

Main minds and mental factors

One of the most important classifications of the mind is the category of main minds and mental factors. This category is concerned with the functions and abilities of a *single* awareness.

Every consciousness consists of one main mind and various mental factors. Main minds are traditionally divided into six types (the five sense consciousnesses and the mental consciousness). Even though from the point of view of their entity mental factors can also be divided into those six types (since there are mental factors that are eye consciousnesses, ear consciousnesses, and so forth), from the point of view of their different functions they are countless. However, in his *Compendium of Knowledge (Abhidharama-samucchaya)* Asanga enumerates fifty-one different mental factors in order to present the most important ones.

Main minds are described as more passive and their mental factor as more active. The principal function of the main mind is to simply apprehend or be aware of the general entity of its object of engagement, while the principal function of the mental factors is to apprehend particular attributes of the same object. Since every object has only one general entity but many particular attributes, any one object has only one main mind but many mental factors perceiving it.

There are several analogies that help to illustrate the relationship between a main mind and its mental factors. One analogy is that of a cabinet with a passive prime minister, who is like the main mind, and his active ministers, who are like the concomitant mental factors. The prime minister merely performs the function of being there, whereas his ministers are very busy performing different tasks. Some of the ministers may be efficient, some sharp, some kind, some greedy, and so forth. And even though each minister performs a different function, the entire cabinet is influenced by every minister's unique activities.

Some liken the main mind to the flame of a candle and its mental factors to the rays of the candle. Just as the rays of the candle emanate from the flame and exist simultaneously with it, the mental factors come from the main mind and exist simultaneously with it; just as every flame has many rays of light, every main mind has many mental factors; and just as the flame of the candle depends on its rays to illuminate its objects, every main mind perceives its objects in dependence on its mental factors.

Another analogy is that of the palm of a hand and the fingers, where the palm is the base but the fingers are responsible for the hand to function.

Therefore, despite their different functions a main mind cannot function without mental factors and mental factors cannot function without a main mind. Furthermore, a main mind and its mental factor are of one nature since the mental factors are a part of the main mind. The Buddhist scriptures describe the main mind as being *concomitant* with its mental factor due to five similarities that they share. The five similarities are:

- 1) The similarity of basis
- 2) The similarity of the observed object
- 3) The similarity of the object of engagement
- 4) The similarity of time
- 5) The similarity of substantial entity

1) *The similarity of basis*

The similarity of basis refers to: the main mind and its concomitant mental factor having the same uncommon empowering condition. Therefore, both a main mind that is an eye consciousness and its mental factors (that are also eye consciousnesses) have arisen in dependence on the same eye sense power, both a main mind that is an ear consciousness and its mental factors (that are also ear consciousnesses) have arisen in dependence on the same ear sense power, and so forth. In the case of a mental consciousness, both the main mind that is a mental consciousness and its mental factors (that are also mental consciousnesses) have arisen from the same preceding consciousness.

2) *The similarity of the observed object*

The similarity of the observed object refers to: the main mind and its mental factors having the same

observed object. Hence the main mind and its mental factors focus on the same object. In the case of a main mind that apprehends that sound is impermanent, and its concomitant mental factors (that also apprehend that sound is impermanent), they both focus on the same object – sound. Similarly, in the case of a main mind that apprehends the vase, and its concomitant mental factors (that also apprehends the vase), they both focus on the same object – the vase.

3) *The similarity of the object of engagement*

The similarity of the object of engagement refers to: the main mind and its mental factors having the same object of engagement. This means that the main mind and its mental factors apprehend the same object of engagement. In the case of a main mind that apprehends that sound is impermanent, and its concomitant mental factors (that also apprehend that sound is impermanent), they both apprehend the same object of engagement – sound being impermanent. Similarly, in the case of a main mind that apprehends the vase, and its concomitant mental factors (that also apprehends the vase), they both apprehend the same object – the vase.

4) *The similarity of time*

The similarity of time refers to: the main mind and its mental factors arising, abiding, and ceasing simultaneously. For instance, a main mind that is an ear consciousness apprehending the sound of water arises, abides, and ceases at the same time as its concomitant mental factors (that also apprehend the sound of water).

5) *The similarity of substantial entity*

The similarity of substantial entity refers to: one main mind having only one of each type of a mental factor. Therefore, a main mind that is a nose consciousness that apprehends perfume, for instance, is concomitant only with one type of the mental factor of feeling, one mental factor of discrimination, and so forth. Similarly, one particular mental factor can be concomitant with only one main mind.

As mentioned above, there are fifty-one mental factors that are divided into six categories:

1. The five omnipresent mental factors
2. The five object-ascertaining mental factors
3. The eleven virtuous mental factors
4. The six root afflictions
5. The twenty secondary afflictions
6. The four changeable mental factors

The five omnipresent mental factors

The five omnipresent mental factors are:

- 1) Contact
- 2) Discrimination/Discernment
- 3) Feeling/Volition
- 4) Intention
- 5) Attention/Mental Engagement

They are omnipresent because they are *always* concomitant with every main mind.

1) *Contact*

Contact is a mental factor that contacts or meets the object of the awareness. For instance, in order for an eye consciousness apprehending a pot to arise, the eye consciousness must make contact with the pot.

2) *Discrimination/Discernment*

Discrimination is a mental factor that discerns the object. It is aware of the object's specific characteristics and thereby able to distinguish it from other objects. Discrimination identifies the object and serves as the basis for memory. Discrimination concomitant with a conceptual main mind also functions to label and name objects. It is the innate quality of the mind whose task it is to distinguish one object from another, either by identifying it with terms and phrases, as in the case of many conceptual

consciousnesses, or by merely making a distinction between objects, as in the case of direct perceptions. Thus it is present in all forms of cognition, playing an essential role in abstract thought and imagination as well as in simplest sense perceptions.

3) *Feeling*

Feeling is a mental factor that experiences the object as pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral. The general function of feeling is to experience the ripening effects of our previous actions. Also, it is impossible to apprehend an object without the presence of any of the three types of feeling (pleasant, unpleasant or neutral). In fact, feeling is the element that drives us; it is responsible for the majority of our physical, verbal, and mental actions. The reason for this is that pleasant feeling induces attachment, unpleasant feeling induces anger, and neutral feeling induces ignorance.

4) *Intention/Volition*

Intention is a mental factor that moves or directs the awareness to the object. When there is feeling toward the object, intention engages the concomitant main mind and the other mental factors with the object. Intention is the element of the mind that is mental karma, also known as 'karma of intention'. The other type of karma is known as 'intended karma' which refers to volitional verbal and physical actions. Intention is both the conscious and automatic motivating element of consciousness that causes the mind to involve itself with and apprehend its object. Just as a magnet by nature moves any iron that comes into contact with it, likewise by the mere existence of intention, the mind is moved to its various objects.

5) *Attention/Mental Engagement*

Attention is a mental factor whose main function is to enable the concomitant main mind and the other mental factors to remain on the object. It prevents the awareness from moving away from the object and serves as a basis for concentration and mindfulness. Attention also focuses on a specific object or a specific aspect of the object, filtering out other objects.

The five object-ascertaining mental factors

The five object-ascertaining mental factors are:

- 1) Aspiration
- 2) Resolve
- 3) Mindfulness/Recollection
- 4) Concentration
- 5) Wisdom

They are object-ascertaining because they realize their object or are induced by awarenesses that realize their object.

1) *Aspiration*

Aspiration is a mental factor that focuses on a desired object and takes a strong interest in it. It has the function to serve as the basis for enthusiasm.

2) *Resolve*

Resolve is a mental factor that having ascertained the qualities of an object (either positive or negative) stabilizes the apprehension of the previously ascertained object and does not allow the mind to be distracted by anything else. It has the function of cherishing the object and serves as the basis of mindfulness/recollection of it.

3) *Mindfulness/Recollection*

Mindfulness is a mental factor that does not forget a familiar object and repeatedly brings it to mind. It serves as the basis for concentration.

4) *Concentration*

Concentration is a mental factor that remains single-pointedly on its object. It acts as the basis for the increase of wisdom and of bringing mundane and supramundane phenomena under control.

5) *Wisdom*

Wisdom is a mental factor that thoroughly discerns the positive and negative qualities of an object, its

functions, characteristics, and so forth. There are four types of wisdom: that which is inborn, that which is the result of listening (or learning), that which is the result of reflection/contemplation, and that which is the result of meditation.

The eleven virtuous mental factors

The eleven virtuous mental factors are:

- 1) Faith
- 2) Shame/Self-respect
- 3) Consideration (for others)
- 4) Non-attachment/Detachment
- 5) Non-hatred
- 6) Non-ignorance
- 7) Diligence
- 8) Mental pliancy
- 9) Conscientiousness
- 10) Equanimity
- 11) Non-harmfulness

When any of the eleven mental factors manifest, their concomitant main mind and other mental factors also become virtuous.

1) Faith

Faith is a mental factor that serves as the antidote of non-faith and is of three types: faith of conviction, admiring faith, and aspirational faith. Faith of conviction is a mental factor that is convinced and certain of the qualities of the Three Jewels (Buddha, Dharma, and Sangha), the infallibility of the law of karma, and so forth. Admiring faith is a mental factor in which the object of faith is held to be particularly excellent and dear. It is an awareness that is endowed with joy and delight. Aspirational faith is a mental factor which considers the object of faith to be attainable, and is characterized by a strong aspiration to attain it.

In general, faith is a state of mind free from the turmoil of mental afflictions. It acts as the basis for generating aspiration to attaining positive qualities that have not been generated yet and for increasing any such aspiration already generated. Faith (or confidence) is extremely important for it is the foundation of the practice of Dharma. The Buddha said that just as a burnt seed is unable to produce a sprout, likewise a mind devoid of faith is unable to cultivate wholesome qualities.

2) Shame/Self-respect

Shame is a mental factor that refrains from non-virtuous actions out of reasons concerning oneself (i.e. out of self-respect). It has the function of restraining harmful conduct of body, speech, and mind and serves as a basis for moral discipline.

3) Consideration (for others)

Consideration is a mental factor that refrains from non-virtuous actions out of consideration for others. This mental factor is very similar in nature to shame, except that it restrains one from engaging in negative actions through considering that if one were to commit a particular action, it would harm others.

4) Non-attachment/Detachment

Non-attachment is a mental factor that is the opponent to the mental factor of attachment. It withdraws us from the compulsive grasping and clinging towards the objects of desire and from the wish to possess them.

5) Non-hatred

Non-hatred is a mental factor that is the opponent to the mental factor of anger and serves as the basis for increasing love and compassion. In general, there are three objects of anger: (1) someone who is inflicting harm on us, (2) the harm itself, and (3) the instrument which harms us (e.g. weapons). Upon recognizing one of these three things as the cause of our suffering we generate dislike for the object and

become angry towards it. Non-hatred is the opposite response: without blindly reacting to the situation it maintains clarity of mind characterized by love, kindness, and patient acceptance.

6) *Non-ignorance*

Non-ignorance is a mental factor that is characterized by clarity and sharpness and that serves as the opponent to the mental factor of ignorance. It is itself not a form of wisdom but a lucid quality of awareness that accompanies wisdom and bears a relationship of similarity with either enthusiasm or diligence.

7) *Diligence*

Diligence is a mental factor that acts as the antidote to laziness and delights in engaging in virtuous actions. Diligence is the joyous, enthusiastic, and dynamic quality of mind necessary to effectively accomplish any spiritual growth and understanding.

8) *Mental pliancy*

Mental pliancy is a mental factor that eliminates mental and physical rigidity and thereby enables the mind to apply itself to a wholesome object in whatever manner it wishes. It makes the mind flexible and quick and serves as the basis for all meditations directly associated with mental stability and penetrative insight. Mental and physical rigidity is an inept state of mind and body which is characterized by mental and physical heaviness and the inability to do what one wishes.

9) *Conscientiousness*

Conscientiousness is a mental factor that cherishes the accumulation of positive actions and guards the mind against that which gives rise to afflictions. In dependence on diligence it thus familiarizes the concomitant main mind and other mental factors with virtue, and guards it from non-virtue. In guarding the mind it is similar in some ways to shame/self-respect and consideration (for others), except that it is not based on a particular reason. Rather it is a mere fundamental protective quality.

10) *Equanimity*

Equanimity is a mental factor that is the antidote to mental sinking and mental excitement. It has the function that keeps the mind balanced and calm without letting it become carelessly distracted or unclear and dull. Also, it settles and leaves the mind in rest upon a wholesome object.

11) *Non-harmfulness*

Non-harmfulness is a mental factor that lacking any intention to harm wishes for sentient beings to be free from suffering. Therefore, non-harmfulness is equivalent to compassion, the pure wish that others may be free from suffering.

The six primary afflictions

Asanga says in his *Compendium of Knowledge (Abhidharma-samucchaya)*:

An affliction is defined as a phenomenon that, when it arises, arises with the characteristic of being disturbing, and that, through arising, disturbs the mental continuum.

Afflictions are mental factors and mental consciousnesses whose function is to disturb or unsettle the mind. Therefore, afflictions (such as ignorance, anger, attachment, jealousy, arrogance, etc.) not only induce contaminated actions, i.e. karma, that lead to future sufferings, they also create problems the moment they manifest, for they immediately create mental agitation and destroy the mind's peace and tranquility.

Furthermore, the root cause of afflictions is ignorance (which is an affliction itself). More specifically, the ignorance that misperceives the "I" and "mine" or other phenomena to exist inherently is the root of all other afflictions and thus the main cause for their arising.

Next follows is a brief presentation of ignorance.

Ignorance

Ignorance is a mental factor and mental consciousness. In general, ignorance can be defined on many levels and thus there are various types of ignorance. One type of ignorance is the awareness that is a mere *not-knowing*, a lack of understanding. An example of this is the ignorance that does not understand how the

engine of a car works or the ignorance that does not know the alphabet. It is confused and bewildered regarding these objects. However, it is one of the most superficial or coarsest forms of ignorance. Another example is the mental factor that is confused and bewildered regarding the working of the law of cause and effect, the Three Jewels, and so forth.

A second type of ignorance is the awareness that is not merely confused about reality but actively misapprehends it (which includes the above mentioned ignorance that apprehends inherent existence). In fact, it is a misconception that is diametrically opposed to what actually exists.

There are also various types of this kind of ignorance. Furthermore, there are numerous layers of ignorance in terms of coarseness and subtlety. Some of the subtlest types of ignorance are so subtle that we may not even be aware of them.

However, in general, ignorance that is a misperception or misconception is said to be of two types:

1. Superimposing misconception
2. Deprecating misconception

1. Superimposing misconception

An example of a superimposing misconception is the ignorance that misapprehends reality on the deepest level, that is, the ignorance that apprehends phenomena to exist inherently and from their own side. Another example is a coarser level of ignorance that apprehends that which is impermanent to be permanent, or the ignorance that apprehends that which is in the nature of suffering to be in the nature of happiness. They are *superimposing* misconceptions because they apprehend [the existence of] something that does not exist.

2. Deprecating misconception

An example of a deprecating misconception is the ignorance that apprehends the non-existence of the law of karma, or the ignorance that apprehends the non-existence of past and future lives.

They are *deprecating* misconceptions because they apprehend the non-existence of something that actually exists.

Another way to categorize ignorance is to categorize it into:

1. Innate (or instinctive) ignorance
2. Intellectually (or ideologically) acquired ignorance

1. Innate ignorance

Innate ignorance is a misperception that arises naturally for all sentient beings. It is inborn and not conditioned by the culture and environment we live in. Regarding, for instance, the innate ignorance apprehending the non-existence of the law of karma, we may have developed firm conviction in the working of karma and live in a community that holds that same conviction. However, when we encounter problems and difficulties we instinctively blame other people or the environment for our problems; we spontaneously ascribe to them the main responsibility for all our trouble.

Similarly, even though we know rationally that our mind and body change moment by moment, we often have the sense that we ourselves and others do not change, and always remain the same. Also, though we understand that one day we are going to die, we plan and live our lives as if we were immortal.

Furthermore, even if we have realized the lack of an inherently existent "I" and "mine," until we overcome the *innate* ignorance apprehending inherent existence, there will always be the spontaneous and instinctive sense of an inherently existent self, etc., which in turn will induce attachment, aversion, and other afflictions.

2. Intellectually acquired ignorance

Intellectually or ideologically acquired ignorance, though rooted in innate ignorance, is a misperception that is not innate but comes about due to the influence of philosophical, religious, scientific, or cultural views and beliefs.

For example, at the time of the Buddha there were a number of philosophical systems that postulated a *permanent, partless, independent self*. Likewise, many religions accept the existence of a soul, a permanent entity that exists independent of mind and body. And then there is the extremely influential Austrian

psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud's descriptions of the ego and the super-ego as well as cultural ideas that encourage us "to be someone in the world," "to be true to ourselves," and to "find ourselves." All these are the results of the intellectually acquired view of an inherently and objectively existent self.

Another intellectually acquired view is the acquired ignorance that apprehends the non-existence of past and future lives. This misconception comes about due to the current widely accepted scientific view that our mind is merely the product of chemical reactions within our brain and body which ceases to exist at the time of death when those chemical reactions come to an end.

From a Buddhist perspective, also religious beliefs in an omnipotent creator God, for example, are explained to arise from an acquired ignorance that apprehends the non-existence of the law of karma.

Ignorance that is the root of cyclic existence

Ignorance that is the root of all other afflictions and thus the root of cyclic existence is the ignorance that apprehends inherent existence. Ignorance that apprehends inherent existence is the root of all other afflictions because it induces all the other afflictions; it induces the other types of ignorance (such as the ignorance that apprehends the non-existence of the law of cause and effect, the ignorance that apprehends the existence of a permanent, partless, independent self, etc.) - as well as anger, attachment, arrogance, jealousy, and so forth.

This root ignorance is also of two types:

1. Ignorance that apprehends the inherent existence of the **"I" and "mine"**
2. Ignorance that apprehends the inherent existence of **phenomena** (phenomena other than "I" and "mine")

Since both types of ignorance apprehend inherent existence, they are both the root of cyclic existence.

In brief, the ignorance that misperceives the nature of phenomena on the deepest level, that is, the ignorance that apprehends inherent existence is the root cause of the six primary afflictions and the twenty secondary afflictions.

The six primary afflictions are:

1. Attachment
2. Anger
3. Arrogance
4. Ignorance
5. (Afflictive) doubt
6. Wrong view

The first five afflictions are called the *five non-views*. The sixth affliction, wrong view, can be further divided into five distinct types of wrong view, called the *five views*. This way of subdividing wrong view into further five types leads to another way of categorizing afflictions into ten (the *five views* and the *five non-views*):

The ten afflictions are:

1. Attachment
2. Anger
3. Arrogance
4. Ignorance
5. (Afflictive) doubt

} *five non-views*

6. View of the transitory collection
7. View holding to extremes
8. Belief in the supremacy of wrong views
9. Belief in the supremacy of mistaken ethics and religious conduct
10. Wrong view

} *five views*

1. Attachment

Attachment is a mental factor that focuses on an object we consider to be a source of pleasure, such as a car,

and either exaggerates the car's positive qualities or superimposes positive qualities the car does not possess. While apprehending those qualities, attachment craves for, and becomes attached to the car.

Regarding the generation of attachment, its root is ignorance apprehending the inherently existent "I," the inherently existent car, or the inherently existent positive qualities of the car. Those misperceptions then induce other wrong perceptions such as the awareness that perceives the car as being permanent, as being in the nature of happiness, or as being flawless, which in turn lead to the mind that exaggerates the car's positive qualities or superimposes positive qualities the car does not possess. The latter awareness is not attachment yet, for craving is still to arise.

The mental factor that craves for and becomes attached to the car, *while* exaggerating the car's positive qualities or *while* superimposing positive qualities the car does not possess, is attachment.

The arising of attachment is quite different to the arising of, for instance, anger. Anger is impulsive and explosive but usually ebbs away quickly. Attachment on the other hand, arises slowly; there is a gradual process of becoming attached to an object. Attachment craves its object, attaches to it and fuses with it, making it very difficult to separate from the object once the mind becomes attached. This is why attachment is compared to a piece of cloth that is stained with oil. The oil is absorbed by the cloth, spreads into it, and is therefore difficult to remove.

Furthermore, the stronger the attachment, the stronger is the sense that we cannot find happiness if we are separated from the object. This feeling is particularly strong regarding attachment to another person. Depending on the intensity of the attachment to the other person there is the fear that we may be separated from them, there is jealousy when they spend time with someone else, and anger when they leave us.

2. Anger

Anger is a mental factor that focuses on an object that we consider to be a source of harm. This source of harm is usually one of the following: the being or object who harms us (e.g. a thief or a disease), the harm itself, the suffering that occurs through our being harmed, and the reasons for being harmed.

In the case of being angry with another person, anger focuses on that person and exaggerates their negative qualities or superimposes negative qualities they do not possess. While apprehending those qualities anger cannot bear the person and wants to harm them.

Regarding the generation of anger, its root is ignorance apprehending the inherently existent "I," the inherently existent person who is the object of anger, or the inherently existent negative qualities of that person. Those misperceptions induce the mind that exaggerates the person's negative qualities or superimposes negative qualities the person does not possess. The latter awareness is not anger, for the wish to get rid of them or to harm them has not arisen yet. Rather, anger is the mental factor that wants to get rid of the person or wants to harm them, *while* exaggerating the person's negative qualities or *while* superimposing negative qualities the person does not possess.

Anger is an affliction that includes or induces a wide range of different emotions such as resentment, ill-will, fury, irritation, rage, hatred, aggression, rancor, spite, etc. It is considered a particularly harmful affliction because it unsettles the mind more than other afflictions and has the power to destroy a lot of *root virtue* or positive karma we have accumulated over many lifetimes.

3. Arrogance/Self-importance

Arrogance is a mental factor that focuses on oneself and exaggerates one's good qualities or superimposes good qualities one does not possess. While apprehending those qualities one feels conceited and superior to others. Through superimposing superiority upon oneself while superimposing inferiority upon others, arrogance elevates oneself.

Arrogance is rooted in the ignorance that apprehends an inherently existent "I" and in the ignorance that apprehends the inherent existence of one's own good qualities.

It creates a lot of unhappiness especially when there is evidence that the image we have of ourselves and of our positive qualities is distorted and not in accordance with reality. Furthermore, it can be a great obstacle to deepening our understanding and to increasing our good qualities.

Once it arises, it automatically causes us to be jealous of superiors, competitive with equals, and arrogant towards inferiors.

According to Vasubhandu's *Abhidharmakosha* there are seven types of arrogance:

- 1) (Lesser) arrogance
- 2) Greater arrogance
- 3) Arrogance beyond arrogance (extreme arrogance)
- 4) Arrogance of thinking "I"
- 5) Arrogance of conceit
- 6) Arrogance of slight inferiority
- 7) Wrongful arrogance

1) *(Lesser) arrogance*

This refers to an inflated mental factor that considers oneself to be superior to those who are inferior, particularly with regard to social standing, knowledge and wealth. It leads to the thought, "I am greater than those who have an inferior social position and who are poorer in knowledge and wealth than myself."

2) *Greater arrogance*

Excessive arrogance is an inflated mental factor that considers oneself to be superior to those who are one's equal, particularly with regard to social standing, etc. It leads to the thought, "although they may be equal to me in their social position, etc., nonetheless, I am superior to them."

3) *Arrogance beyond arrogance (extreme arrogance)*

Arrogance beyond arrogance is an inflated mental factor that considers oneself to be superior to those who are actually superior, particularly with regard to social standing, etc. It leads to the thought, "although they may have greater social standing, knowledge, etc. than myself, I am nonetheless superior to them."

4) *Arrogance of thinking "I"*

An inflated mental factor that thinks "I" by focusing on the aggregates

Some explain the "I" here as referring to the non-existent self, while others explain it as referring to the conventionally existent "I." If it refers to the non-existent self, this arrogance apprehends an inherently existent self and feels inflated about it. If the "I" this arrogance takes to mind is the conventionally existent "I," then it merely feels inflated about the conventional "I" without apprehending its inherent existence. Either way, this type of arrogance is a deluded mind that feels inflated about one's identity. For instance, it may feel inflated about being Indian, American, European, etc.

5) *Arrogance of conceit*

An inflated mental factor that thinks one has attained good qualities that one has not attained

6) *Arrogance of slight inferiority*

An inflated mental factor that thinks one is only slightly inferior to those that are greatly superior

7) *Wrongful arrogance*

An inflated mental factor that thinks that one has attained excellent qualities while one has not attained such excellent qualities but rather has attained faults

4. Ignorance

As explained before, in general ignorance refers to either a mental factor that is a mere *not-knowing*, i.e. that is merely confused and bewildered with regard to the nature of an object, or it refers to a mental factor that actively apprehends the opposite of what is actually there. However, here ignorance refers to a confused and bewildered quality of the mind that does not understand the working of the law of karma, the Three Jewels, the four noble truths, and so forth.

(Afflictive) Doubt

As explained above, doubt is in general not considered to be an affliction, for it can be one of the stepping

stones to gaining a correct understanding of reality. However, here *afflictive* doubt is a mental factor that serves as an obstacle to spiritual development, for it is an awareness that despite correct reasoning does not transform into a correctly assuming consciousness and that continues to waver with respect to the four noble truths, the law of cause and effect, the Three Jewels, and so forth. It is two-pointed and undermines our ability to engage in any action with confidence and resolve. Furthermore, it hinders us from committing ourselves whole-heartedly to a particular practice or to remaining diligent in our effort in accomplishing a desired result. There is a Tibetan saying that just as we cannot sew with a two-pointed needle, we cannot accomplish our goal with a doubting two-pointed mind.

5. View of the transitory collection

The view of the transitory collection refers to a mental factor that apprehends an inherently existent "I" and "mine." It is an 'afflictive wisdom' because its function is similar to wisdom in the way it actively apprehends an object. However, it is an *afflictive* wisdom because its object, an inherently existent "I" or "mine," does not exist.

The reason for calling it "the view of the transitory collection" is that this view apprehends an inherently existent "I" or "mine" while focusing on the aggregates, which are a transitory collection. The aggregates are a transitory collection due to their impermanent and perishable nature.

6. View holding to extremes

The view of holding to extremes is an afflictive wisdom focusing on the self as apprehended by the view of the transitory collection, perceiving it either as being permanent and non-changing, or as subject to annihilation in such a way that it becomes non-existent at the time of death. In other words, there are two extremes into which we are likely to fall once we have assented to the sense of self given to us by the view of the transitory collection: the extremes of permanence and annihilation. The view of the extreme of permanence refers to the view which considers the self to be something essentially unchanging, which will survive death and continue indefinitely. The view of the extreme of annihilation is a view which holds that even though the self exists presently, at death it (as well as any element of consciousness) will cease completely. In Buddhism these extreme views are avoided through refuting the existence of an independent inherently existent self on the one hand, while positing a merely imputed and momentary self on the other.

7. Belief in the supremacy of wrong views

Belief in the supremacy of wrong views is an afflictive wisdom that focuses on one of the three views – the view of the transitory collection, the view holding to extremes, or wrong view (which will be explained below) – and regards them as supreme. It has the function of causing the attachment to wrong views to increase and strengthen.

8. Belief in the supremacy of mistaken ethics and religious conduct

Belief in the supremacy of mistaken ethics and religious conduct is an afflictive wisdom which asserts that various misguided religious practices are supreme and lead toward spiritual attainment. Examples of such practices can be found in many different religious systems. In certain Christian traditions, for instance, one finds the practice of 'corporal mortification' or 'mortification of the flesh' which in some of its more severe forms can mean causing self-inflicted pain and physical harm, such as beating, whipping, piercing, or cutting oneself. These practices are considered to help the practitioner to attain a union with god, obtain a higher place in heaven etc. Similarly, in some religious traditions one finds the practice of ritual animal sacrifices. Then there are various ascetic practices such standing on one leg or burning the body in the sun for a long time in order to purify negativities. Further, there are numerous cases of self-immolation and ritual suicide that are performed for the sake of spiritual salvation. The view that holds such practices as supreme and as a means of attaining spiritual emancipation is the fourth of the *five views*.

10. Wrong view

Even though the previous four views are all forms of wrong view, here wrong view refers specifically to an afflictive wisdom that actively apprehends the non-existence of something which in fact exists. Examples of such wrong views are the mental factor that perceives the non-existence of the law of karma, the non-

existence of past and future lives, etc. It also refers to the view that asserts the cause of sentient beings and cyclic existence to be a divine creator, a primordial essence (as propounded by the non-Buddhist Indian philosophical system of the Samkyas), and so forth.

The twenty secondary afflictions

The twenty secondary afflictions all derived from the three poisons (attachment, anger, and ignorance). Although when confronted with an immediate situation we are often unaware of the growth and arising of these various mental factors:

1) *Aggression / belligerence*

Aggression is a mental factor that is an increase of the primary affliction of anger and that wishes to physically or verbally harm others. It has the function of directly connecting the person who intends to cause harm with the actual means to do so.

2) *Vindictiveness*

Vindictiveness is a mental factor that maintains the continuum of the primary affliction of anger without forgetting it, and wants to retaliate. It is a basis for impatience and thus performs the function of repeatedly generating anger and the pain of being unable to bear something.

3) *Concealment / denial*

Concealment is a type of ignorance which wants to conceal one's faults from others when they are pointed out by someone with the motivation to benefit. In concealment we do not necessarily react negatively to the other person but simply suppress any manifestation or knowledge of the fault that is described. Superficially it seems to act as a defense, yet the more we resort to it, the more it causes heaviness and discomfort of the mind.

4) *Spite*

Spite is a type of anger which, induced by the secondary afflictions of aggression and vindictiveness, motivates one to utter harsh speech. It acts as the basis for accumulating negative karma of the speech.

5) *Jealousy*

Jealousy is a type of anger which, motivated by attachment to material possessions, status, etc., cannot bear and feels resentful towards others' accomplishments. It is the basis for the immediate arising of unhappiness in the mind and has the function of causing one's own qualities, wealth, etc. to become exhausted.

Jealousy often contains an element of fear. It sees, for example, that someone may be about to gain a position that one wanted very much for oneself. Desirous of the position and afraid that one may not gain it, one starts to dislike and even hate the person who appears to be the cause of the problem.

6) *Miserliness*

Miserliness is a type of attachment which, motivated by attachment to material possessions, status, etc., holds onto things tightly and does not want to separate from them. This mental factor causes us pain whenever the possibility arises of being separated from what we own and regard dear to us. It can also develop with regard to our inner knowledge and understanding of, for instance, the Dharma. It is thus the greatest obstacle to giving away our possessions to and sharing our understanding with others. In the future it is a cause for material, intellectual, and spiritual poverty.

7) *Pretension / deceit*

Pretension is a type of ignorance or attachment which, motivated by attachment to material possessions, reputation, status, etc., wants to pretend that one possesses qualities one does not possess. It acts as a basis for the establishment of wrong livelihood and as a cause for engaging in lying.

8) *Dissimulation*

Dissimulation is a type of ignorance or attachment which, motivated by attachment to material possessions, reputation, status, etc., does not want others to know one's shortcomings. It has the function of not giving a clear response to questions and of causing an interference to obtaining properly directed service.

9) *Haughtiness*

Haughtiness is a type of attachment which, having taken to mind one's accomplishments and good qualities, generates an afflictive sense of self-confidence. It has the function of giving rise to all other afflictions as well as interfering with the attainment of higher qualities. Furthermore, it produces a false sense of self-satisfaction through considering the superiority of one's race, physical appearance, learning, youth, authority over others, and so forth.

10) *Harmfulness*

Harmfulness is a type of anger which wants to inflict harm on other sentient beings. It has the function of reducing the good qualities of oneself and others, acting as a basis of turmoil, and physically harming the lives of others. Also, it generally arises towards those we regard inferior to ourselves.

11) *Shamelessness/non-shame*

Shamelessness is a type of ignorance, anger, or attachment which is devoid of a sense of shame and conscience with regard to one's negative actions. It acts as the supportive condition for all primary and secondary afflictions, for engaging in negativities, and for transgressing one's vows.

12) *Inconsideration/non-embarrassment*

Inconsideration is a type of ignorance, anger, or attachment which is devoid of consideration for other sentient beings with regard to one's negative actions. It acts as the basis for causing others to lose respect and trust in oneself and for becoming agitated.

13) *Dullness/lethargy*

Dullness is a type of ignorance which makes the mind lethargic so that it is unable to comprehend its object clearly. Having caused the mind to lapse into darkness and thereby become insensitive, it does not comprehend its object clearly, as it is. It has the function of making the mind and body heavy and inflexible, and of increasing sleepiness and mental sinking.

Dullness should not be confused with mental sinking. The latter only occurs in the more advanced states of stabilizing meditation and is not necessarily an affliction.

14) *(Afflictive) Excitement*

(Afflictive) excitement is a type of attachment which scatters the mind so that it is unable to remain focused on one object. It has the mental function of obstructing concentration. Furthermore, it causes the mind to engage in uncontrolled fantasy and frivolity. This mental factor is often with us but its presence only becomes truly felt when we start to concentrate the mind in concentration.

15) *Non-faith*

Non-faith is a type of ignorance which does not believe in, does not have admiration for, and does not aspire to virtuous phenomena. It has the function of acting as the basis for laziness and of causing the power of faith to decrease.

16) *Laziness*

Laziness is a type of ignorance which, due to attachment to an object that provides temporary happiness, etc. dislikes or feels sluggish or faint-hearted about engaging in virtue. It has the function of causing diligence to decrease and acts as a basis for the degeneration of wholesome tendencies and the prevention of accumulating virtue.

17) *Non-conscientiousness*

Non-conscientiousness is a mental factor that manifests together with one of the three poisons (attachment, anger or ignorance) when accompanied by laziness, and that leaves the mind in a relaxed state without habituating it to virtue and protecting it from contaminated phenomena. It leads to the wish to freely act in an unrestrained manner without cultivating virtue or guarding the mind against negativities. Also, it has the function of increasing non-virtue and preventing virtue as well as causing any positive qualities to be destroyed.

18) *Forgetfulness*

Forgetfulness is a type of ignorance that is blurred with respect to virtuous objects due to remembering non-virtuous objects. It has the function of causing positive qualities to degenerate and recollection to

decline. Here forgetfulness does not refer to simply being unable to retain a memory of an object in the mind, for it refers to a mental factor that, in addition to losing sight of what is wholesome, draws one into an apprehension of what is unwholesome.

19) *Non-alertness /non-introspection*

Non-alertness is a type of afflicted wisdom which is not alert with respect to physical, verbal, and mental actions and causes one to enter a state of careless indifference. It has the function of causing the power of intelligence to degenerate and negative actions of body, speech, and mind to increase.

20) *Distraction*

Distraction is a type of anger, attachment, or ignorance which, unable to direct the mind towards a wholesome object, disperses it to a variety of other objects. It causes concentration to deteriorate and acts as a basis for losing one's attention upon the objects referred to both in analytical and stabilizing meditation. It is a mental function ascribed to an awareness in which the mind has been led away from the object of concentration by attachment, anger, or ignorance.

The four changeable mental factors

The four changeable mental factors are:

- 1) Sleep
- 2) Regret
- 3) (General) Investigation
- 4) (Detailed) Analysis

They are 'changeable' because in dependence upon one's motivation or a particular situation they become virtuous, non-virtuous, or neutral

1) *Sleep*

Sleep is a mental factor that is the result of mental heaviness or mental dullness, makes the mind unclear, and is responsible for dissolving the sense consciousnesses (into the subtler mind). It has the function of letting the apprehension of the object of the conscious mind degenerate and causing a loss of conscious physical activity.

When the body and mind are exhausted and in need of refreshment, sleepiness pulls the sense consciousnesses and the coarse mental consciousness into the darkness of deep sleep, i.e. a state in which no dreaming occurs. As the force of sleep becomes lighter dreams are then experienced due to the ripening of imprints left on the mind during the waking state.

Sleep is a changeable mental factor because it can be influenced by our behavior. If we spend the day involved in wholesome activities and, in particular, generate strong positive thoughts before going to sleep, this will cause the sleep itself to be wholesome and restful. If, on the other hand, our minds are filled with hatred and craving when we go to sleep, the quality of sleep will likewise be unwholesome and disturbed.

2) *Regret*

Regret is a mental factor that, having regarded a past physical, verbal, or mental action as negative and harmful, feels remorse for that action. It has the function of not allowing the mind to rest at ease and of acting as a basis of mental unhappiness.

If the action we regret having done was negative, then the regret becomes virtuous. It is necessary to generate this form of regret in order to help purify the negative mental imprints we accumulated while engaging in non-virtuous actions. However, if we regret a positive action, such as having made a generous gift or offering, the regret becomes non-virtuous and harmful. Simply regretting that one parked one's car in a wrong place is neither a virtuous or non-virtuous state of mind, rather it is neutral.

3) *(General) Investigation*

Investigation is a mental factor that in dependence upon intention or intelligence roughly examines the general nature of an object.

4) *(Detailed) Analysis*

(Detailed) analysis is a mental factor that in dependence upon intention or intelligence thoroughly

examines the detailed nature of an object.

Both general investigation and detailed analysis are qualities ascribed to intention and intelligence, their difference being determined by the degree of precision and detail with which they examine the object. If they are cultivated in a wholesome manner, they are virtuous. But if they are developed in an unwholesome way, they are non-virtuous.

This concludes the presentation of main minds and mental factors.