



THE ASIAN CLASSICS
INSTITUTE

4

PROOF OF FUTURE LIVES

Level One of Buddhist Logic and Perception (*Pramana*)

DHARMA ESSENTIALS





Class One Outline

- I. Introduction to the Dharma Essentials Series and to this Course
- II. Sanskrit and Tibetan Words for and Definitions of “Buddhist Logic”
- III. Importance of Logic in Buddhism
 - A. The key to understanding emptiness
 - B. Gyaltseb Je’s statement
 - C. Lord Buddha’s statement
- IV. Texts on Buddhist Logic
- V. Reality and Valid Perceptions
 - A. Levels of reality: evident, hidden, deeply hidden
 - B. Valid Perceptions
 1. Definition
 2. Two types of valid perception and what they perceive
 3. Master Dignaga’s famous opening statement
- VI. Meditation Assignment

Fifteen minutes a day on the things you know through direct perception, inferential reasoning, and authority and the differences between these three kinds of valid perceptions.

Class Two Outline

- I. Definition of “Person of Valid Perception”
 - A. Definition of “Person of Valid Perception”
 - 1. Two things an enlightened being sees
 - 2. Times that an enlightened being sees
 - B. Three methods for determining that the Buddha is “totally correct” about His deep teachings
 - C. Three “ground rules” for deciding whether the Buddha meant something figuratively or literally
- II. Omniscience
 - A. What an “all knowing” Being knows
 - B. Why an omniscient Being could not have created the world
 - C. Evidence that the Buddha is “unerring”
- III. Four Reasonings of the Forward Order
 - A. What they are and what they prove
 - 1. The reasoning of the protector
 - 2. The reasoning of having gone to bliss
 - 3. The reasoning of the Teacher
 - 4. The reasoning of great compassion
 - B. Three types of compassion
- IV. Meditation Assignment

Fifteen minutes a day on why it is logically impossible to assert that an omniscient Being created the world. What are the implications in our own lives if there is not a “first cause” to things?

Class Three Outline

- I. The Materialist Argument for Why Future Lives are Impossible
 - A. Three reasons why the mind dies when the body dies
 1. The mind is a quality of the body
 2. The mind is dependent on the body
 3. The mind is the result of the body
- II. The Meaning of the Term “Material Cause”
- III. Refutation of Materialists
 - A. Cause of the mind
 1. At the moment of birth
 2. Changing or unchanging
 3. Physical matter or outside
 4. The mind of someone else – your parents
 5. The result of a cause must resemble the cause and come after it
- IV. Meditation Assignment

Fifteen minutes a day on the differences between physical things like the body and mental things like the mind

Class Four Outline

I. The Body and Mind

- A. Can sense powers or living tissue be the cause of the mind?
- B. Karma and the mind
 - 1. Mind as the basis for sense powers
 - 2. What keeps the mind going
 - 3. The mind at the moment of death, and its relationship to the body

II. Format of Logical Proof

- A. Three parts of Master Dharmakirti's main proof of future lives

III. Twelve Links of Dependent Origination – the Wheel of Life

- A. The twelve links
- B. Two links involving desire
- C. Three types of craving
- D. Four levels of focusing on yourself and the triggering of karma

IV. Meditation Assignment

Fifteen minutes a day on how mistaken ideas of the self and the craving we have for the continued existence of that “self” triggers the karma for rebirth



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Dharma Essentials Course IV: The Proof of Future Lives

Level One of Buddhist Logic and Perception (*pramana*)

Reading One:

This selection is from *Light for the Path to Freedom*, written by Gyalsab Darma Rinchen (1364-1432) in explanation of the *Commentary on Valid Perception*.

Here is the third division, [on the purpose served by the reasoning where one proves the non-existence of something which does not appear]. A sutra states the following:

I or someone like myself can judge a person, but no normal person should judge another, for he will fall.

This statement itself expresses the purpose of the reasoning. What the Buddha is saying here is that:

Without being able to see the real condition, you should never say anything even close to "This person has such and such faults. This person hasn't the least good quality"—or "He or she has some good qualities, but nothing more than that."

We never know who might be a holy being, and every open and secret scripture there is says that the very finest way to end up in an unbearable birth within the realms of misery is to speak badly about a holy being. Every person who has any intelligence should therefore act with extreme caution in this regard; treat such matters as though you were walking on the edge of a great pit of glowing embers, innocently covered with powder of ash.

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The implication suggested by the sutra above, and by the great treatises which comment upon it, is that we must try to keep an attitude of wanting to help all living creatures, of wanting to assure their happiness. So try to remain in that pure vision where you see only pure good in other people. If you are not capable of this, then at least it would be nice if you could try to speak badly of others a little less than you do now.

English Introduction to Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk's *Jewel of the True Thought*

ENGLISH INTRODUCTION

Jewel of the True Thought is an important new treatise on the concept of valid perception (*pramana* or *tsad-ma*) in Buddhist philosophy. Its author is the venerable Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk, an eminent scholar from the Sera Mey college of Sera Tibetan Monastic University. The work has already taken its place in the commentarial tradition of Buddhist literature.

Subject of the Work

The study of valid perception is of vital importance in Buddhist philosophy, for it is this perception which allows us to determine the real nature of the world around us and thereby escape pain, whether it be in the form of a mild headache, or anxiety, or any undesirable object at all, on up to death itself.

This real nature of the world must be perceived not only with our direct physical and mental senses, but by indirect methods such as reasoning, which allows our minds to see important concepts such as the benefit of being moral. Therefore the study of perception is tied to the study of reasoning, or logic—and these form the core of the subject matter of the *Commentary on Valid Perception*, the classical text which this book explains.

The Commentarial Tradition

The *Commentary on Valid Perception* (*Pramanavarttika*, or *Tsad-ma rnam-'grel*) is a work in four chapters by the Indian Buddhist master, Dharmakirti. As with many early Buddhist sages, we know little of his life or even the dates that he lived; Western scholars place him at around 630 AD, although even this is uncertain. The "valid perception" in the title of his masterwork refers to another

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treatise, the *Compendium on Valid Perception (Pramanasamuccaya, or Tsad-ma kun-btus)*, and Master Dharmakirti's text is actually a defense of this piece.

The *Compendium* was itself composed by Master Dignaga, who is considered the father of the Buddhist logic traditions and is dated by Western scholars at around 440 AD, although again there is considerable uncertainty, and according to tradition he was a direct teacher of Master Ishvarasena, who is said to have been the direct teacher of Master Dharmakirti.

The philosopher Dignaga was for his part commenting upon the concepts of perception and logic presented in the teachings of Shakyamuni Buddha, who lived 500 BC. And so the lineage goes from the Buddha, to Master Dignaga, to Master Dharmakirti, and then on to the early Indian explanations of Master Dharmakirti, including his own auto-commentary....

Levels of Reality

Deductive valid perception based on belief	That unerring, fresh perception which perceives a hidden object by using a good reason based on belief.	Those deeply hidden objects which can be established only by authoritative scripture.	Consider scriptures such as those which say, "Giving leads to abundance, and morality leads to happiness." They are unerring about what they teach, because they are scripture which has been confirmed with the three different tests.
Deductive valid perception based on convention	That unerring, fresh perception which perceives a hidden object by using a good reason based on convention.	Those objects which are decided on nothing more than whether we choose	Consider the "portrait of the rabbit." You can say it's the moon, because it's something you can think up.

What it Was that Master Dignaga Stated

From *Jewel of the True Thought of the Commentary on Correct Perception*, by Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk, of the Pomra College of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery:

We have previously explained the first chapter of the *Commentary on Correct Perception*, which covered deductive perception, the means to achieve one's own

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goals. Here next we will explain the second chapter, which proves that the Buddha is a correct person.

This chapter begins from the second major point of the outline to the entire work; this is the explanation of what it is we seek to perceive: freedom and the state of all-knowing, and the path that will take us there. Here there are two divisions—the main subject, and certain secondary subjects.

There are three parts to the main subject; these are showing what it was that Master Dignaga stated, describing how the author of the *Commentary* explained what he stated, and demonstrating the true intent of each.

Here is the first. The following is the classical statement by Master Dignaga:

I bow down to the One who turned correct,
Who helps all beings, the Teacher,
The one who went to bliss,
And our Protector.

And now out of love
For those mistaken in their logic
I shall explain the right way
To establish correct perception.

As elucidated in the *Light on the Path to Freedom*, these lines present the offering of praise and the pledge to compose the work. . .

The Definition of Correct Perception

The following is a selection from the *Jewel of the True Thought*, by the great scholar Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk, in explanation of the *Commentary on Correct Perception* by Master Dharmakirti....

The identification of what it means to be "unerring" is found in two and a half lines of the root text:

**Correct perception is a state of mind unerring;
To be in a condition able to perform a function
Is what "unerring" means.**

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The thing that correct perception undertakes to perceive is the existence of and the means for a person to attain a birth in the higher realms, as well as definite good. The Able One is the one being who is unerring with regard to all of these things; and so, if you should wonder how correct perception is defined, we can state that "a fresh **state of mind which is unerring**" is the definition of correct perception.

And what is the meaning of "unerring"? Suppose you perceive something as being **able to perform the function** of cooking or burning something else. Your perception is "unerring" when this thing does actually exist in the **condition** you have perceived it to be.

Here secondly is a detail of the definition, which is indicated in six lines from the root text:

**It must also illuminate something not perceived.
Subsequent to perceiving the thing in its very essence,
You have a more general type of experience.
It's because the intent when they mention a perception
Is one that has not perceived a definitive object.
Because it discerns its own definitive object.**

What this is saying is that the requirement described above, that a perception be "unerring," is not by itself enough to complete the entire definition of correct perception. This is because the perception **must** be one which **illuminates something** that was **not perceived** previously; and so we must **also** mention at some point in the definition that the object is known "for the first time," or "freshly." As such, the standard definition for correct perception is "a fresh and unerring perception."

Someone might make the following objection. "Suppose we allow you to define correct perception as a fresh illumination of an object. Consider then a recollection in which you perceive the color blue. According to you, wouldn't this have to be a correct perception? Because isn't it a state of mind which realizes its object and is fresh? And it is just that, for it is a state of mind which is a fresh perception of the mental image of the color blue."

Yet there is no such problem. What happens is that the state of mind which grasps the color blue directly **perceives** that **very essence** of blueness which is unique to it. **Subsequent to this perception you have a more general experience**, where your mind grasps to a mental image of the color blue. This

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latter state of mind though does not have the ability to discern the object on its own power alone. If something is correct perception, it must be a fresh perception of a **definitive object** that it **has not perceived** before, or else must be directly dependent upon such a perception. Incidentally, you should understand the phrase "definitive object" here as referring to an object as it exists in its own essence.

Showing that the Buddha has the Qualities of Correct Perception

From *Jewel of the True Thought of the Commentary on Correct Perception*, by Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk, of the Pomra College of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery:

Here secondly we show that the qualities of correct perception are as well possessed by the victorious Buddha. We proceed in two steps: bridging this explanation to the meaning of correct perception already presented, and explaining the meaning of the words "who turned." The first of the two is conveyed in the root text with the line,

**The one who has it is the Victorious One;
Perfectly correct itself.**

Consider the **Victorious One**, the able Buddha. He is **perfectly correct** towards each and every existing object, for He is **the one who has "it"**: that is, who has a fresh and unerring perception of all these objects, and who is that **itself**.

The main point here is to show that omniscience is a correct perception which sees directly, and on its own power, each and every existing object: the nature of all things, and the totality of all things. And the Buddha is as well a being who possesses this omniscience. Incidentally, this fact also disproves the belief that realized persons who are Buddhas do not possess the mental function of wisdom....

Our own textbooks, in the section on the study of the mind, define recollection as "A state of mind where you perceive what you have already perceived before." The textbooks of certain other monasteries say that the definition of recollection is "A state of mind which is not correct perception, and where you perceive what you have already perceived before." *Light on the Path to Freedom* says,

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No matter how much we look within ourselves and think it over, we cannot detect any case where omniscience could be anything other than correct perception, or where there could be any case of correct perception that were not a fresh perception.

If you consider this quotation carefully, you can see that it is stating that the second and following moments of omniscience are fresh perceptions towards their objects.

If the first moment of omniscience does not see the past, present, and future all at once, then there could be no wisdom which sees all these three times at once. If it does see these three, then it would have to see all objects which are going to occur in the future. As such there could be no object which the second and following moments perceived which had not already been perceived before, or which the first moment had not perceived. Therefore our own position is that the group of things which are discerned by the first moment of omniscience and the group of things which are discerned by the second moment of omniscience are completely identical.

One may then make the following objection:

If that's the case, then let's consider the second moment of omniscience. Isn't it then a state of mind which perceives something which it has already perceived before? Because isn't the only thing it perceives then exactly the same thing which has already been perceived by the first moment of omniscience?

Our answer is that it doesn't necessarily follow. Although it is true that the second moment of omniscience does perceive what it does in the way described, it does not engage in its object by force of the first moment of omniscience, but rather perceives its object on its own power.

Here secondly is our explanation of the meaning of the words "who turned." First we will describe the necessity for mentioning "who turned," and then after that discuss some objections to this description. The first point here is covered in the following three lines of the root text:

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The phrase that goes "who turned"
Is spoken in the sense

Of the opposite of something
Which wasn't ever developed.

This as well is why it's right
That correctness depends on achieving.

There are two reasons why Master Dignaga, in the verse of the offering of praise at the beginning of his work, the *Compendium on Correct Perception*, mentions the phrase "**who turned.**" The first purpose for these words is the kind that is meant to exclude something. Here they **are spoken in the sense of the opposite:** they are meant to indicate that a person who is totally correct could never be something that **didn't ever develop** from its proper cause.

The second purpose for these words is the kind that is meant to imply something. Here the point we are supposed to grasp is that one develops into a person of total **correctness** only by **depending** on reaching the final perfection of a gradual practice of all the various methods used for **achieving** this state....

Reading Two:

The following is a selection from the *Jewel of the True Thought*, a commentary on Master Dharmakirti's *Commentary on Valid Perception* by Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery.

...Here thirdly is the section on identifying what it is to be omniscient. The root text of Master Chandrakirti says:

**The thing that we agree to be
totally correct**

**Is the one who has knowledge of
the fact of what it is**

**That we should take up and give up,
and the method too;**

**It's not though one who knows
everything there is.**

**Whether or not He can see
to some so very great distance,**

**He is a person who has seen
the one goal that we wish.**

**If what it takes to qualify
is how far he can see,**

**Come then over here and take
the vulture as your Teacher.**

Consider now the Able One, the Victorious Buddha, the One Gone Beyond. It is right that all those who aspire for liberation should **agree** that He is **totally correct**. This is because He has reached the ultimate point of knowledge where He sees directly the causes for our getting trapped and for escaping: He sees everything that **we should take up** (the end of suffering, and the path to it) **and** everything we should **give up** (suffering and its source); and He sees **the method** to follow here **too**.

It's not though that **knowing every** kind of **thing there is**, all the rocks and tiny creatures at the bottom of the ocean, is all it takes to fulfill the wishes of those who seek liberation.

It doesn't matter **whether or not He can see to some so very great distance**; either way, the Teacher, the Transcendent Buddha, is the right one to take as a teacher, for **He is a person who has seen that one goal that those who seek for freedom wish**.

If what it takes to qualify as a person who is totally correct **is** nothing more than **how far one can see**, then it would be proper to give the following advice to people who are wishing to reach liberation:

Come then over here. It's true that a vulture is nothing but a bird, but he does see to a very great distance; and so you should **take vultures** or other such beings **as your Teacher**.

In everyday life, people talk about how it is some being that was able to make the world who is the omniscient one. This verse though serves to identify the real nature of an omniscient being, which is one who understands in totality all the details of what one should take up, and what you should give up.

Here is some advice for those of you who have no attachment to this present life, and who aspire to goals of the next life, and beyond.

The one thing which is important, beyond all else, is to follow properly, in your mind and in your deeds, a spiritual Guide who possesses the necessary qualifications. And the way to find the Guide is to look for one who can teach you, in exactly the right way, how to reach the goal that you desire. This key—that is, what you really need to look for—is described with absolute perfection by the Lord of Reasoning in the verse above.

The Four Reasonings of the Forward Order

An Essay on the "Four Reasonings of the Forward Order"
written by that Supreme Being, Sermey Geshe Lobsang Tharchin,
Former Abbot of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery

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We turn now to the point in the text which treats the lines from the *"Sutra on Correct Perception"* which include "The One who turned correct, who helps all beings." Here two steps are presented towards proving that the Teacher is a person who is totally correct: using the forward order to show what path the Teacher came from; and using the reverse order, putting forth evidence that He could have come this way.

Here is the first.

[First: the "Reasoning of the Protector," which proves turning totally correct:]

Consider our Teacher.

He is someone who turned correct,

Because He possesses the quality of being an unsurpassed Protector, who by teaching the four noble truths protects each and every living being from suffering.

[Second: the "Reasoning of Eliminating Undesirable Qualities—the One who Went to Bliss," which proves being the Protector:]

Consider the same One.

It is true that He possesses the quality of being an unsurpassed Protector;

Because he has eliminated undesirable qualities, totally.

[Third: the "Reasoning of the Teacher," which proves having gone to bliss:]

Consider the same One.

It is true that He has previously eliminated all undesirable qualities;

Because during His time on the paths of learning He has for the sake of others acted in every way to practice continually on the subjects of selflessness and so on, and because He has reached the final perfection of this same practice.

[Fourth: the "Reasoning of Great Compassion," which proves being the Teacher:]

Consider the same One.

There is a reason why He has practiced this way for the sake of others;

Because He has reached the final perfection of compassion.

[In summary,]

Consider this same One.

He is not a person who is totally correct and who is also unchanging, who just came that way from the beginning;

Because He has turned this way by practicing, for a long period of time, a great many methods that were both a part of the cycle of life and also beyond it; and He did so over the course of many different kinds of lives He has taken—driven all the while by His compassion.

Explanation of the Perfected Thought

...The root text of Master Dharmakirti says—

**It comes from practicing perfectly
what helps bring Him about: holy compassion.**

As for the things that **help bring about** a person who is totally correct, holy great compassion comes first: that is, before. This is because you must become the Teacher first by giving birth within yourself to the **compassion** which wants to liberate every living being from suffering, and then by **practicing perfectly** the method for liberating them from suffering.

This kind of holy great compassion, moreover, comes about through constant practice of earlier and similar forms. The two phrases terms "holy great compassion" and "great compassion" are explained as being the same in this particular instance.

The auto-commentary to *Entering the Middle Way* says:

They do not possess the great masses of merit and of wisdom, nor holy great compassion, nor omniscience or the like. Therefore they

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are less than totally enlightened Buddhas, and so are said to be "medium."

The *Analysis of the Middle Way* from our monastery quotes this passage and says that therefore not even bodhisattvas have holy great compassion in their mind streams.

In the seventh chapter of the *Treasure House of Knowledge (the Abhidharmakosha)*, eight distinctions between great compassion and holy great compassion are set forth. This text states that holy great compassion is found only in the mental stream of a realized being who is a Buddha. As the root text of the *Treasure* says,

The Buddha's great compassion, deceptive mind.
Because of collection, aspect, activity object,
Evenness, for greatness in the extreme.
Distinctions between them of eight different types.

According to all this then, the difference between holy great compassion and great compassion is vast, and holy great compassion is no path which is practiced at the outset of the path of the greater way.

In this same vein, the majority of the textbooks of the great monasteries state that there is no great compassion in the mind stream of a practitioner of the lesser way. Our own textbooks though establish that enemy destroyers of the Listener type do possess great compassion in their mind-streams; they do so by using a quotation from the *Dar* commentary to the *Higher Line*.

They state moreover that, although these enemy destroyers lack the kind of compassion where they wish to protect living beings from suffering, they do have the kind where they wish to see them free of suffering.

The text called *The Explication which is a Light on the Path to Freedom* says that "This great compassion is the one thing that allows one to reach the start of the practice of the path of the greater way.

The Great Commentary, the Ocean of Reasoning, also says:

Any person who is able to develop in the stream of his mind this one thing, the great compassion that wishes to free each and every

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living creature from suffering, has thereby become someone whom we can speak of with the name "bodhisattva."

It states as well that:

This one thing, great compassion, is explained in the section on the forward order as being the beginning of the path for the unique path of the greater way.

In addition, this same work states:

A certain attitude grows up in the bottom of one's heart; a totally genuine state of mind where you wish to free every living being from suffering. This very state of mind is what we call "holy great compassion," or "great compassion."

As soon as this one thing has grown in your heart, then we speak of you with the words "greater way." This state of mind is moreover the starting point of the unique path, and a special cause for achieving omniscience.

Great compassion therefore is explained as being the starting point for the path of the greater way; and holy great compassion and great compassion are said to be two different words for the same thing.

In the *Greater Steps of the Path*, the *Sutra Requested by Ocean of Understanding* is first quoted. Then Lord Tsongkapa goes on to describe the example of a family person with an especially beloved son who suddenly falls into a great pit of filth. Even practitioners of the Listener and Self-Made Buddha types possess a kind of compassion which is similar to the one that the boy's mother and different relations feel, where they wish to pull him out of the pit. Only a bodhisattva though, he says, possesses the kind of compassion which is like the concern felt by the boy's father.

Judging from this description, our own monastery's textbooks appear to be correct on this point. This is because compassion which is like the mother's love for his son is had by Listeners and Self-Made Buddhas as well, and that in itself satisfies entirely the definition of great compassion.

We should note though that prior to developing compassion one must go through the steps of "beautiful" love, which cherishes and values its object; as

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well as wanting to repay kindness, recalling kindness, realizing that they have been your mother, and so on.

Whether or not Listeners and Self-Made Buddhas meditate on these various steps is something we would have to investigate.

Reading Three:

The following is a selection from the *Jewel of the True Thought*, a commentary on Master Dharmakirti's *Commentary on Valid Perception* by Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery.

Explanation of Perfected Thought, continued

Here secondly is the part where we disprove arguments that the perfected thought even exists. First we will present the arguments themselves, and then show how we disprove them.

The first of these two is indicated in two lines of the root text:

**Suppose you say that,
because of the fact that the mind**

**Is something that relies on the body,
there is no achieving by practice.**

Those of the Charvaka School say:

Your statement that a person practices compassion over the length of many lifetimes, and then turns into a person who is totally correct, is wrong. This is because there are no past or future lives, and awareness in the mind is something that relies on the body.

They say that there are three ways in which the mind relies on the body. First of all they say the mind is a quality of the body, similar to alcohol and the ability to make someone drunk. Secondly mind is part of the nature of the body, as with a wall and a design on the wall. Lastly the mind is a result of the body, in the way of a lamp and its light.

And they say that, because the mind relies on the body, the awareness in the mind dies when the body dies.

The *Great Commentary* states that "It is explained through similes, and the way one thing stops when another does [?]." The *Jewel of Valid Perception* says,

They believe there is no achieving through practice,
Due to the fact of three different ways:

The mind is an integral part of the body,
A result of the body, and one of its qualities.

The Proof by the Elimination of Other Possibilities

[From *A Number of Necessities, which Those Who Seek for Freedom should Cherish like the Heart in their Breast*:]

The following excerpt is taken from *Clearing Away Darkness of the Mind about the Seven Books of Valid Perception*, a text composed by Kedrup Je.

Suppose you say that the mind of a person who was just born has no cause. You are disproven by the fact that this mind is variable.

Suppose thus that this mind does have a cause. Is this cause unchanging or changing? If it were an unchanging thing that could perform some function, then there would be no possibility that it did not apply in every place and at every time; and so there would be no possibility of its having a fixed relationship where it came and went according to its result.

Suppose then that the latter were true, [and that the cause of this mind were changing.] It would be incorrect to say that this mind could arise from any working thing other than matter or mind, and so it must come from one or the other of these two.

Suppose you say that matter provides the material cause for this mind. Is it the kind of matter which involves the powers of sense, or is it matter outside of them?

Suppose you say it's the first of the two. Is this cause one where all the various sense powers must come together, or is any one or combination of them enough? If the first is the case, then mental consciousness would fail to arise if the sense power of the eye were absent. If the latter is the case, then one's thoughts would have to be able to capture visible objects with the same kind of clarity that the consciousness of the eye does.

Suppose you say that it's outer matter which provides the material cause. Is it matter in the sense of some substance which is a whole, or is it atoms? Suppose you say it's the first. The substance which is a whole can only be something with parts or something without parts.

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Suppose you say it's a whole with parts that provides the material cause. We deny you then with the same reasoning we used before: Is this cause one where all the various parts must come together, or is any one or combination enough?

Suppose you say that it's a substance which is a whole, and which has no parts, and which exists distinct from its details, which provides the material cause for the mind. Then when you covered your face with a piece of cloth all the other details of your body would have to be covered as well. If the other details didn't get covered then there would come to be two parts: one that was covered and one that wasn't. These two parts, the covered one and the uncovered one, would be something that applied to the details but not to the whole that had the details. This being the case, you would have to be able to see clearly the face of the whole even when the face as a detail was covered with the cloth.

This position is equally disproven by reasoning that treats other distinctions, such as moving one of your limbs or not, and turning to one side or not.

Suppose you say that atoms provide the material cause for the mind. If it's that the mind arises through each of the atoms, acting independently of each other, then many different mental consciousnesses would have to arise at the same time. If it's that the atoms must act all together in a group, then the mind could never arise if even a single atom were absent.

This reasoning, where we use the process of eliminating all other possibilities, brings us to the conclusion that the material cause for mind is mind itself.

The mind that acts as the cause must moreover either be one which is part of yourself or one which is part of someone else. Suppose you say that a mind which is part of someone else, of someone like your father or mother, acts as the direct material cause for this mind. The problem then arises that—where the father is a skilled artisan, or say foolish, or whatever—the son must always be this way as well.

This leads us to conclude that it can only be a former mind which is part of our own stream of consciousness that provides the material cause [for our mind as it exists just after we are born.]

This means that the past history and future continuation of our minds are simply infinite; and that the existence of past and future lives can be clearly and correctly proven.

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Reading Four:

From *Jewel of the True Thought*, by Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk of Sera Mey Tibetan Buddhist Monastery:

Dharmakirti's Proofs for the Existence of Other Lives

Here secondly is the detailed refutation [of the Charvaka system]. We begin by presenting proofs for the existence of past and future lives, and then refute attempted proofs that these lives do not exist....

Here then are the proofs. The root text states,

When a person goes to take his birth,
The in-out breath, the powers, and the mind
Are nothing not dependent on their type,
Nor only something born from body alone;

It would be absurd. The thing that you can see
Has the ability to cross the line
Without another thing that need be there
Then isn't such that later doesn't cross.

There then would never be any part of earth
And such where there could never grow those beings
Who come from heat and moisture and the rest,
And so it all would be by nature seeds.

So if the powers and such could ever occur
Without depending each upon their type,
Then all of them should change the same as one,
For there exists no difference between them.

If you hurt each one of all the powers,
It isn't that the mind is also hurt.
The fact that they too change whenever it
Changes, this is something we can see.

Thus the basis for the mind to stay
Is mind itself, a number which it depends.

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Since they are the cause for all the various powers,
These powers are something then that comes from mind.

And if the same projecting ones are there,
Later too it will become the same.

Given this text, consider now an infant who has just taken birth: consider his *breathing in and out*, the clarity of his *powers*, the feeling of anxiety in his *mind*, and so forth. *When a person goes to take his birth*, these are *nothing* such that they are *not dependent on* something of *their own type* which has come before, because the infant is now possessed of this in-out breath, and the clarity of his powers, anxiety in his mind, and so on.

Nor are these things *only something born from the body*, with its elements, *alone*; for they have come from something of their own type that came before them.

If this were not the case *it would be absurd*. Every one of the elements then would have to be a living being, for the mind is something that comes only from the elements.

There is a *thing that you can see has the ability to cross the line* into a new life *without another single thing*, without any extra cause, *that need be there*. This thing *then isn't such that later it doesn't cross* into another life.

Then too there would never be any part of earth and "such" (meaning any one of the other elements) *where there could never grow those beings who come from heat and moisture and the rest, and so "it all"* (that is, every case of the elements) *would be by nature seeds*. And that would be absurd.

So if the powers and the mind and such could ever occur just from the elements, *without depending each upon something of their own type* which came before them, *then all of them* (the elements) *should change* into a living being, in *the same way as one of them had changed* into a living being—[*for there exists no difference between them.*]

Even *if you hurt each one of all the powers, it isn't* always the case *that the mind is also hurt*. But suppose *it*, the mind, *changes* because it is hurt by feelings of grief or the like. *It is something we can see* then that *they*—the powers—*change too*. Therefore the mind is a very special basis for these powers; and it is something which *depends* on the *mind itself*, meaning former instances of its

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same type. Moreover, *a number* of cases of mental action, or karma, from one's past life are now *the basis for the mind to stay*. For these reasons then the mind is not something which has no basis of its own.

These powers are something then that comes from mind, since they—a number of previous instances of mind—are the cause that projects the future occurrence of all the various powers. And later on, things like the mind at the moment of death too will become the same as these previous cases, crossing the line into later states of a similar type. This is because the same (meaning the same type of) projecting ones (that is, causes) are there.

The root text and its commentary just given present different reasonings to prove the existence of past and future lives. This is because when you prove that the passing in and out of breath with an infant who has just been born (or any of the other examples) comes from something of the same type which occurred previously, one can understand that the "same type" refers to the inhaling and exhaling of the past life, and so on.

Suppose you say that the powers and so forth of someone who has just now taken birth could occur only from the various elements. We can see that in one glass of water there grows one bug with a red head and a yellow body, and then another with a yellow head and a red body. Some creatures come out smaller, and others come out larger.

Among humans as well some come with larger bodies, and then some with smaller ones. Certain people come with a very sharp intellect, and others with one which is dull. Some children display a great amount of understanding and love and the like, while others show a tendency towards attachment and other bad thoughts. According to you, these and similar cases should be impossible, because beings take birth only through the elements, without having to depend on any earlier instance of a similar type.

Suppose again that creatures were born only from the elements. Then when any one element turned into a creature, all the elements would have to turn into creatures. This is because there would be no cause or condition that would make one of the two occur, and the other not occur.

Our own position is that a number of instances of mind in the past act as projecting causes, and from them occur our present powers and so on, which are such that they result from karma, through a time-lag. And since a number of instances of mind in the form of the mind at the moment of death will also

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provide a cause, for the powers and so forth that come later, we are able to establish that future lives exist.

For this reason, it is not always the case that the mind is affected when you hurt any one of the five sense powers. On the other hand, it is invariably the case that when the mind is affected by strong emotions of grief, or by various harmful influences, then it does hurt the physical powers. When for example the mind is affected by powerful feelings of fear, the sense power of the tongue can no longer taste something as delicious.

One may present the following argument:

What about a case where the power of the eye is damaged, and because of this the consciousness of the eye loses its ability to see its object? Isn't it common knowledge that you then undergo some feelings of distress, and that these affect the mind?

This though is no problem. It is true that such cases are possible, but it is not that mind is affected by the damage to the sense power. Rather, the damage to the eye power provides a general condition for a separate occurrence, the distress. The distress itself increases to a point to where the mind as well is affected.

It is not though the case that the mind is affected solely by the damage to the sense power of the eye. This is because there are instances where certain great beings have given away their very eyes, and yet still felt emotions of great happiness within their minds.

As such, the mind provides a very unique cause, a *sine qua non*, for a corresponding result: the sense powers and so on. The powers and the rest though do not provide this same kind of cause for any state of mind resulting from them.

To summarize, let us consider the mind of someone who has just taken birth. A previous state of mind has come before it, because it (the one at birth) is a state of mind. It is, for example, like one's current state of mind. This is the reasoning for proving the existence of former lives.

Consider further the mind at the moment of death, for an ordinary person. It will cross the line into a later state of mind, because it is a state of mind where attachment is present. It is, for example, like one's state of mind from the day before. This is the reasoning for proving existence of future lives.

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If one gets caught up in the wording, it might seem that we are asking you to consider a former state of mind, and arguing that a former state of mind has preceded it, since it is a state of mind. Or else it sounds like we are saying one should consider a later state of mind, and arguing that it will cross the line into a later state of mind, because it is state of mind where attachment is present. It would seem that we had accepted that all these reasons were true, and that all the necessities held. And it would seem as though one could never accept these arguments, for in each case elements were the same.

These proofs are similar to where Master Kamalashila proves past and future lives in his *Concise Commentary on Suchness*, for there he states:

A state of mind such that desire is present in it does have the ability to give birth to yet another state of mind, the one that we take on at birth. This is because the state of mind at death for an ordinary person is similar to states of mind on previous occasions where desire was present: it too has desire.

The text goes on to state that these are types of reasoning where the quality asserted and the quality accepted share a nature.

With both the reasonings presented above, you would have to perceive past and future lives if you perceived what the reasonings are trying to prove. Therefore it will be necessary for us to examine what object we can utilize as a starting point for perceiving past and future lives.

Selections on How Ignorant Desire Triggers Another Life

The first selection is from the *Overview of Dependent Origination* by Kedrup Tenpa Dargye (1493-1568).

The definition of that ignorance which constitutes the first of the twelve links in the chain of dependent origination is: "That view of the perishable assemblage [view of a "me" or "mine" which has its own nature] which inspires one to commit fresh cases of the relevant second link--that of immature karma."

The definition of that immature karma which constitutes the second link in the chain of dependent origination is: "That impure movement of the mind which is of the type that is inspired freshly by the relevant first link, of ignorance."

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This particular immature karma can be divided into three types: merit, non-meritorious karma, and un-shifting karma. Meritorious karma and un-shifting karma are not mutually exclusive, for there does exist something which can be both basic virtue which is consistent with merit and also the causal form of balanced concentration.

There are various typical examples of these three. The first would be the karma which projects as a karmic result the parts of a person who takes birth in one of the better forms of life in the desire realm. The second would be a karma which projects as a karmic result the parts of a person who takes birth in one of the three lives of misery. The third would be a karma which projects as a karmic result the parts of a person who takes birth in one of the higher two realms.

The definition of that craving which constitutes the eighth link in the chain of dependent origination is: "The mental function which, based on the link of feeling, desires of its own accord not to be separated from its object."

This particular craving can be divided into three types: desire craving, fear craving, and existence craving. Each of these three can be described in the following typical examples. The first is that craving where you desire not to be separated from an attractive object. The second is that craving where you desire to be separated from an unattractive object. The third is that craving wherein you crave the parts of your being at the time of your death, out of fear that you think you are going to stop.

The definition of that grasping which constitutes the ninth link in the chain of dependent origination is: "The strong desire that represents the craving of the previous link developed to an intense degree."

This particular grasping may be divided into four types: grasping to the desirable, grasping to views, grasping where you profess the existence of a self-nature, and grasping where you hold mistaken forms of morality and ascetic practices to be supreme.

The first of these is a kind of desire which is strongly attached to an attractive object. The second is a kind of desire which is strongly attached to bad views. The third is a kind of desire which is strongly attached to professing that a self-nature of a person exists. The fourth is a kind of desire which is strongly attached to bad ascetic practices.

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These two links possess certain typical characteristics. Among the three categories of being virtuous and so on, they are invariably ethically neutral. There are types of each which are eliminated by the path of seeing, and types of each which are eliminated by the path of habituation; both types are possible. These links are found with both normal beings and with realized beings, and are had by beings in all three realms.

The definition of that ripened karma which constitutes the tenth link of the chain of dependent origination is: "The movement of the mind which is in its essence an impure ripening where karma has become extremely potent due to its being triggered by the relevant links of craving and grasping."

The second selection is from *Jewel of the True Thought*, a commentary to Master Dharmakirti's *Commentary on Valid Perception* by Geshe Yeshe Wangchuk (b. 1928) of Sera Mey Tibetan Monastery. [The verses are inserted from the original work by Master Dharmakirti (630 AD), sometimes in shorter excerpts than in Geshe Wangchuk's text, to facilitate comparison with the corresponding commentary.]

**Suppose because he's free of the perishable view
He would stop rebirth at the beginning of the path.
Because the innate one's not yet eliminated.
If it were, then how could there ever be a rebirth?**

Suppose someone makes the following argument: "Let's say that you are right, and that the view of the perishable assemblage [seeing some "me" or "mine" with a self-nature] is the very root of the cycle of rebirth. Well then, just after a person had been able to develop the **beginning moments of the path** of seeing, **he would have stopped** himself from every crossing again the line into a new **rebirth**. Why? **Because he's free then of the perishable view.**"

Our answer then would be as follows: "Consider a stream enterer [a person who has reached the path of seeing, and seen emptiness directly.] Isn't it rather the case that he has not yet reached a point where, because he has eliminated the perishable view, he need not take another rebirth? **Because** isn't it true that **the innate one**, the inborn perishable view, **is not yet eliminated?** And **if it were** eliminated, **then how could there ever be a rebirth?** In that case then he could of course never take another rebirth."

You could also answer: "Consider then a stream enterer who sees peace in that same life [that is, who reaches nirvana in the same life in which he reached the

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path of seeing]. **How could there ever be a rebirth** for someone like this? He is one of those people who is certain to eliminate the perishable view completely, and thereby achieve nirvana, in the same life that he reaches the path of seeing.

**That state of mind where a person thinks of "me,"
Where he wishes to himself "May I be happy,"
Or "May I never suffer any pain,"
This viewpoint of a person is the innate.**

And suppose you say, "Perishable view only comes in one kind: the type where you consciously believe [in a "me" or "mine" which has its own nature]. Therefore it is not the cause for suffering existence." It is not true though that there exists no innate form of the perishable view. Think of that case **where a person wishes** a certain object, where he thinks **to himself**, "May I be happy," or "May I never suffer any pain." Without being influenced by any kind of intellectual belief, he holds to a "me," he **thinks of** a "me" who is independent, and who is not just a label applied to the various parts of himself. **That particular state of mind is the viewpoint of a person which is the innate one.**

**If they never thought they saw any kind of "me,"
If they had no attachment at all to some kind of "self,"
If they were free of this craving to a self-nature,
They'd never race on through desire for happiness.**

And are you saying then that people like stream enterers [those who have seen emptiness directly but have not yet reached nirvana] **have no attachment at all to some kind of "self"?** You must be, because [according to you] **they never think they see any kind of "me."** If you agree, then you must be saying that **they could never** be the kind of people who **race on** to the next life **through a desire for happiness** [for a self-existent "me," and yet they are.] This would have to be the case, because **they would be free of this craving to a self-nature.**

The *Great Commentary* says: "Wherever a person **never thinks they see any kind of "me,"** then they have **no attachment at all to some kind of "self."** And because **they are free of this craving to a self-nature,** then **they can never race on** again to a next life **through a desire** for "my-self's" happiness."

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We should note at this point that it is incorrect to assert, as some have done, that the simple awareness of oneself constitutes the perishable view. This is proven by the fact that enemy destroyers and Buddhas do possess states of mind in which they think to themselves, "These are my robes," or "This is my wisdom bowl."

If you disagree that this could ever be the case, then you would have to say as well that there could never exist that failure in one's monastic vows where you steal the robes or bowl or any similar article belonging to one of these beings. This would have to be the case, for these beings would according to you lack any state of mind where they considered something "mine." A lack of such a state should always mean that one could not steal from such beings, for the following distinction is correctly made: So long as the Teacher is still blessing the world with His presence, there can occur the failure of one's vows where he steals what rightfully belongs to the Teacher; and yet, after He pretends to pass into His final nirvana, such a failure can no longer occur.

There are moreover those lines in *Entering [the Middle Way]*, which talk about being

Like the case where Buddhas, who are
free of the view
Of the perishable assemblage, still speak of
'me' and 'my teaching'..."

**From the one cause of being attached to some self-nature,
They conceive of what's not happiness as happiness,
And as a result they dive into everything;
Therefore craving's a basis for rebirth.**

Consider now **craving**. It is the [aspect of the truth of the source of suffering we call] "factor." This is because it is a **basis** which contributes to a corresponding result; ie, another **rebirth**.

It is true that craving is this way, because **those** who have been brought down by the tendency to **conceive of what's not happiness as being happiness** **dive as a result** of this **into "everything,"** which refers to unworthy things and goals. Neither is it true that this totally mistaken backwards conception of things is without its proper cause, for all this occurs **from the one cause of being attached to some self-nature**.

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**Because of the fact that the Masters have said
"Those free of attachment will never see birth."**

It is true that craving is a cause for a future rebirth, **because of the fact that Masters of the past have said** that "Enemy destroyers, **those** who are **free of attachment, never** again **see** a **birth** in some future life; this is due to the fact that they have eliminated craving in its entirety."