

## 6. PHENOMENOLOGICAL BASIS ACCORDING TO THE FINAL PROMULGATION

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2. Phenomenological Structures according to the Final [Definitive] Promulgation [III.C.2]
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### PHENOMENOLOGICAL STRUCTURES ACCORDING TO THE FINAL [DEFINITIVE] PROMULGATION [2]

The second part [of the extensive exegesis on the actual structure of Buddhist phenomenology; see p. 472] is a systematic presentation of phenomenological categories according to the uncommon tradition of the final promulgation.<sup>240</sup> This has three topics: (1) the basis of the phenomenological categories which encompass all twenty-five realms of phenomenal existence (*srid pa nyi shu rtsa lnga*); (2) the five foundational factors (*gzhi chos lnga*) of which the [three] natures partake; and (3) an exegesis of the three natures (*mtshan nyid gsum*) which partake of these [foundational factors].<sup>241</sup>

### PHENOMENOLOGICAL BASIS ENCOMPASSING ALL TWENTY-FIVE REALMS OF PHENOMENAL EXISTENCE [a]

The first of these topics has three aspects: (1) ground (*gzhi*), (2) path (*lam*), and (3) the expanse of reality (*chos kyi dbyings*).

## GROUND: THE TWENTY-ONE FOUNDATIONAL CATEGORIES [i]

With regard to the first [it says in the root verses]:

When the psycho-physical aggregates, the sensory bases,  
 And the sensory activity fields are reconstituted,  
 Each of these [structures] has three further subdivisions:  
 Respectively, [the aggregate of physical forms] comprises  
 The sensory bases of the elements, the physical world and its living  
 organisms;  
 [The sensory base of mental phenomena] comprises  
 The mind, mentation, and consciousness;  
 While [the sensory activity field of the mental faculty] comprises  
 Demonstrations, defining characteristics, and non-substantial  
 mental phenomena.  
 [Among the latter,] the demonstrations also comprise  
 Three further aspects—feelings, perceptions, and formative  
 predispositions;  
 The defining characteristics comprise three further aspects—  
 Those that are imputed with regard to space, time, and substance;  
 While the non-substantial mental phenomena comprise  
 Those arising through the transformation of substance,  
 Those that are dependent on substance,  
 And those that do not exist.  
 These then are the twenty-one aspects associated with the ground.

As explained above, the five psycho-physical aggregates, the eighteen sensory bases and the twelve sensory activity fields may be reconstituted in the following three aspects: (1) the aggregate of physical forms (*rūpaskandha*, *gzugs kyi phungpo*), (2) the sensory base of mental phenomena (*dharmadhātu*, *chos kyi kham*s), and (3) the sensory activity field of the mental faculty (*mano āyatana*, *yid kyi skye mched*).<sup>242</sup>

Each of these also has three further subdivisions. Among them, the aggregate of physical forms comprises the following three aspects: (4) the sensory base of the elements (*bhūtadhātu*, *'byung ba'i kham*s), (5) the containing physical world (*bhājanaloka*, *snod kyi 'jig rten*), and (6) the sentient beings within it (*sattva*, *bcud kyi sems can*). The sensory activity field of the mental faculty<sup>243</sup>

also comprises the following three aspects: (7) the 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) mental phenomena denoting demonstrations (*lakṣyadharmā, mtshan gzhi'i chos*), (11) mental phenomena denoting defining characteristics (*lakṣaṇadharmā, mtshan nyid kyi chos*), and (12) non-substantial mental phenomena (*abhāvadharmā, dngos med kyi chos*).

Among the latter, the demonstrations comprise three further aspects: (13) the aggregates of feelings, (14) perceptions, and (15) formative predispositions. The 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 substance (*bhāvaparikalpita, dngos la btags pa*). Then, the non-substantial mental phenomena may also be subdivided into (19) non-substantial phenomena arising through the transformation of substance (*bhāvanyāthikābhāva, dngos po gzhan 'gyur gyi dngos med*), (20) non-substantial mental phenomena dependent on substance (*bhāvanīśritābhāva, dngos po la brten pa'i dngos med*), and (21) non-substantial mental phenomena which do not exist (*asambhavābhāva, mi srid pa'i dngos med*). These twenty-one are collectively designated as the “aspects associated with the ground” (*gzhi'i chos*).<sup>244</sup>

These largely accord in their meaning with the foregoing [explanations]. However, the “defining characteristics” refer [in this context] to particular aspects of phenomena that are imaginary or imputed (*chos kun tu btags pa*). These include all phenomena that are relatively determined, such as [the 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 substance (*dngos la btags pa*).

Furthermore, non-substantial [phenomena] which were once substantial but subsequently destroyed, such as the cessation [of sensory functions] obtained through analytical means, are [classed as] non-substantial phenomena arising through the transformation [of substance]. Substantial object-universals (*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-substantial [phenomena] dependent on substance. Concepts such as the “horns of a hare” or

“non-vase universal” (*bum pa med pa'i spyi*), are [classed as] non-substantial [phenomena] which do not exist.

### PATH: THE THREE ASPECTS OF THE PATH [ii]

With regard to the second [topic of the phenomenological basis, it says in the root verses]:

There are three approaches of the [spiritual] path:  
Common, uncommon, and one [extraordinary approach]  
Through which the abiding nature of the Conqueror will be  
reached.

The three approaches of the [spiritual] path comprise (1) the common path which refers to the vehicles of the gods and of Brahmā,<sup>245</sup> (2) the uncommon path which refers to the vehicles of the pious attendants and hermit buddhas,<sup>246</sup> and (3) the [extraordinary] path of the Greater Vehicle<sup>247</sup> through which the abiding nature or level of the Buddha, our Teacher, the Conqueror, might be reached.<sup>248</sup>

### RESULT: THE EXPANSE OF REALITY [iii]

With regard to the third [topic of the phenomenological basis, it says in the root verses]:

The expanse of reality is the ultimate [truth], unconditioned and  
unique.  
The systematic presentation of the irreversible promulgation  
Determines that this object of knowledge  
Encompasses all twenty-five realms of phenomenal existence.

In this context, [unconditioned phenomena,] including the so-called three categories of unconditioned phenomena (*'dus ma byas gsum*) posited by pious attendants, are actually [classed as] “symbolic or imputed unconditioned phenomena” (*rnam grangs sam btags pa'i 'dus ma byas*). By contrast, the expanse of reality (*dharmadhātu, chos kyi dbyings*), which is the ultimate truth (*paramārthasatya, don dam pa'i bden pa*), alone is [considered to be] unique and uncompounded.<sup>249</sup>

The systematic presentation of renowned [texts] such as the *Sūtra of Great*

*Final Nirvāṇa* and the *Sūtra of the Great Drum*, which belong to the irreversible promulgation [of the Buddha's teachings], has determined that all things of phenomenal existence, encompassing all the twenty-five realms (*srid pa'i chos mtha' dag bsdus pa nyi shu rtsa lnga po*) have this field of knowledge, [the actual reality,] as their ground and path.<sup>250</sup>