

SEVEN TYPES OF AWARENESS—PART 3

3. SUBSEQUENT COGNIZERS (བཅད་ཤེས་/ bcad shes)

Definition:

A knower which realizes that which has already been realized.

A subsequent cognizer realizes an object that was previously realized by a prime cognizer. It could arise immediately, i.e. in the next moment, or sometime later. Since they **realize** their objects, subsequent cognizers are **always incontrovertible**. Therefore, wrong consciousnesses and inattentive perceptions are never subsequent cognizers.

Although they realize their objects and are incontrovertible, they are **not valid cognizers**, and this is because they are **not new**. Why is that important? The first moment of a consciousness engages its object by its **own power**; that's why it's considered to be "new" and therefore valid. Subsequent moments realize their object by the power of the first moment, not by their own power. This is similar to a train: the first car, the engine, moves by its own power, but the later cars do not move by their own power, but are pulled by the first one. For example, the first moment of an eye consciousness seeing the moon realizes its object through the force of **experience**; the later moments no longer rely on experience but are induced by the force of the first moment.

Furthermore, the first moment of realizing an object (a prime cognizer) removes **superimpositions** (false modes of existence) with respect to the object—for example, thinking a blue object is green, or thinking sound is permanent rather than impermanent. Subsequent moments of realizing the object do not perform this function of removing superimpositions.

There are two types of subsequent cognizers:

(1) **direct perceivers**— For example, the first moment of an eye consciousness correctly seeing the moon is a prime/valid direct perceiver; later moments in that same continuum of eye consciousnesses seeing the moon are subsequent cognizers. This is true for all four types of direct perceivers.

(2) **conceptual**—these are of two types:

(a) **a conceptual subsequent cognizer induced by a direct perception**—e.g. after having a series of correct eye consciousnesses seeing the moon, one can have a conceptual subsequent cognizer thinking about the moon.

(b) **a conceptual subsequent cognizer induced by an inference**—e.g. the first moment of an inference realizing the impermanence of one's body (in dependence on a correct sign) is an inferential valid cognizer; later moments in that same continuum of realizing the impermanence of one's body are conceptual subsequent cognizers that are induced by that inference.

- In each of the above examples, the subsequent cognizers realize the same object as the first moment, and the strength of the initial realization has not been lost. However, the realization has not been gained by their own power; rather, they merely realize something that has already been realized by the first moment.
- Also, they do not remove superimpositions (e.g. that what one is seeing is the moon and not a streetlight), that enable the realization to take place.

THE IMPORTANCE OF INFERENTIAL COGNIZERS & SUBSEQUENT COGNIZERS IN DHARMA PRACTICE

- In Dharma practice, we need to transform our mind by overcoming mistaken conceptions and disturbing emotions, and cultivating correct and positive states of mind.
- We need inferential cognizers to understand hidden objects such as impermanence, and emptiness.
- Then we need to keep these understandings in mind and not forget them; this involves subsequent cognizers. We can do this during meditation itself—after understanding something, staying with that understanding (i.e. cultivating subsequent cognizers regarding that topic).
- We also need to remember what we have understood even when we're not meditating, but going about our daily activities. In this way our mind becomes more and more familiar with this new understanding, and it becomes our habitual way of seeing things (i.e. building new neural pathways). This is how our mind gets transformed—e.g. seeing things as impermanent means we'll be less likely to get caught up in emotions such as attachment, anger, fear & anxiety, jealousy, pride, etc.

4. CORRECTLY ASSUMING CONSCIOUSNESS (ཡིད་དཔྱོད་/ yid dpyod)

Definition: A factually concordant determinative knower that is controvertible with regard to determining its object.

- “factually concordant” means that it is correct; it knows its object correctly, as it is
- “determinative knower” means it is conception, rather than perception
- “controvertible” means it is not infallible; it does **not realize** its object, does not eliminate superimpositions about the object, and therefore is unable to lead to absolute certainty about it.
- Therefore, there is a difference between being *correct* about an object, and actually *realizing* it. Most of what we know, even our birth-date, are correctly assuming consciousnesses.
- An inferential cognizer is both correct about and realizes its object; this is because it arises in dependence on a correct sign/reason.

- A correctly assuming consciousness is correct about its object, but does not realize it; this is because of the way it is generated.
- According to Purbujok¹, there are 5 types of correctly assuming consciousness depending upon the ways in which they are generated:
 - 1) Without any reason—e.g. thinking “sound is impermanent” simply because you heard this from a teacher, but it’s not based on any reason as to *why* sound is impermanent.
 - 2) With a contradictory reason—e.g. thinking “sound is impermanent because it does not perform a function.” This is incorrect because not performing a function is contradictory with impermanence. In fact, being impermanent is synonymous with being able to perform a function.
 - 3) With an indefinite reason—e.g. thinking “sound is impermanent because it exists.” The fault here is that there is no pervasion, because existents include both impermanent and permanent phenomena.
 - 4) With a non-established reason—e.g. thinking “sound is impermanent because it is an object of eye consciousness.” The sign does not apply to the subject; thus it is not the property of the subject.
 - 5) With a correct reason which has not been brought to its full conclusion—e.g. thinking “sound is impermanent because it is a product,” but one has not gone through the whole process of reasoning, establishing the three modes in one’s mind.

In all of these examples, one has a correct understanding that sound is impermanent, but such understanding is weak, not strong; it could be overthrown upon meeting someone who gives seemingly strong arguments to the contrary. Therefore, correctly assuming consciousnesses are not foolproof, reliable forms of knowledge.

However, Lati Rinpoche in *Mind in Tibetan Buddhism* (p. 93 and 95) says that a correctly assuming consciousness “is a knower which determines one-pointedly, or decisively, the phenomenon which is its main object of engagement.” The meaning of “one-pointedly” is that this type of mind is free of the two-pointedness of a doubting consciousness that thinks, “Maybe it is this, maybe it is that.” However, it lacks stability so it could turn into doubt.

5. AWARENESSES TO WHICH THE OBJECT APPEARS BUT IS NOT ASCERTAINED, A.K.A. INATTENTIVE PERCEPTION (སྣང་ལ་མ་ངེས་པ་/ snang la ma nges pa)

Definition: A knower to which the specifically characterized phenomenon which is its object of engagement clearly appears but which is unable to induce ascertainment with respect to it.

- “specifically characterized phenomenon” and impermanent phenomenon are mutually inclusive

¹ These 5 are summarized into 3 in *Mind in Tibetan Buddhism* (p. 97-98): without a reason (#1), without ascertaining the reason (#5), and depending on a facsimile of a reason (#s 2-4).

- “object of engagement,” or “engaged object,” is the actual object the mind is dealing with (see chart 2)
- “clearly appears” means the object appears directly, not through the medium of a mental image [this indicates this type of mind is non-conceptual]
- “induce ascertainment”—an ascertaining consciousness is a conceptual mind that knows with certainty that one saw that object.

This type of mind is always non-conceptual, i.e. perception, never conception. In fact, it is a **direct perceiver**, which means that it is always **non-mistaken** about its object. The object **appears** to this type of mind (for example, an eye consciousness seeing green), however the mind **does not realize** or **ascertain** its object. And it is unable to induce an **ascertaining consciousness**, i.e. a conceptual mind/memory that knows “I saw green.” Therefore this type of mind is **never a prime cognition**; it is never incontrovertible.

One reason that this type of mind does not realize its object is because it occurs while one’s attention is directed elsewhere. For example, while you are absorbed in listening to a concert, you have an eye consciousness seeing the green curtain at the back of the stage. But you are not paying full attention to it, so later, if someone asks you what color the curtain was, you would not be able to say. Or, while absorbed in watching a movie on TV, someone may say, “Dinner is ready.” You have a non-mistaken ear consciousnesses hearing the sound of this person’s voice, but because your attention is mainly focused on the movie, you don’t pay full attention to what is being said and therefore do not fully realize it. You will probably have to ask them to repeat what they said.

To understand this more clearly, let’s review the meaning of the terms “to realize” and “non-mistaken.” For a mind to **realize** its object means that the mind is able to

- (1) lead to a correct ascertainment of the object (i.e. later one can remember correctly and precisely what one saw, heard, etc.); and
- (2) eliminate superimpositions or misconceptions about it (e.g. one knows that the color of the curtain was green and not red).

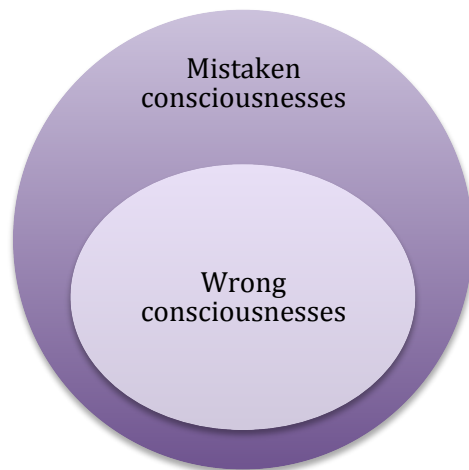
Neither of these occurs for an awareness to which the object appears but is not ascertained.

The meaning of “**non-mistaken**” is that the mind is not mistaken with regard to its **appearing object**. Examples of non-conceptual minds (i.e. perceptions) that are **mistaken** are: seeing a mirage as water, seeing rabbit’s horns, hearing an echo as another person’s voice, etc. So there is actually an error, a distortion in the way the object is perceived.

In the case of an awareness to which the object appears but is not ascertained, the mind is not mistaken to its appearing object—the green color of the curtain, or the sound of the person’s voice. You did correctly, non-mistakenly see the color of the curtain and hear the sound of the person’s voice saying something, but because you were not fully attentive, you did not realize what that object was. But if you *did* mistakenly perceive the object (e.g. seeing the curtain as red, or hearing the voice as a cat meowing), then it would be a **wrong perception**.

Chart 4: The difference between mistaken (Tib: 'khrul འཇུག་' pronounced "trul") and wrong (log རྨོག་)

	Mistaken Consciousness*	Wrong Consciousness#
What does it mean?	A mind that is mistaken with regard to its appearing object.	A mind that is mistaken with regard to its object of engagement (the object that the mind is involved with).
Perception	Examples: seeing a mirage as water, a reflection of a face in a mirror as a real face, a rabbit's ears as horns, feeling phantom limb sensations as real, etc.	Any perception that is mistaken is also wrong, because the appearing object and object of engagement of perception are the same (thus if a perception is mistaken to its appearing object it will also be mistaken to its object of engagement.)
Conception	<u>All</u> conceptual consciousnesses are mistaken because a mental image of the object appears to them as if it's the actual object.	Although all conceptions are mistaken, not all are wrong. Examples of wrong conceptions are: thinking sound is permanent, thinking a mirage is water, etc. If a conception correctly realizes its object of engagement (i.e. that sound is impermanent, or that a mirage is a mirage and not water) then it's not wrong.



What would be an example of a mistaken consciousness which is not a wrong consciousness?

Is there anything which is a wrong consciousness, but not a mistaken one?

Another way that one could have an awareness to which the object appears but is not ascertained would be when the duration of the experience is too short to be noticed. Examples would be: mental direct perceivers that occur in between a sense direct perceiver of an object and a conception thinking about that object; or a subliminal image flashed on a TV screen.

There are three types of awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained: sense, mental, and self-knowing direct perceivers. Yogic direct perceivers are never this type of mind because they always realize their objects.

Some scholars (e.g. Lama Tsong Khapa) say that it is possible to have all five sense perceptions at the same time. However, at any given moment, only one of the five can *realize* its object; the remaining four would be awarenesses to which the object appears but is not ascertained.