

Transcript of teachings by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi

Lesson No: 10

Date: 19th July 2012

There are four divisions of the direct perceiver:

1. sense direct perceiver
2. mental direct perceiver
3. self-knowing direct perceiver
4. yogic direct perceiver

According to the Sutra School (SS), a direct perceiver is necessarily (1) free of conceptuality and (2) non-mistaken.

You must understand the importance of knowing this subject well because, as I have mentioned before, the different modules in the Basic Program, especially the philosophical subjects, are closely interconnected. When you do not have a reasonably good understanding of *Lorig*, it is not possible to learn tenets well. That is not going to happen. Since these subjects are connected in this way, from now on, you must try your best to understand as much as you can.

You must understand in accordance with the assertions of the SS:

- Why direct perceivers are necessarily non-mistaken?
- Why conceptual consciousnesses are necessarily mistaken?

This has to depend on an understanding of what a mistaken consciousness is and knowing the definition of a mistaken consciousness. Once you know the definition of a mistaken consciousness, you will be able to understand why, according to the SS, direct perceivers are necessarily non-mistaken.

The proponents of the Mind-Only School (MOS) can be divided into:

1. proponents of the True Aspectarian Mind-Only School
2. proponents of the False Aspectarian Mind-Only School

Khen Rinpoche: Listen to this to place some imprints in your mind.

The False Aspectarians also posit direct perceivers such as the sense direct perceivers and the mental direct perceivers but according to them, these direct perceivers are mistaken. This position is different from that of the SS which asserts that the self-knowing direct perceivers and the yogic direct perceivers are non-mistaken.

In the same way, the True Aspectarians assert that the sense direct perceivers in the continua of ordinary beings are necessarily mistaken.

This is just to give you an idea. As we move up the tenets, there will be slightly different assertions. For the highest tenet, the Consequence

Middle Way School (CMWS), with the exception of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, *all* other minds in the continua of sentient beings are necessarily mistaken. For the CMWS, not only are the sense direct perceivers in the continuum of a sentient being mistaken, *every* mind in the continuum of a sentient being, with the exception of the wisdom of directly realising emptiness, is necessarily mistaken. From this, you can see that there is so much more to learn and to know. There is a lot more coming.

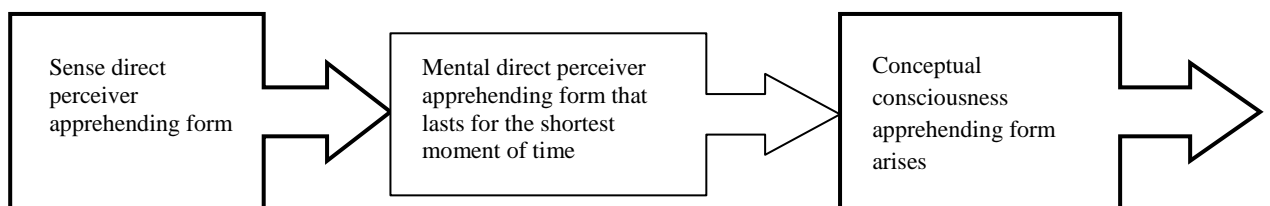
We are approaching this topic from the perspective of the SS. You have to at least understand why, from the perspective of the SS, direct perceivers are necessarily non-mistaken. When we study the tenets, we will then look at why the MOS asserts that *not* all direct perceivers are necessarily non-mistaken. As we go up to the CMWS, we will look at why the CMWS asserts that, with the exception of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, all other minds in the continua of sentient beings are necessarily mistaken. You have to understand all these assertions.

All this will become clearer when we study tenets. I brought this up to highlight to you that there is a lot more coming.

Khen Rinpoche: A lot of interesting things are coming, ok? Not boring things but interesting things!

Earlier we had looked at the sense direct perceivers and mental direct perceivers. Going back to the example of a sense direct perceiver apprehending form:

1. First, the sense direct perceiver apprehending form is generated.
2. Following that, the mental direct perceiver apprehending form arises but, in the continua of ordinary beings, this mental direct perceiver apprehending form lasts only for the shortest moment of time.
3. The conceptual consciousness apprehending form then arises.



- Due to the prior realisation of form by the sense direct perceiver apprehending form, the conceptual consciousness apprehending form is able to induce the ascertainment of form.
- Because the mental direct perceiver apprehending form in the continua of ordinary beings lasts for only the shortest moment of time, that mental direct perceiver apprehending form does *not* realise form, i.e., it is unable to induce an ascertainment of form.

In order to be a mental direct perceiver, four characteristics must be present:

1. It is generated in dependence upon a mental sense power that is its uncommon empowering condition.
2. It must be non-mistaken.
3. It must be free from conceptuality.
4. It is a consciousness that is an other-knower

There are consciousnesses that are other-knowers and there are consciousnesses that are self-knowers.

Other-knowers

An other-knower realises something other than itself. Consciousnesses that are other-knowers are:

1. In the division of direct perceivers:
 - a. sense direct perceivers
 - b. mental direct perceivers
 - c. yogic direct perceivers
2. All conceptual consciousnesses

Therefore any consciousness that is a sense direct perceiver, a mental direct perceiver, a yogic direct perceiver, or a conceptual consciousness is *necessarily* an other-knower.

Question: Why is the word, “other-knower,” not in the definition of a sense direct perceiver?

Answer: There is no need to specifically mention “other-knower” for conceptual consciousnesses.

The definition of a sense direct perceiver is:

- 1) that which is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, a physical sense power, and
- 2) is a knower that is free from conceptuality and non-mistaken.

The definition of a sense direct perceiver does not say, “it is an other-knower that is free from conceptuality and non-mistaken.” However in the definitions of the mental direct perceiver and yogic direct perceiver, the words, “is an other-knower” and “is an other-knowing exalted knower” are included in their definitions.

Related to this discussion, if you were asked, “Is the self-knower that experiences the sense direct perceiver, an eye consciousness apprehending form, a sense direct perceiver?” what will be your answer?

Khen Rinpoche: Yes or no?

(Students answer no.)

No? Are you sure? Why are you saying no?

In debate language, it follows that the self-knower experiencing a sense direct perceiver *is* a sense direct perceiver because it is produced in dependence upon the uncommon empowering condition, a physical sense power.

So the next question is this: Is the uncommon empowering condition of a self-knower experiencing a sense direct perceiver a physical sense power?

What do you think is the uncommon empowering condition of the self-knower experiencing an eye consciousness?

The eye consciousness and the self-knower experiencing it are established *simultaneously*. That being the case, then the uncommon empowering condition for this self-knower that is experiencing the eye consciousness has to be posited to be the physical sense power as well.

The self-knower experiencing an eye consciousness *is* a direct perceiver that is non-mistaken and free from conceptuality. Is it generated in dependence upon the uncommon empowering condition of the eye consciousness, i.e., the physical sense power? That is what you have to analyse.

In the definition of a mental direct perceiver, why then is “an other-knower” specified? What does this eliminate? A mental direct perceiver is a non-mistaken knower that is free from conceptuality and generated in dependence upon its uncommon empowering condition, a mental sense power. But that is not enough. For a consciousness to be a mental direct perceiver, it must be an other-knower.

If you think along these lines, perhaps this is the reason why “other-knower” is included in the definition of a mental direct perceiver. The point here is that we have to understand why the term “other-knower” is in the definition of a mental direct perceiver and why it is insufficient for the definition to state that its uncommon empowering condition is a mental sense power and that it is non-mistaken and free from conceptuality. When we do not mention “other-knower,” what happens to the self-knower experiencing the mental consciousness? That makes the self-knower the mental consciousness.

Therefore in order to show that the self-knower experiencing a mental consciousness is a self-knower and not the mental consciousness, “other-knower” is included in the definition of a mental direct perceiver. It should be like that.

If you say this is acceptable, then is it all right to apply the same line of reasoning to the definition of a sense direct perceiver or not?

Question: Is the uncommon empowering condition of a self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending form the mental sense

power?

Khen Rinpoche: Why do you have to posit that the uncommon empowering condition of this self-knower experiencing an eye consciousness is a mental sense power?

Student: Because the self-knower is experiencing an eye consciousness apprehending form, so its uncommon empowering condition has to be a mental sense power and not a physical sense power.

Khen Rinpoche: That is a good point.

Question: For someone who remembered, “I saw blue,” the reason posited was that this is due to the self-knowing direct perceiver perceiving the consciousness apprehending blue in the past. Does this self-knowing direct perceiver apprehend the thought consciousness that discriminates blue or does it apprehend the eye consciousness that apprehends blue at that point in time?

Answer: Memory is a conceptual thought. When the eye consciousness apprehended blue earlier, there was a self-knower experiencing it. Of course at the time of apprehending blue, you also have the thought conceptually designating, “This is blue” and “This is not blue.” There is also a self-knower experiencing that thought.

Self-knowers

Self-knowers are asserted by the SS, the MOS and the Autonomy Middle Way School (AMWS). What is the main reason for them to assert the existence of self-knowers? For them, the correct sign that establishes the existence of self-knowers is memory.

According to the abovementioned tenets, the reason why, after having seen blue, subsequently you remember the experience of having seen blue at a later date is because, at the earlier time when the eye consciousness was apprehending blue, there was a consciousness experiencing this eye consciousness. This consciousness that experiences the eye consciousness apprehending blue is called the self-knower.

- The self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending blue is of one collection with the eye consciousness apprehending blue.
- The self-knower that experiences the eye consciousness apprehending blue has the factor of clarity and knowing.

There are two factors to the eye consciousness apprehending blue:

1. The factor that experiences itself, i.e., experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending blue.
2. The factor that experiences something other than itself, i.e., blue.

It is similar to the two parts that pertain to the illumination of a flame:

1. The flame illuminating itself is like the factor that experiences itself,

the self-knower.

2. The flame illuminating something other than itself is like the factor that experiences something other than itself, the other-knower.

These two factors are included in one collection.

You must have a rough idea of what a self-knower is. If you do not, then when we come to the highest school, the CMWS, that does not assert self-knowers, you cannot make any comparison with those schools that do assert self-knowers. In reality, there are no self-knowers.

Here we are trying to find out what is a self-knower in accordance with those who assert it. When you think about the main reason why the proponents of self-knowers assert the existence of self-knowers, i.e., memory, it does make sense. Otherwise how would we remember things? Only after you think, “Maybe self-knowers do exist,” and then you hear the explanations of the CMWS refuting those assertions, only then will you appreciate the difference.

So you should try to have a rough idea of why a self-knower is posited by those who believe in it. The main reason they put forth is the memory of the subject and the object.

When a self-knower experiences the consciousness that is of one collection with it, it does not experience the consciousness with any sense of duality such as the experiencer is here and the experience is there. The way a self-knower experiences the consciousness that is of the same collection with itself is as if it has become one with the consciousness that it is experiencing. So there is no duality. This is what constitutes a self-knowing direct perceiver that:

- has an aspect of the apprehender,
- is free from conceptuality and
- is non-mistaken

Question: Is a self-knower of a conceptual consciousness conceptual or non-conceptual?

Answer: It was mentioned earlier that a conceptual consciousness is necessarily an other-knower.

Question: But it is non-dual with a conceptual consciousness because the self-knower has the characteristics of being non-dual with the consciousness that it is experiencing. In that sense, is it not conceptual?

Khen Rinpoche: You accept that sense direct perceivers, mental direct perceivers, yogic direct perceivers, and conceptual consciousnesses are other-knowers?

Student: Yes.

Khen Rinpoche: If that is the case then there is no reason why this question should be asked. The answer is No.

Student: The self-knower is non-conceptual but it is non-dual with the conceptual consciousness?

Khen Rinpoche: Yes. What is the problem with that?

Student: It is one entity but one part is conceptual and the other is non-conceptual?

Khen Rinpoche: That does not matter. There is no problem with that.

Question: Can we say that a self-knower and the consciousness that it is experiencing are one entity with two isolates?

Answer: Yes, you can say that.

Question: I would like to clarify an example of a self-knowing direct perceiver that is an AAA. The example is of a smoker who knows smoking is bad yet still continues to smoke even after having seen all the advertisements on the effects of lung cancer and so forth. Is that an AAA that is a self-knower?

(Khen Rinpoche answers this question towards the end of the lesson).

Question: When we meditate, there is the mindfulness of the object and there is another part of the mind that makes sure that the mind does not go shopping. Is such vigilance of the mind a self-knower?

Answer: No, that is a mental factor. It is a different mind. Within *one* consciousness, there are *two* parts:

1. One part is experiencing itself
2. Another part is realising something other than itself.

These two are present and exist in any one consciousness. In the collection of consciousness, there are two parts existing in the consciousness. There is the part that illuminates objects other than itself, i.e., the other-knower. When you expand the presentation from this, then you have the sense direct perceivers, the mental direct perceivers, the yogic direct perceivers, and the conceptual consciousnesses.

Question: Can I say that the self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness, that eye consciousness is not aspected?

Answer: Remember the discussion on the aspect of an apprehender and the aspect of the apprehended?

Student: So it is in the definition.

Question: Can I say that the self-knower and the eye consciousness share the three conditions: the observed object condition, the uncommon empowering condition, and the immediate preceding condition?

Answer: What we are trying to analyse here is the self-knower experiencing an eye consciousness apprehending blue. The question is: is the self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending blue generated by the same three conditions that produce the eye consciousness apprehending blue?

Perhaps one can say that the self-knower experiencing eye consciousness apprehending blue is generated in dependence on:

- blue
- the eye sense power
- the consciousness that existed just prior to the generation of the eye consciousness apprehending blue

But we need to analyse whether blue is the observed object condition of the self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending blue.

The eye consciousness apprehending blue and the self-knower experiencing that eye consciousness arise simultaneously, i.e., they are generated, abide, and disintegrate at the same time. Therefore the causes that are responsible for the generation of the eye consciousness apprehending blue can be said to be the causes of the self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending blue. We can probably say that. The causes for the production of an eye consciousness apprehending blue can be posited to be the causes for the production of the self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending blue.

Question: Do all sense direct perceivers have the aspect of an apprehender? Page 4 of Handout No. 5 dated 10 July 2012 states, “The eye consciousness itself is the apprehender.” May I take that to mean all sense direct perceivers have the aspect of an apprehender?

Answer: What is the apprehended object of the eye consciousness apprehending blue? The apprehended object of that consciousness is mutually inclusive with its appearing object.

What is the appearing object of an eye consciousness apprehending blue? It is blue. So blue is the apprehended object of the eye consciousness apprehending blue. The eye consciousness apprehending blue is the aspect of the apprehended because it is a consciousness that is generated into the aspect of blue.

Question: There is an apprehender that is the subject and the apprehended that is the object. The self-knower is apprehending the eye consciousness apprehending blue so the self-knower is the apprehender.

What is being apprehended by this apprehender, the self-knower, is the eye consciousness apprehending blue. In turn the eye consciousness apprehending the object blue is the apprehender of blue. Is this all right?

Answer: That is correct.

Question: The self-knower takes on the aspect of the apprehender, the eye consciousness apprehending blue. If that is the case, is there a cause and effect relationship between the self-knower and the eye consciousness?

Answer: There is no cause and effect relationship between a self-knower and the consciousness that it is experiencing because they are established simultaneously, i.e., they are produced at the same time. If you talk about there being a sequence, then it is necessarily a cause and effect relationship but because they are produced simultaneously, you cannot talk about cause and effect.

Question: If they occur simultaneously, how then does a self-knower take on *the aspect* of an apprehender that is the eye consciousness itself?

Answer: This aspect of the study of Lorig is the most difficult aspect. All minds have a self-knower. Whether it is a main mind or a mental factor, there is a self-knower experiencing it.

Question: What would be the problem if we were to use the terms, observed object condition, uncommon empowering condition, and immediately preceding condition with regard to the production of the self-knower? It seems Khen Rinpoche was very careful when he was giving the explanation earlier to show that the self-knower arises in dependence on these conditions but they are not quite the same thing.

Answer: Blue is the appearing object of eye consciousness apprehending blue. If we were to say that blue is the appearing object of the self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending blue, then what would be the consequence?

What appears to this self-knower experiencing the eye consciousness apprehending blue? It is only the eye consciousness apprehending blue. Blue does not appear.

In the next lesson, we will look at the facsimile of a direct perceiver. Once we complete that, we will move on to the inferential valid cogniser.

I don't fully understand the earlier question about smoking but let us assume that this is the answer!

A smoker may know that if one smokes, it is bad for one's health. Such a thought however can be a **doubt** as one could be wondering, "Maybe it is bad for me or maybe it is not." For such a person who is still entertaining

doubts about whether smoking is really harmful or not, obviously he does not realise that smoking is bad and he will continue to smoke.

After hearing more about the harmful effects of smoking and now believing that smoking is really bad, that is an assumption that accords with the fact. It is still just a thought but it is better than doubt. When one has arrived at a **correct assumption**, there is greater hope that the chances of smoking less will be higher.

The person who has this correct assumption is now on the side of the truth that smoking is bad, but he has not ascertained or realised this yet. He still smokes. Even when one has a very strong belief in the harmful effects of smoking, nevertheless it is still just an assumption. There is still a long way to go before one is able to induce an ascertainment.

When one is able to induce ascertainment, this is **valid cognition**. During the gap between the development of this ascertainment that is a realisation and the correction assumption, one still smokes. Once a person is able to induce the ascertainment or the valid cognition of the harmful effects of smoking, definitely the chances of him smoking less is much higher than the chances he had when he simply had the correct belief.

So do people who have the valid cognition realising the harmful effects of smoking still smoke? Yes or no?

(Student's response is inaudible)

Due to seeing an advertisement on the harmful effects of smoking, it is possible to generate a valid thought thinking smoking is bad. But this thought can be a valid cogniser, a correctly assuming consciousness, or even doubt. The adults did not give the lighter to the child in the advertisement you described because they realise the harm of smoking with respect to others. But they still have doubts with respect to themselves being harmed by smoking. There are people who know that they are harmed by certain habits like smoking, yet they knowingly engage in the very habits that harm them.

Questions for discussion on Sunday, 22nd July 2012

1. If it is an established base, is it necessarily all three of the following:
 - appearing object
 - determined object, and
 - object of engagement?
2. Object possessors are divided into: (1) persons (2) awarenesses, and (3) expressive sounds.
 - Why are they object possessors?
 - If it is a sound, is it necessarily an object possessor?

3. (a) If an object appears to a direct perceiver, is it necessarily its appearing object?
(b) If an object appears to a conceptual consciousness, is it necessarily not its appearing object?
4. Among the seven-fold divisions of consciousness, how many are mistaken consciousnesses and how many are non-mistaken consciousnesses?
5. (a) What is the uncommon empowering condition, the mental sense power?
(b) If it is a consciousness that is generated in dependence on a mental sense power, is it necessarily a mental direct perceiver?

Translated by Ven. Tenzin Gyurme

Transcribed by Phuah Soon Ek, Vivien Ng and Patricia Lee

Edited by Cecilia Tsong