



An Introduction to the Central Paradigm of UNITY IN DUALITY

There is a timeless universal wisdom concerning human existence and the existence of the universe. This wisdom is so old that it might even have been connected with ancient western knowledge long before it flowered in the eastern hemisphere in India and later on in Tibet¹. This wisdom encompasses the knowledge that our seemingly solid world in its deepest nature is subject to continuous becoming and cessation and that at its root anything is interconnected with everything else, in unity; and that everything which exists has a causal and interdependent nature. This means that each and every phenomenon only exists because of the coming together of countless causes and components in every moment – in duality. In Tibetan this knowledge, of the interdependent origination of everything that exists, is called “**Tendrel**”. Unity in Duality springs from the Buddhist wisdom tradition’s expression of this universal knowledge.

The specific view of UNITY IN DUALITY is best described by the central paradigm of the three inter-determining unities of subject-object, mind-body and energy-matter. To understand these interrelationships in all their implications and to actualise them in one’s own personal experience is the core of Tarab Tulku Rinpoche’s holistic approach and his deepest concern.

1. The Interrelationship of Subject and Object.

Within the Buddhist ‘science of the mind’² we find a precise analysis of the subject’s perceptive and cognitive tools, which correspond exactly and exclusively to their respective perceptive and cognitive objects. On the one hand there are the five sense minds, which facilitate perception of the five sense objects, and on the other hand there is the so-called sixth sense mind, which serves for the cognition of the respective cognitive objects³.

This means, that the subjective perception/cognition of the object can never lead beyond the specific capacity of the respective perceptive/cognitive tool. Due to the specific characteristics of these tools the subject thus constitutes the object in the particular form in which it is perceived: without the perceiving sense-minds the sense-reality would not exist in this form, and without the cognitive sixth sense mind the cognitive reality would not exist in this form either. At the same time, without the object the corresponding sense / sixth sense-minds can neither arise within the subject. Therefore one can conclude that both on the

¹ See “Scientific Expedition to Various Countries”, Tibet 1990 (ISBN7-80589-002-1/z.1) by Gendün Chöpel about the origin of the Brahmins.

² Tib. *Sems-rig*

³ A clear distinction of this is generally not experienced by the subject. In the subjective experience the sense-perception is immediately submitted to cognitive interpretation. This is then taken to be “the” reality. (further explanation: “The three disciplines of the Unity in Duality training”)

sense level and on the conceptual level, subject and object come into existence interdependently and simultaneously. This is a first reason as to the interrelationship of subject and object.

Furthermore the degree of subtlety of the corresponding perceptive/cognitive tools determines the nature of the reality which can be experienced. The more subtle the subject's tools the more refined or subtle the level of the object. This is a second reason for the interrelationship of subject and object.

Finally, according to one of the Buddhist philosophical schools⁴, subject and object spring from the same root. Due to an extremely subtle energy-imprint⁵ on the fundamental level of 'Mind', it splits itself into 'self' and 'other'⁶, in this way bringing dualism into existence. From here on the dualistic split manifests in increasingly coarse forms until it reaches our level of subject and object. Thus the subtle energy-imprint on the fundamental level of consciousness is, on the one hand, the determining factor for the development of the different levels of 'mind' and 'body' (subject-pole) as well as, on the other hand, the experience of the respective objects (object-pole). This is a third reason for the interrelationship and unity of subject and object.

For these reasons, according to UNITY IN DUALITY, the experience of the object is constantly referring back to the subject, both on the theoretical/philosophical and on the practical/experiential level⁷, whereby the respective perceptive/cognitive tool is a main point of consideration. The subject is thus seen as the key factor for the individual's experience of reality.

2. The Interrelationship of 'Mind' and 'Body'

The basic components of the subject are mind and body. From the physical body and ordinary mind these two aspects can be found in different forms of 'embodiment' and 'mind-nature' on increasingly deeper and more subtle levels of the subject.

On the outer most level the subject possesses a coarse material body with five sense organs and five sense-powers. This sets the frame for a coarse mind that consists of the five perceptive sense-minds and the cognitive sixth sense-mind. On this level of mind-body the subject is restricted to ordinary time-space limitation.

On a more subtle level the subject possesses a subtle energy-body⁹, endowed with all the energy senses. This 'embodiment' sets the frame for the five subtle sense-minds and for a subtle sixth sense-mind, which has special cognitive and intuitive abilities. In the dream state we naturally take on an energy-body, the so-called "dream-body", but we are usually not aware of it¹⁰. Advanced practitioners of Tantric Buddhist practices develop through meditative training the ability to consciously use their energy-body. This body has an extended time-space limitation, which can be used for spiritual development.

On the most subtle level there is an extremely fine energy-based body/mind¹¹. Even though in this body/mind one can distinguish an extremely subtle 'embodiment-aspect' and an extremely subtle 'aspect of mind-nature', ultimately both are inseparably united. According to the Tantric Buddhist view it seems as though this unity of body/mind is basic to all existence. On this level the time-space limitation is extended even further.

⁴ The Yogacara or Cittamatra school

⁵ Tib. *Bag-chags*

⁶ On this extremely subtle level 'self' is to be understood in the sense of a primordial identification of basic awareness with itself and 'other' likewise in the sense of a primordial 'experience' of basic awareness pertaining to 'non-self'.

⁷ However, it is important to notice that the Buddhist philosophy is not an idealistic philosophy.

⁸ According to Buddhist philosophy the actual perceptive powers can't be attributed to the physical sense organs, but rather to energy-based sense powers (Tib. *dBang-po*) that are located in the respective sense-organ.

⁹ Tib. *Yid-lus*

¹⁰ An exception to this is when one masters the so-called lucid dream bodymind.

¹¹ Tib. *rLung-sems*

Thus on all levels an aspect of 'body' stands in necessary interrelation to an aspect of 'mind'. The 'body' aspect sets the frame for a certain 'mind', which in turn experiences a corresponding reality. A more subtle 'embodiment' therefore allows for a more subtle 'mind', which leads to a deeper experience of reality in terms of an extended time-space-limitation.

3. The Interrelationship of Energy and Matter

Considering the deepest level of the 'mind'-'body' interrelationship ultimately leads us back to the beginning of evolution. The interrelationship of energy and matter must be investigated on this level in order to really understand the interrelationship between 'mind' and 'body' as well as between subject and object in all its implications. The understanding of the five, or respectively six¹² so-called 'element-origins'¹³, which are the energy origin of matter¹⁴, is the key to the understanding of the fundamental energy-matter interrelationship. The 'element-origins' possess the respective functions of materialisation (earth-element-origin), cohesion (water-element-origin), maturation (fire-element-origin), movement and expansion (wind-element-origin) and finally of the potentiality of all powers (space-element-origin) as well as the awareness nature (mind-element-origin).

The unfoldment from energy to matter on this primordial level is described in the following way¹⁵. If an inseparable unit of four subtle element-origin-energies (earth-water-fire-wind-element-origin) meets another such inseparable unit then something new comes into existence. Energy crystallises in an extremely subtle form aspect constituting the five so-called 'sense-object-particles', which now consist of nine 'particles' all together; including the element-origin-energies. From here on this energy-matter-crystallisation unfolds on increasingly coarser levels up until that which we actually perceive as the five sense objects, and which forms our material world. At the same time the reverse process of enfoldment of matter back into its energy origin takes place incessantly. This process of simultaneous and continuous arising and cessation can be described as the fundamental pulsation or 'breathing' of the universe.

In this process of infoldment* of matter into energy and unfoldment of energy to matter, even on the coarsest level of matter, the living energy of the 'element-origins' remains. The manifest universe in each moment is thus inseparably connected to its energy origin with energy continuously saturating matter in all its forms and varieties. This constitutes the fundamental interrelationship or unity of energy and matter.

It is implicit in the paradigm of the three inter-determining unities of subject/object, mind/body and energy/matter that the interrelationship/unity of energy-matter forms the basis for the interrelationship/unity of the 'mind'-'body', which in turn forms the basis for the interrelationship/unity of subject-object. It is only due to the existence of the interrelationship between these three inter-determining unities that everything is possible: *i.e.* the cause and effect nature of phenomena, their interdependent nature and all development of the inner and the outer worlds, including both self-development and spiritual development as well as any form of evolution, transformation and change.



¹² The sixth 'element-origin' is due to a further differentiation of the fifth 'element-origin'.

¹³ Tib. 'Byung-ba

¹⁴ Tib. 'Byung-gyur, where 'Byung' means 'element-origin' and 'Gyur' means "appearing from".

¹⁵ E.g. in the Abhidharmakosa by Vasubandhu.