# The Mahāyāna Śāstra on the Door to Understanding the Hundred Dharmas

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Namo Shakyamuni Buddha, Namo Shakyamuni Buddha, Namo Shakyamuni Buddha.

(Sutra Opening Gatha)

The Dharma, infinitely profound and subtle,
Is rarely encountered in a million kalpas;
Now we are able to hear, study, and follow it,
May we fully realize the Tathāgata's true meaning.

(full text of the Hundred Dharmas:)

As the World-Honored One has said, "All dharmas are devoid of self." What are "all dharmas"? And what is "devoid of self"?

"All dharmas" are summarized into five classes:

1. Mind dharmas
2. Mind-associated dharmas
3. Form dharmas
4. Mind-dissociated dharmas
5. Unconditioned dharmas

The order is such because: those in the first class are supreme; the second are concomitant with the first; the third are projections manifested by the first two; the fourth are (based on but) distinct from the first three; and the fifth are revealed by the previous four.

**The first, mind dharmas class,** comprises eight kinds of consciousness:

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1. Eye-consciousness
2. Ear-consciousness
3. Nose-consciousness
4. Tongue-consciousness
5. Body-consciousness
6. Mind-consciousness
7. Manas-consciousness
8. Ālaya-consciousness

**The second, mind-associated class,** comprises fifty-one mental factors divided into six groups:

1. Five universally active factors
2. Five specific factors
3. Eleven wholesome factors
4. Six primary afflictions
5. Twenty secondary afflictions
6. Four indeterminate factors.

The five universally active factors are: attention, contact, feeling, conception, and volition.

The five specific factors are: desire, resolve, mindfulness, samadhi, and discernment.

The eleven wholesome factors are: faith, vigor, shame, embarrassment, non-greed, non-anger, non-ignorance, serenity, vigilance, equanimity, and non-harmfulness.

The six primary afflictions are: greed, anger, arrogance, ignorance, doubt, and false views.

The twenty secondary afflictions are: wrath, resentment, spite, concealment, deceit, guile, conceit, harmfulness, envy, stinginess, lack of shame, lack of embarrassment, lack of faith, indolence, heedlessness, torpor, restlessness, unmindfulness, delusion, and distraction.

The four indeterminate factors are: sleep, remorse, inspection, and investigation.

**The third, form class**, comprises eleven dharmas: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body; form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and mental-form.

**The fourth, mind-dissociated class**, comprises twenty-four dharmas: acquisition, life-faculty, commonality, distinctness of beings, thoughtless absorption, cessation absorption, fruit of thoughtless absorption, names, sentences, syllables, birth,

abidance, aging, impermanence, flux, causal distinctions, correlations, speed, sequence, time, space, number, compatibility, incompatibility.

**The fifth, unconditioned class**, comprises six dharmas: empty space cessation, cessation through discernment, cessation without discernment, imperturbable cessation, cessation of conception and feeling, and true-suchness.

“Devoid of self” refers to: sentient beings are devoid of self, and dharmas are devoid of self.

## 大乘百法明門論. 世親菩薩造　唐三藏法師玄奘譯

如世尊言：**一切法無我**。何等一切法？云何為無我？**一切法者，略有五種**。一者心法。二者心所有法。三者色法。四者心不相應行法。五者無為法。一切最勝故。與此相應故。二所現影故。三位差別故。四所顯示故。如是次第。**第一心法，略有八種**。一眼識。二耳識。三鼻識。四舌識。五身識。六意識。七末那識。八阿賴耶識。**第二心所有法，略有五十一種**，分為六位。一遍行有五。二別境有五。三善有十一。四煩惱有六。五隨煩惱有二十。六不定有四。**一遍行五者**。一作意。二觸。三受。四想。五思。**二別境五者**。一欲。二勝解。三念。四定。五慧。**三善十一者**。一信。二精進。三慚。四愧。五無貪。六無瞋。七無癡。八輕安。九不放逸。十行捨。十一不害。**四煩惱六者**。一貪。二瞋。三慢。四無明。五疑。六不正見。**五隨煩惱二十者**。一忿。二恨。三惱。四覆。五誑。六諂。七憍。八害。九嫉。十慳。十一無慚。十二無愧。十三不信。十四懈怠。十五放逸。十六昏沈。十七掉舉。十八失念。十九不正知。二十散亂。**六不定四者**。一睡眠。二惡作。三尋。四伺。**第三色法，略有十一種**。一眼。二耳。三鼻。四舌。五身。六色。七聲。八香。九味。十觸。十一法處所攝色。**第四心不相應行法，略有二十四種**。一得。二命根。三眾同分。四異生性。五無想定。六滅盡定。七無想報。八名身。九句身。十文身。十一生。十二住。十三老。十四無常。十五流轉。十六定異。十七相應。十八勢速。十九次第。二十時。二十一方。二十二數。二十三和合性。二十四不和合性。**第五無為法者，略有六種**。一虛空無為。二擇滅無為。三非擇滅無為。四不動滅無為。五想受滅無為。六真如無為。言無我者。略有二種。一補特伽羅無我。二法無我。

# MAIN PREMISE

## Introduction to Yogācāra (The Consciousness-Only School)

All Buddhist schools aim to elucidate the Buddha Dharma (the Buddha's teachings), guide followers in their Buddhist cultivation, so they may achieve their own liberation, or, in addition, help with the liberation of all beings.

The Yogācāra school (Sanskrit for "Practitioners of Yoga") is one of the two pillars of Mahāyāna Buddhist philosophy. In East Asia, it is known as the **WéiShì (Consciousness-Only, 唯識) School**, established by the Great Master Xuanzang (玄奘) upon his return from India in the 7th century.

Yogācāra is a profound system for analyzing the mind (theory), such insights are used in contemplation to realize the ultimate truth, leading to Buddhahood. It can be seen as "contemplative psychology", though a system totally different from western psychology. It seeks to explain how our experience of a seemingly "external" world is actually a projection of our own consciousness. By deconstructing the mind into its constituent parts—as seen in the **Hundred Dharmas**—practitioners can trace the roots of suffering back to the deep-seated habits of the ego.

### Core Principles

- **The Storehouse Consciousness (*Ālaya-vijñāna*):** Beyond our everyday thoughts lies a vast "repository" of karmic seeds. Every action, word, and thought leaves a seed here, which eventually ripens into our future experiences and perceptions.
- **The Three Natures (*Trisvabhāva*):** Yogācāra teaches that we perceive reality in three ways: the **imagined nature** (the false sense of permanent selves and external realities), the **dependent nature** (the flow of causes and conditions), and the **perfect nature** (reality seen as it is, free from the duality of subject and object).
- **Transformation of Consciousness:** The ultimate goal is not mere intellectual knowledge, but a fundamental "turning over" of the mind. By understanding the 100 Dharmas, we transform the eight types of consciousness into enlightened wisdom.

## About the Author: Vasubandhu

The Yogācāra school was established by two brothers from Gandhāra, **Asaṅga** and **Vasubandhu**, whose combined genius provided both the spiritual vision and the logical structure of the tradition.

- **Asaṅga** (fl. 4th century CE): The actual founder of the Yogācāra school. According to tradition, Asaṅga spent many years in deep retreat and eventually ascended to the Tuṣita Heaven, where he received a series of groundbreaking treatises directly from **Maitreya Bodhisattva**, including the *Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*. Asaṅga's works provided the vast, systematic framework for the path of the Bodhisattva and the revolutionary mapping of the eight types of consciousness.

- **Vasubandhu** (fl. 4th–5th century CE): Initially a master of the Sarvāstivāda school, Vasubandhu was famously converted to Mahāyāna by his brother Asaṅga. While Asaṅga provided the foundational vision, Vasubandhu's contribution lay in his unparalleled ability to systematize and condense complex doctrines into precise, logical verses. He authored the foundational "manuals" of the school, including the *Triṃśikā-vijñaptimātratā-siddhi* (Thirty Verses), the *Viṃśatikā* (Twenty Verses), and the **Hundred Dharmas**.

Together, their legacy represents the pinnacle of Buddhist psychological analysis, providing the philosophical "map" used by the Chan (Zen), Tiantai, and Vajrayāna traditions that followed.

## About the Hundred Dharmas

The Śāstra *on the Door to Understanding the Hundred Dharmas* serves as the essential gateway to this school. Written by **Vasubandhu**, one of the school's founders, it acts as a "Periodic Table" of the mind. By categorizing all possible phenomena into five classes, the text systematically demonstrates that nowhere among them—whether in our thoughts, our bodies, or the laws of physics—can a permanent, independent "self" be found.

As the text concludes, to understand these hundred dharmas is to realize that **all phenomena are devoid of self**, paving the way for the liberation of all sentient beings.

Although this Śāstra (treatise) does not explicitly mention the "three natures" and "transformation of consciousness", these core principles will be introduced during this course in as needed in explaining the Hundred Dharmas.

## Exercise #1 Main Premise

# A. Thinking and Internalizing

1. Why is it useful to study the "100 Dharmas"? What are the five classes of all dharmas according to Vasubandhu?
2. Which benefits you hope to gain from participating in this class. Write them down in your cultivation journal, and check on these goals periodically.
3. **Deconstructing the "Self"**: Contemplate the metaphor of the "Periodic Table of the Mind". Reflect on a simple recent experience (e.g., drinking tea), and try to see which part of the event belong to one of the five classes: which part is a mind dharma, a mind-associated factor, or a physical projection? Which concepts (mind-dissociated dharma) were involved?
4. **The King and Ministers Reflection**: Consider the "mind-king" (consciousness) as the subjective foundation of your current experience. Identify which "ministers" (mental factors) are currently active and associated with which of the first six consciousnesses—is it attention, greed, doubt, or faith?

5. **Storehouse consciousness:** If there is an ālaya**-vijñāna** as a vast repository of our past experiences, what influence and significance would it have?
6. Write down in your cultivation journal what you feel are the important points from this first class, from memory.

## B. Buddhist Meditation Practices

7. **The Projection Exercise:** Ten-minute meditation: whatever sound you hear or physical sensations you experience, practice seeing them as "projections manifested by the mind". Use the movie screen metaphor: the mind is the projector, and the physical world is the light on the screen. See how it makes sense that they are projections in your consciousness, rather than the actual reality.

## C. Daily Application

8. Trace **the Roots of Suffering:** When you experience a moment of stress, unhappiness or ego-clinging, think of the possibility that what you feel are "projections" influenced by your perspectives and habitual thinking. Ask yourself: "Do I have to feel this way? Can I react differently?"
8. **Mindfulness in mundane tasks:** Apply the principle from the *Platform Sūtra*: "There is no enlightenment apart from this world". During a mundane task (like cleaning the floor or walking), practice seeing the activity as an opportunity to practice mindfulness rather than a distraction from spiritual practice. Do this exercise three times a day.

## Opening Question

As the World-Honored One has said, “All dharmas are devoid of self.” What are all dharmas? And what is devoid of self?

- This is an entry-level text to the Yogācāra school, one of the three Mahāyāna Buddhist Schools in India, or one of the eight Chinese Mahāyāna Schools.
    - 3 Indian Schools: Madhyamaka (focus on prajna, wisdom of emptiness), Yogācāra (Consciousness-Only, focus on analysis of the mind), and Vajrayana (which is grounded on both Madhyamaka and Yogācāra doctrines).
    - 8 Chinese Schools: Chan (禪宗), Pure Land (淨土宗), Tiantai (天台宗), Huayan (華嚴宗), Three Treatises三論宗, Consciousness-Only (唯識宗), Vinaya (律宗), Vajrayana (密宗).
- **World Honored One** (*Bhagavān*): One of the ten titles of the Buddha. The Buddha is honored by the world for his enlightenment, compassion, and wisdom. To quote the Buddha shows the author is elucidating the truth expounded by the Buddha, not some theory of his own.
    - **Q**: What are the ten titles and what is the significance of each?
    - **Hint**: some of these titles represent the Buddha’s attainment (e.g., *Tathāgata*), merit (e.g., *Arhat*), and function (e.g., Teacher of Heavenly and Human Beings).

- **All dharmas**: all things in the universe: physical, mental, ideas, feelings, even made-up things that exist only as concepts. These are the phenomena we are familiar with in our daily experiences, in Buddhism they are called “**conditioned dharma**” (saṃskṛta), which are listed in the first four classes of Hundred Dharmas. But “all dharmas” also include **unconditioned** (*asaṃskṛta*) phenomena, which is enumerated in the fifth class.

- **Devoid of self**: The core Buddhist teaching that no phenomenon possesses an intrinsic, permanent, or independent essence or identity. Properties are relative and dependent on causes (*hetu*) and conditions (*pratyaya*). This teaching of “emptiness of self” is the central theme of the Heart Sutra, the Diamond Sutra, and *Nāgārjuna*’s *Mūlamadhyamaka-kārikā* (The Middle Verses, 中觀頌).

- **Structure of the text:** Most of the rest of the Śāstra then elucidates “all dharmas,” classifying them into five classes totaling100 dharmas. Shifu will explain these 100 dharmas in detail in this class.

- **Conclusion of the Text:** The Śāstra concludes by applying the “devoid of self” principle to two categories: **sentient beings** (mptiness of the person) and **dharmas** (emptiness of dharmas). The structure of the 100 dharmas lead to their revelation.

## THE FIVE CLASSES AND THEIR ORDER

Regarding "all dharmas", they may be grouped into five classes in general.

1. Mind dharmas
2. Mind-associated dharmas
3. Form dharmas
4. Mind-dissociated dharmas
5. Unconditioned dharmas

The order is such because: those in the first class are supreme; the second are concomitant with the first; the third are projections manifested by the first two; the fourth are (based on but) distinct from the first three; and the fifth are revealed by the previous four.

- **Five classes**: The first four classes are "conditioned dharmas" (those that arise and cease due to causes and conditions), while the fifth is the "unconditioned" (the absolute). Together, they constitute a complete map of the universe, from the depths of the consciousness to the physical world.
- **Mind dharmas: the eight kinds of consciousness**. These are "supreme" "mind-kings" because:
  - (a) They are the subjective foundations of all experiences
    - that is, when we say "I", we usually are referring to one of the consciousness or its associated mental factors
  - (b) They have commanding power over other mental factors (2nd class)
  - (c) Their functions and influences are general and pervasive

    According to Yogācāra, everything we know is a manifestation of these eight streams of consciousness.
- **Mind-associated dharma: the fifty-one mental factors.** These are specific mental states (both wholesome and unwholesome) that are concomitant ("always occurring together", "naturally associated") with the eight kinds of consciousness. These 51 factors are like the ministers who carry out specific functions for the mind kings. For example, greed, anger, and faith, vigor, all these wholesome and unwholesome mental factors are all primarily associated with the sixth consciousness, where as other consciousnesses command far fewer mental factors.

- **Form**, **the physical dimension.** This comprises 11 dharmas, including the five senses and their objects. In the Yogācāra view, these are projections manifested by the first two**.** Just as a movie is projected onto a screen, the physical world we perceive is a manifestation of our underlying consciousness and mental factors. It has no independent substance outside of mind.

- **Mind-dissociated dharmas: abstract principles and concepts:** These are 24 in number, such as time, space, and sequence. They are distinct because they are neither purely mental nor purely physical. They are abstract labels or concepts based on the interactions of the first three classes. As such, they have no substance in and of themselves even though many of these dharmas seem real (e.g., space and time).

- **Unconditioned dharmas, the absolute reality:** These 6 dharmas indicate the state of enlightenment and the ultimate nature of things, such as true-suchness. They are not "built" or created; rather, they are **r**evealed by the previous four, conditioned dharmas. (It's like "you know what it is only when you fully know what it is not").

    - That there are six unconditioned dharmas does not mean six absolute realities, rather, these are six ways to "look" at the ultimate truth.
    - As the *Sixth Patriarch's Platform Sūtra* says, "The Buddha dharma is here in this world; there is no enlightenment apart from this world." (佛法在世間, 不離世間覺). We do not realize the unconditioned state by escaping the 94 worldly dharmas, but by understanding them so deeply that their true, empty nature is revealed.
- **Silent review**: close your eyes for 3-5 minutes and review what we've learned about the five classes, their relationship, and what their order and categorization already tell us about how our mind works, and how our mind interacts with the world.

## CLASS 1: EIGHT KINDS OF CONSCIOUSNESS

The first, mind dharmas class, comprises eight kinds of consciousness:

1. Eye-consciousness
2. Ear-consciousness
3. Nose-consciousness
4. Tongue-consciousness
5. Body-consciousness
6. Mind-consciousness
7. Manas-consciousness
8. Alaya-consciousness

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- **Characters of consciousness**: cognition, cogitation, repository, field, continuity. Cognition: to know, to perceive, general term for acquiring knowledge and interpreting everything.

Cogitation: to think, to deliberate, contemplate, or judge

Repository: "storehouse" or "warehouse" aspect, storage and preservation of experiences and "karma seeds"

Field: growth and fruition of karma seeds (karma seeds = deeds)

Continuity: thought-streams

- **Eight Kinds of Consciousness:**

  First five: sense consciousness: seeing, hearing, smell, taste, and touch

  Sixth consciousness: the "regular" thinking faculty

  Seventh consciousness: the mistaken notion of the "self-ego", the "false-self"

  Eighth consciousness: "*alaya*" or the "storehouse" consciousness

**Five Kinds of Sense Consciousness 五識:**

- **Sense consciousness and their sense objects**
  eye-consciousness (eye-consciousness, vision) – form
  ear-consciousness (ear-) – sound
  nose-consciousness (nose-, olfaction) – smell
  tongue-consciousness (mouth-) – taste
  body-consciousness (body-, touch) – touch
- Genuine form (direct perception) – images of red, yellow, green, blue, etc.

  Artificial (conceptual) form – long, short; square, round; big, small; far, near; etc.
  - The "genuine" in these five senses does not mean that these are objective, absolute true forms
  - Rather, they are closer to the primarily, direct experience of perception, as opposed to secondary, post-processed conception of form such as large, small, tall, short, nice, ugly forms.
  - Artificial forms are actually perceived by the sixth consciousness, not by eye-consciousness. Likewise for the other four senses.
- Genuine sound – sound made by sentient (people, animals) and non-sentient beings (river, rain, wind, etc.)

  artificial sound – sound of a car, a piano; conceptual sound such as pleasant sound, unpleasant sound.
- Similarly for smell, taste, and touch.

- The sense organs primarily transmit the sensory information to the six consciousness; they perform the rudimentary, lower-level discernment of the sense objects. Higher level cognition takes place in the sixth consciousness.
- 5 + 1: Sense (first five) consciousness and the sixth consciousness always arise together. 五俱意識
  The "artificial" sense objects are actually created by the sixth consciousness.
- Sense consciousness perceives stimuli of the present moment, never the past or future.
- These five senses are not heavily involved in making judgments that lead to greed or anger, that mostly takes place in the six consciousness. This is why they are not so important to Buddhist cultivation.
- The 5 senses are associated with 34 of the 51 mental factors (the detailed analysis is beyond the scope of this class.)
- Interestingly, in Yogacara analysis, the five sense consciousnesses are also "associated" with the wholesome and a subset of unwholesome mental factors.
    - E.g. If you really like cats, your eye-consciousness will be conditioned to be more alert when such cats appear in your field of vision. Likewise for chocolate, money, clothing, etc.

**The Sixth Consciousness** 第六識：意識

- This is what most people consider the thinking mind. Its functions are most extensive among the 8 kinds of consciousness, associated with all 51 mental factors.
- Feelings and emotions (the "heart" in common western usage) are also part of the sixth consciousness.
- Two types of sixth consciousness: co-arising (with the five senses), and self-arising.
- The sixth often arise together with one or more of the 5 senses, but it can also arise by itself, e.g, during meditation, or during dreams.
- Four types of self-arising sixth consciousness **獨頭意識**: 1. dream, 2. samadhi (meditative), 3. scattered/drifting/discursive, and 4. deranged consciousness. (**夢中獨頭，定中獨頭，散亂獨頭，狂亂獨頭**).
    - First three states occur in ordinary people. The deranged consciousness is what is studied extensively in clinical psychology (and much less so in Buddhism).
    - However, Dharma insights have inspired some important and effective clinical psychology methods such as cognitive behavioral therapy.
- What we consider "personality" is actually an aggregate of beliefs and behavior patterns, which are mostly formed in the 6$^{th}$ consciousness.
    - They are "conditioned" views and behaviors that often lead to duhkha (suffering, dissatisfaction), and can be changed through Buddhist cultivation.
- Good or bad thoughts arise in the sixth consciousness. They lead to good or bad karma and

retributions, and so it is the one most responsible for our "fate".

- Our karma is primarily formed through volitional actions processed by the sixth consciousness. As an example, two types of karma affect our future rebirth:

    - **Projecting karma (引業)**: Also "propelling karma". This determines which of the six realms and the form of rebirth (e.g., as a human, animal, or heavenly being). E.g,
        - Upholding the Five Precepts □ rebirth as human beings or higher
        - Five Precepts + Ten Wholesome Acts (+ samadhi): deva (heavenly beings)
        - Serious killing or harming, cheating or gluttony, denial of causality or attachment to sensual pleasures □ animal, hungry ghost, or hell realms.
    - **Completing karma** (滿業): Fills in the specific details within that life, such as appearance, health, talents, relationships, and material circumstances. E.g.,
        - Small acts of giving □ wealth
        - Healing others or refraining from killing □ health, longevity
        - Less serious acts of killing □ poor health, shortened lifespan
        - Studying hard, loves thinking, teaching and sharing knowledge □ intelligence, wisdom
        - Alcohol or other intoxication: low intelligence, slow in learning
    - End-of-life karma: Although rebirth is ultimately governed by one's own karma, Buddhist practices like "chanting for the dying" serve as supportive conditions aim at influencing, to some degree, a person's future rebirth during the period of death, by helping the dying person access their positive karma seeds, regain right mindfulness, thereby projecting their karma toward a more auspicious rebirth.
- **Silent review**: close your eyes for 3-5 minutes and review what we've learned about the 5 senses and the six consciousness. How are they related to our karma and future? What is the significance of understanding the projecting and completing karmas?

**The Seventh Consciousness (*Manas*, Self-consciousness)** 第七識：末那識

- Manas, or the 7th consciousness, is the origin of the innate notion of the ego-self, or "false-self".
- The false-self has the following characteristics, all of which are illusive:

    a. Individuality, being independent and separate from others

    b. Permanence, there is an "I" that stays unchanged through time

    c. Being one's own master, (false sense of) having control

- These three characteristics are "illusive" in the sense that they are often assumed and *seem* to be self-evident but, upon closer examination, none is actually real.
- However, it is also wrong to take the opposite stance, that these characteristics are absolutely non-existent.
- Therefore, it is useful to study manas, the 7th consciousness, to better understand how the erroneous notion of "I', i.e., the ego-self, is formed, and what problems it causes.

- Four subtle afflictions are always associated with the manas: self-ignorance, self-view (false notion of the self), self-conceit (self-centeredness), and self-love. 我癡、我見、我慢、我愛
  - ~~The 7th is associated with only above four unwholesome mental factors. They are a form of ignorance, false view, conceit, and greed.~~
  - The above statement is wrong. The 7th is associated with 18 mental factors, but the above four are most important.
- The manas is actually too subtle to be recognized by most people. Only advanced Buddhist cultivators truly see the action and nature of the manas-consciousness.
  - However, coarser versions of the ego-self exist in the 6th consciousness, which are easier to detect.
  - For example, the notion that "I am a man/a woman", "I am beautiful/homely", "I am smart/stupid", etc., are notions of the "self" that are coarse and are formed by the 6th consciousness rather than the 7th.
  - Personality traits like being quick-tempered, caring, intelligent, artistic, etc., are also formed in the 6th consciousness rather than the 7th.
- Manas, or the 7th consciousness, has the unique quality of "continuous cogitation" (恆審思量). The five senses are not continuous and does not cogitate (不恆不審). The sixth consciousness cogitates but is not continuous (審而不恆). The eighth consciousness is continuous but does not cogitate (恆而不審).

| | Cogitation | Continuous |
|---|---|---|
| 5 senses | N | N |
| 6th consciousness | Y | N |
| 7th consciousness | Y | Y |
| 8th consciousness | N | Y |

| | No cogitation | Cogitation |
|---|---|---|
| Not continuous | 5 senses | 6th |
| Continuous | 8th | 7th |

- Group discussion: We have begun to "deconstruct the self". What have we learned in this class so far? Write (in the chat box) an important point.

**The Eighth Consciousness: *Alaya* or Storehouse Consciousness** 第八識:阿賴耶識

- The alaya consciousness has the following characteristics:
  a. repository: it is a repository of "karma seeds" created by the first seven consciousnesses.
  b. field: it can preserve the karma seeds, and when the conditions are favorable, the seeds will grow and bear fruits (resulting in karmic retributions).
  c. object of attachment: the *manas* cling to the *alaya* as the "self".
- There are two parts to the alaya consciousness: the perceptive component, and the form component. The perceptive component "sees" the world (though with delusion), and the form component is what is "seen".
- The manas thinks the perceptive component of the alaya as the "self", and the form component as the world, including the external world (outer form) and its own body (inner form). This is the origin of our delusion.
- The alaya is the "first to come, last to go" consciousness of a lifespan. Its manifestation for a lifetime is "already there" at conception, and "leaves last" when one dies.
  - The setting details come from the "projecting karma" and "completing karma" of the past actions, primarily from the sixth consciousness.
  - We should not imagine that the alaya as an entity that actually moves from one place to another; rather, its particular manifestation/incarnation lasts throughout a "lifespan". Within a lifetime, after conception, the first six consciousness develops gradually and may cease to function properly as one approaches death.
  - The manas (7th), however, always takes the alaya as the self through any incarnation, and therefore is not specific to any particular lifetime. It is the most innate sense of "self".
- All 8 kinds of consciousness have individual functions, but do not think of them as eight distinct entities. Rather, think of them as parts of a tree that works together.
- Eight consciousness and the three natures:
  - Imagined nature: the subtle, "innate self" as imagined by the 7th, and the ego-self (with personalities) as imagined by the 6th.
  - Dependent nature: how the karma seeds in the 8th are transformed by activities of the first 6, like seeds sprouting and bear fruits. The first 5 also functions dependently.
  - Perfect nature: Not available yet while the 8 consciousness are working. Although, the first 5's perceptions are less deluded thant 6th.
- We also should not think of the alaya as resembling an actual warehouse (storing "karma seeds") or some fixed entity. Rather, the alaya, like the other 7 consciousnesses, are changing

continuously from moment to moment.

- Some of these changes are easier to detect (first six), while some of the changes are extremely subtle (7th and 8th). This is why most people have an innate sense of an unchanging "I" (manas), and that many do not realize the karma effects of one's actions are in constant development (alaya).

- Two poems on consciousness:

| | |
|---|---|
| Eight brothers from one same womb, | 八個兄弟一個胎 |
| One is quick, one is slow. | 一個聰明一個呆 |
| Five goes out to buy and sell, | 五個在外作買賣 |
| One stays home and keeps the books well. | 一個在家把帳開 |
| | |
| Cultivators do not see what's real, | 學道之人不識真 |
| Mistaking consciousness for soul; | 只為從來認識神 |
| This root of samsara, old as time, | 無始劫來生死本 |
| Is to take the puppet as true self. | 癡人認作本來人 |

(1st unknown author, 2nd poem by Chan Master Chang Sha 長沙景岑禪師)

**Transformation of Consciousness 轉八識為四智**

- Transformation of the eight kinds of consciousness into four kinds of wisdom

| | |
|---|---|
| Five sense consciousness (1-5) | Accomplishing Wisdom成所作智 |
| Sixth consciousness (6) | Wisdom of Sublime Discernment妙觀察智 |
| Manas consciousness (7) | Wisdom of Equality平等性智 |
| *Alaya* conscousness (8) | Perfect Mirror Wisdom大圓鏡智 |

- This "transformation of consciousness" into four kinds of wisdom is the main task of Buddhist cultivation in the Yogacarian school. However, it is not possible to active affect the five sense consciousnesses or the alaya (8th) by sheer will. And the manas (7th) is too subtle for most people to recognize. Therefore, all Buddhist practice and all meditation begin with the sixth consciousness.
- Silent review: Close your eyes for 5 minutes and review the main points of the 8 kinds of consciousness.

## Exercise #2 Class 1: 8 Consciousness

## A. Thinking and Internalizing

1. **Digital Experience Deconstruction**: Choose a common digital activity, such as scrolling through social media or watching a video. Identify which "Mind-Kings" are active. Notice your Eye-consciousness (seeing images) and Ear-consciousness (hearing sound). Then, notice how your Sixth Consciousness (Mind-consciousness) immediately begins to categorize the content as "interesting," "boring," "like," or "dislike".

2. **Habitual Seed Audit**: Reflect on a strong habit you have, such as reaching for your phone first thing in the morning. Using the concept of the Alaya-consciousness (Storehouse consciousness), think of this habit as a "seed" that was planted by past actions. Consider how many times you have "watered" this seed through the sixth consciousness within a single day to make it such a dominant force in your life.

## B. Buddhist Meditation Practices

3. **Isolate the Five Senses**: Spend 5 minutes in silence. Try to experience "genuine form" or "genuine sound"—the raw sensory data—before your Sixth Consciousness labels it. For example, hear a sound simply as a vibration (Ear-consciousness) before you conceptually name it "a car" or "a bird".

4. **Review of the "Eight Brothers":** Close your eyes for 3-5 minutes and mentally scan through the eight kinds of consciousness. Acknowledge the five outer sense-consciousnesses, the inner thinking mind (6th), the clinging ego (7th), and the hidden storehouse (8th). Feel them as a "continuity of similar moments" rather than a fixed soul.

5. **The Present Mind Meditation:** Listen to the Awakening Hours in 2026 and practice "the mind in the present moment" according to the teachings, a few times a day, if only for a few minutes at a time.

## C. Daily Application

6. **Mindfulness in Mundane Tasks:** Choose a routine task like washing dishes or walking to your car. Practice the principle that "there is no enlightenment apart from this world". Focus entirely on the body-consciousness (touch) and eye-consciousness (vision) associated with the task, treating it as an opportunity for spiritual practice rather than a distraction.

7. **Intentional Seed Planting:** Before starting a task (like writing an email or a work project), pause to check your volition. Realize that the intention behind your action is planting a "seed" in your Alaya-consciousness that will ripen into future "completing karma" (specific details of your future life). Remember, your "future life" starts with the next moment.

8. **Observing the "Coarse" Self (6th Consciousness):** In your daily interactions, watch for moments when you feel defensive, proud, or self-critical. When you think, "I am right," "I am being ignored," or "I am smarter than this person," recognize that these are "coarse" versions of the ego-self formed by the 6th consciousness. These thoughts are detectable because the 6th consciousness "cogitates" (thinks/judges) but is not "continuous"—it arises

and ceases based on your current situation. Labeling these moments as the 6th consciousness at work allows you to begin Buddhist cultivation, which must always start here because this level of mind is accessible to us.

9. **Acknowledging the "Hidden Clinger" (7th Consciousness):** Recognize that even when you are not actively thinking about yourself, there is a deep, background sense of being a permanent, independent "I". This is the 7th consciousness (Manas). While it is too subtle for most ordinary people to detect directly, you can acknowledge its presence as the "background program" that is continuously cogitating—clinging to your storehouse consciousness as "me" even while you are distracted or sleeping. Understanding that this innate "false-self" is an illusion—and that your 6th consciousness is merely reacting to its subtle influence—helps you move toward the Wisdom of Equality, where you see no fundamental separation between yourself and others.

## CLASS 2: 51 MENTAL FACTORS

### Group One: Universally Active Mental Factors

**The second class, mind-associated dharmas**, comprises fifty-one mental factors divided into six groups:

1. Five that are universally active,
2. Five that are specific,
3. Eleven wholesome dharmas,
4. Six primary afflictions,
5. Twenty secondary afflictions, and
6. Four indeterminate states.

The five universally active dharmas are: attention, contact, feeling, conception, and volition.

- **Mind-associated dharmas (心所法)**: So called because they arise from the mind-dharmas (consciousness), they depend on the same conditions as, and are dominated by, the respective consciousnesses. (依心而起、與心相應、繫屬於心)
- Whereas the mind-dharmas are general mental functions (e.g. vision, thinking), the dharmas in this class are specific mental factors (mental states, mental activities) that are associated with the different consciousness in the first class. Studying the mind-dharmas and mind-associated dharmas help us understand our complicated thinking and emotional processes.
- **Universally active dharmas**: the five mental factors in this category are called universally active dharmas because
  1. They are each associated with all eight kinds of consciousness, and are present whenever any consciousness is active—namely, in any mental experience.

  2. They are active in wholesome, unwholesome, and neutral mental states

  3. They are active in the past, present, and will continue to the future

  4. They are present in all sentient beings of the Triple Realms (Realm of Desire, Realm of Form, and Realm of Formlessness), humans and non-humans.
- **#1 Attention** (作意*manaskāra*): "Attention has as its nature the arousing of mind, and its activity is that of directing mind to the objective realm. It arouses and awakens the seeds of the mind that will come into existence and leads this mind and makes it approach its object; hence, its name attention.[2]"
- In plain English: Attention alerts the consciousness and directs it to focus on a particular

[2] This quote is taken from the English translation of Hsuen-Tsang's classic text of the Consciousness-Only School 成唯識論: *Demonstration of Consciousness Only*, translated by Francis H. Cook (p.69), in the collection *Three Texts on Consciousness Only*, BDK English Tripitaka Series, Numata Center, 1999.

object of interest. This is also called "awakens the seeds of the mind", referring to the karma seeds in the 8th consciousness.

- The *Great Learning* says: "When the mind pays no attention, one looks without seeing, hears without perceiving, and eats without knowing the taste." (《大學》: 心不在焉, 視而不見, 聽而不聞, 食而不知其味。) Attention alerts the mind and makes the mind perceive its objects. Without attention, even with objects in front of our eyes there is no conscious perception.
- **Contact,** or **mental contact** (觸*parśa*): the nature of this dharma is to "brings together mind, mind factors (i.e. the other mind-associated dharmas), and their object (e.g. form, sound). Its action is to serve as support for (the arising of) feeling, conceptualization, volition, etc.[3]"
- An example of contact: a chair comes into our line of sight, this mental factor unifies the eyes, table, and eye-consciousness and make the perception (and subsequent feeling, conception, and volition) possible.
- Some say that contact comes before attention, some say attention comes before contact, but according to their "universally active" designation, both are always present together.
- **Feeling** (受*vedanā*): "Feeling has as its nature the experience of objects that are agreeable, disagreeable, or neither, and its activity is that of arousing craving because it creates a desire for union, separation, or neither one." (p.70.)
- Feeling is one of the five skandhas (aggregates): form, feeling, conception, volition, and consciousness. Feelings are primarily of three kinds: agreeable (pleasant), disagreeable (unpleasant), and neutral. From agreeable feelings (pleasure) come desire and craving; from disagreeable feelings come anger and resentment. Neutral feelings often lead to ignorance, unmindfulness, or torpor. Therefore, feelings are very influential in the creation of karma.
- **Conception** (想or conceptualization, some translates it as perception, *samjñā*): "The nature of conceptualization is that of grasping images of objects, and its activity is that of displaying and producing various names and words. When distinct characteristics (e.g. green, round) are established, then various names and words are produced accordingly." (pp.70-71.)
- In Chinese, this word 想 is composed of 相 (image) on top of心 (mind). That is, images on our mind, which is conception. Basic concepts the mind creates are directly related to perception of the objects, e.g. colors red, green; shapes round, square; objects rock, table, house, etc. We then create comparative concepts such as long, short, hard, soft, etc. We then further create concepts of beauty, ugliness, good, bad, desirable, undesirable, etc., which lead to volition (will), influences feelings, and then creation of good and bad karma.
- We need to realize that concepts (of objects) in our mind are not the same as the object itself. The world that we perceive to be real are actually only concepts build up in our mind.
- More abstract concepts (further from direct perception of objects), such as time, space, conformity, etc., are discussed in the Class of Mind-Dissociated Dharmas.
- **Volition** (思will, *cetanā*): "The nature of volition is that of making the mind work, and its activity is that of bending the mind toward, etc. When it grasps the characteristics of an

[3] Ibid., p.68. Parentheses mine. From now on until noted, only the page number will be indicated after each quote.

object as causes of good, etc., it urges the mind to create good, etc." (p.71.)

- This is the mental activity that directly leads to the creation of karma (mental, verbal, and physical karmas).
- The *Treatise on Karma Formation* (*Mahāyāna-karmasiddhi-śāstra*) explains that there are three types of "volition":
    1. Deliberative Volition (審慮思): Examining and considering the object or situation in order to reach a resolution
    2. Decisive Volition (決定思): Following deliberation, determining whether to act or to refrain from acting
    3. Active Volition (動發勝思): Once the decision is made, this factor triggers bodily movements or speech, thereby creating physical and verbal karma.
- Of the five universally active dharmas, feeling and conception are extremely important and therefore are considered as two of the five skandhas. As to volition, some say this *is* the fourth skandhas, some say that the other 49 mind-associated dharmas (excepting feeling and conception) together comprise the fourth skandha, volition (also translated as "mental formation").
- Alaya (8th) is associated only with these 5 mental factors, no more. (While the other 7 consciousness all associate with more mental factors).
    - We can think of the 6th consciousness as the OS (operating system) of a computer, handling user (external environment and people) requests, interpreting them and presenting results. The I/O drivers that connect to the cam and microphone would resemble the 1st 5 consciousness. Then the 8th is like the compiled machine code that is constantly talking to the CPU and hardware devices without the use ever noticing. What about the 7th? Does the computer have a "self"?
    - The alaya's "attention" is a very low-level subtle drive for the karma seeds to be in contact with conditions that may activate the seeds.
    - Its "contact" keeps (1) the "karma seed warehouse" connected to the organism of this lifetime, and (2) provide conditions for karma seed development.
    - Its "feeling" is a very low-level, always neutral feeling. Imagine when you are in deep sleep: that ever-present neutral feeling would be similar.
    - Its "conception" is 8th's grasping of its objects (mind-body and karma seeds), which is too low-level for words and labels.
    - Its "volition" is what drives the karma seed transformations
- Silent Review: Reflect on the definition of the **five universally active factors** (attention, contact, feeling, conception, and volition).
- Practice: In mindfulness of breathing meditation, what are the roles of the five universal factors? How about "whole body awareness"?

## Group Two: Five Specific Mental Factors

The five specific dharmas are: desire, resolve, mindfulness, samadhi, and discernment.

- The specific dharmas are so named because they are mental activities that arise only with specific objects, e.g., desire wishes for pleasing objects, and therefore arises only when something inducing such a wish is present.
- Like the five universal mental activities above, these five specific mental activities are present in (1) wholesome, unwholesome, and neutral mental states; and (2) in all conscious/cognitive states spanning across the Triple Realms.
- *Unlike* the universal mental activities, these five dharmas are not present all the time and are not each associated with all eight kinds of consciousness.
- For example, alaya, the eighth consciousness, is associated with only the five universal mental activities. Manas, the seventh consciousness, is associated with the five universal mental activities as well as four other mind-associated dharmas: ignorance about self, view of self, self-conceit, and self-love. Of these, "(false) view of self" is a kind of discernment, but it is erroneous discernment. The other four specific dharmas are, however, not associated with the 7th.
- **Desire**, aspiration (*chanda*,欲): Desire has as nature the wishing for a pleasing object, and its activity is that of supporting effort (p. 165). That is, it acts as a motivation for further efforts.
- What we desire can be wholesome or unwholesome. To wish for enlightenment can become the driving force for our liberation. Conversely, to pursue the five objects of desire (form, sound, smell, taste, and touch; or, alternatively, wealth, looks, fame, food, and sleep) can lead one to degradation. So, desire is the driving force to both good *and* bad karma.
- (A common misunderstanding about Buddhism is that "desire" is always negative.)
- **Resolve**, determination (*adhimokṣa*, 勝解): The nature of resolve is to make a definite decision on an issue or situation, or ascertain an object beyond doubt, and its activity is that of not allowing the decision to be changed or doubted (at least for the time being).
- For example, seeing one's cup and ascertaining that it is "my cup", not my brother's; learning about the five precepts and making a resolve to observe and uphold them, etc. In a situation where one is unable to ascertain or to decide, then resolve is absent.
- Differences between "resolve", "decisive volition", and "active volition":
    - If you possess "resolve" but lack "decisive volition" and "active volition," you may believe in a principle with unwavering conviction yet remain passive and fail to take any action in practice.
    - If you have "active volition" but lack "correct resolve", you may act blindly and impulsively; this may become "reckless action".
    - "Resolve" involves a conviction in one's understanding, recognition, or determination

so that it is not easily changed; whereas, in the "volition" stage the mind may decide that "I am not sure what I'm seeing so why don't I wait and see what happens"—in this case there is volition but a firm resolve is absent.

- **Mindfulness**, memory, recollection (*smṛti, Pāli: sati*, 念): "Its nature is that of causing mind to record clearly and not forget an object that has been experienced, and its activity is that of supporting *samādhi*, because it steadily holds an experienced object and prevents its loss, thus inducing *samādhi*." (p.167.)
- If a recent experienced is not remembered clearly, the mindfulness was missing.
- Mindfulness is closely related to recollection or memory. Mindfulness can be just the clear, unbiased recollection of past teachings or experiences. But mindfulness is also clear, unattached experiencing of present events.
- "Right mindfulness" (7th of the Eightfold Path) involves the following: present mind, calmness, objectivity (unbiased mind), focusing on what you should be focused on at this moment, and with right view / right understanding.
- **Samadhi** (*samādhi*, 定): "Its nature is that of causing mind to be absorbed in attention on a contemplated object and not become distracted" (p.167.), and its activity is that of supporting wise discernment or insight. Samadhi is also translated as concentration or meditative absorption; it is a state where the mind is highly focused.
- While most people have had experiences of concentration, there are more profound samadhi states that in general can be achieved only through dedicated meditation practice.
- To be in samadhi does not mean the mind is focused on one thing only; it also means that the mind can focus on what it wishes to focus on with mindfulness, control, without being easily deterred by distractions.
- "Right samadhi" (8th of the Eightfold Path) is "right mindfulness" (with the "no-self" right view) that is continuous, deep, and therefore strong enough to destroy all afflictions.
- **Discernment** (*prajña*, 慧): "Its nature is discriminating an object that is being inspected, and its activity is that of eliminating doubt, because discernment seeks certainty when inspecting something that is meritorious, [unworthy], both, or neither." (p.168.)
- With discernment comes understanding (of a situation, subject, etc.). Correct discernment can lead to true insight or wisdom, while misguided discernment leads to misunderstanding and delusion. The "view of self" is an incorrect discernment on the part of the manas as well as the sixth consciousness.
- "Right understanding", the first of the Eightfold Path, is a most important type of correct discernment, clearly understanding that "sentient beings are devoid of self, and dharmas (phenomena) are devoid of self."
- Q: What is the difference between "discernment" and "volition"?
- **A: Discernment** is characterized by "selection and the severance of doubt." It includes investigation and analysis, yet its essence lies in reaching a certain and clear understanding of the object or situation.

**Volition**, which is universal, is characterized by "causing the mind to engage in action" and

has the function of "harnessing the mind toward karma." It drives the process of "deliberative volition." During this deliberation, one might employ **discernment** (e.g., when comparing different doctrines), or one might not (e.g., when simply gazing at a beautiful landscape).

Similarly, **deliberative volition** may give rise to **desire** and **resolve**, subsequently leading to **decisive volition** and **active volition** (e.g., while admiring a landscape, one decides to stay for a few more minutes). Conversely, it may not trigger these "specific factors" at all—such as when one is passively attending a lecture (no **desire**) without actively contemplating the meaning (no **discernment** nor **resolute** understanding).

## Exercise #3: Class 2: Groups 1 & 2

## A. Thinking and Internalizing

1. **Observing the Mental Factors:** When you are reading, your mind is directed toward the book (attention). The eyes and the words on the page meet (contact). Eye- and sixth-consciousness arise together, and feelings are generated (e.g. if the lighting is too bright or too dark, or the words are large enough or too small, then the feelings may be pleasant or unpleasant). The words make an imprint in the mind (conception) as one performs the reading (volition). The book is interesting and one continues to read (desire) with concentration (samadhi). The words are recognized and ideas considered (conception, mindfulness, discernment), and one decides to follow the lessons learned from the book (resolve).

   Now, try a few examples of your own and see how these mental activities come into play in each action (e.g. eating sweets, drinking tea, driving fast, talking, meditating, sleeping, listening to lecture in this class). Share your observations.

2. **The "Universal" Audit**: Reflect on the definition of the **five universally active factors** (attention, contact, feeling, conception, and volition). Why must these five be present even in the **eighth consciousness** (Ālaya), which is otherwise neutral and non-cogitative?

3. **Cognition vs. Resolve:** Consider the difference between discernment and resolve. How does "firmly ascertaining" an object differ from simply "understanding" it? Can you recall a time you had clear discernment but lacked the resolve?

4. **The Driving Force:** Analyze the role of desire as a "specific" factor. Given that desire can be wholesome (wishing for enlightenment) or unwholesome (pursuing the five sense objects), how does it serve as the primary motivation for further effort in your own life?

## B. Buddhist Meditation Practices

**5. Isolating the Universal Five:** Sit in silence for 10 minutes and choose a single sensory object (e.g., the sound of a fan).

   - Observe **attention** alerting the mind.

- Notice the **contact** between the ear, the sound, and the consciousness.
- Identify the immediate **feeling** (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral).
- Catch the **conception** as it "grasps the image" and prepares to name the sound.
- Observe the **volition** as it "bends the mind" to continue listening or to shift focus.

6. **Samādhi and Discernment**: Practice 10 minutes of breath meditation. When the mind becomes "absorbed in attention" and is no longer easily deterred by distractions, acknowledge this as **samādhi** (although an entry-level samādhi). From this focused state, apply **discernment** to inspect the impermanence of the breath, seeking "certainty (resolve)" in its rising and falling.

## C. Daily Application

7. **Tracing the Three Volitions**: During a routine task (e.g., deciding to check your email), pause and identify the three stages of **volition**:
   - **Deliberative:** Considering whether to check it now or later.
   - **Decisive**: Making the internal determination to do it.
   - **Active**: The actual mental impulse that "triggers" your hand to move toward the phone or mouse.
8. **Stop Checking Your Phone**: what mental factors are involved in "about to check your phone out of habit, but stops and go back to work"?
   - Deliberative volition: what type of thoughts?
   - Discernment: to check or not to check?
   - Resolve:
   - Decisive volition:
   - Active volition:
9. **Mindfulness (Smṛti) Check**: Throughout the day, practice "right mindfulness" by maintaining a "present mind" that records your experiences clearly without bias. When you forget where you put your keys or lose your train of thought, acknowledge that **mindfulness** was momentarily missing, without getting upset at yourself.
10. **Attending Lecture:** "When you catch yourself in "passive listening" (volition without discernment), consciously trigger **desire** (the wish to learn) to re-engage **discernment** and samadhi (stay focused), arriving at clear understanding (**resolve**) of the Dharma being taught. thereby transforming a neutral moment into a wholesome one.

11. **Correcting Reckless Action**: When you find yourself acting "blindly and impulsively" (e.g., a snap retort in a conversation), stop and reflect. Identify if you lacked **correct resolve** or if your **active volition** was triggered prematurely without proper **discernment**.

## Group Three: Eleven Wholesome Mental Factors

The eleven wholesome dharmas are: faith, diligence, lack of shame, lack of embarrassment, non-greed, non-anger, non-ignorance, serenity, vigilance, equanimity, and non-harm.

- **Wholesome dharmas**: that which lead to happiness or benefit sentient beings. More generally, they refer to all that lead to good karma. In a narrow sense, they refer to the eleven kinds of wholesome dharmas in this 100 Dharmas.
- **Karma**: deeds, from thought, speech, or action. They have consequences (fruit of karma). Good (wholesome) karma: deeds that benefit others. Bad (unwholesome) karma: deeds that harm others. See this section in the Heart Sutra Lecture 23.
- There are two types of goodness: **defiled**, and **undefiled**.
  Defiled goodness (or: impure, conditioned, mundane) goodness means that the wholesome karma, even though leading to happiness or benefits, is still subject to contamination or impurity. For example, the benefits do not last long and makes people wanting, or when impure or selfish intention is involved.

  Undefiled goodness, or pure/unconditioned/supramundane goodness, are selfless and egoless, and lead to the lasting benefit of transcendence of death, i.e., nirvana.
- These eleven wholesome mental states are not associated with all eight consciousnesses, nor do they exist in all mental activities (unlike the universally active dharmas). However, they do exist in all of the Triple Realms.

## 1. Faith

- **Faith,** trust (*śraddhā*, 信): "Deep is the sea of Dharma: entered by faith, crossed by wisdom. … faith is like having hands when you enter a treasure mountain; you can freely take anything with you. Without faith, you enter the treasure mountain of the Dharma but are unable to take anything with you." (*Treatise on the Perfect of Great Wisdom* or *MPPS*, Nāgārjuna).
- The *Demonstration of Consciousness Only* says of faith, "Its nature is that of the purification of mind, which is a profound acquiescence toward and joyful desire for realities, virtues, and abilities. Its activity is that of counteracting faithlessness and enjoying the good." (p.173.)
- According to the above definition, there are three aspects of "right faith":
  Faith in reality, which means the truth as taught in the Dharma;

Faith in virtue, referring to the faith that the Three Jewels represent true virtues;

Faith in abilities, the profound faith that one has the abilities to attain perfect enlightenment by practicing the Dharma.

- The right faith is different from a belief. A belief may be correct or incorrect, rational or irrational, so it may be wholesome or unwholesome (or neutral). But right faith, or trust in the Dharma, is faith is built upon correct observation, discernment and experience.
- We may distinguish several kinds of faith: new faith, right faith, deep faith, and real faith. New faith may be shaky;

  Right faith is based on understanding and knowledge of the Dharma;

  Deep faith comes from having gained experiential validation of the "profound Dharma", at which point one's faith becomes deep-rooted and unshakable;

  Real faith is when one is awakened and therefore directly experiences the truthfulness of the Dharma.
- Q: Blind faith: How to avoid the pitfalls of blind faith, especially blind faith in religion or spirituality?
- Q: Role of faith: Describe fields, disciplines or areas in which faith plays an important role. Are there any discipline that does not require faith at all?
- Q: Levels of faith: Of the four levels of faith in the Buddha Dharma, at what level do you feel you are at? Why?

## 2. Diligence

- **Diligence** (*vīrya*, **精進**): also translated as "effort" or "vigor", it is one of the crucial factors in attaining enlightenment. The importance of diligence is stressed in many lists in the sutras, such as the Seven Factors of Enlightenment, the Noble Eightfold Path, and the Six Paramitas.
  - The Four Noble Truths (including Eightfold Path) in Heart Sutra Lecture Notes, and Lectures 27, 28.
- A classic statement on the practice of diligence is the "Four Right Exertions" (四正勤):

  Prevent the unarisen evil;
  Eradicate the evil already arisen.
  Awaken the unarisen good;
  Nurture the good already arisen.

  (已生善念令增長, 未生善念令速生;已生惡念令滅除, 未生惡念令不生)

- Buddha has said that nothing is difficult for those who are diligent, like a small, steady stream that eventually penetrate a rock.

- Mindless effort, smart effort, mindful effort
    - Mindless effort: repeating the same effort without understanding
    - Smart effort: finding smarter, more efficient ways to accomplish a task
    - Mindful effort: use the "present mind" every moment
- Diligence in action vs. diligence in mind (事精進，心精進)
    - Diligence in action: e.g. meditating n hours a day
    - Diligence in mind: right mindfulness every moment
    - Grand Master Wei Chueh: "The ultimate in diligence is no thought."
- Q: Renewal of commitment: Do you recall a time when you could've accomplished something but did not because of lack of diligence and persistence? Share with us. Would you like to renew that commitment?
- Q: Meritorious deeds: Recall a time when you were proud of yourself when you completed something requiring diligence and effort that was helpful to others. Do you have similar commitments now? (How about volunteering for Shifu?)
    - Note: feeling proud does not automatically equal to pride. What is the balance?

## 3-4. Shame and embarrassment

- **Shame** (*hrī* ), and **embarrassment** (*apatrāpya*): These two closely related mental states are expressions of our conscience; they have similar nature and activities, differing only in that shame refers to feeling ashamed of oneself for wrongdoing, and embarrassment refers to being embarrassed in front of others for wrongdoing. Both has the wholesome effect of stopping one's wrongdoing.
- These two wholesome factors are the twin pillars of human integrity. Shame is our internal moral compass—the self-respect that stops us from doing wrong. Embarrassment is our social conscience—the sense of accountability we feel toward others and the community.
- When people are ashamed of wrongdoings, they are likely to repent the past wrongs and works on preventing future wrong actions. When they are embarrassed of wrongdoings, they are afraid of the humiliation, criticism, or judgment from others, which also help in preventing them from future wrongdoing.
- When people are without shame and embarrassment, their conscience is covered up, and any transgression may be possible.
- In the *Abhidharma* (Buddhist Psychology), "shame" is not a feeling of being "bad"; it is the capacity to recognize the value of virtue.
    - This is an internal standard. You refrain from evil because you value your own character and your path toward awakening.
    - Thought process: "I won't do this because it is beneath my dignity as a practitioner."
- Embarrassment: moral dread / accountability
    - This is a relational standard. You refrain from evil because you respect the community, your teachers, or the law of Karma.

    - Thought process: “I won’t do this because it would harm my community or disrespect my mentors.”
- In our modern world, we have witnessed a state of moral desensitization in the ruling elite**.** We have witnessed leaders who use character assassination as a tool and wear broken promises like a badge of pride. When public figures can lie without blushing and the public accepts it with a shrug, we are at a point of ethical bankruptcy. We’ve normalized what was unthinkable in traditional family education just decades ago. We have discarded our sense of inner shame and outer accountability.
- Q: Shame as motivation: Can shame and embarrassment become a motivation to “Prevent the unarisen evil / Eradicate the evil already arisen”? Share examples.
- Q: Careful balance: Can shame become destructive? How to prevent that from happening to yourself?
- Q: Public shaming: What is “public shaming”? Does the “shame” there mean the same thing as “shame” in the Wholesome Factors?

## 5-7. Non-greed, non-anger, and non-ignorance

- Non-greed, non-anger, and non-ignorance together are called the **three wholesome roots** (三善根, 無貪、無瞋、無癡), This is because they are predominant in the production of all good, and that they are the direct opposites to the three roots of evil, the “thee poisons”: greed, anger, and ignorance.
- The a- prefix in Sanskrit directly negates the term, it is a common feature in many Indian languages. This makes it easy to create many new terms opposite to the root term.
- In Buddhism, the purity of mind is not achieved by adding wholesomeness to the mind, but by removing unwholesome factors, therefore, non-greed, non-anger, non-ignorance is the most straightforward expression.
- **Non-greed**, non-craving (*alobha*): The nature of non-greed is the non-attachment to the three realms of existence, to their causes, and to all the objects in them (e.g. sights, sounds, smells, etc.; food, wealth, beauty, etc.) Its activity or effect is to counter greed, and produce good.
- Non-greed means that the mind does not give in to desires and lust. Furthermore, one may be willing to share one’s possessions with others. Therefore, to be able to resist temptations is non-greed; charitable thoughts (and subsequent actions) are also non-greed.
- Q: On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your greed tendencies? How would you rank your non-greed tendencies? (Yes, greed and non-greed co-exist)
- **Non-anger**, non-hatred (*adveṣa*): The nature of non-anger is the lack of anger toward duhkha received, the causes of such duhkha, and the environment in which duhkha takes place. The activity or effect of non-anger is to counter ill-will and produce good.
    - E.g., one is not angry for catching a flu, not angry at the friend who passed on the flu, and not angry at the place where this took place.)
- Non-anger ranges from staying calm to loving-kindness, to transcending the duhkha.

- Q: 1. What situations or behaviors easily "triggers" you? List five things.

  2. What Dharma teachings can help improve your non-anger score toward these five things?
- **Non-ignorance**, lack of ignorance, non-delusion (*amoha*): Its nature is that of clearly understanding both principles and events, and its activity (effect) is to counter ignorance and produce good.
- Examples of non-ignorance:
  - Recognizing which areas one is ignorant about.
  - Working on removing those ignorance.
  - Contemplating and apprehending the Four Noble Truths, dependent origination, and causality
  - Knowing what good karma and bad karma are and how they are created
  - Which friends are beneficial and which have harmful influences
  - Being able to discern truth from falsehood, not easily taken in by one-sided news or web postings
  - Being enlightened: total removal of ignorance is enlightenment. Non-ignorance, obviously, plays a key role here.
- We can view non-ignorance as both a mental state of the moment (having a clear mind), as well as the Path: from clarity of mind, to having the right view, to removing ignorance and delusion, to ultimate enlightenment.
- Of the specific dharmas, "discernment" can be good, which would bring one's mind into a state of "non-ignorance"; but it also can make a mistake, which would lead to a "false view", one of the six primary afflictions.
- Q: Do you find it easy to admit your ignorance or mistakes in certain areas or situations? Do you find it difficult? Do you know someone who can never say "I was wrong"?
  - Which mental factors are involved in each of these personalities?
  - If you find it difficult to admit "I was wrong", "I didn't know that", or "I misunderstood you", do you want to change? If so, where would you start?

## 8. Serenity

- **Serenity**, tranquility (*praśrabdhi*, 輕安): Serenity means "lightness" (in contrast to feeling heavy or burdened) and peacefulness or contentment. "Its nature is that of keeping the gross and heavy far away, regulating and comforting body and mind, and making them fit [for meditation]. Its activity is that of counteracting torpor and transforming the support ("support" refers to body and mind). It subdues and banishes [the grossness and heaviness] that obstruct samadhi and changes the support into one of serenity and pleasantness." (p.178.)

- Serenity is a state wherein the body and mind leave the "gross and heavy" state of ordinary life, and experience an unusual feeling of being unburdened, calm, and peacefulness, free from torpor and drowsiness.
- Transforming the support: "Support" refers to body and mind. This is a most important character of serenity: by removing the "heaviness" of body and mind, it gives us the capacity to go much further in meditation and cultivation.
- Serenity is like a lubricant for the rusty, overheated, rigid body-mind, as well as power source, filling the body-mind with power, joy, and hope.
- Some explains that serenity is of two kinds, serenity of the body, which is associated with the first five consciousnesses, and serenity of the mind, which is associated with the sixth consciousness. (Other explanations also exist.)
- Some argue that *praśrabdhi* only exists in samadhi (meditative absorption), and that before one achieves samadhi, there can only be a semblance of serenity.
- Serenity experienced after one achieves the **unconditioned state** is more profound and subtle compared to serenity experienced while in **conditioned state**.
- Q: Have you experienced heaviness of body? Under what circumstances? How do you deal with it? Can meditation help?
- Q: Have you experienced heaviness of mind? Under what circumstances? How do you deal with it? Can meditation help?
- Q: Have you experienced serenity from meditation? Describe your experience in your cultivation journal (no need to share with others). Reflect on the process. Can you repeat it?
    - In general, we do not share our personal meditation experiences with others except with your Shifu who can guide you with your meditation.

## 9. Vigilance

- **Vigilance**, heedfulness (*apramāda*, 不放逸): vigilance is a combination of the three wholesome roots (non-greed, etc.) and diligence. Its nature is to avoid what is to be avoided and to cultivate what is to be cultivated. Its activity is to counteract indulgence or negligence, and to realize and fulfill all mundane and transcendent good.
- Vigilance is the well-guarding of the mind, so it doesn't become negligent or indulgent.
- Vigilance brings out the **proactive side of the three wholesome roots** by coupling them with diligence, to keep the mind on the path. It is crucial for achieving our goals.
- Q: When we are procrastinating, feeling lazy, or wanting to give up, when we know we should be diligent, what are ways to bring the mind to vigilance?

## 10. Equanimity

- **Equanimity**, renunciation (*upekṣā*, 行捨): "Its nature is that of vigor (diligence) and the three roots that cause the mind to rest in equality, uprightness, and effortlessness. Its activity is that of countering agitation (restlessness) and calming [the mind] … Impurities are eliminated at first through vigilance, and [then equanimity] causes the mind to rest calmly." (p.179.)
- A combination of three wholesome roots and diligence just like vigilance, yet it often the result of "impurities eliminated at first through vigilance", that is, through active effort in meditation, afflictions have cleared in the mind, and therefore calmness / stillness / peacefulness / serenity is experienced.
- Q: How does equanimity related to the "serenity" discussed earlier?
    - **Analogy:** Imagine pushing a stalled car. Initially, it requires vigilant, heavy effort to overcome inertia. **Serenity** is that moment the car finally begins to roll; the burden feels lighter, and the car becomes capable of sustained movement.
    - **Progression:** With continued vigilance, the car gains momentum and glides smoothly. At this stage, it moves forward with minimal exertion. This state of effortless, balanced flow is **equanimity**, born from stable, sustained vigilance.
- The essence of equanimity is "letting go". The perspective (view) is nonduality. The effect is stillness and clarity of the mind.
    - Nonduality is the insight / principle. Letting go is the practice. Stillness and clarity is the result.
- When the mind is in deep samadhi, it can experience profound serenity and joy. If the mind cling to these feelings, then there is no equanimity. Important: The mind must be willing to "give up" the Chan joy (by non-abidance, non-attachment to the feelings) in order to experience equanimity, which is a deeper, more subtle state of mind, that helps gain more clarity of mind and therefore deeper insights of reality
- Advanced: Equanimity (*upekṣā*) in Buddhism appears in different contexts with subtle differences. The *Tattvasiddhi-śāstra* (成實論) identifies five types of equanimity, referring to various mental factors:
    - **1. Equanimity of neutral feeling:** Among the various feelings, the state of mind that is neutral or unclear (neither painful nor pleasant) is a form of equanimity. This equanimity does not aid in cultivation.
    - **2. Equanimity of meditative absorption (dhyāna):** In the states of dhyana (advanced samadhi), the mental activity of letting the mind go naturally—having relinquished both pain and pleasure—is called equanimity. This is beneficial to enlightenment.
    - **3. Equanimity of the Seven Factors of Enlightenment:** one of the seven factors, this balanced mental state, neither sinking (into dullness) nor agitated (by excitement), is called equanimity.
    - **4. Equanimity of Emotional Transcendence:** The balanced state of mind achieved after relinquishing both grief and joy is also a form of equanimity. This can refer to

ordinary experiences (e.g, when one calms down after grief or joy), or meditative experience (similar to case 2)

- **5. Equanimity in the Four Immeasurables (Brahmavihāra):** One of the Four Immeasurables (an important method of compassion contemplation), the state of mind that is free from both hatred (aversion) and biased love (attachment) is called equanimity.

- Q: "The essence of equanimity is 'letting go'". How is this different from "giving up", "cold-hearted", "apathetic"?

## 11 Non-harm

- **Non-harm** (*avihiṃsā*): non-harm is a kind of non-anger. Whereas non-anger brings about more happiness, non-harm banishes harm and suffering in sentient beings. It is named as one of the wholesome dharmas to stress the importance of eliminating suffering. Loving-kindness (which brings happiness) is a primary example of non-anger, while compassion (which removes suffering) is a primary example of non-harm.
- The ultimate level of compassion, or non-harm, is stated in this verse: "Great is the kindness that is unconditioned; great is the compassion when all are one." (無緣大慈, 同體大悲)
- The Avatamsaka Sutra says also, "A mind of great compassion is the foundation of all tathagatas (i.e. buddhas). [The suffering of] sentient beings give rise to great compassion, great compassion gives rise to bodhi mind, and bodhi mind gives rise to supreme enlightenment."
- Wholesome dharmas leads to good karma, which in turn leads to beneficial impacts. However, "wholesome" or "unwholesome" are conditioned and relative, not absolute.
- Q: The Heart Sutra says, "All dharmas are empty in character"—this means that good thoughts may actually lead to undesirable results sometimes. Is it possible that even "non-harm" thoughts can lead to actual harm? How so? Is so, how can this be prevented? (Hint: think of other mental factors.)

### Exercise #4: Group 3 Wholesome Dharmas

## A. Thinking and Internalizing

1. **Defiled goodness:** What are defiled goodness and undefiled goodness? What does each accomplish? Give examples of both. In performing good deeds, how much of what we do are "defiled goodness" and how much are "undefiled goodness"? Should we stop doing good deeds altogether if they are defiled goodness?
2. **The Faith Audit:** Reflect on the four levels of faith: new faith (shaky), right faith (based on understanding), deep faith (experiential), and real faith (awakening).
   - Where do you currently stand regarding the Buddha Dharma?
   - How is this last stage of faith different in character from the previous levels?

- Recall the metaphor of the **"Treasure Mountain"**: Faith is like having hands. Without hands, you enter the mountain but leave empty-handed. Are there areas in your study where you lack the "hands" of faith, preventing you from receiving the benefits?

3. **Blind faith:** How to avoid the pitfalls of blind faith, especially blind faith in religion or spirituality?
4. **Role of faith:**
   4.1. Describe fields, disciplines or areas in which faith plays an important role.

   4.2. Are there any discipline that does not require faith at all?

   4.3 What is the role of faith in Buddhist practice?
5. **Aspects of right faith:** Explain the three aspects involved in having "right faith" according to the Yogācāra School.
6. **Effort Analysis (Mindless vs. Smart):** Reflect on tasks you perform repeatedly in your life, whether simple of more complex.
   - Identify an area in your life (work, study, or practice) where you are exerting mindless effort (blind repetition).
   - How can you convert this into smart effort (efficiency/wisdom) or mindful effort (present mind)?
7. **The Moral Compass Check:** Review the teaching on shame (internal self-respect) and embarrassment (external accountability/social conscience) as positive mental factors, and distinguish between them.
   - In what way can these two mental factors become a negative or even destructive force in one's life? (Hint: "self".)
   - If they have been negative in the past to you, how can you turn them around to make them beneficial to you?
   - Think of a recent time you refrained from a negative action. Was it because it violated your own integrity (shame), or because you didn't want to look bad in front of others (embarrassment)? Both lead to better karma, but knowing the driver helps understand your mind.
8. **Public shaming:** What is "public shaming"? How is the "shame" there differ from "shame" as a wholesome factor?
9. **Shame as motivation**: Can shame and embarrassment become a motivation to "Prevent the unarisen evil / Eradicate the evil already arisen"? Share examples.
10. **The three wholesome roots:** Why are non-greed, non-anger, and non-ignorance phrased as negatives? What advantages does this form of expression have? Contemplate how purity is often achieved not by adding something new, but by removing the defilement.
11. **Greed and non-greed on a scale:** On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your greed tendencies (toward some specific area)? How would you rank your non-greed tendencies? (Yes, greed and non-greed co-exist)

12. **Examine your triggers:**
    1. What situations or behaviors easily "triggers" you? List five things.

    2. What Dharma teachings can help improve your non-anger score toward these five things?

13. **Kinds of non-greed and non-anger:** What are examples of non-greed and non-anger? Name at three in each case.
14. **Ways of non-ignorance:** What are some examples of non-ignorance? Try to think of them in your mind. If you do not recall, review the examples given by Shifu, then try again to think of them in your mind. Can you come up with even more examples of non-ignorance?
15. **Acknowledging mistakes:** Do you find it easy to admit your ignorance or mistakes in a situation? Do you find it difficult? Do you know someone who can never say "I was wrong"?
    - Which mental factors are involved in each of these personalities?
    - If you find it difficult to admit "I was wrong", "I didn't know that", or "I misunderstood you", do you want to change? If so, where would you start?
16. **Heaviness of body and mind:**
    1. Have you experienced heaviness of body? Under what circumstances? How do you deal with it? Can meditation help?

    2. Have you experienced heaviness of mind? Under what circumstances? How do you deal with it? Can meditation help?
17. **Serenity:** Have you experienced serenity from meditation? Describe your experience (no need to share with others). Reflect on the process. Can you repeat it?
    - In general, you do not share your personal meditation experiences with others except with your Shifu who can guide you with your meditation.
18. **Vigilance:** The opposite of vigilance is heedlessness (one of the 20 secondary afflictions). When we are procrastinating, feeling lazy, or wanting to give up, when we know we should be diligent, what are ways to bring the mind to vigilance?
19. **Vigilance + equanimity:** How does vigilance work together with equanimity?
20. **Equanimity vs. apathy:** "The essence of equanimity is 'letting go'". How is this different from "giving up", "cold-hearted", "apathetic"?
21. **Importance of equanimity:** Contemplate on the relationship between "equanimity" and important qualities like "objectivity", "clarity of mind", and "calmness".
22. **Special case of non-anger:** Non-harm is a special case of non-anger. Why is it given a distinct place in the Wholesome Dharmas?
23. **Non-harm leading to harm?** The Heart Sutra says, "All dharmas are empty in character"—this means that good thoughts may actually lead to undesirable results sometimes. Is it possible that even "non-harm" thoughts can lead to actual harm? How so? Is so, how can this be prevented? (Hint: think of other mental factors.)
24. **The compassion package:** Discuss the relationship between loving-kindness, compassion, non-anger, and non-harm. What is the ultimate in Buddhist compassion?

## B. Buddhist Meditation Practices

25. **The "Hands" of Faith:** Before beginning your meditation, spend 2 minutes generating right faith.
    - Tell yourself: "I have the **ability** to meditate. This practice has **virtue**. The Dharma is **real**".

- This “faith in ability” will gradually tune you in and prepare you for serenity and samadhi.

26. **Cultivating Serenity:** If you have a regular (e.g., daily) meditation practice, it is quite possible to occasionally experience one or more of the following in a meditation session:
    - Feeling very comfortable at the current sitting posture
    - Feeling of lightness of body
    - Experience a deep calmness of mind
    - Experience an unusual sharpness / clarity of mind
    - The mind is suddenly empty of thoughts
    - Feeling a softness of the heart, finding it easy to let go or forgive
    - Feeling that stress and anxiety are gone
    - Feeling completely refreshed after the session

    These are some signs of “serenity”, or approaching serenity, even if the experience only last 10 minutes. (It can go on much longer as well.) When this happens, reflect on the session after it is completed, and try to recall the steps or conditions leading to that experience. Try to reproduce the conditions (there will be trial and error) next time in your meditation. The goal is to have a more clear understanding of what works for you to get to the serenity state, in preparation for deeper samadhi.

27. **Equanimity Observation:** In deep silence, practice “letting go.” If a pleasant sensation arises (Chan joy such as serenity or even meditative samadhi), do not cling to it. If an unpleasant sensation arises (leg pain), do not resent it. Balance the mind in **equality** and **effortlessness**, allowing the mind to rest calmly while remaining fully aware.

## C. Daily Application

28. **Reflection on wholesome dharmas:** Examine yourself and see which of the 11 wholesome dharmas you generate frequently and which are lacking. Record in your “cultivation journal”. Examine yourself again in two months and see if you made some progress toward developing wholesome dharmas.

29. **The Integrity Pause (Shame & Embarrassment):** When tempted to cut a corner, tell a small lie, or act out of anger, pause and ask two questions:
    - *Internal:* “Does this action align with the person I wish to be?” (Invoking **Shame/Self-Respect**).
    - *External:* “If my teacher or community saw this, would I feel comfortable?” (Invoking **Embarrassment/Accountability**),.
30. **Vigilance (Apramāda) in Action:** Practice **Vigilance** by guarding the mind against the “Three Poisons” during a specific activity (e.g., shopping or driving).
    - *Shopping:* Apply **Non-greed**. Do I really need this, or am I just filling a void?
    - *Driving:* Apply **Non-anger**. Can I remain calm when cut off?
    - *General:* Apply **Non-ignorance**. Am I aware of the consequences of my actions?.

- These are example situations. Come up with your own relevant situations in your life to apply this practice.

31. **Practicing Non-Harm (Avihiṃsā):** Identify a situation where you might cause subtle harm (e.g., harsh speech, ignoring someone, killing an insect). Actively generate the mind of **Non-harm** (compassion) to banish the potential suffering of that being. (This includes non-human sentient beings like animals and insects.)
32. **Smart Diligence:** Choose one mundane chore this week. Instead of doing it "mindlessly" while distracted, apply **Mindful Effort**. Be fully present with the task. Remember, "The ultimate in diligence is no thought"—just pure doing.

## Group Four: Primary Afflictions

The six primary afflictions are: greed, anger, arrogance, ignorance, doubt, and false views.

- Afflictions, vexations, defilements, fetters (*kleśa*): Opposite to the wholesome dharmas are the unwholesome dharmas, or *kleśa*, which are mental states that originate from delusion and ignorance. They delude, vex and disrupt the mind, causing it to lose peace, become emotional, agitated, worried, fearful, stressed, or depressed; in addition, they lead the mind into harmful actions that generate suffering.
- All psychological states that obstruct enlightenment are *kleśa* (also spelled *klesha*).
- *Kleśa* are separated into two categories, primary and secondary. The six primary afflictions are so named because they are the fundamental obstructions to true wisdom and happiness. The secondary afflictions are specific cases, or combinations, of the primary afflictions.
- The *Surangama Sutra* says, "When the king sends his soldiers to destroy the bandits that disrupt the land, they must know where the bandits come from first." To eradicate our *kleśa*, we must understand them and see where they come from first.

## 1. Greed

- **Greed**, desire, craving (*rāga*): **"**Its nature is defiled attachment to existence and the resources for existence. Its activity/function is to obstruct non-greed and to generate suffering." (「於有有具, 染著為性。能障無貪, 生苦為業。」)
    - **Existence:** the living form we take on in the Triple Realms: Realm of Desire, Realm of Form, and Realm of Formlessness.
    - **Resources for existence:** food, clothing, houses, etc.
    - **Defiled attachment**: we cling to life and resources, with ego-self at the core.
    - **Q:** are there "non-defiled", or "wholesome" forms of attachment?
    - **Function**: this mental factor lead to greediness, and generate activities that will bring upon duhkha (suffering).
- What are some of the things we are greedy about? The *Yogācāra Bhumi* provides the a list of ten objects of greed:
    1. The five aggregates (skandhas)
    2. Our views and beliefs
    3. What we do not have
    4. What we already possess
    5. What we had experienced and enjoyed
    6. Misdeeds, harmful actions

7. Lust
8. Family and friends
9. Material goods, resources, tools
10. Our future

- Regarding the greed (lust) between the sexes, one may lust after:
  1. A person's appearance, skin color, and complexion;
  2. A person's looks and shape (tall, short, slim, attractive, cute, etc.);
  3. Touch of the body (soft, smooth, rugged);
  4. Services provided (cooking, cleaning, comfort, pleasant voice and words, smell, etc.)
- These are primarily greed in the Realm of Desire. But greed exists in all three of the Triple Realms, e.g. clinging to meditative joy in the Realm of Form, and clinging to very subtle samadhi joy in the Realm of Formlessness.
- **Meditation**: the standard Buddhist practice to overcome greed is "impurity meditation": meditate on details of various impurities of the body.
- **Q:** If one simply practices "knowing without judging", would this be effective in dealing with greedy tendencies?

## 2. Anger

- **Anger**, ill-will, hatred (*dveṣa*): **"**Its nature is hostility and resentment toward suffering and the instruments of suffering. Its function is to obstruct non-anger, to create an unstable state of mind and body, and to serve as the basis for unwholesome deeds." (「於苦、苦具，憎恚為性。能障無瞋，不安隱性，惡行所依為業。」)
  - **Suffering:** the three types of duhkha are: the suffering of suffering (苦苦), the suffering of impermanence (changes, losing, decay; 壞苦), and the suffering of conditional existence (行苦)。
  - **Instruments of suffering**: refers to the instruments, conditions, or objects that bring about physical and mental suffering.
  - When we cannot do anything about suffering itself, we transfer our resentment toward the instruments that help bring upon the suffering: a stone, the weather, an accomplice, the doctor unable to cure you.
- **Q:** What is the actual source of suffering?
- According to the ancient *Analytical Dictionary of Chinese Characters* (說文解字), the original meaning of the character "瞋" is "to open eyes widely" (張目). That is, when a person encounters an adversity or an infuriating event, they stare straight ahead with wide, angry eyes—this physical expression is what is termed "瞋" (anger/glaring).

- Among the twenty secondary afflictions, the mental factors of wrath (忿), resentment (恨), spite (惱), harmfulness (害), and envy (嫉) are all direct derivations (or specific examples) of anger.
- *An Analytical Exposition of Dhyāna Pāramitā* (釋禪波羅蜜) by Master Chih-I lists three types of anger:
    - Irrational anger: anger that arises suddenly for no rational reason, even when oneself is at fault.
    - Rational anger: anger that arises when others are at fault, or upon seeing injustice. Though the anger may be justified ("righteous anger"), it still is a hindrance to samadhi and spiritual cultivation.
    - Disputatious anger: anger that arises in arguments, or from clinging to one's own views and refusing to accept other views.
- The *Numerical Agama*[4] *(Ekottara Āgama,* **增一阿含經**) says, "Through innumerous eons, many buddhas have come and gone (entered pari-nirvana), yet you have not encountered any of them, all because of the fire of anger inside you."
- **Ways to overcome anger:** Buddhism offers many ways to overcome anger, such as:
    - Compassion contemplation (see Jianhu Shifu's teaching on "Chan Compassion Contemplation"
    - *Kṣānti-Pāramitā* (Perfection of tolerance)
    - A terse example of the above is The Practice of Accepting Adversity (**報冤行**) from Bodhidharma's treatise *Essence of Mahayana Practice*:

      "What is the practice of accepting adversity? When suffering, a practitioner of the Way should reflect: For innumerable kalpas, I have pursued the trivial instead of the essential, drifted through all spheres of existence, created much animosity and hatred, and maligned and harmed others endlessly. Even though I have done no wrong in this lifetime, I am reaping the karmic consequences of past transgressions. This is something that neither the heavens nor other people can arbitrarily impose upon me. Therefore, I should accept it willingly, without any resentment or objection.

      The sutra says: 'Face hardships without distress.' How is this achieved? Through thorough insight. With this understanding in mind, you align with the Principle, advancing on the Way through the very experience of adversity. This is called the practice of accepting adversity."
    - Contemplating the impermanence and emptiness of adversity
    - Chanting the Buddha's name

[4] The Agamas are Theravada sutras belonging to the Northern tradition instead of the Southern, Pali tradition which are called Nikayas. Most Agama sutras have correspondences in the Nikaya suttas, as they are two distinct factions from the "Theravada" schools. The Numerical Agama's corresponding text is the Numerical Nikaya, translated into English as "Numerical Discourses of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Bodhi.

- **Q:** If one simply practices “knowing without judging”, would this be effective in dealing with anger?

## 3. Ignorance

- **Ignorance**, delusion (*avidyā, moha*): “Its nature is that of delusion and blindness regarding both phenomena and principles, and its function is to obstruct non-ignorance and to serve as the basis for all defilements.” (於諸事理，迷暗為性。能障無癡，一切雜染所依為業。)
- A-vidyā is the lack of light, vision, knowledge, or wisdom.
- Within the Buddhadharma, ignorance is categorized in numerous ways depending on the doctrinal framework:
- **The Twelve Links of Dependent Origination (十二因緣)**: Ignorance is placed at the very head of the chain (**無明為首**), serving as the primal condition for cyclic existence.
- **The Three Afflictions of the Tiantai School (天台三惑)**: Divided into the Afflictions of Views and Thoughts (**見思惑**), the Afflictions Innumerable as Motes of Dust and Sand (**塵沙惑**), and the Afflictions of Ignorance (**無明惑**).
- **Fundamental vs. Derivative Ignorance**: Further distinguished into Fundamental Ignorance (**根本無明**) and Derivative/Branch Ignorance (**枝末無明**).
- From the *Saṃyukta Āgama* (**雜阿含經**):
  What is ignorance? It is not knowing the past, not knowing the future, and not knowing both the past and the future. It is not knowing the internal, not knowing the external, and not knowing both the internal and the external. It is not knowing karma, not knowing its retribution, and not knowing both karma and retribution.

  It is not knowing the Buddha, not knowing the Dharma, and not knowing the Saṅgha. It is not knowing suffering, not knowing its accumulation, not knowing its cessation, and not knowing the path. It is not knowing causes, and not knowing the phenomena generated by causes.

  It is not knowing what is wholesome and unwholesome, what is blameworthy and blameless, what should be practiced and what should not be practiced. Whether a phenomenon is inferior or superior, defiled or pure, or how dependent origination is differentiated—all this is completely unknown.

  One fails to perceive and know reality as it is within the six spheres of sensory contact. To be thus lacking in knowledge, lacking in vision, devoid of immediate realization regarding various objects—characterized by the darkness of delusion, blindness, and dense obscurity—this is called ignorance.
- From the *Tattvasiddhi-śāstra* (**成實論**):
  To blindly follow conventional designations is called ignorance. Ordinary people blindly follow the mere sound and idea of ‘self’. In reality, there is neither a self nor anything

belonging to a self within; it is merely an aggregation of various phenomena conventionally designated as a 'person.'

Because ordinary people fail to discern this, the conception of a self arises. The very birth of this conception of a self is precisely what constitutes ignorance.

- Q: Can you make a list of your various kinds of ignorance or delusion? E.g., one is blind to his parents love for him, another does not care about how to improve himself, a third easily believes in irrational cult tenets.
- Q: Give 3 examples of how ignorance caused suffering in your past.
- Q: What is the fundamental, root ignorance according to Buddhism? What are derivative ignorance / delusion stemming from this root?

## 4. Arrogance

- **Arrogance**, pride (*māna*): "Its nature is self-inflation and looking down on others based on a false assessment on one's own qualities. Its function is to obstruct non-arrogance and to generate suffering." (**恃己於他，高舉為性。能障不慢，生苦為業**)
- The *Abhidharma-Kosa* by Vasubandhu lists seven kinds of pride:
  - **Basic pride** (慢):
    Considering oneself superior toward someone inferior, or considering oneself equal when someone is equal to oneself. Even though this may indeed be the case, the mind nonetheless harbors an inflated sense of self-importance.
    - E.g., someone who keeps on reminding you that he has beaten you in a competition.
  - **Excessive pride** (過慢): Considering those who are superior to oneself as being equal, or considering those who are equal to oneself as being inferior. This pride is stronger than the first type.
    - E.g., someone who you have beaten in a competition insists that "you got lucky."
  - **Overly excessive pride** (慢過慢): Insisting that oneself is superior even to those who are clearly superior.
  - **Self-pride** (我慢): The fundamental root among the seven types of pride. To take the five aggregates as "I", and view one's resources as "my possessions", and use them to compare with others. Self-pride keeps our thoughts ego-centric.
    - E.g. "I'm better looking," "I'm wealthier," "I'm right so you must be wrong.")
  - **Attainment pride, spiritual pride** (增上慢): to believe that one has attained enlightenment, samadhi, virtues or stages of liberation when one has not. This hinders future progress in one's cultivation and can mislead others.
    - This pride is especially problematic to serious Buddhist cultivators. The person genuinely believes in what they claim, without the intention to lie or mislead others. E.g.:

        - "I'm not greedy."
        - "I've let go of that episode, it doesn't bother me anymore."
        - "I have attained the arhat stage."
        - "I am now equal to the Chan Patriarchs like Master HuiNeng."
    - **Inferiority pride** (卑慢): Looking at those who are vastly superior to oneself and claiming that they are only "slightly" superior.
    - **False pride** (邪慢): to believe in false teachings as the right teachings, or falsely believe that one is virtuous, therefore unwilling to accept the true teachings or virtuous mentors. This leaves them with no path to end the wheel of suffering.
- Q: Of the seven kinds of arrogance, which you have experienced in your life? Share your examples.
- Q: Can arrogance lead to serious consequences? Give an example.
- Q: Of the different kinds of arrogance, which can be said is the root, the source of them all?
- Q: Meditate on the relationship between ignorance and arrogance.
- Q: In what ways are arrogance related to greed and anger?

## 5. Doubt

- **Doubt**, lack of faith (*vicikitsā*): "Its nature is hesitation and indecision regarding phenomena and underlying principles. Its function is to obstruct non-doubt and to undermine wholesome factors." (於諸事理，猶豫為性。能障不疑、善品為業。)
- Faith, correct discernment, and correct resolve work together to remove doubt; non-doubt (freedom from doubt) also help build stronger faith and sophisticated discernment toward the realization of truth.
- Q: Can faith and doubt co-exist?
- Three types of unwholesome doubt:
  **Doubting the Dharma**: nitpicking to invalidate its authenticity
  **Doubt the teacher**: not trusting virtuous mentors
  **Doubting oneself:** unsure of one's own potential to attain enlightenment.
- Before a practitioner attains genuine Right View, it is necessary to examine both teachings and teachers to distinguish truth from falsehood. Otherwise, one may fall prey to misleading teachers and heretical doctrines. Therefore, rational inquiry is an important step, whereas unreasonable doubt acts as a primary obstacle to spiritual cultivation.
- Before we attain the right view, it is reasonable to examine spiritual teachings carefully, in order to avoid false teachings. However, irrational doubt, bias and stubbornness are serious hindrances to seeing the truth.

- "**Pseudo-scientific doubt**": Doubting the existence of currently unexplained phenomena, when science cannot (yet) prove that they don't work or exist; like acupuncture, karma, reincarnation, supernormal phenomena.
    - E.g. to have faith in reincarnation is not necessarily un-scientific, because science have nothing to say on this matter. It can neither prove nor disprove the existence of reincarnation.
    - Meanwhile, major cultures and regions all have many accounts of previous-life memories (academically verified) that cannot be explained scientifically.
- Q: Do you find it difficult to trust others? What about yourself? Why?
- Q: How to achieve a balance between faith and naivete or blind faith? What would be the right balance between healthy doubt and trust?
- Q: Doubt is listed as one of the primary afflictions, yet a Zen Buddhist saying goes: **大疑大悟，不疑不悟**("with great doubt comes great enlightenment" and "with no doubt there is no enlightenment") —so, should we question the Dharma or not?
- Q: Give three examples of "pseudo-scientific doubt", that is, people using science (mistakenly) to justify their misplaced doubt and stubbornness. (Hint: know the limitations of science.)
- Q: Do you have doubts about your potential to achieve great things? What about enlightenment?

## 6. False views

- **False views**, deviant, heretical, wrong views (*mithyā-dṛṣṭi*): "Its nature is defiled wisdom, characterized by distorted analysis and misinterpretation regarding phenomena and underlying principles. Its function is to obstruct wholesome views and to invite suffering." (於諸事理，顛倒推度，染慧為性。能障善見，招苦為業。)
- There are five basic kinds of false views: views of identity, dualistic views, deviant views, attachment to deviant views, and attachment to false precepts (wrong ethical practices).
    - FV1. Views of identity / self-view (身見): incorrectly formed views of "who I am". There are many forms of identity views, mostly variations of clinging to the temporary, impermanent five aggregates (body, feeling, conception, volition, and consciousness) as a real, permanent self or possession. (See 20 views below for details).
        - Common examples of mistaken self-view: "My brain equals my mind." "My thoughs are who I am" or "My feelings define me."
    - FV2. Dualistic views (also called extreme views, 邊見): adopting views of eternalism or annihilationism, or similar beliefs in dualistic concepts.
        - Eternalism: belief in a self / soul that lasts forever, e.g, it migrates from one lifetime/body to another at death

- Annihilationism: the belief that a person, soul, or consciousness exists during life, but is permanently destroyed or extinguished at death. E.g., many now believe the physical body is all that we have. Both are incorrect views of life and are not in accordance with the Middle Way.
- Other dualistic views (such as fixed views on right and wrong, beauty and ugliness) and one-sided extreme views also fall into this category.
- Q: Give examples of common dualistic views. E.g., "(In an argument) If I'm right you must be wrong."

- FV3. Deviant views (邪見): a primary example is the disbelief in causality.
  - Any other incorrect views of reality beside the four listed here are also collected here.
  - Q: Give three examples of deviant views. E.g., "If nobody discovers my mistake then there is no consequence." "People who cheat millions and not get caught are so lucky."
- FV4. Attachment to false views (見取見): to hold the view that one's false views are correct, and to insist that others' right views are incorrect.
  - One may hold many false views, but if open-minded enough to consider and accept challenges to their beliefs, then there is hope for them!
  - This one is about being irrationally stubborn attachment to one's beliefs,

    1. Especially regarding what is the true Way (Tao, Dao, 道). E.g., someone who firmly believes in a Buddhist, Christian, or Islamic cult, unable to see its blatant contradictions.

    2. Mistaking a non-goal as the actual goal, e.g., "having lots of money = happiness", and dogmatically clinging to this view. (非果計果)
  - Q: Do you know such persons? Name some commonly seen false beliefs that people get attached to.

    Have you acted this way before? Share the false belief, and how you came to realize it.
- FV5. Attachment to false precepts (戒禁取見): one has incorrect views of what is proper or moral conduct, especially related to practices to attain nirvana, and insists that this is correct. Example: to believe that ascetic practices alone can end suffering, or that sacrificial rites can bring blessing.
  - This one is a confusion about the process, or path, that leads to the desired result.

    1. Especially regarding how to achieve enlightenment / Buddhahood.

    2. This is called "Mistaking non-cause as actual cause" (非因計因)
  - Q: Do you know forms of this kind of attachment from your culture?

E.g., in Chinese culture, the number 4 sounds like "death" and is considered an unlucky number. E.g., to avoid it in license plate; a hotel does not have 4 in room numbers or even a 4th floor is avoided.

In the West, "Friday the 13th" is similarly considered unlucky.

In ancient India, some spiritual seekers believed the ascetism itself led to enlightenment.

- The five kinds of false views are called the "five acute agents" (五利使) or "five delusions," whereas the first five primary afflictions (greed, anger, ignorance, arrogance, and doubt) are also called the "five dull agents" (五鈍使) or "five vices." Together they are known as the "ten agents" (十使), so called because they are the primary agents that cause people to create bad karma.
- These five delusions are called "acute" because one can obtain these views in an instant (upon hearing or reading). However, one may also remove them quickly once one realizes the mistake. On the other hand, the five vices are called "dull" because they are karmic habits that have accumulated over time, and so they are also much harder to get rid of even after false views are corrected. For example, to realize that being angry at other's words is unnecessary does not mean one can immediately remain calm when it happens.
- **20 views**: False self-views can be further detailed to twenty views:
  1. Form is the self (materialistic view, this body *is* "I")
  2. The self possesses form (The body is part of "I", like a hand is part of an arm)
  3. Form belongs to the self ("I have a body", like a person owns a house)
  4. The self resides within form ("I" exists inside the body)
    - Similarly for feeling, conception, volition, and consciousness. That is, feelings are I, I possess feelings, etc.

- Q: Name some of the false views you've had in the past that you have later discovered and corrected, whether by your own discovery or with someone's help.
- Q: Name some of the false views you discovered after learning Buddhism.
- Q: Give examples to at least three of the five kinds of false views.
- Q: Give examples of suffering, large or small, stemming from false views held by people.
- Q: Name some ways a person can overcome false views.

## Exercise #5: Group 4-1: Primary Afflictions

Consider the questions sprinkled into the Notes in this section are also are of this exercise set.

Below are new, additional exercises.

## A. Thinking and Internalizing

1. **Greed for the Future**: "Our future" is listed as one of the ten objects of greed. We often think of anxiety as a form of fear, but how might your daily anxieties actually be rooted in a "defiled attachment" (greed) for a specific, imagined future outcome? What is the difference between wholesomely planning for the future (using the "wholesome desire" to achieve a goal) and being afflicted by greed for it?
2. **Arrogance vs. confidence**: "Self-pride" (the root of all arrogance) involves taking the five aggregates as "I" and comparing one's resources to others. In modern society, we are constantly told to build "self-confidence." Based on Buddhist psychology, how can you cultivate strong capabilities, leadership, and confidence without becoming trapped in basic pride or excessive pride?
3. **Intersection of anger and false views**: Master Zhiyi identifies "disputatious anger" as the anger that arises in arguments when refusing to accept other views. How does this specific type of anger directly fuel "attachment to deviant views" (the stubborn insistence that your false view is correct and others are wrong)? Why does the ego-self feel so deeply threatened by simply being mistaken?
4. **Anatomy of ignorance**: The *Tattvasiddhi-śāstra* states that ignorance is born when we blindly follow "conventional designations" (like the sound and idea of a "self") instead of seeing the aggregation of phenomena. Look at a title or label you strongly identify with (e.g., "parent," "engineer," "Buddhist"). How does blindly taking this conventional designation as a permanent reality create misconceptions, unreasonable expectations, and suffering in your life?
5. **The Illusion of defeat (1):** Review the definitions of **self-pride** (taking the five aggregates as "I" and comparing them with others) and **inferiority pride** (looking at those vastly superior and claiming they are only "slightly" superior to protect the ego).
    - Reflect on a specific area in your life (e.g., a professional skill, patience, or intelligence) where someone you know is objectively superior to you.
    - Why does admitting this objective difference in skill or virtue makes us feel defeated, inferior, or upset? "Who" actually is feeling uneasy, the knowing mind, or the ego-self? Are we letting the ego-self, created by the 7$^{th}$ consciousness and emphasized by the 6$^{th}$ consciousness, to speak as the "I" again?
    - Contemplate how simply admitting "I am inferior in this aspect" is actually a manifestation of *non-ignorance* (seeing phenomena and principles clearly as they are), rather than a failure. How does separating objective reality from the ego's narrative of "winning or losing" free the mind?

## B. Buddhist Meditation Practices

6. **Anger and vulnerability**: Anger is defined as hostility toward "suffering" and the "instruments of suffering". In your next meditation, bring to mind a recent moment of mild irritation toward a person (the instrument). Drop the story about what the person did wrong. Instead, look inward and identify the actual suffering (e.g., the suffering of impermanence, loss of control, feeling disrespected, or physical exhaustion). Practice sitting with the raw vulnerability of that suffering without transferring the resentment to the instrument.
7. **Deconstructing the "cup" (counteracting ignorance):** To break the habit of blindly following conventional designations, place an ordinary object, like a ceramic cup, in front of you. Meditate on it for 10 minutes. Mentally strip away the label "cup." See the clay, the water that molded it, the fire that baked it, the human effort, and the spatial dimensions. Recognize that the "cup" is merely a mental concept. Extend this realization to the concept of "I".
8. **Applying Discernment to Doubt:** When you encounter "unreasonable doubt" or hesitation about a Dharma principle during meditation (e.g., doubting if karma is real), do not suppress it. Instead, apply the specific factor of *discernment*. Objectively analyze your doubt: Is this hesitation based on rational inquiry, or is it a "pseudo-scientific doubt" (demanding a type of proof that is impossible for the subject matter)? Use focused discernment to severe the unwholesome doubt.
9. **The Illusion of defeat (2), deconstructing the threat of inferiority:** Sit in silence for 10 minutes. Bring to mind a person whose abilities, wealth, or virtues usually trigger feelings of envy or inadequacy in you.
    - Observe the immediate mental "heaviness" or agitation that arises when you think of their superiority.
    - Apply *discernment* (*prajñā*) to separate the objective facts from the 6th consciousness's fabricated narrative. The objective fact might simply be: "This person has cultivated more causes and conditions for this specific skill." (i.e., worked long and hard for it.) The fabricated narrative is: "This makes me a lesser being; I am defeated."
    - Practice resting the mind in *equanimity* (*upekṣā*). Let go of the ego's need to compare the five aggregates, and accept the reality of the situation effortlessly, without attachment to pride or the dualistic view of "better vs. worse"

## C. Daily Application

10. The "Inferiority Pride" Catch: Inferiority pride is looking at someone vastly superior and claiming they are only "slightly" superior. It is the ego's defense mechanism against feeling small. This week, when you encounter someone whose skills, patience, or wisdom vastly exceed your own, notice if your mind tries to diminish their accomplishments. Practice

actively and verbally acknowledging their superiority to dismantle this subtle form of arrogance.

- The opposite reaction is to exaggerate their skills and fall into inferiority complex, which actually comes from the same root of "defend against feeling small". If this is your case, also practice acknowledging their superiority without judging, knowing that "this is okay". (See exercise "The Illusion of Defeat (1-3))

11. **Media Diet and "Acute Agents"**: The five false views are called "acute agents" because they can be acquired instantly upon hearing or reading something, but can also be dropped quickly upon realization. Notice how modern social media algorithms feed you content designed to solidify your identity views, dualistic views, and deviant views. This week, intentionally consume a thoughtful article from a perspective you traditionally disagree with. Practice reading it purely with "knowing without judging," refusing to let disputatious anger or attachment to your own views arise. (Instead of reading an article, listening patiently and with attention to someone laying out their reasons for a different perspective also works.)
12. **Auditing the "Services Provided" (Greed)**: Greed and lust in the Realm of Desire are not just about physical forms; they are heavily tied to the "services provided" (e.g., comfort, pleasant words, convenience). The next time you feel a strong craving to buy a luxury item, upgrade a service, or demand specific behavior from a family member, pause. Ask yourself: "Am I reacting to a genuine need, or am I being driven by a defiled attachment to the comfort and 'services' this will provide my ego?"
13. **The Illusion of defeat (3): joyful concession (practicing non-ignorance):** The ego's natural defense mechanism when facing someone superior is either to find their flaws or to say "Yes, but you don't have to shout it out ..." to soften the blow.
    - This week, when a colleague, friend, or family member clearly outperforms you, corrects you, or demonstrates a skill you lack, catch the ego's urge to defend itself.
    - Instead, practice actively and verbally acknowledging their superiority in that specific aspect without any self-pity or caveats. You might say, "You are much better at this than I am, and I admire your skill."
    - Observe how leaning into the truth dismantles your *basic pride* and *inferiority pride*. Notice that when you simply align with reality—admitting ignorance or lack of ability—is irrelevant to the dualistic concept of "I'm better" or "you're better". This way, the ego's fear of "defeat" vanishes, leaving a clear, unburdened state of mind.

## Group Five: Secondary Afflictions

The twenty secondary afflictions are: wrath, resentment, spite, concealment, deceit, guile, conceit, harmfulness, envy, stinginess, lack of shame, lack of embarrassment, lack of faith, indolence, heedlessness, torpor, restlessness, unmindfulness, delusion, and distraction.

- The twenty secondary afflictions (*upakleśa*) arise from the primary afflictions, or are combinations or special instances of the primary.
- The Consciousness-Only School distinguishes "three natures" for all dharmas. All dharmas are either **good**, **bad**, or **neutral** (morally). Good dharmas lead to happiness, bad dharmas lead to suffering, while neutral dharmas do not lead to a retribution that can be classified as happiness or unhappiness (*sukha,* d*uḥkha)*.
- However, neutral dharmas are of two kinds: **undefiled** (無覆無記), which do not obstruct our pure mind or the Noble Path, and **defiled** (有覆無記), which do obstruct.
    - **Undefiled neutral**: For example, the eighth consciousness is neither good nor bad, so it must be neutral; yet it cannot be said to obstruct the Noble Path so it is undefiled neutral in nature.
    - **Defiled neutral:** On the other hand, the seventh consciousness is also neutral, because its actions are too weak to directly lead to any suffering; yet it is defiled because it does obstruct the correct view of dependent origination and emptiness of the ego.
- Scope of these secondary afflictions: these 20 afflictions are further divided into three categories based on their operational scope:
    - Minor (narrow-scope) secondary afflictions (小隨煩惱)
        - Comprises the first 10 of the 20 secondary afflictions; because their nature is strong, they tend to arise individually (as opposed to in combination with each other), and they arise only in specific situations, so their operational scope is small.
        - E.g., wraith, resentment, spite, etc., are emotions / reactions that occur in highly specialized situations. They are stronger and may cause more harm than the other two categories (at least at the moment).
    - Medium (intermediate-scope) secondary afflictions (中隨煩惱)
        - These two pervade all unwholesome mental states and are invariably associated with all unwholesome phenomena (***不善法***). Because their operational scope is broader than the minor but narrower than the major, they are termed medium.
    - Major (wide-ranging) secondary afflictions (中隨煩惱)
        - They are associated with **all defiled mental states**—including both unwholesome states and defiled-neutral states. Because their sphere of operation is even wider than that of the Medium Secondary Afflictions, they are termed "major".
        - For example, the 7th consciousness is associated with all 8 afflictions in this

category, because it is “defiled neutral”. But, the 8th consciousness is not associated with any of these afflictions, because it is “undefiled neutral”. Alaya is associated only with the 5 universal factors.

### Narrow Secondary Afflictions

## 1. Wrath

- Wrath (*krodha*), ire, rage, fury 忿
    - “Its nature is that of an explosive flare up of anger toward a present disagreeable object (a situation or person). Its activity is that of obstructing non-wrath and taking up of weapons; that is, because someone harboring wrath frequently manifests violent and hostile physical actions. In substance, it is a specific aspect of anger. Apart from anger, it has no distinct nature or function.”
    - Wrath is a strong surge of anger toward an unpleasant person, situation, or other present object. Unlike a more enduring resentment (the next secondary affliction), *krodha* is characterized by an immediate and vehement outburst of anger, often manifested through the body and facial expression.
    - If this sudden wrath is not dissolved through mindfulness, repeated instances incubate over time into the next secondary affliction: resentment.
    - Cognitive scope: In the Yogācāra system, wrath (and its root, anger, and anger-associated afflictions like resentment, etc.) operates exclusively within the Sixth Consciousness and is strictly confined to the Desire Realm (欲界).

## 2. Resentment

- Resentment (*upanāha*), hostility, enmity, grudge 恨
    - “It’s nature is that of dwelling repeatedly on the object of wrath, refusing to let go, thereby forming lasting grudge. Its activity is that of obstructing non-resentment and intensifying spite, because he who has strong resentment are not forgiving, always burning with spitefulness.” *–Demonstration of Consciousness Only*
    - “Resentment arises from repeated mulling over a situation, holding onto wrath and unwilling to let it pass.” *—Abhidharma-Kosa*倶舍論
    - “The mind is bound by hostility, tormenting oneself for a long time to no purpose whatsoever.” — *Nyāyānusāra* 順正理論
    - Resentment naturally leads to the next affliction, spite.

- **Memory triggered**: wrath requires a direct, present object, whereas resentment functions in memory. Even when the person or situation is no longer present, the mere recollection triggers this affliction.
- **Internalized torment**: While wrath blasts outward toward others, resentment burns inward. It is a futile mental loop that yields no positive fruit, serving only to prolong one's own suffering.
- Stemming from initial wrath, if resentment is left unpurified, it leads to the third secondary affliction: spite (惱 / pradāśa).

## 3. Spite

- Spite (*pradāśa)*, vexation, acrimony, aggravation惱
  - "Preceded by wrath and resentment, its nature is that of fierce stubbornness triggered by past grievances coupled with present provocations. Its activity is that of obstructing non-spite and biting others; that is, because when recalling past wrongs and encountering present conflicts, the mind becomes fiercely stubborn, violent, vile, and spits out coarse words that sting and bite others [like venomous insects]. In substance this is also a type of anger.
  - "When disputes arise regarding the Dharma or non-Dharma, and fellow practitioners out of a desire for peace attempt to advise or instruct, one adamantly refuses to accept guidance. This unyielding and unteachable nature, extreme stubbornness, ferocious tenacity, and poisonous, malicious heart is collectively called *pradāsa*."
    —*Dharma-skandha-sastra* 法蘊足論
  - The next stage when one's anger is not reined. One builds on past and present anger toward a person or a situation, the resentment grows, turning into strong feelings and vicious language. It may then lead to the next stage, harmfulness.
  - Unlike simple anger, *pradāsa* is ignited when memory of past resentment collides with a present unpleasant trigger. The mind boils over into a fierce, venomous state.
  - A defining trait of spite is its refusal to listen to reason, advice, or friends.
  - If this poisonous spite is allowed to fester without restraint, it escalates to the final stage of the anger-series afflictions: harmfulness (害 / vihiṃsā).

## 4. Harmfulness

- Harmfulness (*vihiṃsā*), malice, malevolence, unkindness 害
  - "What is harmfulness? Having no compassion or kindness toward sentient beings, its nature is that of seeking to injure and torment them. Its activity is that of obstructing non-harm (*ahiṃsā*) and causing distress and persecution, because one who harbors

harmfulness actively oppresses and injures others. In substance this is also a specific type of anger."

- A person who has developed harmfulness is seriously planning to hurt others, to use violence or cause disruption to peace. This is a dangerous mental state that leads directly to harmful actions.
- Punitive vs. restorative prison model: Unlike most prisons in the world, Norway's correctional system emphasizes rehabilitation and reintegration rather than punishment for its own sake.
  - Official statistics show that approximately 16–22% of prisoners released in recent years were reconvicted within two years, substantially lower than recidivism figures commonly reported for the United States (up to 70%)
  - The punitive system may deepen the seeds of resentment, spite, and harmfulness; whereas the restorative system aims to remove the conditions of harm and cultivate non-harm.
  - The Nordic countries (Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Denmark) plus Iceland all follow the "Nordic correctional model", very rare in the world.

## 5. Concealment

- Concealment (*mrakṣa*), dissimulation 覆
  - "What is mrakṣa? It is the nature of concealing one's own misdeeds out of fear of losing benefits and reputation. It obstructs non-concealment (honesty/open confession). Its activity is regret and mental distress, because one who conceals offenses will inevitably experience subsequent remorse and distress, lacking inner peace.
  - Types of misdeeds or offenses: breaking or violating the following:
    - Precepts (e.g., the Five Precepts)
    - Right views (e.g, slandering the Buddha or Dharma or law of causality)
    - Right livelihood (e.g., work in slaughterhouse or shady business)
    - Proper conduct (e.g, committing crimes)
  - Concealment is part ignorance and, some say, part greed. Ignorance because one is not clear on the karmic consequences, thinking that concealing one's transgression will benefit oneself. Greed because one covets good reputation. It is closely related to hypocrisy.
  - **Antidote to concealment**: repentance, open acknowledgement and transformation.
  - Sutra of Forty-Two Chapters, Ch. 5: "The Buddha said: If people with many faults fail to repent and immediately cease the thoughts that cause harm, their offenses will consume them, just like waters gathering into the sea becoming ever deeper and wider. If those with faults realize their errors, correct their actions and cultivate virtue, their

offenses will naturally dissolve, just as sweating enables a sick person to gradually recover."

## 6. Deceit

- Deceit (*māyā*) 誑
  - "Its nature is that of feigning virtue in order to obtain benefits and reputation. Its activity is that of obstructing non-deceitfulness and wrong livelihood. One who resorts to deception harbors ulterior motives and frequently engages in untrue and improper means of sustenance. This is in substance a part of greed and a part of ignorance."
  - "In order to deceit another, one harbors hidden agendas internally while appearing to benefit the other person. —Yogācāra Bhumi
  - One who deceits is blind to causality and morality.
  - The opposite of deceit, non-deceit (**不誑**) is a wholesome mental factor, a combination of non-greed and non-ignorance, it represents a honest and grounded mental attitude and conduct, and manifests as:

    Not deceiving oneself
    Not deceiving others

  - Five kinds of "wrong livelihood" for a Buddhist monastic, especially when the following acts are done for the purpose of getting offerings from followers:
    1. Deceitful display of special powers
    2. Bragging about one's own merits or abilities
    3. Fortune-telling
    4. Loud, forceful, or pretentious demeanor (to induce respect or fear)
    5. Bragging about the offering one has received

## 7. Guile

- Guile (*śāṭhya*) 諂, flattery, duplicity
  - "In order to deceive and manipulate others, it has as its nature deceitful crookedness—putting on feigned manners and artificial demeanors. Its activity is that of obstructing non-guile and obstructing teaching and guidance; that is to say, those who indulge in flattery compromise their principles and resort to deceitful tactics—either to win the favor of others or to hide their own faults—they become incapable of receiving the wholesome teachings and instructions of masters and spiritual friends (**不任師友正教誨故**). Its substance is a mode of greed and ignorance.
  - "The mind is not straightforward, is hazy and veiled; its view and actions are dishonest and twisted."— Yogācāra-bhumi-sastra

- Insincere flattery, kissing-up, beguiling behavior, for the purpose of selfish gains, are all examples of this mental state.
- Concealment hides what is shameful in onself; deceit fabricates what is admirable in oneself, and guile exaggerates another's virtues to extract personal gain.
- **Hypocrisy**: In modern terminology, concealment, deceit, and guile are the structural pillars of hypocrisy. While ordinary hypocrisy is often viewed merely as a social flaw, Abhidharma diagnoses it as a severe spiritual disease born from the fusion of greed (attachment to status/gain) and ignorance (ignoring the Law of Cause and Effect).

## 8. Conceit

- Conceit (*mada*), vanity;
  - "It is the nature of deep infatuation and attachment to one's own superior qualities. It's activity is obstructing non-conceit, and serving as a basis for all defilements."
  - One who is intoxicated with conceit gives rise to and nurtures all defiled dharmas. This mental factor is a form of greed.
  - "People may become conceited because of their birth, class, family status, physical appearance, strength, skills, career, wealth, social status, morality, meditation skills, intelligence …, whatever they are superior at, they may become vain and conceited, overly conceited, intoxicatingly conceited, arrogant and flaunting, self-enamored, etc.; these are all instances of conceit."— Dharma-skandha-sastra
  - Chinese Tiantai Master Zhiyi's Words and Phrases on the Lotus Sutra lists these eight types of qualities that make one vain and conceited: being strong, family status, wealth, being free to do as one pleases, long life, intelligence or cleverness, having done many good deeds, physical appearance.[5]
  - Key Characteristics & Behavioral Manifestations
    - Self-absorption and complacency (自大自滿):
      - ❖ Being completely enthralled by one's own talents, wealth, beauty, or spiritual achievements.
    - Getting carried away by success (得意忘形):
      - ❖ Becoming utterly blind to one's own flaws, limitations, and blind spots.

      Thus unable to improve oneself
    - The psychological core: Intoxication:

[5] Master Zhiyi is a great Chinese Buddhist master and scholar, responsible for founding the Tientai School of Buddhism (Tendai in Japanese). His three great works are: *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra, Detailed Commentary on the Lotus Sutra,* and *The Great Concentration and Contemplation (MoHeZhiGuan)*, among many others. The last work is one of the most important Chinese treatise on the theory and practice of Mahāyāna meditation, and has recently been completely translated as *Clear Serenity, Quite Insight* by Paul Swanson.

- ❖ The Sanskrit root *mad* literally means "to be drunk / intoxicated." *Mada* is an internal "drunkenness" where the mind is drunk not on alcohol, but on its own perceived glory.

- The support of all defilements (染依為業):

  - ❖ When one is drunk on self-satisfaction, mindfulness drops, moral vigilance collapses, and heedlessness (*pramāda* / 放逸) immediately takes over, giving birth to all further afflictions.

- The difference between conceit and arrogance: arrogance is often observed in one's actions comparing with others, and conceit is more of an inner, self-aggrandization based on real or perceived accomplishments.

## 9. Envy

- Envy (*īrṣyā*), jealousy
  - "What is *īrṣyā*? Driven by the pursuit of one's own fame and gain, it has as its nature the inability to bear another's success and prosperity, characterized by bitter begrudging. Its activity is that of obstructing non-envy and producing sorrow and distress."
  - One who is envious, upon hearing or seeing others' prosperity, harbors deep sorrow and agitation, and thus lacks inner peace.
  - Underlying roots: anger / resentment + greed / attachment
  - "A person seeing another earning respect, offering, reverence, praise, desirable objects, clothing, food, bedding, medicine, and other resources, thinks the following: 'why do they get these and I do not?' Thereupon he gives rise to: sorrow, extreme sorrow; distress, extreme distress; jealousy, extreme jealously; envy, extreme envy." — *Dharma-skandha-sastra*
  - Envy toward others may target: the worthy, the capable, the wealthy, the beautiful, or fame, status, and power.
  - Q: Reflect on ourselves. Have I been envious of others? In which ways? Be honest and specific. Recall instances where we acted or thought in envious ways.

    Then reflect on the object of my envy. With my Buddhist knowledge, how do I now perceive: 1. The object of my envy; 2. What should I focus my attention and energy on? (Hint: what is more precious in life?)
  - Q: Reflect on each of the object of envy below and design a Buddhist response to counter that envious state of mind:

    **1. Sibling favoritism** (siblings receiving more parental love)

- ❖ Reflect that parental affection stems from past karmic affinity (宿世業緣).
- ❖ Resentment only deepens negative karmic ties within the family.

**2. Academic / athletic rivalry** (Classmates outperforming in grades/sports)

- ❖ Recognize their current ability as the ripe fruit of past and present diligence.
- ❖ Transform petty rivalry into wholesome inspiration (見賢思齊).

**3. Workplace competition** (Colleagues demonstrating superior ability)

- ❖ Cultivate Sympathetic Joy (muditā / 隨喜): a team's collective success elevates everyone.
- ❖ Rejoicing in others' strengths dissolves personal insecurity.

**4. Praise vs. Neglect** (Others receiving awards while one is sidelined)

- ❖ Understand that worldly recognition is impermanent.
- ❖ True spiritual worth is measured by self-purification, not external applause.

**5. Economic disparity** (Friends prospering while one's business struggles)

- ❖ Recognize the Law of Cause and Effect (因果業報): wealth arises from past generosity (Dāna / 布施).
- ❖ Rejoicing in their prosperity plants the seeds for one's own future abundance.

- The Antidote: Sympathetic Joy (隨喜**功德**)
  - In Buddhist practice, the direct sovereign cure for envy is the third of the Four Immeasurables (Brahmavihāras): sympathetic joy.
  - When someone accomplishes a good deed or achieves success, begrudging them generates heavy negative karma. Conversely, simply generating genuine joy for their accomplishment (**隨喜**) yields great karmic merit without costing a penny
  - The Paradigm Shift:
    1. Envious mind: “Your gain is my loss.” (Zero-sum delusion)
    2. Awakened mind: “Your happiness is my happiness; the world has one more reason to celebrate.”

## 10. Stinginess

- Stinginess (*mātsarya*), avarice, parsimony
    - "What is stinginess? Its nature is that of attachment to wealth or Dharma, unable to graciously let go or share the wisdom, hiding them and being possessive. Its activity is that of obstructing non-stinginess and hoarding; that is, because the mind of the person who is stingy is rigid and mean, he amasses goods and the Dharma and cannot give them away. This is in substance a type of greed."
    - "There are two types of stinginess:
        - Stinginess with possessions: one is unwilling to donate or give away to others, and even actively prevents others from from getting clothing, food, bedding, medicine, and other materials; his mind close and holding tightly.
        - Stinginess with the Dharma: one is unwilling to teach what he knows, even taking various actions to make it difficult for others to learn the sutras, vinaya, abhidharma, liturgies and regulations.
    - Clothing, food, bedding, medicine are the four primary types of offerings from lay people to the sangha during Buddha's time. As society and economy evolved, money become more acceptable and convenient as an offering.
    - The Agama Sutras lists five types of stinginess: land, house, earning/wealth, praise, and the Dharma.
    - The consequences of being stingy with the Dharma (in future births):
        - Blindness: Obstructing the "Dharma eyes" of others causes the loss of physical sight.
        - Dullness / stupidity: Denying wisdom to others starves one's own cognitive faculties across lifetimes.
        - Wretched family: Deprived of fertile spiritual environments due to blocking other's access.
        - Premature death: Cutting short of the spiritual life of others leads to the truncation of physical life.
        - Fear of objects / paranoia: The constant paranoia of hiding secrets creates severe psychological instability.
        - Alienation from the noble: Those who hoard refuses to connect with goodness, alienating virtuous people.
        - A life of crime: Severed from the light of the Dharma, moral restraint collapses and one degenerate into rampant unwholesome deeds.
    - A well-known example of stinginess with the Dharma is the story of Buddha's disciples Cūḍapanthaka, who was an erudite Dharma teacher in a previous life but was afraid that his disciples would surpass him, therefore was very stingy with his teachings. As a result, he was born with extreme dullness, unable to memorize even

one gatha ofthe Dharma. He eventually overcame this and became an arhat due to Buddha's skillful means.

## Exercise #6: Group 5-1: Minor (Narrow-Scope) Secondary Afflictions

# A. Thinking and Internalizing

1. **The Escalation of Anger:** Review how anger escalates through four distinct stages: wrath, resentment, spite, and harmfulness.

    - Contemplate: How does allowing a fleeting reaction (wrath) to go unresolved inevitably lead to the mental cage of resentment?
    - Reflect: Why is the refusal to listen to reason, advice, or spiritual friends the definitive hallmark of spite? What is going on mentally, causing this gradual collapse of the sixth consciousness's rational control, leaving the mind "intoxicated" by hostility?
    - How can we reverse this downward spiraling mental stream?

2. **The Triad of Hypocrisy:** Abhidharma diagnoses hypocrisy as a severe spiritual disease born from the fusion of greed and ignorance (blindness to the law of karma). Its three structural pillars are concealment (hiding what is shameful in oneself, deceit (fabricating false virtues to gain reputation), and guile (flattering and exaggerating others' virtues for personal gain).

    - Why does concealing a transgression ultimately bring "internalized torment and regret," as warned in the Sutra of Forty-Two Chapters?
    - Analyze: Think of a time you witnessed hypocrisy. Describe the situation, and analyze any or all three of these pillar's role in this act.
    - Have you fell into the trap of hypocrisy? Think very hard to identity at least one such act. If a similar situation arise in the future, how would you think and act differently?

3. **Conceit vs. Arrogance:** What is the precise psychological difference between the primary affliction of arrogance and the secondary affliction of conceit? Give an example situation for each case.

    - Why is conceit compared to being "drunk" on your own perceived glory? How does this drunkenness destroys your mindfulness and moral vigilance, serving as the "support for all other defilements"?
    - Review Master Zhiyi's "Eight Qualities of Conceit" (being strong, family status, wealth, free-will, long life, intelligence, good deeds, physical appearance). Name the areas in which you have or are likely to become conceited.

4. **The Paranoia of Envy and Stinginess:**

    - Compare envy with stinginess.

- Why are envy and stinginess categorized as "narrow-scope" afflictions despite their strong destructive power in families and workplaces?
- Consider the severe karmic consequences of "stinginess with the Dharma" (法慳) —such as the story of the disciple Cūḍapanthaka, who was born with extreme dullness because he withheld teachings in a past life. Why does blocking another person's access to wisdom directly starve one's own cognitive faculties across lifetimes? (Explain from karma consequence / Causality Principle.)

## B. Buddhist Meditation Practices

**5. Tracing Anger to its Root (Avoiding the "second arrow"):**

- Sit in silence for 15 minutes. Bring to mind a recent situation at work or home that triggered irritation / wrath, resentment, or spite in you.
- Instead of focusing on the external "instrument of suffering" (what the other person did), turn your attention inward. Notice the physical tension and emotional burn.
- Apply the Buddha's "second arrow" metaphor: The external trigger was the first arrow. Your repeated mulling over it is you poking yourself with the same arrow 99 times.
- Practice breathing through the raw sensation. Step back into the "knowing mind" (覺性 /pure awareness). Recognize that while your consciousness is turbulent, your core knowing mind is completely cool, untouched, and uninjured. Let the resentment dissolve into this boundary-less awareness.

**6. Dismantling the Mask of Concealment:**

- In silent meditation, courageously bring to mind a mistake, failure, or negative quality that you are actively trying to conceal from others out of fear of losing respect or benefits.
- Feel the specific mental "heaviness" and anxiety of maintaining this mask.
- Apply the **discernment** mental factor: Who is trying to hide? It is the self-appointed representative—the ego-self.
- Mentally visualize bringing this fault out into the open, offering it in front of the Buddha, your teacher, or your spiritual community. Practice "unmasking" yourself in the safety of your own mind. Feel the immediate relief and expansive freedom of purity and honesty.

**7. Deconstructing the "Self" in Conceit:**

- Select a quality you are highly conceited about (from Ex. #3, e.g., your intelligence, your physical appearance, your morality, or even your meditation achievements).

- During meditation, dissect this quality into its constituent parts (a practice in interdependence). If it is intelligence, see the DNA from your parents, the teachers who taught you, the farmers who grew your food, and the books you read.
- Recognize that this quality is not "yours" and does not define a permanent "I"; it is a temporary, shifting constellation of causes and conditions. Let the "intoxication" of conceit settle into deep, humble gratitude.
- Note: properly practiced, this contemplation should not make you suffer from low self-esteem. If it does make you feel inferior, what is the medicine? (Hint: review the five universal, five specific, and 11 wholesome factors.)

## C. Daily Application

**8. The "Advice Pause" (Counteracting Spite):**

- This week, when a conflict or disagreement arises, watch for the sudden onset of Spite (惱)—especially the urge to reject guidance, become fiercely stubborn, and spit out "stinging words" to hurt the other person.
- Commit to the "Advice Pause": The moment someone criticizes or corrects you, pause, take two deep breaths, and do not self-defend.
- Ask yourself: "Am I defending the objective truth, or is my ego trying to protect its fragile illusion of being 'always right'?" If the criticism has even 1% of truth, focus on that part until you can verbally thank the person, with sincerity, for helping you grow.

**9. Joyful Praise (Overcoming Envy):**

- Identify someone in your immediate circle (a colleague, sibling, or classmate) whose accomplishments or praise usually trigger a quiet sting of envy (嫉) in you.
- This week, actively practice **sympathetic joy** (隨喜功德). Internally comes to terms with your ego-self and see the benefits of walking up to them and warmly congratulate them on their success.
- Contemplate the truth: In an interdependent world, another's success elevates the entire collective. Rejoicing in their good fortune directly uproots your own insecurity and plants the seeds of abundance (in virtue, good karma, merits, resources) in your alaya-consciousness.

**10. Uprooting Stinginess through Sharing:** Actively counter stinginess in your daily routine:

- Possessions: Identify something you hold onto tightly (a favorite treat, money, or a prized possession) and voluntarily give it away to someone else this week.
- Dharma/Knowledge: If you have a special skill, shortcut, or insight at work or school, do not hide it to protect your status. Actively and patiently teach it to your peers. Observe how sharing your "secrets" frees you from the paranoia of being surpassed.

- Make an offering that is larger than your usual amount to the monastery (monetary or time-effort).

**11. Living with Equality and Straightforwardness vs. Guile:**

- Notice when you use subtle guile or deceit to win approval or manipulate people in authority.
- This week, intentionally practice level-mind and straightforward. Speak flat, plain, honest truths (when it is beneficial to others) without artificial demeanor. Observe how much energy you save when you stop trying to curate and manage other people's perceptions of you.

**Medium Secondary Afflictions**

"lack of shame, lack of embarrassment"

- These two pervade all unwholesome mental states and are invariably associated with all unwholesome phenomena (**不善法**), meaning they arise concomitantly with **every single unwholesome mental state without exception**. Whenever an unwholesome thought or negative deed occurs, both mental factors are actively functioning.
- Because their operational scope is broader than the minor but narrower than the major, they are termed medium.

## 11. Lack of shame

## 12. Lack of embarrassment

- Lack of shame (*āhrīkya*) 無慚. Lack of embarrassment (*anapatrāpya*) 無愧.
    - "What is lack of shame? Disregarding oneself and the Dharma, it has as its nature the slighting and rejection of virtue and wholesome qualities. Its activity is that of obstructing shame and generating and fostering unwholesome actions.

      What is lack of embarrassment? Disregarding the world, it has as its nature the attachment and elevation of unwholesome and violent acts. Its activity is that of obstructing embarrassment (moral regard) and generating and fostering unwholesome actions."
    - "Regarding the transgressions one has committed: feeling no inward shame toward oneself is called lack of shame. Feeling no outward embarrassment toward others is called lack of embarrassment." --*Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra*
- Core characteristics of lack of shame:
    - Loss of self-respect & dignity: Does not respect one's own moral integrity or character.
    - Inward indifference: Toward one's own evil deeds, the mind feels no remorse, no inward blush, and no impulse to repent.
    - Brazen justification: Downplays misdeeds as trivial, holding the attitude: "So what? It doesn't matter."
    - Slighting virtue: Displays cynicism or disdain toward moral teachings and spiritually cultivated individuals.
- Core characteristics of lack of embarrassment:
    - No fear of public blame: Lacks fear of letting down others, society, or spiritual companions.
    - Defiance of criticism & law: Indifferent to scandal or suspicion, refuses wholesome admonition, and disregards legal penalties.

- Brazen impunity: Acts openly without embarrassment, completely unbothered by what others see or think.
- Glorifying evil: Openly admires, mimics, and aligns with aggressive, corrupt, or ruthless behavior.

**Major Secondary Afflictions**

"Lack of faith, indolence, heedlessness, torpor, restlessness, unmindfulness, delusion, and distraction."

## 13. Lack of faith

- **Lack of faith (*āśraddhya*)**, 不信,absence of faith, distrust, faithlessness.
  - "What is lack of faith (āśraddhya)? Toward reality/truth, virtue, and capability/attainability, having no conviction, no joyful appreciation, and no aspiration, it has as its nature mental defilement and turbidity. Its activity is that of obstructing pure faith and serving as the basis for indolence; that is to say, one who lacks faith or conviction tend to be indolent and lazy.

    Furthermore, while other defiled dharmas each possess their distinct characteristics, this lack of faith is special in that its own characteristic is turbidity, and it can muddy all other consciousnesses and mental factors—just like an extremely filthy substance that is itsself foul and defiles everything it touches. Therefore, it is said to have mental impurity as its nature."
    — 成唯識論 (CWSL, Cheng Wei Shi Lun), Demonstration of Consciousness-Only, the definitive Chinese classic by Master XuanZang
  - "What is lack of faith? It refers to the mind lacking clarity and purity toward the Buddha, Dharma, and Saṅgha; and giving rise to discordant or distorted understanding regarding the Four Noble Truths." — Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra
  - Previously discussed afflictions acts in specific situation and have distinct defiling characteristics, this lack of faith acts like a slow-acting poison that spreads and contaminates all mental states.
  - "If someone harbors doubt (疑), they can still be led to faith through inquiry; but if someone is entrenched in disbelief (lack of faith), even the Buddha cannot help them—hence it is called an extreme and turbid defilement." — Essentials of Consciousness-Only
  - Lack of faith often manifests in these aspects:
    - Sensual complacency: satisfied with status quo; chasing sensory pleasures.
    - Dogmatic preconceptions: entrenched beliefs; unwilling to engage rationally.
    - Reductionism: refusing what empirical tools cannot yet measure; denying

personally verifiable meditative results.

- Avoidance of effort: believing practice is too difficult, demanding, or that enlightenment is impossible to attain.

- Like all conditioned dharmas, lack of faith can be reversed and turn into unshakable right faith. For example, when one begins questioning life's ultimate meaning, or start looking for genuine happiness.

## 14. Indolence

- **Indolence** (*kausīdya*) 懈怠, sloth, spiritual laziness
  - "What is indolence (kausīdya)? Regarding wholesome and unwholesome factors, in the tasks of cultivating the good and severing the bad, it has as its nature laziness and inertia. Its activity is that of obstructing diligence (vīrya) and increasing defilements, because an indolent person fosters contaminated mental states.

    Furthermore, one who vigorously exerts effort in defiled affairs is also called indolent, because such effort causes one to regress from wholesome dharmas." (CWSL)
  - "Indolence refers to clinging to sleep, delighting in lying down and lounging; fearing spiritual elevation, and self-deprecation Its substance is a mental state that lacks resolve and effort. Its activity is that of obstructing the generation of right exertion, and increasing further indolence." — Prakaraṇāryavācā-śāstra (顯揚聖教論, Treatise on Elucidating the Noble Teaching by Asaṅga)
  - Indolence is the opposite of diligence (vīrya).
  - Hardworking criminal: In secular society, an ambitious criminal, a workaholic hustling for corrupt gains, or a ruthless corporate schemer might be labeled "hardworking." In Yogācāra, this is classified as indolence, because, from the perspective of cultivation, energy expended on defiled pursuits withers and starves the wholesome roots of the mind and causes spiritual regression, which is the activity of indolence.
  - Neutral exertion: What about intense exertion in morally neutral activities, such as obsessively mastering a video game, memorizing trivia, or routine secular tasks?
  - CWSL explains: This type of effort is driven purely by the specific mental factors of desire and resolve. It is neither diligence (vīrya) nor indolence, nor does it involve faith or lack of faith.
  - However, because neutral exertion does not cultivate liberating wisdom or sever afflictions, from the perspective of Buddhism, it is ultimately futile effort leading to no benefits.
    - On the other hand, **emptiness** allows the possibility that one may gain insights into life from even with futile efforts. However, there has to be a certain mindfulness somewhere in the equation.
  - Four faces of indolence:

- **Sensual sloth**: Clinging to sleep, lounging, physical comfort, and procrastination.
- **Fear of spiritual ascent**: Intimidated by the discipline, meditation, and rigorous training required for higher realization.
- **Self-deprecation & inferiority**: Convincing oneself, *"I am too flawed, too busy, or too foolish; enlightenment is for great masters, not for me."*
- **Lack of Inner Exertion**: Drifting through life without moral vigilance, spiritual urgency, or proactive resolve.

- The Sūtra of the Indolent Plowman (《佛說懈怠耕者經》):
  - This sutra tells the story of an indolent farmer. While the Buddha and his disciples were walking, a farmer plowing his field saw the Buddha from a distance. Joy arose in his heart, but he thought: "I must finish plowing and harvesting my field first. Once I have free time, I will go pay homage to the Buddha."
  - The Buddha turned to his saṅgha and revealed: "In the past, across the eras of seven preceding Buddhas, this plowman encountered each Buddha with joy, but due to indolence and preoccupation with worldly chores, he never acted."
  - “He failed to recognize the plow of the Dharma or cultivate the field of unconditioned liberation. Having passed by six Buddhas without gaining deliverance, he continues to delight in sowing the seeds of suffering solely due to indolence."
- Q: Do we repeat the plowman's tragic mistake? Whenever we encounter virtuous teachers or rare opportunities for practice, do we say "let me finish this busy secular project first," only to let lifetime after lifetime slip by in s*aṃsāra*?

## 15. Heedlessness

- **Heedlessness** (*pramāda*) 放逸, carelessness, indulgence, negligence
  - "What is Heedlessness (*pramāda*)? Regarding defiled and pure phenomena, being unable to guard against the former and cultivate the latter, it has as its nature unbridled self-indulgence and laxity. Its activity is that of obstructing non-heedlessness (*apramāda*), serving as the basis for increasing unwholesomeness and diminishing the good. Because of **indolence** along with greed, anger, and ignorance, one fails to guard against defilements and cultivate pure dharmas; this combined state is collectively named heedlessness, and it possesses no separate substance apart from these four factors." (CWSL)
  - "Regarding wholesome factors, taking no delight in diligent cultivation; regarding unwholesome factors, maintaining no mental guarding or defense—this is called heedlessness." —Yogācārabhūmi-śāstra
  - "If one does not restrain and rein in scattered, disordered thoughts, that is called Heedlessness." — Śāriputrābhidharma-śāstra《舍利弗阿毘曇論》

- In the Pali commentary tradition (e.g., Dhammasaṅgaṇī and Visuddhimagga), pamāda (Pali for pramāda) is defined as the mind's loose, unchecked indulgence in the five sensual pleasures and infatuation with sensory stimuli.
- People reasoned that as long as they felt "peace and love," indulging in sensory pleasures without worrying about the future or karmic consequences was "practicing Zen."
- Authentic Buddhist non-attachment is rooted in crystal-clear mental states with vigilance and ethical discipline (śīla). Unchecked indulgence is not liberation; it is the very definition of heedlessness, which accelerates karmic degeneration.
- "The Buddha told Ānanda: Even if heavenly beings rain down celestial incense and flowers from the sky, that is not called truly making offerings to or venerating the Tathāgata. If a monk, nun, layman, or laywoman focuses their mind in one-minded non-heedlessness (一心不放逸) and immerse in the cultivation of the Noble Dharma, that alone is called the true offering to the Buddha." — Daśabhūmi-vibhāṣā (Nāgārjuna's Treatise on the Ten Bodhisattva Grounds)《十住毗婆沙論》

## 16. Torpor

- Torpor (styāna) 昏沉, lethargy, drowsiness, dullness, mental heaviness, sluggishness
  - "What is torpor (*styāna*)? It has as its nature causing the mind to become unwieldy and unserviceable toward its cognitive object. Its activity is that of obstructing **serenity** (*praśrabdhi*) and ***vipaśyanā*** (vipassana)." CWSL.
    - Vipaśyanā is simply the wholesome, cultivated functioning of **discernment** (*prajñā*) applied to the nature of phenomena (impermanence, non-self, emptiness, suchness).
  - "Heaviness of body, heaviness of mind; unwieldiness of body, unwieldiness of mind; sinking-dullness of body, sinking-dullness of mind; mental muddle-headedness, and stupefied smothering." — *Dharma-skandha-śāstra* (《法蘊足論》
  - Meaning of the Chinese Compound (昏+沉):
    昏 (hūn) = Muddle-headed obscuration: The conscious intellect loses sharp perception; awareness becomes dark, dim, and foggy.

    沉 (chén) = Sinking heaviness: The mind and body feel weighed down, sinking downward toward inertia and drowsiness.

    Together, hūnchén produces a state of consciousness that blurs meditative focus, breeds excessive sleep, and paralyzes contemplation.
  - Ignorance vs. torpor:
    - Ignorance (*moha*) is Intellectual darkness; lack of insight into reality and causality. This leads to misunderstanding the nature of reality.

- Torpor: opposite of serenity, it is cognitive unwieldiness, fuzziness, and gross physical-mental heaviness. This leads to inability to focus or stay awake on an object.

  - Five hindrances (五蓋): In meditative training, torpor is paired with sleep to form the 3rd hindrance. The five are: sensual desire (貪欲蓋), anger (瞋恚蓋), torpor & sleepiness (昏沈睡眠蓋), restlessness regret (掉悔蓋), and doubt (疑蓋)
  - Ways to conquer torpor / drowsiness:
    - Visualization of brightness, sun, or light
    - Walking meditation
    - Direct the mind to some pure object such as an image of the Buddha or an incense burner
    - Contemplate the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṅgha, morality, or generosity
    - Read or chant in aloud
    - wash and sprinkle the face with cold water.

## 17. Restlessness

- Restlessness (*auddhatya*), 掉舉
  - "What is Restlessness (*auddhatya*)? It has as its nature causing the mind to become unquiet and non-serene toward its cognitive object. Its activity is that of obstructing **equanimity** (*Upekṣā*) and calm abiding (*śamatha*)." CWSL.
    - Śamatha and vipaśyanā are the two pillars of Buddhist meditation.

      Śamatha is the practice of concentration, one-pointed focus training. It leads to samādhi.

      Vipaśyanā is the practice of contemplation, mindfulness, clear and objective observation, etc. It leads to wisdom.
    - Śamatha is the practice to overcome restlessness of the mind.
  - Relationship between samatha, samadhi, and vipasyana:
    - Lantern analogy: Samatha is the glass lantern that shields the flame, samadhi is the steady flame, and vipasyana is the clearn illumination from the steady flame.
  - In traditional meditation practice, samatha is the “calm abiding” method or process that brings the mind into concentration. At the core of this training is the (momentary) mental factor of samadhi.

    By counting or observing the breath, for example, we bring forth the samadhi mental factor. The goal is to sustain the samadhi until we achieve a deeper sustained

concentration, or deep samadhi.

- Samatha □ brings up samadhi □ sustained samadhi □ dhyana (deep, advanced, sustained samadhi)
- With deep samadhi, one's mental clarity is enhanced, and using this wisely is called "vipasyana" (e.g., contemplate the Four Noble Truths, reflecting on the mind itself, etc.) one sees the truth and achieves awakening.

- The above is called "gradual cultivation", which is the primary way of the Theravada and Yogacara school.
- The Chan / Zen school takes a different view, emphasizing the non-duality of samatha and vipasyana.
  - E.g., using the "knowing" to observe the breath, samatha and vipasyana are not two separate practices but two aspects of the same cultivation.

## 18. Unmindfulness

- **Unmindfulness** (*muṣitasmṛtitā*), 失念, forgetfulness, lack of mindfulness, loss of recollection
  - "What is unmindfulness (muṣitasmṛtitā)? Regarding observed cognitive objects, it has as its nature the inability to remember clearly and distinctly. Its activity is that of obstructing right mindfulness and serving as the bases for distraction, because one who has lapsed mindfulness falls into a scattered and distracted mind." — CWSL
  - "Unmindfulness refers to defiled non-remembering of what has long been done, spoken, or deliberated upon—whether doctrines (Dharma) or their underlying meanings. Its substance is defiled non-retention; its activity is that of obstructing clear recollection, and increasing further unmindfulness." — *Prakaraṇāryavācā-śāstra*《顯揚聖教論》
  - "Empty, idle mind, hollow mind, forgetfulness, losing thoughts, and the incapacity for distinct retention—these are called unmindfulness." (空念性、虛念性、忘念性、失念性、心不明記性，是名失念。) — *Dhātukāya-śāstra*《界身足論》
  - Some say the substance of unmindfulness is a form of ignorance, some say it is a portion of mindfulness.
    - In Yogācāra, mindfulness (smṛti念) is not inherently wholesome; it is an ethically flexible cognitive faculty. When the CWSL describes unmindfulness as partly comprised of smṛti, it does not mean the mind has gone blank. Rather, the retaining mechanism of mindfulness has been hijacked by an unwholesome or trivial object—such as fixating on an insult or sensory desire instead of the Dharma. Toward virute, mindfulness has been lost, but the cognitive engine actively clinging to the distraction remains a defiled, misdirected instance of "mindfulness".
    - Resolving the debate over whether its underlying substance is ignorance (moha

癡) or mindfulness, master Dharmapāla establishes that unmindfulness is a composite state sharing roots in both. Ignorance acts as the blinding force that obscures clear spiritual awareness, while defiled retention acts as the operational instrument that grips the wrong object. Like a camera whose recording function is running perfectly while pointed into a pile of trash, the mechanism of retention (in mindfulness) is actively functioning, but under the influence of ignorance, the true objective has been lost.

- Unmindfulness is not mere forgetfulness (like misplacing keys or forgetting a phone number). In Abhidharma, it specifically denotes the cognitive collapse of moral and spiritual alertness toward wholesome objects. When mindfulness lapses, the mental anchor slips, allowing defilements to flood into the vacuum.
- Four foundations of mindfulness: Failure in the satipaṭṭhāna means, instead of maintaining real-time awareness of body as body, feeling as feeling, thought as thought, and dharma as dharma, that they have the characteristics of impurity, suffering, impermanence, and empty of a self-identity, the unmindfulness easily revives the "four inversions (四顛倒): grasping at pleasure, beauty, permanence, and a solid self.
- From Sutra of the Buddha's Last Teaching 佛遺教經: "You bhikṣus! In seeking a virtuous friend and spiritual guide, or in seeking wholesome protection and aid, nothing surpasses maintaining mindfulness. If one maintains mindfulness, the thieves of defilement cannot penetrate. Therefore, you all must mindfully collect your thoughts. If you lose mindfulness, you will forfeit all virtues. If the power of mindfulness is fortified and unyielding, even if you wander amidst the thieves of the five sensory desires, you will not be harmed by them, just like a warrior wearing sturdy armor entering the battlefield, having nothing to fear."
- The maintenance of mindful vigilance is not unique to Buddhism. Confucious says in The Analect: "A noble person (君子) does not depart from benevolence even for the space of a single meal. In moments of sudden haste, they adhere to it; in times of dire peril and turbulence, they adhere to it."

## 19. Delusion

- **Delusion** (*asaṃprajanya*), 不正知, defiled discernment, non-discernment, misperception, misconception, deluded cognition
  - Just as unmindfulness is a compound of mindfulness and ignorance, delusion is an afflicted composite of discernment corrupted by ignorance (moha).
  - "What is delusion (asaṃprajanya)? Toward the observed cognitive domain, it has as its nature erroneous, distorted comprehension. Its activity is that of obstructing correct knowing and causing transgression and precept violation; this is because one who has incorrect knowing commits numerous transgressions and violations." — CWSL
  - "Delusion is discernment associated with defilement. Thus, it gives rise to distorted

observation, leading to unwholesome actions of body, speech, and mind, thereby causing the violation of moral discipline (śīla).” — *Prakaraṇa-pañcaskandhaka*《大乘廣五蘊論》

- “Suppose a bhikṣu acts without correct knowing, in coming and going, bending and stretching limbs, turning about, wearing the monastic robe, holding alms bowl, eating and drinking, defecating and urinating, resting, walking, standing, sitting, lying down, falling asleep, awakening, or guarding conduct—this is called non-discernment (不正知).” — *Śāriputrābhidharma-śāstra*《舍利弗阿毘曇論》
  - This emphasizes the importance of having right discernment and right mindfulness in all daily activities, even common ordinary actions like walking and sitting.
- Incorrect knowing vs. pure stupidity: the trap of worldly cleverness (世智辯聰)
  - Delusion is not mere mental darkness, torpor, or ignorance. The mind here is active, analytical, and articulate, but its foundational premise is completely skewed. It engages in misguided, distorted thinking and rationalizations, and false discrimination.

    This is the psychological ground of “worldly cleverness and sophistic intellect” (世智辯聰)—individuals who possess sharp wit, but use it to scoff at karma, justify unethical conduct, and out-argue the truth. This “unwholesome worldly cleverness” is a prime example of delusion.
- The tragedy of Kapila
  - A classical scriptural case study from the *Sūtra on the Wise and the Foolish* (《賢愚經》) illustrates the peril of *afflicted intellect* weaponized against Dharma teachers:
  - During the era of Kāśyapa Buddha (迦葉佛the Buddha that appeared before Shakyamuni Buddha in this world), a Brahmin named Kapila (迦毗黎) was remarkably sharp and learned. His mother resented Buddhism, so at his mother’s urging, he shaved his head and feigned being a Buddhist monk simply to study the scriptures and defeat the saṅgha in debates.
  - When he found himself repeatedly unable to out-argue the awakened monks, his pride morphed into virulent contempt. Under the sway of defiled discernment (delusion), he reviled the monks. Adopting his mother’s suggestion, he started calling the monks “donkey-heads,” “ox-heads,” and various animal epithets.
  - Because of this severe verbal karma fueled by twisted intellect, Kapila was reborn as a monstrous sea creature with a hundred animal heads (a head for every insult he uttered), will be trapped in that form across the span of a thousand buddhas, while his mother fell straight into the avīci hell.

# 20. Distraction

- **Distraction** (*vikṣepa)*, 散亂, scatteredness
    - "What is distraction (vikṣepa)? Toward observed objects, it has as its nature causing the mind to drift and wander. Its activity is that of obstructing right concentration (samyak-samādhi) and serving as for distorted discernment. For one who is distracted gives rise to distorted discernment." — CWSL
    - "Mental turmoil, mental scattering, mental drifting, mental fluttering, the mind failing to aim toward a single direction, and failing to abide on a single focal object—this is called mental distraction." — Prakaraṇapāda-śāstra (《阿毘達磨品類足論》
    - Debate its underlying substance: some say it is purely a form of ignorance, as ignorance blinds the mind from remaining unified. Some say it is derived from portions of all three unwholesome roots—greed, anger, and ignorance—as the mind chases desirable sights, flees unpleasant sounds, or wanders aimlessly in confusion.
    - Restlessness vs. distraction: "one object, many views" vs. "one mind, many objects" (掉舉與散亂之別): The classical śāstras resolve the subtle difference between restlessness and distraction by examining whether the instability comes from internal interpretation or shifting external targets:
        - The classical treatises formulate this as the distinction between "causing the mind to change interpretations" (令心易解) versus "causing the mind to change objects" (令心易緣).
        - Restlessness operates primarily from within the mind; the focal object remains fixed, but consciousness churns with agitated evaluation, emotional turbulence, and discursive proliferation—a pattern known as "one object, many thoughts" (*一境多解*). Distraction, by contrast, operates in relation to sensory stimuli (從境); here, the mind abandons its anchor entirely, flitting like a restless monkey from sight to sound to fantasy in rapid succession—a pattern termed "one mind wandering across multiple objects" (一心緣多境).
        - This dynamic becomes immediately visible in meditative practice, such as Buddha-name-recitation. When a practitioner experiences **restlessness**, the focus does not stray from the Buddha, but the mind remains unquiet, caught in an agitated cascade of speculative doubts and evaluations: "*Does the recitation* actually work? Will the Buddha hear me? Will he actually appear at the moment of my death?" When experiencing **distraction (*vikṣepa*)**, however, the recitation is completely derailed by external sensory grasping: the practitioner's awareness drops the Buddha entirely to chase secular preoccupations—wondering what to eat for dinner, recalling a text message, or thoughts about an move. Because distraction continually flings awareness away from its meditative ground, it deprives the mind of the stability needed to observe reality accurately, functioning as the primary operational basis for distorted views and discernment.
    - **Five types of distraction (梁譯《攝大乘論》五種散亂):** Paramārtha's translation of

The *Mahāyānasaṃgraha-śāstra* classifies distraction into five levels of increasing subtlety:

- Inherent distraction: The five sensory consciousnesses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body) failing to stay still and easily chase external stimuli.
- External distraction: The sixth mental consciousness racing outward after worldly things, giving rise to endless conceptual discriminations.
- Internal distraction: The mind fluctuating internally—swinging between high and low, elation and depression, continually unstable from moment to moment.
- Coarse/heavy distraction: Distraction grounded in clinging to a substantial self and what the self possesses, obsessing over one's physical body, wealth, home, and status.
- Reflective distraction: A bodhisattva departing from the mahāyāna path, instead brood on the narrow cultivation path focused on self-liberation, losing peace and equanimity.

- **源頭歷歷記分明，靜裏休教雜念生；割斷去來生死路，故鄉田地不須爭。**

*Keep the original source clear and lucid, present;*
*Amidst the stillness, let no stray wandering thoughts arise.*
*Sever completely the coming-and-going path of birth-and-death;*
*The real estate of your native homeland requires no contention.*

- This verse encapsulates the transformation of scatteredness into awakening. "Clearly noting the source" is right mindfulness; "letting no stray thoughts arise" is the pacification of distraction and restlessness; resting in the "native homeland" is returning to the undisturbed, luminous knowing nature of original mind.

## Exercise #7: Groups 5-2 & 5-3: Medium and Major Secondary Afflictions

This exercise set covers the remaining ten secondary afflictions: the two medium secondary afflictions—**lack of shame** (*āhrīkya*, 無慚) and **lack of embarrassment** (*anapatrāpya*, 無愧)—and the eight major secondary afflictions: **lack of faith** (*āśraddhya*, 不信), **indolence** (*kausīdya*, 懈怠), **heedlessness** (*pramāda*, 放逸), **torpor** (*styāna*, 昏沉), **restlessness** (*auddhatya*, 掉舉), **unmindfulness** (*muṣitasmṛtitā*, 失念), **delusion** (*asaṃprajanya*, 不正知), and **distraction** (*vikṣepa*, 散亂).

# A. Thinking and Internalizing

1. **Conscience Guardians**

Yogācāra states that, the minor (narrow-scope) secondary afflictions (first 10 in the list) are strong in action and never arise with another minor affliction together (i.e., within this category of 10 afflictions, they do not appear at the same time, for example, when one is in wrath, he is not in resentment or spite; those affliction may arise subsequently but not at the same moment.

On the other hand, the medium secondndary afflictions (#11, #12) co-arise with all unwholesome factors. That means, while one is in wrath, there is also lack of shame and lack of embarrassment at the same moment.

Review the definition of the two medium secondary afflictions: **lack of shame** and **lack of embarrassment**.

- Why do you think any negative thought or harmful action—be it a flash of anger or a jealous fit—automatically requires the active presence of both lack of shame and lack of embarrassment?

- Contrast the cognitive triggers of these two factors. Lack of shame is defined as disregarding oneself and the Dharma, rejecting virtue from an internal moral compass. Lack of embarrassment is defined as disregarding the world, ignoring social accountability and public blame.

  Reflect on how "brazen justification" (rationalizing misdeeds as trivial) and "glorifying evil" (openly aligning with corrupt or ruthless behavior) dismantle these moral gateways. How does this psychological breakdown transition an individual or a society from localized misconduct to systemic "ethical bankruptcy," as observed in historical atrocities (like the Rape of Nanking) or corporate financial crimes (like the Enron scandal)?

- From above contemplation we understand that these two mental factors occur in various degrees, from trivial daily transgressions, to horrific magnitude evil. What insight does this observation bring?

2. **The Slow-Acting Poison: Lack of Faith**

The *Cheng Wei Shi Lun* (CWSL / 成唯識論) defines **lack of faith** as having a unique characteristic of "turbidity"—like an contaminating filthy substance that is itself foul and defiles everything it touches.

- Doubt vs. disbelief: Contrast the primary affliction of doubt (**疑**) with the major secondary affliction of lack of faith (**不信**). Why does the Yogācāra state that a doubting person can still be guided to the truth through rational inquiry, whereas a person entrenched in stubborn disbelief is almost impossible to help, even by a Buddha?

- Analyze how lack of faith manifests in modern intellectual circles. How do sensual complacency (satisfaction with chasing sensory pleasures) and reductionism (dismissing personally verifiable meditative results because current empirical tools cannot measure them) act as a slow-acting poison that muddy or brood over other cognitive functions?

- When and how did you become genuinely interested in the Dharma? Was there a period of time in your life when you had disbelief in Buddhism? How did you turn around?

3. **The "Hardworking Criminal" Being Indolent Parodox**

In Yogācāra psychology, **indolence** is the direct opposite of wholesome **diligence** mental factor.

- **The illusion of effort**: Consider a ruthless corporate schemer, a workaholic hustling for corrupt gains, or a highly disciplined criminal. Although they appear "hardworking", Yogācāra classify their intense efforts as indolence. Why? How does expending energy on defiled pursuits wither and starve the wholesome roots of the mind?

- Do you remember being "indolent" this way, working hard on something that is actually not beneficial or even harmful to your body and mind?

- **Neutral exertion**: What about intense exertion in morally neutral activities, such as obsessively mastering a video game, memorizing trivia, or routine secular tasks? Why is this neither diligence nor indolence, yet ultimately a futile expenditure of life energy under the light of liberating wisdom?

- **The procrastinator's trap**: From the story of The Indolent Plowman (《佛說懈怠耕者經》), who deferred paying homage to seven consecutive Buddhas because he "must finish plowing his field first." In your own life, how often do you fall into this exact trap, saying, "Let me finish this busy secular project first," only to let precious opportunities for Dharma practice slip away?

- Reflect on the importance of cultivating the Dharma in your life. Then reflect on the effort you have put into it vs. efforts in mundane tasks. Do they accord? If not, what can you do about it?

4. **False Non-Attachment vs. Heedlessness**

**Heedlessness** (*pramāda* / 放逸) is defined as the inability to guard the mind against defiled phenomena and cultivate pure states, resulting in unbridled self-indulgence and laxity.

- **The "Zen" Excuse**: In Western spiritual culture, some people reason that as long as they feel "peace and love," indulging unchecked in sensory pleasures without worrying about karmic consequences is "practicing Zen" or "being non-attached." Why is this a dangerous delusion? How does authentic Buddhist non-attachment differ from heedlessness?

- **The True Offering**: Nagarjuna's *Daśabhūmi-vibhāṣā* (《十住毗婆沙論》) states that showering the Tathāgata with celestial flowers is not a true offering; rather, focusing the mind in "one-minded non-heedlessness" (一心不放逸) and cultivating the Noble Dharma is the ultimate veneration. What is this practice aiming to achieve? And why is this the true way to venerate the Buddha instead of with praises, chants, and candles?

5. **The Hijacked Lens: Unmindfulness vs. Distraction**

Yogācāra distinguishes **unmindfulness** (*muṣitasmṛtitā* / 失念) and **distraction** (*vikṣepa* / 散亂) as distinct major secondary afflictions.

- **The Camera aiming at trash:** Master Dharmapāla explains that unmindfulness is not a blank mind, but a composite state of **ignorance** (癡) and **mindfulness** (念). Like a camera whose recording function is running perfectly but is pointed directly into a pile of trash, unmindfulness "hijack" our cognitive engine of retention to grip unwholesome or trivial objects (like an insult, a worry, or a craving) instead of the Dharma.

  Reflect on our ordinary day. How often have we been unmindful this way? How often have we aim the lens of our mind on unworthy subjects? What vido clips have we taken to store in our alaya consciousness?

- **Restlessness vs. distraction:** Compare the difference between **restlessness** (*auddhatya* / 掉舉) and **distraction** (*vikṣepa* / 散亂). The classical treatises formulate this as "the mind switch considerations" (one object, many thoughts) versus "causing the mind to change objects" (one mind, many objects).

  How do these two manifest differently during a meditation session (e.g., breath counting or mindfulness of feeling)? Use the distinction between *internal speculation* about the practice versus *external sensory grabbing* (planning dinner, reacting to sounds) to illustrate your answer.

- After a short meditation session (e.g. 15-30 min), reflect on how your mind acted during the meditation. If it wandered away, is it more of a restlessnessness (internal) or distraction (external)? This helps identify our meditation obstacles and use the right tools to overcome them.

6. **Weaponized Intellect: Delusion**

**Delusion** (*asaṃprajanya* / 不正知) is defined as defiled discernment—discernment corrupted by ignorance, desire, or resentment, leading to distorted comprehension and transgressions.

- **The Trap of Worldly Cleverness:** Why is delusion not mere stupidity, but often the ground for "unwholesome worldly cleverness and sophistic intellect" (世智辯聰)? How do articulate, sharp-witted individuals use rationalizations and logical-sounding arguments to scoff at karma, justify unethical conduct, or talk their way out of mistakes?

- **PUA and gaslighting**: These two tactics are textbook examples of "worldly cleverness gone wrong", or weaponized intellect. Discuss or contemplate what afflictive mental factors are involved.

- **Brutally honest reflection:** Reflect on whether yourself have used slight forms of PUA, in order to manipulate another's emotions, to make that person rely on you, or to establish your authority?

- **Empowerment:** The opposite of PUA is empowerment. Give three examples of how the Buddha empowers his disciples, or how a good leader / teacher empowers others. What mental factors are at work here?

## B. Buddhist Meditation Practices

### 7. Dismantling the fog of torpor (styāna / 昏沉)

Torpor is the opposite of **serenity** (*praśrabdhi* / 輕安). It is defined as causing the mind to become unwieldy, foggy, and heavy, completely obstructing *vipaśyanā* (insight contemplation).

- **Meditation remedy:** Sit for 20 minutes. If you experience torpor—characterized by a muddle-headed obscuration (昏 / hūn) where awareness dims, and a sinking heaviness (沉 / chén) where the body and mind weigh down:

  1. Do not struggle blindly against the drowsiness, as this breeds frustration.
  2. Consciously invoke the visualization of brightness—imagine a sphere of pure, white light or the sun illuminating the space behind your closed eyelids.
  3. If the torpor remains heavy, gently open your eyes slightly, direct your gaze toward a stable, pure object (like an image of the Buddha or an incense burner), or chant/read the Heart Sutra or a short Dharma passage aloud.
  4. If physical sleepiness persists, transition mindfully into walking meditation or perform 10 slow, reverent prostrations to the Buddha to activate warmth and consciousness.

### 8. Untangling Restlessness (*auddhatya*) and Distraction (*vikṣepa*)

Practice a 15-minute meditation on the breath to observe the subtle movements of these two afflictions:

- **Identify distraction:** When your mind drops the breath entirely to chase an external stimulus (a bird chirping outside, a planning thought for dinner, or a memory), label this immediately as **distraction** (*vikṣepa* / "one mind wandering across multiple objects"). Gently, without judgment, guide the mind back to the breath.

- **Identify restlessness:** When your mind remains anchored to the breath, but is churning with internal agitation, emotional evaluation, or anxious thoughts about the practice itself ("Is this working? Am I doing this right? When will the timer ring?"), label this as **restlessness** (*auddhatya* / "one object, many thoughts").

- Apply the **lantern analogy**: Imagine your mind as a candle flame. See how restlessness acts like wind, causing the flame to flicker, blurring its illumination. Let go of the internal wind of evaluation. Shield the flame with the glass of *śamatha* (calm abiding), allowing the light of *samādhi* to burn steady, clear, and quiet.

- Conclude your meditation, always, by returning to the knowing, the pure awareness, without focusing on an object. Simply experience its presence.

9. **Returning to the Native Homeland: The Non-Duality of Chan**
Remembering the Chan master's verse:
*"Keep the original source clear and lucid, present;*
*Amidst the stillness, let no stray wandering thoughts arise.*

**The Practice:** Observe the rising and falling of your breath using your **pure knowing mind** (覺性). Drop the dualistic concepts of "I am the meditator" and "the breath is the object." No need to label "in" or "out." Simply rest as the boundaryless, undisturbed, luminous *knowing nature* that experiences the airflow. Let all major afflictions—distraction, restlessness, unmindfulness, and torpor—dissolve like waves returning to a vast, still ocean. This is the "native homeland" of the original mind.

## C. Daily Application

10. **The "conscience check"**
The medium afflictions (*āhrīkya* and *anapatrāpya*) arise with every unwholesome thought. This week, establish an active defense mechanism to strength your moral compass:

- When tempted to cut a corner, tell a small lie to protect your ego, or react with irritation, perform a **conscience check** by asking two questions:

    1. **Internal (shame)***:* "Does this action align with the person of integrity I wish to be?" (Invoking *hrī* / self-respect).

    2. **External (embarrassment)**: "If my spiritual teacher, my community, or those I respect saw this action, would I feel comfortable?" (Invoking *apatrāpya* / social accountability).

- Observe how aligning with truth immediately dissolves the "brazen justification" temptation that feeds the ego-self.

11. **Busy = indolence?**
Review your daily schedule and identify areas of "neutral exertion" (intense effort spent on trivia, video games, or social media) or "sensual sloth" (procrastination masked as relaxation).

- Remember the warning of The Indolent Plowman. Review this past week, refuse to let worldly chores completely starve your spiritual life for a whole week.

- Commit to a non-negotiable 15-minute daily block of sincere Dharma study, lecture review, or silent meditation. When the mind says, "I am too busy/too tired today, let me do it tomorrow," recognize this immediately as the face of **indolence** and use your **diligence** to engage Dharma practice anyway.

- Extend the daily must-do Dharma practice to 30 minutes when you are ready (set a goal of, say, 3 months).

12. **Re-aligning the camera lens (uprooting unmindfulness)**

Throughout the day, monitor what your mind's "camera" is recording.

- The challenge: When you find your mind's recording function hijacked by "trash"—such as replaying an online argument, obsessing over a past slight, or looping a craving—stop and acknowledge that unmindfulness has taken over.

- Practice: Use right mindfulness to actively re-align the camera. Point the lens back to a wholesome object: the present moment, a breath, a word of gratitude, or the recollection of a Dharma teaching. Wear right mindfulness like a "sturdy armor" to protect yourself from the thieves of the five sensory desires.

13. **Dismantling sophistic cleverness (correcting delusion)**

Delusion (*asaṃprajanya* / 不正知) often presents itself as sharp, defensive "worldly cleverness".

- The challenge: This week, pay close attention to your speech. When you make a mistake, fail to meet a commitment, or act out of an affliction, catch yourself if your mind tries to deploy "sophisticated rationalizations" to out-argue the truth or blame others (e.g., "I only did that because they were unfair first").

- Practice: Intentionally practice a straightforward mind (**直心**). Stop the clever arguments. Simply, plainly, and honestly admit your mistake or lack of knowledge: "I made a mistake here," or "I spoke out of anger, and I apologize." Observe the immense psychological energy one saves when one stops using delusional guile to manage and curate how others perceive oneself.

14. **"Shared sunset" rejoice (counteracting envy through sympathetic joy)**

**Envy** (*īrṣyā* / 嫉) does not always manifest as outward hostility; it often operates as a quiet, deflating contraction in the mind when a peer, colleague, or even a friend receives praise, a major promotion, or unexpected good fortune. The ego-self (*manas*) instantly treats life as a zero-sum game, quietly interpreting their gain as your personal loss, which leaves you feeling subtly drained or left behind.

- **Practice:** This week, actively monitor your mind and body for that silent "deflation" or tightening of the stomach when someone else is placed in the spotlight or shares good news.

- **Action:** Instead of offering a polite but distant "Congratulations" or retreating into passive indifference, step directly into active sympathetic joy (*muditā* / **隨喜功德**). Go out of your way to ask them about their success in person or in a detailed message: "I would love to hear how you pulled off this milestone! Tell me all about it."

- **Contemplative shift:** As they share their happiness, practice listening with a completely open mind. Treat their success exactly like a magnificent sunset in the sky—you do not need to "own" the sunset, nor does its beauty diminish your own life, to be deeply warmed and delighted by its existence.

- **Clear observation:** Notice how leaning into their joy dissolves the painful, defensive effects of envy. Observe how in that moment of sincere rejoicing, you have shared their happiness as your own, turn your concern to common good, expanded your vision, thereby accumulating great merit without costing you a single cent.

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**(below: Lecture notes not prepared yet)**

## Group Six: Indeterminate Dharmas

The four indeterminate dharmas are: sleep, remorse, inspection, and investigation.

## CLASS 3: FORM DHARMS

**The third class, form dharmas**, include eleven in general: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body; form, sound, smell, taste, touch, and thought-object.

## CLASS 4: NON-MIND-ASSOCIATED DHARMS

**The fourth class, non-mind-associated dharmas**, include twenty-four in general: gain, basis of life, commonality, mundane disparity, thoughtless absorption, cessation absorption, fruit of thoughtless absorption, name, sentence, alphabet/language, birth, abidance, aging, impermanence, flux, karmic distinction, karmic correlation, speed, serial order, time, space, number, congruence, incompatibility.

## CLASS 5: UNCONDITIONED DHARMAS

**The fifth class, unconditioned dharmas**, include six in general: empty space, unconditioned by discernment, unconditioned without discernment, immovable samadhi, cessation of conception and feeling, and true-suchness.

Regarding "void of a self," there are two kinds in brief: a sentient being is

void of a self, and dharmas are void of a self.