

Transcript of teachings by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi

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All page references refer to this root text unless otherwise stated.

Lesson No: 15

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Question: The Half-Eggists assert that for the mottled colours on the wing of the butterfly, the individual colours cast an aspect. When the karma ripens for a consciousness apprehending the individual colours, both the object (the colours) and the subject (the consciousness) arise simultaneously. That being the case, how is it possible for multiple objects to be cast and yet there is only one consciousness apprehending these objects? Since the MOS states that every time an object is cast, simultaneously there is a subjective aspect, I thought there should be multiple subjective aspects rather than just one subjective aspect.

Answer: The SS asserts that consciousnesses are aspected. There is also a discussion about the objective aspects and the subjective aspects in accordance with the Proponents of an Equal Number of Apprehendeds and Apprehenders, Half-Eggists, and Non-Pluralists in the SS.

It is just that the SS asserts external objects so that the object, from its own side, casts an aspect of itself to the consciousness perceiving it. The casting of the aspect comes from the side of the object.

However, for the MOS, the question is whether this casting¹ of the aspect is coming from the side of the object or not. To the MOS, the aspect of the object that is cast does *not* come from the side of the object. It is due to the ripening of a particular karmic seed or propensity. So although the terms used may be the same—the aspect is cast or delivered—their meanings are different.

Question: My question is equally applicable to the SS. A consciousness apprehending the object is supposed to be generated every time an object is cast. How is it possible then that multiple objects are cast yet there is only one consciousness apprehending the overall mottle rather than the individual colours?

Khen Rinpoche: Of the three positions, which position is this?

Student: According to the root text, it is the Half-Eggists but based on Khen

¹ In the root text, the aspect is said to be “delivered” rather than “cast” as “cast” may carry the connotation that the aspect is coming from the side of the object.

Rinpoche's explanation using another commentary, this is the position of the Non-Pluralists.

Answer: This is one particular way of explaining the position of the Non-Pluralists: one consciousness is generated in many aspects.

Using the eye consciousness apprehending blue as an example, the eye consciousness apprehending blue is one consciousness, but it is not just blue that is appearing to the eye consciousness. Everything that is part of the collection of blue, including the impermanence of blue, blue being a product, blue being a functional thing, and whatever isolates that may appear, they all appear to the eye consciousness apprehending blue. Although everything within the collection of blue appears to the eye consciousness apprehending blue, the eye consciousness apprehending blue is only generated in the aspect of blue. It is not generated into the aspect of the impermanence of blue, blue being a product, and so forth.

Question: Using this example of the eye consciousness apprehending blue, based on the position of the Proponents of an Equal Number of Apprehendeds and Apprehenders, there will then be multiple apprehenders apprehending the different aspects of the blue?

Ven Gyurme: There are two positions of these being generated either simultaneously or serially.

Question: The Mind Only True Aspectarians assert that gross objects are not polluted by the latent ignorance of the mind. I am not sure if The Mind Only False Aspectarians assert gross object.

For the MOS, external objects do not exist. Do gross objects exist for the MOS? Do they exist for both the Mind Only True Aspectarians and the False Aspectarians? What then is the difference between an external object and a gross object?

Is it better to be a True Aspectarian or a False Aspectarian? Do the words "true" and "false" have anything to do with the right view?

Khen Rinpoche: It is good to be both.

The MOS: Refutation of external objects

Answer: In order to understand the assertion of the MOS that there are no external objects, in the first place, we have to understand what an external object is. For that, we first have to look at the tenets below the MOS.

The SS assert external objects. What is their explanation of an external object? They assert directionally partless particles. It is the coming together of many of these directionally partless particles that you have a gross form or object. This gross object then acts as an observed object condition for the production of a consciousness apprehending it.

According to the SS, there is this cause and effect relationship. In the case of an eye consciousness apprehending vase, the vase must exist *prior* to the eye consciousness apprehending it. The vase acts as the observed object condition

for the production of an eye consciousness apprehending vase. So there is a sequence: the existence of the vase *precedes* the eye-consciousness apprehending it. These two do *not* come about simultaneously.

This is the explanation of an external object according to the SS, but this explanation is not accepted by the MOS. When we say that the MOS does not assert external objects, essentially we are saying that the MOS does not accept the explanation of the SS.

Does this mean that the MOS does not assert a vase? The MOS asserts that a vase exists. They also assert that the eye-consciousness apprehending the vase exists. Both the object and the subject exist, but both are produced *simultaneously*, i.e., their arising is *not* sequential. They both arise from the ripening of *one* karmic imprint or predisposition. This one imprint produces *both* the objective aspect and the subjective aspect.

Therefore the MOS asserts that:

- Both the vase and the eye-consciousness apprehending the vase are produced simultaneously from the ripening of one karmic imprint.
- This one imprint produces *both* the objective aspect and subjective aspect.
- Unlike the SS, their production is simultaneous.

In the first place, the MOS do not assert directionally partless particles. Since they do not assert directionally partless particles, you cannot have a gross form that is the result of the coming together of many directionally partless particles. If there isn't such a gross form, then there cannot be a valid cogniser apprehending such an object.

This is the MOS's refutation of external objects:

- According to this school, the directionally partless particle does not exist.
- If the directionally partless particle does not exist, how can there be a gross form that is the result of the coming together of many directionally partless particles?
- If such a gross form does not exist, then there cannot be any valid cogniser apprehending it. Therefore a gross form does not exist in the first place.
- In short, when the MOS says that there aren't any external objects, what they are saying is that the external object that is asserted by the SS does not exist.

SUTRA SCHOOL	MIND ONLY SCHOOL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Asserts external objects because they assert directionally partless particles. • The gross form is the result of the coming together of many directionally partless particles. • This gross object acts as the observed objective condition for the production of a consciousness apprehending it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not assert external object because they do not assert directionally partless particles. • Therefore there isn't any gross form and there cannot be any valid cogniser apprehending it so external objects do not exist.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For an eye consciousness apprehending a vase, the vase must exist prior to the eye consciousness apprehending it. It is a <i>cause and effect</i> relationship. • The vase acts as the observed object condition for the production of an eye consciousness apprehending vase. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For an eye consciousness apprehending vase, both the vase and the eye consciousness apprehending vase are produced <i>simultaneously</i> from the ripening of one karmic imprint. This one imprint produces both the objective aspect and subjective aspect.

The Gross Object according to the Mind Only True Aspectarians & Mind Only False Aspectarians

The Mind Only True Aspectarians do assert gross objects. The Mind Only False Aspectarians do not assert gross objects. To the Mind Only False Aspectarians, to assert gross objects is the same as asserting external objects.

So what is a gross object? What is a gross blue or gross vase? A gross blue means that a very vivid blue is appearing. What about a gross vase? A gross vase is a vase that we see occupying space.

The Mind Only True Aspectarians assert gross objects. Whether it is gross blue or gross vase, they assert that the appearance of blue as gross blue and the appearance of vase as gross vase are valid. Those appearances are correct because to the True Aspectarians, they exist in the way they appear. As mentioned before, for the Mind Only True Aspectarians, the mind that is apprehending blue as gross blue is not mistaken with respect to that factor of appearance.

For the Mind Only False Aspectarians, they do not assert gross blue because to do so would be the same as saying that there are external objects.

The Mind Only True Aspectarians have no problem with saying that the mind is not mistaken with respect to the factor of blue appearing as gross blue or the factor of vase appearing as gross vase. To them, this does not mean that there is an external blue or there is an external vase. Gross blue is just the very vivid appearance of blue and gross vase is just a vase that is occupying space.

The Mind Only False Aspectarians do not assert gross form, gross sound, and so forth because for them, to assert that there is gross form, gross sound, and so forth would be the same as saying that there are external form and so forth.

If you remember, the Mind Only False Aspectarians assert that with respect to the direct perceiver apprehending form, that direct perceiver:

- is mistaken with respect to the factor of appearance of form appearing as form and
- is also mistaken with respect to form appearing as gross form.

The Mind Only False Aspectarians assert that the direct perceiver apprehending form is mistaken with respect to form appearing as form because there is an appearance of an external form. The Mind Only False Aspectarians' understanding of the True Aspectarians' assertion of form appearing as form is form appearing as an external form.

Both the Mind Only True Aspectarians and the Mind Only False Aspectarians assert that the eye consciousness apprehending blue, for example, is a mistaken consciousness, but they differ as to how that consciousness is mistaken and with respect to what it is mistaken.

For the Mind Only True Aspectarians, the eye consciousness apprehending blue is *not* mistaken with respect to the factor of blue appearing as blue. But the Mind Only False Aspectarians assert that the eye consciousness apprehending blue is mistaken with the factor of blue appearing as blue. Because of this difference, then there comes the difference in asserting whether blue appearing as gross blue is mistaken or not.

MIND ONLY TRUE ASPECTARIANS	MIND ONLY FALSE ASPECTARIANS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assert gross objects. <p>Using the example of blue:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assert that the mind that is apprehending blue as gross blue is <i>not</i> mistaken with respect to that factor of appearance. Blue exists in the way it appears. • Gross blue is the appearance of vivid blue but that does not mean that there is an external blue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eye consciousness apprehending blue is not mistaken with respect to the factor of blue appearing as blue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not assert gross objects because that would be the same as saying there are external objects. • Assert that the mind is mistaken with respect to form appearing as form and form appearing as gross form. • With respect to the direct perceiver apprehending form, that direct perceiver is mistaken with respect to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the factor of appearance of form appearing as form because there is an appearance of an external form and of ◦ form appearing as gross form. • The eye consciousness apprehending blue is mistaken with respect to the factor of blue appearing as blue.

Review: “A form being empty of existing by way of its own characteristics as a basis for applying the term ‘form’”—the assertions of the MOS vs the assertions of the SS

There are two kinds of emptinesses described in the MOS as illustrations of the two selflessnesses. For example, an eye consciousness apprehending blue, although there is just one consciousness, there are many ways in which objects can appear to this consciousness. To the eye consciousness apprehending blue, there are many different appearances:

- There is the appearance of blue as blue.
- There is an appearance of blue as an external object.
- There is the appearance of blue existing by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue.”

There are these different appearances to one consciousness apprehending blue. These appearances are not due to just one karmic imprint or latency but the ripening of different karmic latencies.

The appearance of blue as an external object and the appearance of blue existing by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” do not exist in the way they appear. Therefore they are the objects of negation or refutation.

<p>Objects of negation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blue as an external object • Blue existing by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue”
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Both the SS and the MOS assert that there is a blue that exists as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue.

The SS asserts that there is a blue that exists by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue. This blue exists as its own uncommon mode of subsistence, i.e., it exists from its own side. In other words, the SS asserts that:

- blue exists by way of its own character and
- blue exists by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue.

According to the MOS:

- blue exists by way of its own character,
- but blue does *not* exist by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue.

The MOS asserts that this blue that is the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue exists as (1) an imputation by a conceptual consciousness and (2) it does *not* exist by way of its own character.

Refutation by the SS

The SS says that the blue that exists by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue cannot exist as an imputation by conceptual consciousness. This blue that is the basis for applying the term “blue” *has to exist* by way of its own character and therefore is not something that is imputed by a conceptual consciousness.

According to the SS, if you were to say that blue does not exist by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue, it would make blue similar to the horns of a rabbit because there is a conception of the horns of a rabbit, although the horns of a rabbit do not exist. What is the basis for applying the term “horns of a rabbit” by that conceptual consciousness? It is the horns of a rabbit. Because of this, the SS asserts that:

- Blue *exists* by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue.
- This blue that exists by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue *cannot exist* as something that is imputed by a conceptual consciousness.

SUTRA SCHOOL	MIND ONLY SCHOOL
Both schools assert that blue exists by way of its own character.	
Both schools assert that there is a blue that is the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Blue that is the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue exists by way of its own character. 	The blue that is the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue does <i>not</i> exist by way of its own character. It exists as merely imputed by a conceptual consciousness.

Blue is blue from its own side. Blue being blue is not something that is merely imputed either by a conceptual consciousness or by a term. Blue is the entity or nature of blue. In the same way, when we analyse form—a form being established as form, a form in the nature of form, and so forth—form is form from the side of the form itself, from the side of the entity of form. Form being form is not something that is merely an imputation by a conceptual consciousness or a term. If form being form is something that is merely imputed by a conceptual consciousness or by a term that would make form no different from the horns of a rabbit.

For this reason, for the SS, using the example of blue, blue being blue comes from the side of blue. The entity of blue is like that. It is *not* something that is merely imputed by a conceptual consciousness or by a term. Therefore when you think about blue being the basis for applying the term “blue” to a conceptual consciousness apprehending blue, that has to exist by way of its own character. It *cannot* be merely imputed by a conceptual consciousness or by a term. Otherwise that would make this blue that is the basis for applying the term

“blue” similar to the horns of a rabbit.

According to the MOS:

- Form exists from its own side.
- Form exists by way of its own character.
- Form exists as the basis for applying the term “form” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending form.
- Although such a form exists, it does not exist by way of its own character.
- **The form that is existing by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “form” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending form does not exist.**

As discussed in the last lesson, if form exists by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “form” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending form, what is the problem? In the case of a mind thinking about a vase, what is the basis of applying the term “vase” for this mind? It is the flat-based bulbous thing. Simply by seeing the flat-based bulbous thing, the idea of a vase would arise. But that is not the case.

The conceptual consciousness plays an important role here.

- First you see the basis.
- Then a conceptual consciousness applying a term (or name or label) to that basis arises, i.e., this mind imputes or affixes a label to that basis.

In the case of a vase, we see a flat-based bulbous thing. Then a conceptual consciousness gets involved, imputing or labelling the flat-based bulbous thing as a “vase.”

What is the basis for applying the term “vase”? It is the flat-based bulbous thing. This flat-based bulbous thing being the basis for applying the term “vase” comes from the side of a conceptual consciousness. In relationship to this conceptual consciousness imputing vase, this flat-based bulbous thing becomes the basis of applying the term “vase.” So the flat-based bulbous thing being the basis for applying the term “vase” is *dependent on* the conceptual consciousness apprehending vase.

If the flat-based bulbous thing existed by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “vase,” anybody seeing that flat-based bulbous thing—without even thinking about the concept or label “vase”—should be able to see vase immediately because the vase is coming from its own side.

The flat-based bulbous thing is the basis for applying the term “vase” for the conceptual consciousness apprehending vase, but this flat-based bulbous thing being the basis for applying the term “vase” does not exist from its own side. It does not exist by way of its own character. Because if this flat-based bulbous thing exists by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “vase,” then just by seeing that flat-based bulbous thing, you should be able to see vase because it is coming from its own side. The term “vase” in relation to this flat-based bulbous thing has the factor of being imputed by the conceptual consciousness.

Let us take a specific individual as an example. This individual is regarded as wise and knowledgeable. The term “wise” is applied. This person is the basis for the expression “wise.” It is also the basis for the conception of a wise person.

But that very same person can be regarded as foolish or even stupid by other people. For those people, that person is the basis for (1) the expression “stupid” and (2) the conception of that person as stupid. That person is considered wise by some and stupid by others. These two different characteristics exist in that one person: (1) there is a factor of that person being wise and (2) there is a factor of that person being stupid.

But that factor of being wise or stupid does not exist from the side of that person.

- The person does not exist by way of his own character as the basis for applying the term “stupid” for the conceptual consciousness thinking that the person is stupid.
- Similarly, that person does not exist by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “wise” for the conceptual consciousness apprehending a wise person.

If this person exists by way of his own character as the basis for applying the term “stupid” and, at the same time, this person also exists by way of his own character as the basis for applying the term “wise,” we would end up with an absurd result: that the person is both wise and stupid at the same time. From this example, it is clear that this person does not exist by way of his own character as the basis for applying the term “wise” nor does this person exist by way of his own character as the basis for applying the term “stupid.”

What you have to understand is this:

- If things and events exist by way of their own character as the bases for applying specific terms, what is the problem?
- Why does form not exist by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “form” for the conceptual consciousness apprehending form?

This understanding can have practical applications. For example, you can apply this to the eight worldly dharmas. You are either being praised or being criticised. When you are praised, think that you are not a basis existing by way of your own character as the basis for that praise. Similarly, when you are being criticised, you can think that you do not exist by way of your own character as the basis for those criticisms.

It is helpful to think about this in relation to our reaction to praise and criticism. When we understand that we, as an individual, do not exist by way of our own character as the basis for the praise, that means the praise is merely imputed. So when we are praised, there is no need to be excited or get carried away. Similarly when we are criticised, this criticism is merely imputed by a conceptual consciousness precisely because we do not exist by way of our own character as the natural base of the engagement of those criticisms or hurtful words. According to the MOS, the recipient of the praise is truly established and the person who is giving praise is also truly established. However, the praise itself is merely imputed.

In the case of Khen Rinpoche, he exists. He is known as Geshe Chonyi. He is the basis of designation of the name “Geshe Chonyi.”

- There is a person who designates the name “Geshe Chonyi.” This person who designates the name is truly established.

- Geshe Chonyi himself is also truly established.
- But the name “Geshe Chonyi” is merely imputed.

The fact that he is Geshe Chonyi does not exist from its own side. He is however the basis of designation. What is imputed is the name “Geshe Chonyi.” This name “Geshe Chonyi” does *not* exist from the side of the basis of designation. If this name “Geshe Chonyi” exists from the side of the basis of designation, then whoever sees him should be able to see “Geshe Chonyi.” So the factor of him being Geshe Chonyi is merely imputed by a conceptual consciousness and the factor of him being Geshe Chonyi does not exist from the side of the basis of designation.

Similarly, he is also a monk but he does not exist by way of his own character as the basis for applying the term “monk.” He is the basis of designation for “Geshe Chonyi,” “monk,” and “man,” but the factor of him being Geshe Chonyi, the factor of him being a monk, and so forth are merely imputed. They do not exist from the side of the basis of designation. What is the basis of designation? He, the person, is the basis of designation.

Khen Rinpoche: I was taking a walk once in the Botanic Gardens and after my walk I was waiting at the gate for someone to pick me up. There was a foreign tourist couple who came up to me and asked, “Are you working here?” Maybe this is the uniform (referring to his robes) for workers at the Botanic Gardens. They did not know that these were the robes of a monk.

I said “No.” They were waiting for the tourist bus and they asked me whether the bus will come here or not. I said, “I think so as this is the only place where the bus will come.” I was surprised at myself. This shows that being a monk does not exist from my own side.

What you have to understand is, using form as an example: why does form not exist by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “form” for the conceptual consciousness apprehending form?

Every phenomenon has a name. Everything is known as something and is called something. Now we are looking at the name itself. How does the name of any particular object exist? Is it established from the side of the object itself? Is there something that is uncommon or peculiar to the object or is there some other way of the name existing?

According to the MOS, an object is called such-and-such. That name does not come from the side of the object but it comes from the side of a conceptual consciousness and it comes from the side of terminology. The MOS is trying to show us that the conceptual consciousness and terms are more powerful. They are responsible for the name. The name is not coming from the side of the object, but rather it is (1) the conceptual consciousness and (2) the term that we impute that accounts for the name.

Whatever objects there are, say objects one, two, three, and four, these four objects are respectively the bases of designation for the labels, “Object One,” “Object Two,” “Object Three,” and “Object Four.” What is imputed? It is “Object One,” “Object Two,” “Object Three,” and “Object Four.” When we say “Object One,” it is referring to something. When we say “Object Two,” it is also referring to something, i.e., the term is engaged with something. What we are trying to do

now is to discover how this term engages its object.

Does the basis of the term “Object One” come or exist from the side of designation or not? According to the MOS, the object one that has the term “Object One” does *not* exist by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “Object One.” That object one that is the basis for applying the term “Object One” does *not* exist by way of its own character from the side of the object, the basis of designation. If it did, there will be many logical inconsistencies, faults, and fallacies.

In short, according to the MOS, for whatever phenomena in question, they do not exist by way of their own character as the bases for applying the names that are given to them. Although things do *not* exist in such a way, things *appear* to exist in such a way.

Imagine your eye consciousness perceives a flat-based bulbous thing. To you, that flat-based bulbous thing appears as a vase. The flat-based bulbous thing appears from its own side as the thing that the term “vase” is referring to and the basis for applying the term “vase.”

But how does the flat-based bulbous thing *appear* to you? The flat-based bulbous thing appears *from its own side, to exist by way of its own character*, as the thing that is referred to by the term “vase” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending vase. This is what appears to you.

We have that appearance and this is what the MOS refutes. The MOS says that that appearance is *mistaken*. The appearance of a flat-based bulbous thing that is (1) appearing from its own side (2) without being merely imputed by a conceptual consciousness or term, as the thing that is referred to by the term “vase,” *that* does not exist. The MOS refutes such appearance. It does *not* exist in the way it appears.

On the other hand, the SS accepts this appearance as valid, because just as the flat-based bulbous thing *appears* to exist by way of its own character as the thing that is referred to by the term “vase,” this is how it *exists*.

The SS also assert external objects. Therefore the SS do not assert the non-existence of object and subject as different substances.

I think we will not talk anymore about this topic. You get a headache. I get a headache.

Question: Can I confirm that to the sense consciousness apprehending blue:

- the appearance of blue existing as the natural referent of the term “blue,”
- the appearance of blue existing as the basis of applying the term “blue,” and
- the appearance of blue existing as the natural base of engagement of the term “blue”

all exist by way of their own character?

Answer: As was mentioned earlier, to the eye consciousness apprehending blue, many things appear such as the appearance of blue as blue, the appearance of blue as an external object, and the appearance of blue existing by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue.” All these appear to the eye

consciousness apprehending blue.

Question: But isn't it correct to say that not everything exists in the way it appears just as external blue does not exist in the way it appears?

Answer: Since sense consciousnesses are necessarily mistaken, therefore it is clear that it does not mean that whatever appears to them necessarily exists.

For example, "the appearance of blue existing by way of its own character." You all must understand exactly what we have been talking about. We are *not* talking about blue but an *appearance* of blue existing by way of its own character as the basis of applying the term "blue." This blue existing by way of its own character as the basis of applying the term "blue" is an imputational nature. Not only that. It is an imputational nature that is non-existent.

Question: Such an imputational nature also applies to a sense consciousness?

Answer: Such a non-existent imputational nature appears to a sense consciousness but it does not exist in the way it appears.

Question: Can I confirm that these terms: (1) natural referent of the term and (2) the natural base of engagement of the term, and (3) basis for applying the term, they all refer to the same thing?

Answer: Yes, they can be taken to mean the same thing.

Question: To the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue, the actual object blue appears to it but the conceptual consciousness is only able to realise the meaning generality of blue? The appearing object is the mental image of blue?

Answer: Yes.

Question: To the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue, the appearing object is the mental image of blue. It is not able to distinguish between the mental image of blue and what it realises, blue. Therefore, this is the same as SS as being mistaken.

However, does the MOS assert a subtler mode in that the conceptual consciousness does not realise that the [mental image] is merely imputed by thought? Can one say that (1) blue is the actual object whereas (2) blue as the basis for applying the term blue is the mental image or meaning generality of the object?

Khen Rinpoche: Are you referring to the eye consciousness or conceptual consciousness?

Student: Conceptual consciousness.

Khen Rinpoche: For a conceptual consciousness apprehending blue, what doesn't it realise?

Student: It does not realise that it is merely imputing the term "blue" on to the basis.

There are three objects of negation that appear to a conceptual consciousness:

1. The object blue
2. The mental image of blue
3. The mental image of blue as being established by way of its own character.

The actual object blue is established by way of its own character, but the mental image of blue is not established by way of its own character, but it does not realise that. The thing to refute is that the mental image of blue is not established by way of its own character.

Answer: The whole discussion about an object being the basis for applying a particular term is not just for proving or establishing that the mental image is imputed by thought.

What we are trying to establish is that, using the example of blue:

- blue does not exist by way of its own character as the basis for applying the term “blue” to the conceptual consciousness apprehending blue.

This is what we are trying to establish.

Question: It has nothing to do with the involvement of the mental image?

Khen Rinpoche: Is the mental image of vase the basis of engagement of the term “vase”?

Student: For the conceptual consciousness?

Khen Rinpoche: No. The question is: Is the mental image of a vase the basis of engagement of the term “vase”? The flat-based bulbous thing is the basis of engagement, *not* the mental image of the flat-based bulbous thing. The mental image of the vase *cannot* be the basis for applying the term “vase,” because whatever is the basis for applying the term “vase” is the vase itself. It is necessarily the vase, something that is there from its own side.

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