Workshop 2 | Room: Crestone Peak II | 4:30–6:30pm, October 4, 2014

Translating Philosophical Materials B
with Klaus-Dieter Mathes, Douglas Duckworth, John Dunne

Douglas Duckworth’s Presentation

Douglas Duckworth
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Douglas Duckworth is Assistant Professor in the Department of Religion at Temple University. He is the author of Mipam on Buddha-Nature: The Ground of the Nyingma Tradition (SUNY, 2008) and Jamgön Mipam: His Life and Teachings (Shambhala, 2011). He also introduced and translated Distinguishing the Views and Philosophies: Illuminating Emptiness in a Twentieth-Century Tibetan Buddhist Classic by Bötrül (SUNY, 2011).
Even if a sensory cognition were caused by fundamental particles,
It would not have particles as its object
Because it would not have the appearance of these [particles],
As in the case of the sense faculties. (1)

It does not come from that of which it has the appearance
Because that is not substantially real, like a double moon.
Thus, it is not reasonable for either kind of external [object]
To be an object of cognition. (2)
Those who maintain that the percept of a sensory cognition such as the visual is an external object may think either that it is fundamental particles, because they are the causes of this [cognition], or that it is a collection of these, because a cognition arises with the appearance of this [collection]. In the first case:

Even if a sensory cognition were caused by fundamental particles,

It would not have particles as its object

Because it would not have the appearance of these [particles],

As in the case of the sense faculties. (1)

An “object” is defined as something whose identity is ascertained by a cognition because [a cognition] arises with its representation. Minute particles may be the cause of this [cognition], but it does not have their appearance, just as [it does not have the appearance of] the sense faculties. Thus in the first case, minute particles are not the percept.
A [sensory cognition] may have the appearance of a collection, but it does not come from that of which it has the appearance (2a).

It makes sense for an object (don; Skt. artha) to be a percept if it produces a cognition that appears as itself (rang snang ba'i rnam par rig pa). That is, this [percept] is said to be the condition for the arising of that [cognition]. But a collection is not like this,

Because that is not substantially real, like a double moon. (2b)

When a person sees a double moon because of defective sense faculties, there may be an appearance of that [double moon], but it is not the object of that [cognition.] In the same way, a collection is not a percept because it is not substantially real and, for that reason, is not a cause.

Thus, it is not reasonable for either kind of external [object] to be an object of cognition. (2cd)

Because something is missing [in each case], no object, whether it is an “external subtle particle” or an “aggregation,” can be a percept.
Fundamental particles are not ultimately substantially real. If one thinks that they have parts, then it follows that they only exist conventionally; but if one thinks that they do not have parts, then it would follow that they could not have such things as shadows and shade. Therefore, how can they be causes? If, on the other hand, one maintains that fundamental particles are causes, then they could not be percepts. Even though fundamental particles are the causes of cognition, because they do not produce a cognition that has the representation (rnam pa; Skt. ākāra) of fundamental particles, they are not percepts, like the sense faculties. Even though sense faculties are the causes of cognitions, the opponent does not maintain that they are their objects. This is because cognition does not arise with the representation of a sense faculty.