lacks intrinsic existence by being oriented in relation to its objects. Here, Jamgon Kongtrul gives an example to demonstrate the relativity of awareness:

Well then, though the reality of exterior referents cannot be established, what if we wonder about the existence of interior awareness? To illustrate that it also can not be established, let's consider what is referred to as "that

mountain over there.” In the same way that that mountain is relative to “this mountain over here,” awareness and the objects of awareness are relative to “me.” If there were no exterior referents to apprehend, there would be no apprehending awareness whatsoever on which to establish “me.”⁴¹

As exterior referents are oriented according to interior awareness, awareness is oriented in relationship to its referents. In order for there to be perspective, there must be a reference point, and the reference point for awareness and its correlative objects is one’s self, the center of attention.

The multidimensionality of awareness

Supraliminal and subliminal awareness

To account for how unconscious propensities influence the conscious continuum without substantiating stimuli or mental phenomenal factors, Yogācāra analysis of mind elaborated on earlier Abhidharma formulations.⁴² Contributing to the observation made within Abhidharma literature that conscious experience is liminal – occurring at the threshold of sensory perceptual awareness and mental awareness, this new model of mind introduced two modalities beneath the threshold of awareness. In addition to the six modalities of supraliminal awareness discussed above, Yogācāra scholarship introduced two modes of subliminal awareness: tainted mental awareness (*nyon yid kyi rnam shes*), and the universal basis for awareness (*kun gzhi rnam shes*).⁴³

In the same way that the modalities of ordinary supraliminal awareness are not vacuous but conditional, these additional modes of subliminal awareness also occur due to the intersection of circumstantial forces. As was mentioned earlier, sensible objects along with mental phenomenal factors constitute the “objective condition” (*dmigs pa’i rkyen*), while the “predominant condition” (*bdag pa’i rkyen*) for perceptual awareness is the sense faculties.⁴⁴ Clarifying that these faculties are not the actual organs of sensory perception but rather their basic capacities, Rangjung Dorje describes these faculties as “lucidity endowed with form,” the organic constituents of consciousness.⁴⁵

In accord with the “objective condition,” sensible objects are perceived directly by sensory awareness, and the proceeding instance gives rise to a moment of indirect cognitive apperception of mental phenomenal factors. This instance apperceives the mental representation, or image of an object.⁴⁶ Since mental awareness does not directly perceive objects but rather apperceives the immediately following mental factor, this modality of awareness acts as an intermediary between mental awareness and the other modalities of perceptual awareness. As Rangjung Dorje states, “Although sensory perceptual awareness perceives objective referents, it is the conceptualizing mental factor that cognizes their distinctive qualities. Mental awareness relies upon both the immediate and tainted mental awareness.”⁴⁷

Expounding on how the cognitive modalities concur, Kongtrul further elucidates this instantaneous perceptual process:

Just as visual perceptual awareness sees exterior referents, all the five modes of perceptual awareness perceive their corresponding objective appearances of forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and textures without being aware of a particular thought such as “vase” or “pillar.” For example, through visual perceptual awareness, blue arises without thinking: “this is blue.”⁴⁸

What happens during this concurrence is that mental awareness begins to form a concept of what is perceived. Kongtrul continues

This is why, at the onset, sensory modalities of awareness perceive their apparent objects. Then there is awareness of the object's distinctive qualities through the conceptualizing mental factor. Due to this interior mental factor, conceptualization apprehends the distinguishing qualities of an object. By thinking, “this sight is awful,” “this sight is wonderful,” or having the thought, “this sound is pleasant,” “this sound is unpleasant,” and so forth, conceptualization comes about through reliance upon mental awareness.⁴⁹

As one of the five omnipresent mental factors, conceptualization (*'du shes*) is the act of cognition that identifies the specific characteristics of an object of perception, associates that identification with a thought, and consequently reifies what is perceived.⁵⁰

Although conceptualization is the conceptual structure that associates perceptions with latent memory traces of previous perceptual experiences, mental awareness is not the source from which these latent traces re-arise. For mental awareness to access the associative predispositions that lie dormant beneath perceptual awareness and that are reactivated through apprehending the particular qualities of a percept, mental awareness is dependent upon the two facets of the seventh modality of ordinary awareness: immediate mental awareness (*de ma thag pa'i rnam shes*), and tainted mental awareness (*nyon yid kyi rnam shes*).

In accord with the two conditions that allow for the appearance of sensible objects and their perception to occur, the “immediate condition” (*de ma thag pa'i rkyen*) provides the circumstantial forces for an immediately proceeding moment of awareness. Because immediate mental awareness is the condition for perceptual awareness to occur and re-occur, ordinary awareness is able to generate perception of an object in an instant, and then dissipate in the next. Rangjung Dorje explains further:

Because immediate mental awareness is the condition for the generation and dissipation of the six modes of ordinary perceptual awareness, it is

in congruence and accordance with the frequency of the instantaneous generation and dissipation of the six modes of ordinary perceptual awareness. It is known by a mind imbued with yoga, and through the teachings of the victor.⁵¹

This successive sequence is what determines the liminality of awareness, the surface-level continuum of consciousness, as well as the liason between supraliminal awareness, and the subliminal basis for awareness. Jamgon Kongtrul unpacks the reciprocity of this condition:

What is referred to as “immediate mental awareness” is what creates the generative condition for immediacy, so that the six modalities of perceptual awareness can rapidly arise. Even if the six perceptual modalities were to cease, the six modalities’ capability for immediacy would create the condition for potentials to subside into the universal basis. This is why it is the immediate condition for both the generation and dissipation of ordinary awareness.

Furthermore, if there is cessation of the six perceptual modalities, this is explained to be identical to the mental faculty, since the immediate modal awareness continues to deposit (potentials) within the universal basis. All of these potentials instantly become like the conditions that force waves from water. This is how the immediate mental modality emerges through diffusing and deeply agitating the abiding universal basis.⁵²

Sustaining homogeneity among supraliminal and subliminal modes of awareness, and maintaining coherence between the cessation of one moment of awareness, and its antecedent, immediate mental awareness thus allows for the association of unconscious propensities with one’s perceived experience.

To understand how immediate mental awareness acts as a mediatory agent that maintains the continuum of awareness while simultaneously individuating, dividing, and identifying with the conscious continuum, Rangjung Dorje introduces the affectively tainted facet of mental awareness:⁵³

Within the mind itself, there is an aspect of this immediate mental awareness that is said to be “the mental awareness endowed with tainted emotionality” because, due to the transitory nature of the constituents of embodied experience, it fixates onto an egocentric attitude, conceitedness, and self-infatuation while infused with ignorance.⁵⁴

Reconciling the egocentric conviction that there is an autonomous agent that intrinsically acts in the world with the observation within Buddhist philosophy of mind that there are only transient fluctuations of mental moments, Waldron hints at how the mind (*sems*) is not identical to the phenomenal factors that arise within the mind (*sems byung*).⁵⁵

By misidentifying the active contents of mind as the nature of mind, a dissonance occurs that consistently reaffirms cognitive and affective factors, and reasserts the feeling of individuation. Though this felt sense of a unified self will persist unanalyzed, Buddhist analysis suggests that this is due to a misapprehension of the actual flux of awareness. As this analysis deepens, afflicted factors are regarded as actively associated (*dang bcas*), or neutrally connate (*lhan skyes*). Because the visceral sense of a self is so persistent and is not determined by mental fluctuations, the four afflicted factors – egocentric attitude (*ngar sems*), conceit (*nga rgyal*), self-infatuation (*nga la chags*), and ignorance (*ma rig pa*) – are connate or indeterminate.⁵⁶ Jamgon Kongtrul elaborates

Moreover, not realizing that the nature of one's own mind is undefiled and that the universal basis of one's mind is imbued with defilements; through objectification, there is an egocentric attitude, conceitedness, seizing onto the feeling of oneself as superior, and then having seized onto cherishing oneself more than others, there is coveting and self-infatuation – all while entrenched within ignorance, not realizing that "I" has no reality. Due to perpetual dividing, these four disturbing emotions persist.⁵⁷

With these four afflictive factors constantly present, tainted mental awareness mistakenly identifies the representations of mind as the actuation of personal experience. This act of mistaken identity results in the assumption of a substantiated self.

Based upon this false assumption of a self, the operative function of tainted mental awareness is to project assumptions outward. Consequently, these pretentious projections impute affectively toned stains or defilements (*dri ma*) onto conscious experience. It is this affect that Kongtrul refers to as invalid cognition (*tshad ma ma yin*):

In regard to this modal awareness, where tainted affectivity abides: it is without valid cognition, and it gives rise to every invalid means of cognitive understanding. The habitual propensities of the universal basis are the essence of its inhibitive force. Because it is indeterminate, it is the source of all conceptual imputations and disturbing emotions.

Moreover, it is explained as "inauthentic conceptual imputation." Because of this, the six modalities of perceptual awareness have produced distortions. By not recognizing the disturbing emotions that are to be relinquished, external projections persist.⁵⁸

Propelled by the imprints of previously experienced percepts and the egotistic impulse to substantiate itself, this facet of tainted mental awareness is what distorts experience. Because it does not depend upon associative mental factors, its egocentrically tainted affect subsists alongside all conscious events. With these afflictive affective factors constantly ascribing conceptual imputations (*kun rtog*)

and emotional distortions (*nyon mongs*), tainted mental awareness misconstrues what ordinarily can be known.

Coupled together, immediate mental awareness and tainted mental awareness act in unison to support the continuous processing of mental events, systematizing feedback between the supraliminal and subliminal modes of awareness and affectively influencing apperception. In brief, these two facets operate within mental awareness to: (1) maintain continuity and cohesiveness, and (2) obscure the basic nature of awareness.⁵⁹ Although this modality of subliminal awareness enables propensities to persist above the threshold of awareness, the reservoir of unconscious dispositions is the universal basis for awareness, *ālaya-vijñāna* (*kun gzhi rnam shes*).⁶⁰

As the receptacle for every remaining impression of past apperception, and uninitiated tendency, this subliminal mode operates as the residual basis or ground (*gzhi*). On this ground, imprints of previous actions lie like seeds (*sa bon*) dormant until the appropriate conditions ripen them into fruition (*'bras bu*). These potential seeds are latent memory traces that pervade and perfume this substratum until tainted mental awareness activates them. For this reason, the universal basis is referred to as the “causal condition” (*rgyu'i rkyen*), the fourth and final condition required for ordinary awareness to occur. Rangjung Dorje explains

To those with particularly refined intelligence, the Buddha taught the universal basis for awareness. It is also referred to as the “foundation for awareness,” the “source for awareness,” and the “receptacle for awareness.” Within it, all of the latent propensities generated by the seven types of ordinary awareness are accumulated distinctively and neutrally – like rainwater flowing into the ocean. This is why it is called the “ripening awareness.”

Because it generates everything and is the basis from which all potentials emerge, it is referred to as the “causal condition.” Nevertheless, since it is counteracted when the seven types of ordinary awareness are inverted, it is also known as “conditional ordinary awareness.”⁶¹

Being the abode or abiding place (*gnas*) for all associative as well as connate factors, the universal basis is the sustaining contributory force that gives rise to both constructive and destructive karmic patterns. In essence, it is the fundamental structuring that underlies all experience. Yet, it is not an isolated mode of awareness.⁶²

In fact, this universal ground is the residing place of sensible objects, sense faculties, and modal awareness itself. Jamgon Kongtrul likens this relationship between the seven modes of awareness and their basis to rain and the ocean:

For example, when it rains, rainwater flows into the rivers, and then their confluence flows into the ocean. Similarly, the six modes of perceptual

awareness are like rain, the seventh mode of awareness is like the rivers' confluence, and the universal basis is like the ocean.⁶³

Once a moment of perception occurs, the succeeding moment of apperception leaves an impression of that perceptual experience on this universal subliminal mind. In this way, mental, vocal, and somatic actions create habitual propensities for future perceptions, and future perceptions are generated by the subliminal mind. This reciprocity persists through the influence of tainted mental awareness that washes over experience like waves. Jamgon Kongtrul elaborates

Moreover, when the conditions are gathered, just like waves immediately arising and billowing forth from the ocean – from the universal basis that is the repository for all potentialities, tainted mental awareness billows forth and arises along with immediate mental awareness, and the efficacy of each and every distinctive potentiality that lies latent upon the surface of the universal basis is activated.⁶⁴

Overflowing what is above and below the surface of mind, the eight modalities overlap past with present awareness, and present awareness with future awareness to circulate – in a liquid-like way – and flow forth seemingly new waves of awareness.

The presence of pristine awareness

As the generative matrix from which one's latent dispositions are set into motion, the universal basis is the creative substructure of reality and experience. The fact that we are unable to distinguish this subliminal oceanic mind from the actual experience of reality sends sinuous reverberating waves undulating onto the shores of supraliminal awareness. With these waves, pulled and pushed by the gravitational force of previous impressions, being actuated in every moment of apperception, the subliminal basis for ordinary awareness becomes one's ordinary habits of awareness.

Underscoring this mutual causal conditioning, Jamgon Kongtrul reminds us of how experience and reality co-create each other:

Furthermore, the universal basis for ordinary awareness is the cause of all disturbing affective phenomena. Similarly, all disturbing affective phenomena are the patterning of the causal condition that is this universal basis for ordinary awareness, because nothing is perceived other than causal conditions.⁶⁵

In this cyclic way, the patterning of one's emotive and cognitive propensities determines one's present awareness, just as present awareness patterns one's propensities.

With this interpenetrative system circulating, Kongtrul continues to emphasize the importance of the practical arts of inner transformation, and how plasticity allows for a reversal of the universal basis for awareness.⁶⁶

Because everything interior and exterior arises and is created from it, and all hostile potentials come from this universal basis, it is said to be the “causal condition” of the six modalities of perceptual awareness. Through the capacity of learning and meditation, the seven modalities can internally reverse. Due to not accumulating new propensities – like rainwater in a quiescent ocean of contemplation – there is no cause for the universal basis to arise, because the universal basis has been reversed.⁶⁷

Just as unreflective minds extrovert through the systematic sequence of conditioned patterns of reactivity, a contemplative mind introverts these conditional sequences in order to fundamentally reorient awareness. Because the universal basis is the continual source of renewal, it is where a conscious revolution occurs.

The reversing of the psychological dispositions that causally condition apperceptions takes place through the meditative practice of quieting (*zhi gnas*) and penetrating with insight (*lhag mthong*) the automated reactive patterns that persist at the core of ordinary awareness. Although this radical shift inverts delusional habits to cause a pure view in align with reality (*yang dag pa'i lta ba*), this revolution of the basis is not the cause of pristine awareness (*ye shes*). Jamgon Kongtrul elucidates this difference:

As far as explaining the pure aspect of the universal basis, if we describe the universal basis as the conventional cause of utter purity, then that is correct. If we explain the universal basis for ordinary awareness as the cause of the pristine awareness of a nirvanic buddha, then that is incorrect.

If that's so, then illustrious phenomena and enlightened buddhahood are inseparable. However, if one asks: “Don't thoughts that rely upon a perfectly pure view subside upon the surface of the universal basis, and haven't these utterly pure phenomena arisen in the same way?” In response to this, the actuality of all phenomena, the very nature of one's mind that is the utterly pure ultimate dimension relies upon the essence of enlightenment.⁶⁸

When the tendencies that induce and influence ordinary awareness are eliminated through contemplative inversion, their momentum is reversed and the potentiality of the universal basis to manifest delusory awareness ceases. When this happens, the veil of distorted perceptions falls away, and the defilements that cover the pure aspect of the universal basis are reversed, revealing pure view – but still not the pristine awareness of a buddha.⁶⁹

Reflections

In conclusion, or at least concluding our discussion of ordinary awareness up to this point within the treatise, we can offer a few reflections on how ordinary awareness transmutes into pristine awareness. To begin with, let's return to Kongtrul's commentary on the meaning of this treatise:

Not knowing one's own nature, the universal basis created the source of delusion through actuating the subject-object complex. That which is designated as "sentient beings" and the revolving "three realms" excessively lusts for pleasures, and has brought about this great ocean of suffering.

By being free of the obscuring defilements that seize onto the five constituents of a sentient being's embodied experience, one is totally transformed. The five types of pristine awareness that are the actual nature of the four dimensions of enlightenment manifest.

In brief, the basis of designating "sentient being" is the five constituents. This is to say, the source of perceptual acquisitions is the everyday mind, mentation, and modal awareness. The source of buddhahood is born from transforming the five constituents of a sentient being.⁷⁰

These five constituents (*phung po lnga*) are the synthetic structuring of a non-buddha being's conscious embodied experience. Bound by these formative constituents, sentient beings impulsively act according to habits of awareness that we have described thus far.

Out of the active oscillation of the universal basis, shapes and phenomenal forms (*gzugs*) begin to emerge as the first constituent. As shape and form emerge, a distancing from something enables a sense (*tshor ba*) of something else. Awareness of something to feel is sensation. With sensory perceptual awareness, the subsequent instance apperceives through the conceptualizing mental factor (*'du shes*). Distinguishing apprehended senses of form formulates concepts, and stimulates impulses that imprint subliminal awareness, perpetuating the supraliminal-subliminal course of awareness. These predisposed patterns (*'du byed*) of perception are then activated once the sense of something is perceived, and the dichotic dynamic is reasserted. Once discursiveness initiates, awareness is automated to react to stimuli. All the while, the background synthesis of this fabric of experience is ordinary awareness (*rnam shes*) in its eight modalities.

Considering these constituents to be like an alchemical formula for everyday experience, Jamgon Kongtrul describes how the constituent of form transmutes into physical marks of excellence and boundless melodies of voice, sensation transmutes into blissful repose devoid of subconscious perturbances, conceptualizing transmutes into vibrational formulations of names and words, predisposed patterning transmutes into the power to magnetize and emanate, and ordinary awareness transmutes into pristine awareness.⁷¹ In this way, through meditative alchemical transmutation, the constituents of non-buddhahood become the

enlightened qualities of buddhahood, and the ordinary habits of awareness shine forth as pristine awareness.⁷²

This is to say, although the latent potentials that were accumulated during mental, verbal, and somatic actions to condition ordinary awareness now display mental, verbal, and somatic actions of pristine awareness, the conditions for awareness were not replaced with new conditions. In fact, the very synthetic fabric of ordinary awareness dissolves. With dissolution of the universal basis, the source of delusions that fabricates awareness, there is unfabricated awareness. This is what is referred to as “pristine” (*ye*) “awareness” (*shes*).

Condensing these five displays of pristine awareness into two, Jamgon Kongtrul summarizes how unconditional wakefulness is meditative and post-meditative:

- 1) The first is the meditative equipoise of the pristine awareness that knows the nature of reality, the ultimate extent of the non-apparent actual nature of all phenomena. “When there is awareness and objects of awareness, the subsequent moment of identifying is not apperceived. At this time, because the identifying qualities do not arise, and because there is stable abiding, nothing emerges.”⁷³ All ensuing phenomena encompassing the three times – every variety without exception – is realized as actually manifesting like an illusion.
- 2) The second is the post-meditative state of the pristine awareness that knows everything knowable. So it is said that a single instance of knowing possesses the all-encompassing maṇḍala of everything that can be known. Moreover, the pristine awareness of a buddha does not make particularizing divisions in the post-meditative state, although how it knows is merely dependently imputed.⁷⁴

How a buddha knows is best understood in contrast to how a non-buddha knows. To do this, we need to make the simple distinction between modal cognitive operations, that which we have discussed so far, and nonmodal cognitive operations.

If we recall, modal operations conceptually divide (*rnam rtog*) appearances, operating in unison with habitual propensities (*bag chags*) to generate the multiplicity of appearances within the sphere of ordinary awareness. The crucial instance of associating an appearance with a mental representation derived from a previous impression does not occur within nonmodal cognitive operations, the awareness of a buddha. When there is no association with a mental representation, there is no fixation onto the percept, and there is no conceptualizing within the space of meditative equipoise. In the post-meditative state, awareness does not particularize or make arbitrary divisions based upon propensities. Instead, because unconditioned phenomena are not beyond dependent origination (*rten cing 'brel*), the inter-relational nature of awareness and all that is to be known allows a buddha to know phenomena through dependent imputation.⁷⁵

The difference between ordinary awareness and pristine awareness is: a non-buddha delusional mind relies upon representational images of reality (cognitive content that is based upon predisposed apperceptive instances), while

a non-delusional buddha mind does not derive meaning from mental representations, but rather knows the appearances of awareness through the interdependent cognizable nature of mind itself.⁷⁶

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Notes

- 1 Personal Tibetan names are phonetized in the body of the chapter and transliterated in the reference notes. Only selected Sanskrit technical terms are included in the notes. I have consulted two versions of the text (Rang byung 1972 and 2002).
- 2 Kongtrul comments, "Samsāra and nirvāṇa are reifications. Because we can decipher the defiled discursive discriminations of the mind from the undefiled, they are simply distinctions. Discovering in this way alters one's realization of the actual nature of all phenomena" (Kong sprul 1972: 2b.6–3b.1).
- 3 Rang byung 2002 and 1970. See, Schaeffer 1995.
- 4 For further readings within this subgenre, Dol po pa 1984: 105–133; Mipham 1972: 42–43; Yon tan rgya mtsho 1971: vol 2. For Longchenpa's distinctions, Germano 1992: 238–260.
- 5 Kong sprul 1972: 6b.5–7a.1.
- 6 Rangjung Dorje's root text is thirty-seven verses. We refer primarily to Kongtrul's commentary as Khakyab Dorje's commentary is an abbreviation. (Kong sprul 1972 and mKa' rhyab rDo rje 1976.) For notes see, Dkon mchog yan lag 1979. For an account of Kongtrul, Smith 2001: 235–273.
- 7 Kongtrul writes, "By being completely free of the two obscurations, habitual propensities, and what is held as most dear, a perfect buddha actually perceives the evidence of all possible existence in accord with what can be known" (Kong sprul 1972: 8b.5, verse 4). See, Wayman 1955: 253–268; Johansson 1965: 189–210; Waldron 1990: 65–74; Loy 1988: 42–60.
- 8 The two obscurations are: (1) emotional obscuration (*nyon mongs pa'i sgrib*); (2) cognitive obscuration (*shes bya'i sgrib*).
- 9 Kong sprul 1972: 9a.3–9a.4.
- 10 The "nam" Tibetan prefix is "vi" in Sanskrit meaning "to divide," "to discern," "to differentiate," "to fragment." The Tibetan term "shes" is "jñā" in Sanskrit meaning "to know," or "to be aware." See, Johansson 1965: 189–210; Waldron 1990: 65–74 and 2003: 21–33.
- 11 *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* 1984.
- 12 There are two uses of the term *ye shes* in Mahayana literature: (1) *ye shes* on the path (*lam*) towards Buddhahood; (2) *ye shes* as the fruition (*'bras bu*) of Buddhahood. Rangjung Dorje uses the term to refer to fruitional pristine awareness (*ye shes lnga*).
- 13 *Bod rgya tshig mdzod chen mo* 1984.
- 14 Kong sprul 1972: 2b.2–2b.4.
- 15 Nāgārjuna states, "Samsāra occurs at the moment of conceptually dividing, without conceptually dividing, there is freedom" (Kong sprul 1972: 2b.5–2b.6).
- 16 This is the model of the Sarvāstivādin Abhidharma. For cognitive functions in Pāli Buddhist literature, Johansson 1970: 14–16 and 103–113; Harvey 1995: 141–154.
- 17 These are categories used by Kongtrul and are not necessarily from Indian Abhidharma literature.

- 18 Waldron 2003: 29.
- 19 *Abhidharmakośabhāṣyam*, “Five consciousnesses always include *vitarka* and *vicāra*. They are always associated with *vitarka* and with *vicāra*, for they are gross, being turned towards externals” (La Vallee Poussin 1990: 96–97).
- 20 Guenther 1976: 50 and Guenther and Kawamura 1975: 102.
- 21 Rang byung 2002: 10, verse 6.
- 22 Awareness is a resultant correlation of sense faculties and objects (*rnam par smin pa*).
- 23 “This is to say, the causal condition (*rgyu'i rkyen*) allows for the universal basis of subliminal awareness (*ālaya-vijñāna*) to arise along with tainted mental awareness (*kliṣṭa-manas*)” (Kong sprul 1972: 12a.2–12a.4). See, Kong sprul 1972: 17a.6–19a.1; Goodman 1979: 177–178; La Vallee Poussin 1990: 296–305.
- 24 Thrangu 2001: 19–20.
- 25 The factor of a predisposed tendency (*bag chags*) is necessary for the distinction between perceiver and perceived according to Yogācāra tradition.
- 26 Kong sprul 1972: 12a.4–12a.6.
- 27 Rang byung 2002: 10–11, verse 7.
- 28 Kongtrul refers to reductionism in Buddhist thought

Since perceptual awareness of the five sense entrances arises from the dynamic presence of the mind's discerning cognition, causes and conditions that function as different from the mere manifestation of the five discrete sensible objects are the hidden molecular particles accepted by the Vaibhāṣika and Sautāntika Schools of the *śrāvaka* disciples.

(Kong sprul 1972: 12a.6–12b.2)

See, Guenther 1971: 31–89.

- 29 On reductionism and physicalism, Wallace 2000: 23–27.
- 30 Kong sprul 1972: 12b.4–13a.2.
- 31 The shared nature is emptiness (*stong pa nyid*). The luminous (*gsal ba*) nature of awareness allows the mind to know. Thrangu 2001: 21–22, fn. 16.
- 32 Kongtrul interjects, “If one says that they assert this kind of thinking, then that is reductionism” (Kong sprul 1972: 13a.2).
- 33 Kong sprul 1972: 13a.2.
- 34 Rang byung 2002: 11, verse 8.
- 35 Kongtrul comments, “As soon as this is explained, due to logical deduction, whatever appears externally cannot be established as actual sensible objects separate from interior awareness” (Kong sprul 1972: 13b.1–13b.2).
- 36 Kapstein 2000: 105–125.
- 37 Rang byung 2002: 11, verse 9.
- 38 On mental factors, Guenther and Kawamura 1975.
- 39 mKha' khyab rDo rje 1976: 46.1–46.3.
- 40 Rangjung Dorje is mentioning the four extremes of Mādhyamika: (1) existence, (2) nonexistence, (3) both, (4) neither. Rang byung 2002: 11, verses 10–11. See, Ruegg 1977: 1–65.
- 41 Kong sprul 1972: 14b.6–15a.2.
- 42 Yogācāra is the name of a Mahāyāna system of thought. See, La Vallee Poussin 1948; Anacker 1988: 183–190.
- 43 Waldron 2002a: 17–22. See Waldron and Germano in this volume.
- 44 Rangjung Dorje states, “The six modes of ordinary perceptual awareness are reliant upon the objective conditions of the six sensible objects of form, and so forth” (Rang byung 2002: 11, verse 13).
- 45 Rang byung 2002: 11, verse 14.

- 46 Kongtrul comments, "Due to ignorance about these three realms, it is said that the defiled discursive thinking mind cannot establish meaning apart from what is simply its own image" (Kong sprul 1972: 9a.1–9a.2).
- 47 Rang byung 2002: 11, verse 16.
- 48 Kong sprul 1972: 19a.6–19b.2.
- 49 Ibid.: 19b.2–19b.4.
- 50 Guenther and Kawamura 1975: 23–25.
- 51 Rang byung 2002: 11–12, verse 17.
- 52 Kong sprul 1972: 20b.1–20b.4. Here, "the cessation of the six perceptual modalities" refers to meditative quiescence that halts mental events. See Waldron 2003: 149.
- 53 Waldron has pointed out that the two facets of the seventh mode of awareness developed in the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* (Waldron 2003: 147).
- 54 "Constituents of embodied experience" refers to the five psychophysical aggregates (*phung po lnga*). Rang byung 2002: 12, verse 18.
- 55 Waldron 2003: 205, fn. 35.
- 56 Waldron 2003: 148.
- 57 Kong sprul 1972: 21a.3–21a.5.
- 58 Ibid.: 21b.3–21b.5.
- 59 Rang byung 2002: 12, verse 19.
- 60 For discussion of *ālaya-vijñāna* and the unconscious, see Waldron 1990: 113–119; Jiang 2004: 119–139. For discussion of the cognitive unconscious, Waldron 2002b: 149–153. See Waldron and Germano in this volume.
- 61 Rang byung 2002: 12, verses 20–21.
- 62 Schmithausen comments,

it is not surprising that *ālayavijñāna*, in order to deserve being qualified as a genuine *vijñāna*, came to be expected to satisfy the Abhidharmic definition of a *vijñāna*. This definition, which in substance can be traced back to the canonical texts, takes *vijñāna* as that which performs the act of *vi-jñā*, or, more explicitly, as that which makes known (*vijñāpti*), i.e. perceives or cognizes (*upalabdhī*), an object (*viṣaya*, *ālambana*).

(Schmithausen 1987: 85)

- 63 Kong sprul 1972: 24b.2.
- 64 Ibid.: 24b.5–25a.1.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 Davidson 1985.
- 67 Kong sprul 1972: 25a.3–25a.5.
- 68 "Elaborating in this way, the venerable and omniscient Rangjung Dorje wrote on the essence of enlightenment in order to demonstrate as well as explain through his realization" (Kong sprul 1972: 25b.1–25b.6, verse 21).
- 69 Slightly deviating from the traditional Yogācāra view, Rangjung Dorje suggests that if the universal basis were the ground for saṃsāra and nirvāṇa, then it would endure after buddhahood. This is similar to Rangjung Dorje's contemporary Dolpopa Shesrab Ggyaltsan and has been equated with a zhentong (*gzhan stong*) view, that the ultimate dimension of reality is empty of everything other than enlightened qualities. See, Stearns 1999: 51–52; Schaeffer 1995: 25–36; Sparham 1993: 37, fn. 60; Dol po pa 1984. On Buddha-nature and the universal basis for awareness, see Brown 1991: 179–181; Suzuki 1959: xlii; Sutton 1991: 51–78.
- 70 Kong sprul 1972: 26a.1–26a.4.
- 71 Kongtrul quotes a passage from the *Mahāyāna-saṃgraha* (Kong sprul 1972: 26a.4–26b.4).

- 72 “The universal basis for awareness is transmuted into the mirror-like pristine awareness. The tainted mental awareness that abides within the universal basis is transmuted into the pristine awareness of equanimity. The fundamental mental awareness is transmuted into the pristine awareness of discernment. The five modalities of sensory awareness are transmuted into the all-accomplishing pristine awareness” (Kong sprul 1972: 27a.2–27a.4).
- 73 Kongtrul quotes from a text titled, “Two Truths.”
- 74 Kong sprul 1972: 27a.4–27b.3.
- 75 Mipham explains, “Since these unconditioned phenomena are inconcrete unconditioned, they are therefore exclusively objects to be known through conceptual thought and are merely mentally projected labels” (Mipham 2002: 264–265). See, Griffiths 1994: 153–173.
- 76 On “cognitive content” as defining awareness, see van der Velde 2004.

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