TRANSLATION & TRANSMISSION

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Translating Abhidharma Materials

with Art Engle, Ian Coghlan, Gyurme Dorje

Gyurme Dorje's Presentation

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Toward a Phenomenology of the Third Turning: The Twenty-one Phenomenologcial Aspects of the Ground

འཁོར་ལོ་ཐ་མའི་ཤེས་བྱའི་རྣམ་གཞག་ལས་གཞི་ཆོས་ཉེར་གཅིག

Framework of the Twenty-one Aspects of the Ground

Vasubandhu- The Starting Point

Jamgon Kongtrul- The End Point

Tāranātha and Khewang Yeshe Gyatso- the Mid-Point

Toward a Phenomenology of the Third Turning: The Twenty-one Phenomenologcial Aspects of the Ground (*'khor lo tha ma'i shes bya'i rnam gzhag*)

In Book Six Part Two of the *Treasury of Knowledge* Jamgon Kongtrul presents the systems of Abhidharma. He begins by summarizing the aggregates (*phung po*), sense fields (*skye mched*) and sensory bases (*khams*) in accordance with Asaṅga's *Compendium of Phenomenlogy* and the five fundamental categories (*gzhi lnga*), as outlined in Vasubandhu's *Treasury of Phenomenology*. Immediately after that, he sets out a fascinating phenomenological framework, said to be in conformity with the discourses of the third turning and in the context of ground, path and result. This includes twenty-one aspects of the ground (*gzhi'i chos nyer gcig*), which are to be known, though inherently non-existent; the common, uncommon and extraordinary vehicles constituting the path (*lam*) which are to be pursued; and the fruition or goal (*'bras bu*), which is identified with the expanse of reality *(dharmadhātu*). This leads in turn to a further analysis of the five epistemological factors (*gzhi chos lnga*) and the three natures (*mtshan nyid gsum*), which are mentioned in the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra.* [The former comprise perceptual appearances (*nimitta*, *rgyu mtshan*), names (*nāma*, *ming*), false imaginations (*vikalpa*, *rnam par rtog pa*), absolute reality (*tathatā*, *de bzhin nyid*) and genuine non-conceptual knowledge (*nirvikalpajnāna*, *rnam par mi rtog pa'i yang dag pa ye shes*). The latter comprise the imaginary, dependent and consummate natures].

The passages I am highlighting today (from Vasubandhu, Jamgon Kongtrul and Tāranātha) specifically concern the twenty-one aspects of the ground, and they are relevant to the discussion of both translation terminology and transmission. The twenty-one aspects may be outlined as shown here (**PP 3**).

1. **Aggregate of physical forms** (*rūpaskandha, gzugs kyi phung po*) **(1)**
1.1 Sensory base of the material elements (*bhūtadhātu*, *'byung ba'i khams*) **(4)**
1.2 Physical environment (*bhājanaloka, snod kyi 'jig rten*) **(5)**
1.3 Life forms (*sattva, bcud kyi sems can*) **(6)**

2. **Sense field of the mental faculty** (*mano āyatana, yid kyi skye mched*) **(2)**
2.1 Mind (*citta*, *sems*) **(7)**
2.2 Mentation (*manas*, *yid*) **(8)**
2.3 Consciousness (*vijnāna*, *rnam par shes pa*) **(9)**

3. **Sensory base of mental phenomena** (*dharmadhātu, chos kyi khams*) **(3)**
3.1 **Definable phenomena** (*lakṣyadharma*, *mtshan gzhi'i chos*) **(10)**
3.1.1 Aggregate of feelings **(13)**
3.1.2 Aggregate of perceptions **(14)**
3.1.3 Aggregate of formative predispositions **(15)**

3.2 **Defining characteristics** (*lakṣaṇadharma, mtshan nyid kyi chos*) **(11)**
3.2.1 Imputed with regard to space (*dikparikalpita, yul la btags pa*) **(16)**
3.2.2 Imputed with regard to time (*kālaparikalpita, dus la btags pa*) **(17)**
3.2.3 Imputed with regard to entities (*bhāvaparikalpita*, *dngos la btags pa*) **(18)**
3.3 **Non-entities** (*abhāvadharma*, *dngos med kyi chos*) **(12)**
3.3.1 Non-entities arising through the transformation of entities (*bhāvanyāthikābhāva*, *dngos po gzhan 'gyur gyi dngos med*) **(19)**
3.3.2 Non-entities dependent on entities (*bhāvaniśritābhāva*, *dngos po la brten pa'i dngos med*) **(20)**
3.3.3 Non-entities which are impossible (*asambhavābhāva*, *mi srid pa'i dngos med*) **(21)**

The springboard or starting point for this journey is found in Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakośa* (Ch. 1, v. 18, **PP 4**), which indicates how the traditional phenomenological framework of the five aggregates, twelve sense fields and eighteen sensory bases is reduced in such a way that only one of each remains, That is to say, t**he aggregate of physical forms** subsumes the physical sensory bases and sense fields. **The sensory base of mental phenomena** subsumes the aggregates of feelings, perceptions and formative predispositions, along with the sense field of phenomena. **The sense field of the mental faculty** subsumes the aggregate of consciousness and the sensory bases of consciousness.

Out of this minimalist contraction, the twenty-one aspects of the ground are then extrapolated in Jamgon Kongtrul's *Treasury of Knowledge* and its auto-commentary **(PP 5-8).**

We can see that recent Tibetan lexicographers-- Dungkar Lobzang Trin-le, Nordrang Orgyan and Thupten Phuntsok-- all include this enumeration of the twenty-one aspects of the ground in their dictionaries, under the entry *gzhi chos nyer gcig*, but none have sought to identify a source predating Jamgon Kongtrul. However, since 2007 when Jonangpa publications became more accessible, it has become relatively easy to trace this development in phenomenology back to the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century—specifically to Tāranātha's *Theg mchog dbu ma* and its *Exegetical Memorandum* (*zin bris*) by Khewang Yeshe Gyatso (**PP 9-16**). And now, with the enhanced digital search capacity at TBRC, this can of course be corroborated at the click of a mouse.

The extracted passages include several basic and important Abhidharma terms which colleagues undoubtedly translate in different ways. Other than issues of terminology, the interesting challenge, as I see it, is to determine whether this framework predates Tāranātha. It's clear that many of the terms in the list are found individually in *Tshad ma* literature and in the writings of Zilungpa Shākya Chokden and Ludrub Gyatso but so far I have found no evidence to counter the suggestion that the full listing and its nested framework are the work of Tāranātha. We may provisionally say that Jamgon Kongtrul presents the twenty-one aspects of the ground, along with the twenty-five meditative stabilities, the five factors and the three natures as a systematic phenomenology of the third turning, by drawing upon the genius of Tāranātha who had already established this doctrinal transmission founded upon the words of Vasubandhu in the early chapters of his *Theg mchog dbu ma.*

Framework of the Twenty-one Aspects of the Ground

1. **Aggregate of physical forms (*rūpaskandha, gzugs kyi phung po*) (1)**
1.1 Sensory base of the material elements (*bhūtadhātu*, *'byung ba'i khams*) **(4)**
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Vasubandhu-- The Starting Point

།ཕུང་པོ་དང་ནི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་དང་།
།ཁམས་གཅིག་གིས་ནི་ཐམས་ཅད་བསྡུས།

All [phenomena] may be subsumed in a single aggregate,
A single sensory base and a single sense field.

Abhidharmakośa, Ch. 1, v. 18 a-b

༑མདོར་བསྡུ་ན་ཕུང་པོ་དང་ནི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་དང་ཁམས་གཅིག་གིས་ནི་ཐམས་ཅད་བསྡུས་པར་ཤེས་པར་བྱ་སྟེ། གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ཕུང་པོ་དང་ཡིད་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་དང་ཆོས་ཀྱི་ཁམས་ཀྱིས་ཆོས་རྣམས་བསྡུས་པར་རིག་པར་བྱའོ།

When abbreviated, all phenomena are known to be subsumed in a single aggregate, a single sensory base and a single sense field-- that is to say, one should know that they are subsumed in the aggregate of physical forms, the sense field of the mental faculty, and the sensory base of mental phenomena.

Abhidharmakośabhāṣyaṃ, dPe bsdur ma, vol. 79, p. 84.

Jamgon Kongtrul-- The End Point

།ཕུང་ཁམས་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་གཅིག་བསྡུས་རེ་རེར་ཡང་།

།འབྱུང་ཁམས་སྣོད་བཅུད་སེམས་ཡིད་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས།

།མཚན་གཞི་མཚན་ཉིད་དངོས་མེད་གསུམ་གསུམ་དབྱེ།

།མཚན་གཞི་ཚོར་བ་འདུ་ཤེས་འདུ་བྱེད་གསུམ།

།མཚན་ཉིད་ཡུལ་དུས་དངོས་པོར་བཏགས་པ་གསུམ།

།གཞན་འགྱུར་དངོས་བརྟེན་མི་སྲིད་དངོས་མེད་བཅས།

།གཞི་ཆོས་ཉེར་གཅིག་ཅེས་པ་སྟེ།

When the psycho-physical aggregates, the sensory bases
And the sense fields are subsumed together,
Each of these has three further subdivisions:
Respectively, [the aggregate of physical forms] comprises
The sensory bases of the material elements, the physical environment and its life forms;
[The sensory base of mental phenomena] comprises
The mind, mentation and consciousness;
While [the sense field of the mental faculty] comprises
Definable phenomena, defining characteristics and non-entities.
[Among the latter], definable phenomena also comprise
Three further aspects: feelings, perceptions and formative predispositions;
Defining characteristics comprise three further aspects:
Those that are imputed with regard to space, time and entities;
While non-entities comprise those arising through the transformation of entities,
Those that are dependent on entities,
And those that are impossible:
These then are the twenty-one aspects associated with the ground.

Shes bya kun khayb mdzod, Book 6 , Part 2 (Bar cha, p. 407)

Commentary

སྔར་སྨོས་པ་ལྟར་ཕུང་པོ་ལྔ། ཁམས་བཅོ་བརྒྱད། སྐྱེ་མཆེད་བཅུ་གཉིས་རྣམས་གཟུགས་ཕུང་དང་ཆོས་ཁམས་དང་ཡིད་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་གསུམ་ལ་གཅིག་ཏུ་བསྡུ། དེ་རེ་རེར་ཡང་གསུམ་གསུམ་དུ་དབྱེ་སྟེ། གཟུགས་ཕུང་ལ་འབྱུང་བའི་ཁམས་དང་སྣོད་ཀྱི་འཇིག་རྟེན་དང་། བཅུད་ཀྱི་སེམས་ཅན་དང་གསུམ། ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་ལ་ཡང་སེམས་དང་ཡིད་དང་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ་གསུམ། ཆོས་ཁམས་ལ་འང་། མཚན་གཞིའི་ཆོས་དང་། མཚན་ཉིད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་དང་། དངོས་མེད་ཀྱི་ཆོས་དང་གསུམ་གསུམ་དུ་དབྱེ། མཚན་གཞི་ལ་འང་ཚོར་ཕུང་དང་། འདུ་ཤེས་དང་འདུ་བྱེད་དང་གསུམ། མཚན་ཉིད་ལ་འང་ཡུལ་ལ་བཏགས་པ་དང་། དུས་ལ་བཏགས་པ་དང་དངོས་ལ་བཏགས་པ་དང་གསུམ། དངོས་མེད་ལ་འང་དངོས་པོ་གཞན་འགྱུར་གྱི་དངོས་མེད་དང་། དངོས་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་དངོས་མེད་དང་། མི་སྲིད་པའི་དངོས་མེད་བཅས་པར་དབྱེ་བས། དེ་ལྟར་ན་ཉེར་གཅིག་པོ་དེ་ལ་གཞིའི་ཆོས་ཞེས་བྱ་བར་འཇོག་གོ། དེ་དག་ཕལ་ཆེར་གྱི་དོན་གོང་དུ་སོང་ཞིང་། མཚན་ཉིད་ནི་ཁྱད་པར་གྱི་ཆོས་ཀུན་ཏུ་བཏགས་པ་རྣམས་ལ་བྱ་སྟེ། དེའང་རྒྱུ་འབྲས་ཆེ་ཆུང་སྣང་མུན། དཔེ་དཔེ་ཅན་ལ་སོགས་པ་ལྟོས་ནས་བཞག་པ་ཐམས་ཅད་ཡུལ་ལ་བཏགས་པ། འདས་མ་འོངས་ཀྱི་ཆར་དབྱེ་བ་དུས་ལ་བཏགས་པ། བུམ་པ་ཀ་བ་ལྟ་བུ་དངོས་ལ་བཏགས་པའོ། སོ་སོར་བཏགས་

འགོག་ལྟ་བུ་སྔར་དངོས་པོ་ཡོད་པ་ཕྱིས་ཞིག་ནས་མེད་པ་ནི་གཞན་འགྱུར་གྱི་དངོས་མེད། བུམ་པ་དང་ཀ་བའི་སྤྱི་ལྟ་བུ་དངོས་པོའི་དོན་སྤྱི་རྣམས་ནི་དངོས་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་པའི་དངོས་མེད། རི་བོང་གི་རྭ་སོགས་སམ། བུམ་པ་མེད་པའི་སྤྱི་ལྟ་བུ་མི་སྲིད་པའི་དངོས་མེད་དོ།།

As explained above, the five psycho-physical aggregates, the eighteen sensory bases and the twelve sense fields may be reconstituted in the following three aspects: **(1)** the aggregate of physical forms (*rūpaskandha*, *gzugs kyi phung po*), **(2)** the sensory base of mental phenomena (*dharmadhātu*, *chos kyi khams*), and **(3)** the sense field of the mental faculty (*mano āyatana*, *yid kyi skye mched*). Each of these also has three further subdivisions. Among them, the aggregate of physical forms comprises the following three aspects: **(4)** the material elements (*bhūtadhātu*, *'byung ba'i khams),* **(5)** the physical environment (*bhājanaloka*, *snod kyi 'jig rten*), and **(6)** life forms (*sattva*, *bcud kyi sems can*). The sense field of the mental faculty also comprises the following three aspects: **(7)** mind (*citta, sems*), **(8)** mentation (*manas*, *yid*), and **(9)** consciousness (*vijñāna*, *rnam par shes pa*). The sensory base of mental phenomena similarly has the following three subdivisions: **(10)** definable phenomena (*lakṣyadharma*, *mtshan gzhi'i chos*), **(11)** defining characteristics (*lakṣaṇadharma*, *mtshan nyid kyi chos*), and **(12)** non-entities (*abhāvadharma*, *dngos med kyi chos*). Among the latter, definable phenomena comprise three further aspects: **(13)** the aggregates of feelings, **(14)** perceptions, and **(15)** formative predispositions. Defining characteristics comprise three further aspects: **(16)** those that are imputed with regard to space (*dikparikalpita*, *yul la btags pa*), **(17)** those that are imputed with regard to time (*kālaparikalpita*, *dus la btags pa*), and **(18)** those that are imputed with regard to entities (*bhāvaparikalpita*, *dngos la btags pa*). Non-entities may also be subdivided into **(19)** non-entities arising through the transformation of entities (*bhāvanyāthikābhāva, dngos po gzhan 'gyur gyi dngos med*), **(20)** non-entities dependent on entities (*bhāvaniśritābhāva*, *dngos po la brten pa'i dngos med*), and **(21)** non-entities which are impossible (*asambhavābhāva*, *mi srid pa'i dngos med*). These twenty-one are collectively designated as the "phenomenological aspects of the ground" (*gzhi'i chos*).

These largely accord in their meaning with the foregoing [explanations]. However, "defining characteristics" here denotes particular aspects of phenomena that are imaginary or imputed (*chos kun tu btags pa*). These include all phenomena that are relatively determined, such as [dichotomies of] cause and result, greatness and smallness, light and dark, or example and exemplified, which are all said to be imputed with regard to space (*yul la btags pa*). By contrast, those phenomena that are analyzed in terms of past and future are imputed with regard to time (*dus la btags pa*), while those such as "vase" and "pillar" [which may be conceived or imagined] are imputed with regard to entities (*dngos la btags pa*). Furthermore, non-entities which were once entities but subsequently destroyed, such as the cessation [of sensory functions] obtained through analytical means, are [classed as] non-entities arising through the transformation [of entities]. Object universals that do pertain to entities (*dngos po'i don spyi*), such as the concepts "vase universal" or "pillar universal" (*bum pa dang ka ba'i spyi),* are [classed as] non-entities dependent on entities. Concepts such as the "horns of a hare" or "non-vase universal" (*bum pa med pa'i spyi*), are [classed as] non-entities which are impossible.

Shes bya kun khayb mdzod, Book 6, Part 2 (Bar cha, pp. 407-408)

Tāranātha and Khewang Yeshe Gyatso— the Mid-Point

།ཡང་ན་གཟུགས་ཕུང་ཡིད་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་དང་། །ཆོས་ཁམས་ཞེས་བྱ་གསུམ་གྱིས་བསྡུས་པ་སྟེ། །འབྱུང་བའི་ཁམས་དང་སྣོད་ཀྱིས་བསྡུས་པ་དང་། །བཅུད་ཀྱིས་བསྡུས་པས་གཟུགས་ཅན་ཐམས་ཅད་བསྡུས། །འབྱུང་བ་རྒྱུ་དང་ཡུལ་དབང་ལ་སོགས་འབྲས། །མཐོ་དམན་ལ་སོགས་བཀོད་པའི་ཁྱད་པར་ཡོད། །བསྟན་ཡོད་ཐོགས་བཅས་ཐོགས་པ་མེད་པ་སྟེ། །དངོས་བཏགས་མ་ཕྱེ་དེ་གསུམ་དབྱེ་བར་འགྱུར། །ཡིད་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་མཆེད་ཕྱོགས་མཐུན་བཅས་པ་ནི། །སེམས་ཡིད་རྣམ་པར་ཤེས་པ་གསུམ་དུ་འདུས། །ཆོས་ཁམས་དེ་ལའང་མཚན་གཞིའི་ཆོས་རྣམས་དང་། །མཚན་ཉིད་ཆོས་དང་དངོས་མེད་དབྱེ་བས་གསུམ། །དེ་ཡི་དང་པོ་ལ་ཡང་ཕུང་པོ་གསུམ། །ཚོར་བ་བདེ་སྡུག་བཏང་སྙོམས་གསུམ་དུ་འདུས། །འདུ་ཤེས་ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་དང་དག་པ་བ། །ཡང་དག་པ་ཡི་འདུ་ཤེས་ཞེས་བྱའོ། །བདག་ཏུ་འདུ་ཤེས་གཤེར་བ་ཆུར་འདུ་ཤེས། །མི་རྟག་པ་རུ་འདུ་ཤེས་བྱེད་སོགས་ཡིན། །མི་སྡུག་ལ་སོགས་ལོག་པའི་འདུ་ཤེས་ཀྱང་། །དགོས་པའི་དབང་གིས་ཡང་དག་ཡིན་པར་འགྱུར། །དེ་ཕྱིར་དེ་འདྲའི་དབྱེ་བར་རྟོགས་པར་བླ། །གཡེང་ལྡན་མཉམ་བཞག་ཐ་བར་དབྱེ་བའང་ཡིན། །ལུས་ངག་ཡིད་ཀྱིས་དབྱེ་བས་འདུ་བྱེད་དེ། །;རེ་རེའང་དགེ་དང་མི་དགེ་ལུང་མ་བསྟན། །;ཉོན་མོངས་ལུང་མ་བསྟན་པར་བཤད་རྣམས་ཀྱང་། །;བསྒྲིབས་སུ་བསྟན་པས་མི་དགེའི་ཕྱོགས་སུ་བསྡུ། །འདོད་ཆགས་ཞེ་སྡང་གཏི་མུག་དུག་གསུམ་དུ། །ཉོན་མོངས་རིགས་རྣམས་ཐམས་ཅད་བསྡུས་པར་འགྱུར། །ངེས་འབྱུང་སྙིང་རྗེ་རྩོལ་བཞིན་ཤེས་པ་དང་། །དད་དང་བརྩོན་འགྲུས་མཉམ་པར་འཛོག་པ་དགེ། །འདུ་ཤེས་ཡང་དག་ལས་ནི་དགེ་བ་སྟེ། །ཕྱིན་ཅི་ལོག་ལས་མི་དགེའི་འདུ་བྱེད་སྐྱེ། །དག་པ་བ་ལས་ལུང་བསྟན་མིན་འདུ་བྱེད། །འོན་ཀྱང་འདི་ནི་ཕལ་ཆེར་གྲོགས་ཀྱིས་བསྒྱུར། །ཡུལ་དང་དུས་དང་དངོས་ལ་བཏགས་པ་ཡི། །མཚན་ཉིད་ཀུན་བཏགས་རྣམ་པ་གསུམ་དུ་འགྱུར། །མཚན་ཉིད་ཆོས་ཀྱི་སྐྱེ་འགག་གནས་དང་རྒས། །ནད་དང་འགྱུར་དང་ཆེ་ཆུང་མཐའ་དབུས་དང་། །མཐོ་དམན་རྒྱུ་འབྲས་དུས་གསུམ་དབྱེ་བ་དང་། །འགྲོ་འོང་ཤོར་ཐོབ་མཚན་ཉིད་མཚོན་བྱ་དང་། །མཚན་གཞི་མིང་ཚིག་ཡི་གེ་ལ་སོགས་དང་། །རགས་དང་དུས་ཀྱི་བཀོད་པའི་ཁྱད་པར་དང་། །རྟེན་དང་བརྟེན་པ་རྩ་བ་ཡན་ལག་དང་། །ཡན་ལག་ཡན་ལག་ཅན་དང་ཚིག་དོན་དང་། །འབྲེལ་བའི་ཁྱད་པར་དུ་མ་འདོད་རྣམས་ཏེ། །བདག་གཅིག་པ་དང་དེ་ལས་བྱུང་བའམ། །ནོར་དང་བདག་པོའམ་རང་བཞིན་འགྱུར་བ་དང་། །རྒྱུ་དང་རྒྱུ་ཅན་ལྷན་ཅིག་འགྲོགས་པ་དང་། །གཙོ་འཁོར་དམན་དང་ཁྱད་འཕགས་གསལ་མི་གསལ། །ཕན་བྱ་ཕན་བྱེད་གནོད་བྱ་གནོད་ཉིད་དང་། །མཚོན་བྱ་མཚན་ཉིད་མཚན་གཞིའི་འབྲེལ་བ་དང་།

།བརྗོད་བྱ་རྗོད་བྱེད་ཡུལ་དང་ཡུལ་ཅན་དང་། །དཔེ་དང་གཏན་ཚིགས་ཆོས་དོན་འབྲེལ་བ་དང་། །བྱེད་པོ་ལས་དང་བྱེད་པའི་འབྲེལ་བ་སོགས། །མཛེས་དང་མི་མཛེས་བར་མ་ལ་སོགས་དང་། །མཐོ་དམན་བར་མ་ལ་སོགས་རྣམ་གྲངས་དང་། །སྤྱོང་བ་པོ་དང་ཤེས་པོ་མཐོང་བོ་དང་། །བྱེད་པོ་སེམས་ཅན་གང་ཟག་སྐྱེས་བུ་དང་ ། །ལྷ་དང་དམྱལ་བ་འགྲོ་བའི་བཀོད་པ་དང་། །རྐང་ལག་མིག་སོགས་ལུས་ཀྱི་བཀོད་པ་དང་། །རི་དང་ནགས་ཚལ་ཁང་ཁྱིམ་སྣོད་ཀྱི་བཀོད། །སྣང་སྲུན་ལ་སོགས་ཉེར་སྤྱོད་བཀོད་པ་སྟེ། །འདི་དག་རགས་པ་དཔྱད་པས་མེད་འགྱུར་མོད། །ཕྱོག་ཆ་ཐ་དད་པས་ན་སོ་སོར་བཞག །དེ་བཞིན་ལོ་ཟླ་ཞག་དང་བསྐལ་པ་སོགས། །སྤྱི་ཕྱིའི་མཚམས་འབྱོར་གཟུགས་ཀྱི་མཚམས་འབྱོར་དང་། །གཟུགས་ཀྱི་ནམ་མཁའ་ཡིད་ངོའི་གཟུགས་སྒྲ་སོགས། །བཀྲིས་སྐོམ་བཟའ་དང་ལོངས་སྤྱོད་གཡོ་བ་ཡང་། །གནས་སྐབས་ཁྱད་པར་སྣ་ཚོགས་མང་པོ་དང་། །གྲངས་དང་ཕྱོགས་དུས་འགལ་དང་དགག་དང་སྒྲུབ། །དེ་དག་ཐམས་ཅད་རང་རང་ལྡོག་སྟེང་ནས། །དངོས་པོར་ཡོད་མིན་བློས་བཏགས་ཙམ་ཞིག་གོ། །ཕྱོགས་དུས་ལ་སོགས་གདགས་གཞི་ངེས་མེད་དང་། །བུམ་པའི་སྐྱེ་སོགས་གཞི་གཅིག་ལ་བརྟེན་དང་། །རྒྱུ་འབྲས་ལ་སོགས་དུ་མར་བརྟེན་པ་སྟེ། །འདོགས་པའི་གཞི་ལས་དབྱེ་ན་གསུམ་དུ་འདུས། །ནམ་མཁའ་འགོག

པ་གཉིས་དང་མ་སྐྱེས་དང་། །ཞིག་ནས་མེད་སོགས་དངོས་པོ་གཞན་གྱུར་དང་། །བུམ་པའི་སྤྱི་སོགས་དངོས་པོ་ལ་བརྟེན་དང་། །མི་སྲིད་བུམ་མེད་སྤྱི་སོགས་དངོས་མེད་གསུམ། །ཀུན་ཀྱང་རྣམ་པར་རྟོག་པས་བཏགས་བྱ་ཙམ། །ཡིན་ཕྱིར་དངོས་པོ་ཉིད་དམ་དངོས་པོ་ཡི། །འབྲེལ་བའམ་མི་མཐུན་ཕྱོགས་ལ་ལྟོས་བཞག་པས། །དངོས་པོ་གཞན་འགྱུར་ཁོ་ནར་འདུས་པ་ཡིན། །དེ་ལྟར་ཉེར་གཅིག་གཞི་ཡི་ཆོས་ཡིན་ཏེ།

Alternatively, [all things] are subsumed in [these three]:
(1) the aggregate of physical forms;
(2) the sense field of the mental faculty; and
(3) the sensory base of mental phenomena.

All physical phenomena [that constitute the aggregate of physical forms] are subsumed in:

(4) the material elements;
(5) the environment; and
(6) life forms.

The material elements are causal or fruitional—in which case they include the sense organs and sense objects, and they are distinguished in their array, as high and low, and so forth. They are also classified according to three sorts: those that are revealed (*sanidarśana,* i.e. phenomena seen by visual consciousness), those that are obstructed (*sapratigha*, i.e. sights, sounds, odors, tastes and tangibles), and those that are unobstructed (*apratigha*, mental phenomena or imperceptible forms—*avijñaptirūpa*)

The sense field of the mental faculty, with its concomitants, comprises these three:

(7) mind (i.e. substratum consciousness);
(8) mentation (i.e. afflicted mental consciousness) and
(9) consciousness (i.e. engaged consciousness).

The sensory base of mental phenomena is also threefold, since it is classified according to

(10) definable phenomena (*lakṣyadharma*);
(11) defining characteristics (*lakṣaṇadharma*); and
(12) non-entities (*abhāva*).

The first of these [definable phenomena] also comprises three aggregates:

(13) [The aggregate of] feelings which includes happiness, suffering and neutrality.

(14) [The aggregate of] perceptions which may be termed erroneous, pure, and authentic--respectively these include the perception of self [instead of non-self], the perception of moisture as water, and the perception [of conditioned phenomena] as impermanent. Unpleasant perceptions [such as the skeleton which is an object of meditation] and so forth, though erroneous, become authentic since they are required [as the causal basis for liberation]. Such classifications are easy to understand. Perceptions may also be classified as distracted (desire realm), equipoised (form and formless realms), or subtle (summit of existence).

(15) [The aggregate of] formative predispositions which is classified as physical, verbal or mental. Each of these in turn may be virtuous, non-virtuous or indeterminate. Although it is explained that afflicted mental states [functioning in the two higher realms] are indeterminate [in the sense that their obscuration of fruitional attainments is indeterminate, here] they are included among the non-virtuous factors because it is determined that they have indeed obscured [those attainments]. All types of afflicted mental states, [whether primary or subsidiary], are subsumed in the three poisons: desire, hatred and delusion. The virtuous factors include disillusionment [with cyclic existence, which is free from desire], compassion [which is free from hatred], and correct knowledge [which is free from delusion], along with faith, perseverance and meditative absorption. Virtuous formative predispositions arise from authentic perceptions, non-virtuous formative predispositions arise from erroneous perceptions, and indeterminate formative predispositions arise from pure [perceptions], although the last are generally advantageous.

Defining characteristics are also threefold, comprising imaginary characteristics that are:

(16) imputed with regard to space (*dikparikalpita*);
(17) imputed with regard to time (*kālaparikalpita*); and
(18) imputed with regard to entities (*bhāvaparikalpita*).

Defining characteristics partake [of dichotomies such as] arising and ceasing, duration and aging, pathological states and transformations, large and small, extremes and middle, high and low, cause and result, the divisions of time, going and coming, or loss and gain; [and trichotomies such as] definition, definiendum, and illustration; or noun, phrase and letter, and so forth; as well as gross entities and temporal distinctions, [and the dichotomies between] supporter and supported, root and branch, branch and appendage, or word and meaning; and the many [imagined] relational distinctions that are held, such as identity and derivation, wealth and owner, intrinsic nature and modification, causes and their properties, or spontaneous and associated; also centre and periphery, inferior and superior, clear and unclear, assisted and assister, injured and injurer, the relation between definiendum, definition and illustration, signified meaning and signifying words, object and subject, the relation between example, reason, property [of the probandum] and meaning, the relation between nominative, accusative and verbal action, categories such as beautiful, ugly and mediocre; high, low and average; experiencer, knower and viewer; creator and life form, individual and human being; the array of sentient beings including gods and denizens of hell; the array of the physical body, including legs, arms, eyes, and so forth; the array of the environment including mountains and forest, house and household; and the array of resources, such as light and darkness. All these, on analysis, are indeed non-existent, but they are respectively established through their distinguishing counterparts.

The same goes for [divisions of time] such as years, months, days and aeons; the connection between previous and subsequent moments; the connection between [two] physical [entities]; space endowed with form [and color, in contrast to space that is ornate and space that is vacuous]; sights, sounds and so forth that arise before the mind; hunger and thirst, fluctuations in food and resources; and also the many diverse provisional distinctions [such as childhood, youth and old age]; of number, direction, and time, and of contradiction, refutation,

and proof [with respect to entities]. All these are merely imputed as existing or non-existing entities on the basis of their distinguishing counterparts, [but they are not substantially existing]. The basis of their designation, including space and time, is unascertained, but contingent on a single basis, such as the arising of a vase, and contingent on a multiplicity of diverse causes, diverse results, and so forth. When [imputed phenomena] are differentiated on the basis of their designation, they comprise these three sorts.

Non-entities are also threefold:

(19) [Non-entities] arising through the transformation of entities (*bhāvanyāthikākabhāva*), such as space, the two kinds of cessation [obtained through analytical and non-analytical means], non-arising [phenomena] and [phenomena] that are [now] non-existent, having been destroyed;
(20) [Non-entities] dependent on entities (*bhāvaniśritābhāva*), such as the concept 'vase universal' and
(21) [Non-entities] that are impossible, such as the concept 'non-vase universal'.

Since all these are simply imputed by conceptual thought, they are intellectually established as either [non-entities] dependent on entities, or as [non-entities] dependent on the relation between entities, or as [non-entities] dependent on incompatibility with entities. [The last two sorts of non-entity] may also be exclusively subsumed in those that arise through the transformation of entities [because they are superimposed non-entities].
So it is that these twenty-one comprise the phenomenological categories of the ground

Tāranātha, *Theg mchog dbu ma*, Ch. 2, Jo nang dpe tshogs, vol. 10, pp. 5-7

Khewang Yeshe Gyatso, *Theg mchog dbu ma'i zin bris*, Ch. 2. Jo nang dpe tshogs, vol. 10, pp. 76-84