Basic Buddhist Ontology

The Selfless, Existents, Types of Existents and Non-existents

1. The Selfless
   a. The definition of the selfless: “That which is without a self.”

   b. The divisions of the selfless
      i. Existents
         a) The definition of an existent: “That which is observed by a valid cognizer.”
         b) The phenomena mutually inclusive with existents, that is, everything that is an existent must be:
            (i) Established bases: “That which is established by a valid cognizer”
            (ii) Object of comprehension: “That which is realized by a valid cognizer”
            ➔ “All existent things are characterized as those things that are established, observed and realized by valid cognizers.”
            (iii) An object: “That which is known by an awareness”
                  - Awareness: “any sort of consciousness, right or wrong, reliable or not”
                  - Reliable cognizer: “A correct, certifying consciousness”
            ➔ Here, “known by” an awareness qualifies that it is an awareness of something correct and reliable—you cannot know something that is not true, not real, not accurate, not existent.
            (iv) Object of knowledge: “That which is suitable as an object of an awareness”
            (v) Object of comprehension of an omniscient consciousness: “An object realized [by a valid cognizer] by an omniscient consciousness”
            (vi) Hidden phenomena: “An object realized in a hidden manner by a thought consciousness apprehending it.”
            (vii) Phenomenon: “That which holds its own entity.”

   c) Seven divisions of existents
      1. The division of existents into Impermanent phenomena and permanent phenomena
         a. Impermanent phenomena
            i. The definition of an impermanent phenomenon: “A momentary phenomena.”
            ii. Examples of impermanent phenomena
         b. Permanent phenomena
            i. The definition of a permanent phenomenon: “A common locus of a permanent phenomenon and the nonmomentary.”
            ii. A division of permanent phenomena
            iii. Examples of permanent phenomena
      2. The division of existents into functioning things and phenomena that are non-things
         a. Functioning things
            i. The definition of a functioning thing: “That which is able to perform a function.”
            ii. The division of functioning things into three
         b. Phenomena that are non-things [non-functioning things]: “A phenomenon that is empty of the ability to perform a function.”
      3. The division of existents into products and nonproduced phenomena
A product: “A created phenomenon” [i.e. that which is produced from causes and conditions]
- A cause: “A producer”
- An effect: “An object produced.”
- A nonproduced phenomenon: “a noncreated phenomenon.” [i.e. an existent not created by causes and conditions.]

4. The division of existents into composed phenomena and uncomposed phenomena
- A composed phenomena: “A disintegrating phenomenon.”
- An uncomposed phenomena: “A nondisintegrating phenomenon.”

5. The division of existents into ultimate truths and conventional truths
- An ultimate truth: “A phenomenon that is ultimately able to perform a function.” [i.e. impermanent phenomena]
  **Only this system of the Sutra School Following Reasoning equates ultimate truth with impermanent phenomena.**
- A conventional truth: “A phenomenon that is ultimately unable to perform a function.” [i.e. permanent phenomena].

6. The division of existents into specifically characterized phenomena and generally characterized phenomena
- A specifically characterized phenomenon: “A phenomenon that is established by way of its own character without being merely imputed by a term or thought consciousness.”
  [Impermanent phenomena, in this system asserted to be truly established phenomena]
- A generally characterized phenomenon: “A phenomenon that is merely imputed by a term or thought consciousness and is not established as a specifically characterized phenomenon.”
  [All permanent phenomena.]

7. The division of existents into hidden phenomena and manifest phenomena
- A hidden phenomenon: “An object realized in a hidden manner by a thought consciousness apprehending it.” [MI with all existents]
- A manifest phenomena: “An object explicitly realized by a direct valid cognizer.” [MI with all impermanent phenomena]

ii. Non-existents
   a. A proposed definition of the non-existent: “That which is not observed by valid cognition.”
   b. Examples of non-existents
c. Examples of the selfless
The Division of Functioning Things into Three

1. Functioning Things
   A. Matter: “That which is atomically established.” [MI with Form: “That which is suitable as form”]
      1. External Matter: “That which is atomically established and is not included within the continuum of a person.”
            i. Color: “That which is suitable as a hue.”
            ii. Shape: “That which is suitable to be known as a shape.”
         c. Odors [odor-source]: “An object experienced by a nose consciousness.”
         d. Tastes: “An object experienced by a tongue consciousness.”
         e. Tangible Objects: “An object experienced by a body consciousness,” or “An object felt by a body consciousness.”
      2. Internal Matter: “That which is atomically established and is included within the continuum of a person.”
         a. Eye sense power: “A clear internal form that is the uncommon empowering condition for its own effect, an eye consciousness.”
         b. Ear sense power: “A clear internal form that is the uncommon empowering condition for its own effect, an ear consciousness.”
         c. Nose sense power: “A clear internal form that is the uncommon empowering condition for its own effect, a nose consciousness.”
         d. Tongue sense power: “A clear internal form that is the uncommon empowering condition of its own effect, a tongue consciousness.”
         e. Body sense power: “A clear internal form that is the uncommon empowering condition of its own effect, a body consciousness.”
   B. Consciousnesses: “That which is clear and knowing”
      1. Mental Consciousnesses: “A knower that is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, a mental sense power.”
         [The mental sense power is “Any of the six [mental or sense] consciousnesses in the immediately preceding moment.”]
      2. Sense Consciousnesses: “A knower that is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, a physical sense power.”
         a. Eye consciousness: “A knower that is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, the eye sense power, and an observed-object-condition, a visible form.”
         b. Ear consciousness: “A knower that is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, the ear sense power, and an observed-object-condition, a sound.”
         c. Nose consciousness: “A knower that is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, the nose sense power, and an observed-object-condition, an odor.”
         d. Tongue consciousness: “A knowing that is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, a tongue sense power, and an observed-object-condition, a taste.”
         e. Body consciousness: “A knower that is produced in dependence on its own uncommon empowering condition, a body sense power, and an observed-object-condition, a tangible object.”
   C. Nonassociated Compositional Factors: “A functioning thing that is neither a form nor a consciousness.”
      1. Nonassociated Compositional Factors That Are Persons—A person: “A being who is imputed in dependence upon any of the five aggregates.”
         a. Common Beings
         b. Superiors
      2. Nonassociated Compositional Factors That Are Not Persons