

Unity in Duality

Introduction to some Basic Essentials in regard to Implication and Application of the Tendrel / Unity in Duality / Interrelated Nature of Existence

Lene Handberg
Semrig Thablam Rabjam

TABLE OF CONTENT

- Introduction to *Tendrel / Unity in Duality / Interrelated Nature of Existence*
- The Entwined Interrelated Nature of *Subject – Object, Body - ‘Mind’ and Matter - ‘Energy’*
- Essential Aspects of the particular *Tendrel / Unity in Duality / Interrelated Nature of Existence* in Regard to the Conceptual Field and Consequences
- Nature of Sense Minds / Sense Realities with Specific Relevance for Unity in Duality Applications
- The Tendrel / Unity in Duality Nature / Interrelated Nature of the
- ‘Self’-Reference and the Experienced Reality
- The Dynamics between the Conceptualizing Mind and Appearance-experiencing Mind as well as Feeling-experiencing Mind and its *Tendrel / Unity in Duality / Interrelated Nature* in regard to Reality Creation
- Utilizing the Understanding of the *Tendrel / Unity in Duality / Interrelated Nature* of Existence for Transformation
- Finishing Remark
- Bibliography
- Resume of the Article

Introduction to Tendrel / Unity in Duality / Interrelated Nature of Existence

The ancient knowledge that underlies the *Unity in Duality / Tendrel* paradigm, which Tarab Tulku¹ presented as an extract of the universal knowledge from the Sutras and Tantras, derives partly from Tibet’s own academic culture and partly from the Indian one. Indian academic tradition is said to have roots back 5.000 years into the ancient culture of the Indus Valley. This melting pot of ancient cultures seems to comprise likewise traces of insight and knowledge from Western cultures of that time².

Tarab Tulku’s main concern and main reason for presenting *Unity in Duality* was partly to preserve the universal aspects of this ancient and most extraordinary knowledge from Tibet and India, which

¹ Tarab Tulku Chögyi Nyima Ngawang Losang, Lharampa Geshe / PhD from Lhasa University Monastery (1935-2004), the originator of Unity in Duality – the author of this article being his co-originator.

² Tarab Tulku, *Einheit in der Dualität /Unity in Duality –Einführung anhand einer Darlegung von Tendrel / Introduction through an exposition of Tendrel*, p. 4 / 26. Privatinstitut Tarab Ladrang e.V., München, 2000.

has survived in Tibet being part of the Tibetan heritage, and partly to present it in a form that makes sense to people of today despite their different cultures and religions. Tarab Tulku thus presented the essential Buddhist view of *Tendrel* in an all-encompassing way, together with the methods of application found to be useful in everyday life for people of this modern culture – as *Unity in Duality*.

The *Unity in Duality* view encompasses ancient ‘science of mind and phenomena’ – including a deeply inspiring epistemological view as one of the outcomes of its research on the interrelated nature of the different types of mind and corresponding realities – personal development as well as spiritual application. But the *Unity in Duality* approach is also offering an extremely useful basis for psychotherapeutic application as well as it naturally supplies the methods in the form of a self-developmental approach.

Said in short, the basis of the *Unity in Duality* view is the *Tendrel Nature*, i.e. the interrelated nature of existence, suspended particularly by means of the entwined interrelationships in and between subject-object and body-‘mind’ as well as ‘energy’³-matter. However, the *Unity in Duality Approach* is not concerned with the isolated understanding of these saturating interrelationships. Rather, from within the *Unity in Duality* view, which is constituted by means of these interrelationships, the *Unity in Duality methods* are to be applied in everyday life, allowing to regain command over and responsibility for our self referential feelings and the corresponding reality as well as for our actions of body, speech and mind, naturally facilitating respect for ourselves and others as well as for nature.

Before venturing further into aspects of implications and implementation of the *Unity in Duality* view, I will give an overview by presenting the three entwined interdependent pairs of subject-object, body-‘mind’ and matter-‘energy’.

The Entwined Interrelated Nature of Subject - Object, Body - ‘Mind’ and Matter - ‘Energy’

In accordance with the Buddhist ‘science of mind and phenomena’ the first enquiry into reality is the one into the interrelationship of subject and object. The understanding that what we experience as the object (object-pole) does not exist as such, independently of the experiencing mind (subject-pole), is leading to the necessity of investigating the nature of persons’ perceptive and cognitive abilities. This naturally implies an investigation of body and ‘mind’ in their interrelationship to realize the conditions under which we experience as we do. This investigation leads the Buddhist scholars into the very basis of the body and ‘mind’ respectively, which may be expressed by the term ‘energy’. As a natural consequence they were therefore also lead into exploring the ‘energy’ and matter interrelationship, in order to grasp in depth the interrelationship between body and ‘mind’ as well as between subject and object⁴.

Because of the understanding that the person’s perception / cognition cannot take him beyond the abilities of the tools used⁵ - a realization which dates back at least to the 2nd century AC with Nagarjuna (approx. 150-250) - within Buddhism the analysis of the object was never undertaken as a separate task in itself. That means that the experience of the object-pole was always related back to the subject-pole and the particular tool used for perceiving (perceptive function) was examined

³ ‘Mind’ and ‘energy’ within the *U.D.* notation are used in inverted commas in order to indicate that these terms have a meaning different from common usage.

⁴ We are indebted to Tarab Tulku as for specifically presenting these three entwined interrelationships together. He managed to present them in such an obvious way that one should think their togetherness must have been clear to anybody knowing the ‘*Inner Science of Mind and Phenomena*’ and practice. However, this presentation is indeed unique to Tarab Tulku.

⁵ This understanding we can also find among the insights of modern western physics, with particular reference to the Danish physicist Niels Bohr as well as to Werner Heisenberg’s ”Uncertainty Principle”.

and taken into account in order to understand the basis, the premise and the limitations of the experience of the object in question, i.e. the referential object.

Through this investigation the later Buddhist Schools⁶ clearly stated that the object doesn't exist "out there" in its own right, the way we habitually experience it. The subject-pole is always interrelated with its 'reality', the object-pole, as we can never go beyond our experience and the frame the perceptive tools (subject-pole) naturally set for our experience. This specifically implies that the conceptualizing mind is interrelated with the conceptual reality, which doesn't exist without it coming about simultaneously with the arising of the conceptualizing mind, experience it⁷.

The acknowledgement of the special role the subject-pole plays for our reality experience led the Buddhist scholars to the enquiry into the subject's components, the body and 'mind'. In this epistemological framework "body" is an expression of "the five sense powers, *indriya*"⁸, which together with the sense minds and their respective objects are basic for our common human reality, which again is that upon which the conceptual mind⁹ builds its conceptual reality. However, the scholars found that also the sense minds are interrelated with the respective sense realities, the latter of which therefore don't exist "out there" in their own right either.¹⁰

This important distinction between the sense-minds and the conceptualizing mind was already made in the early Pramana texts¹¹. In accordance with this epistemological analysis the conceptualizing mind is considered the most *unfolded* among the different types of mind. By means of language it abstracts from the sense reality and thus provides us with an astonishing freedom. On this basis the conceptualizing mind has the ability to extract certain aspects from the whole, creating the 'conceptual-wholeness-experiences' that make up our conceptual reality, which again make it possible to compare and analyze. Within this ability we find the roots of the mental superiority of humans to animals. However, I will later argue that in the dominance of the conceptualizing mind, which is the norm in modern culture, we can find important roots for many of the mental and intercultural as well as environmental problems facing men of modern culture. Problems that to a large extent are caused and furthered by the increasingly isolated use of the conceptualizing mind, in modern cultures therefore often referred to by the term "mind".

The subtlest intuitive levels of 'mind'¹², in accordance with the Tantric literature and the experiences of the yogis¹³, are seen as relying on so-called subtle-'mind'-senses and subtle-'mind'-bodies¹⁴. The extraordinary scholars and body-'mind' researchers of the ancient Hindu and Buddhist cultures found that there is an awareness nature with any embodiment – any living body embodies awareness nature. The physical body has *matter nature* and *awareness nature*, the latter

⁶ The Yogacara and the Madhyamaka Schools.

⁷ Clearly expressed in the three Buddhist Schools: Sautrantika, Yogacara and Madhyamaka.

⁸ The sense-field on the subject-pole comprises the physical sense organs and their respective *indriyas* / sense-powers plus the respective sense-minds. The body-sense is the foremost sense, which is said to be like a container for the other senses and is to be found everywhere in the body. The sense-field comprises likewise the senses of seeing, hearing, tasting and smell.

⁹ Tib. *Yid-kyi rtog-pa'i rnam-shes*

¹⁰ Which is clearly expressed in the later Schools of Yogacara and Madhyamaka.

¹¹ Dignaga (AD 480-540), *Comprising the Meaning of all Pramana Texts*, (Tib. *Tshad-ma kun-btus* / Skt. *Pramanasamuccaya*), *bsTan-'gyur*, Peking Edition No. 5700.

¹² In the context of this paper when referring to 'mind', we refer to a much broader meaning of this term ranging from conceptualising mind, image-experiencing mind, feeling-mind (the 6th sense-mind) to the sense-minds (the five sense-minds) where particularly some of the feeling-minds are very subtle types of mind taking part in very subtle bodymind constitutions, consciously reachable only by means of deep meditative abilities.

¹³ Herbert V. Guenther, *The Life and Teachings of Naropa*, Oxford University Press 1963; Tsongkhapa Lobzang Drakpa, *Tsongkhapa's Six Yogas of Naropa*, Snow Lion Publication, Ithaca, New York 1996.

¹⁴ In accordance with Tarab Tulku, *'Tendrel' Inner Science of Mind and Phenomena, I*, (Tib. *Nang-don rig-pa'i gzhung-las byung-ba'i sems-kyi tshan-rig rten-'brel snang-ba'i gzi-byin*).

being of 'energy' nature. Within the Hindu view even plants are seen as having living 'awareness' that can be equalled to some of the more rudimentary levels of human mind¹⁵. Going deeper in their investigation, this ancient view states that even inorganic matter comprises both matter as well as 'energy' /potential field¹⁶, the latter being the actual basis of its matter existence.

In the Vaibhasika and Sautrantika views all matter is traced back to the subtlest final particles, which no longer have matter nature, but are seen as 'energy'. In the Yogacara view both matter and 'mind' are traced back to *bagcha / vasana*¹⁷, subtle 'energy'-imprints, which are the determining factors for the development of body and 'mind' at its different levels as well as for the manifestation of subject and object all together, and further back into an underlying 'energy'-field, *bagcha / vasana* are basic to existence as such – like potential rules for the unfoldment of existence. In accordance with the ancient view organic matter, inorganic matter as well as the 'universe' are thus seen as having 'awareness'-like-'energy', which is basic to all of existence in its unfolding process into diversity, manifesting in the form of more and more specialized species. This basic universal 'awareness-energy' is seen as saturating matter in all its varieties and subtleties. Without this 'energy' principle matter would not exist. Without the continuous pulsation from 'energy' to matter, and the dissolution from matter to 'energy' nothing would continue to exist and nothing would be able to change or develop¹⁸.

In this way the interrelationship of matter and 'energy' seems to be the key to the understanding of the body – 'mind' interrelationship, which in turn is the prerequisite necessary to comprehend the subject and thereby the subject – object interrelationship. But what have the three entwined interrelationships to do with us, and with our reality? Very much so! What these ancient scholars and researchers are drawing our attention to is our own existential condition. The subject-object, body-'mind' as well as matter-'energy' interrelationships constitute the frame that is suspending our being-ness and our entire world of experiences.

There has been much investigation into these interrelationships both on the side of the Sutras as well as in the Tantras by means of meditative absorptions, sharpening the more subtle perceptive tools, which are giving access to different levels of body-'mind' and reality experience accordingly. Since the given body sets the frame for a particular time and space limitation, a subtler embodiment naturally widens the time and space limitations, making it possible for the 'mind' to appreciate this wider dimension. Thus attending to deeper levels of the body-'mind' interrelationship, the tantric practitioners were able to approach the unity of the interrelationships of subject-object, as well as 'energy'-matter, addressing the so-called "spiritual dimension".

¹⁵ Tarab Tulku & Lene Handberg, UD Textbook "Yogacara".

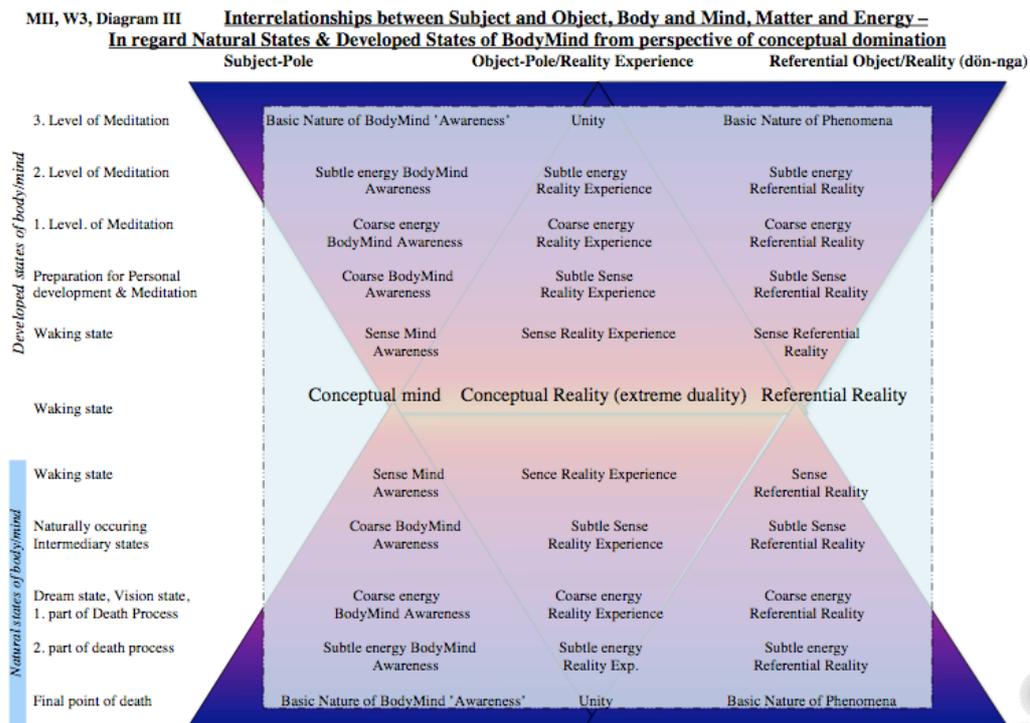
¹⁶ Vasubandhu (approx. 400-480), *Abidharmakosabhasyam*, Vol. I, Chap. I, v.12a-b, p. 68. 'Energy' is here relating to "jungwa" (Tib. 'Byung-ba) and subtle matter relates to "jungjur" (Tib. 'Byung-gyur).

¹⁷ *Bagcha* (Tib. *Bag-chags*) / *vasana* (Skt.) / sedimental imprints. The sedimental imprints have many different types and levels. In accordance with the Yogacara view there are special types of *bagcha / vasana* basic to the way in which existence unfolds – universally as individually – these basic types of *bagcha / vasana* are like the potential rules of existence. In accordance with Tarab Tulku three types of these basic *bagcha / vasana* have a very special influence on the way we experience at our level of existence either being: the first being basic to the feeling types of experiencing, *dagde bagcha (bDag-lta 'i bag-chags) / ātma·d@∑†i-vāsanā / sedimental imprints of 'self'-reference*; the second being basic to image way of experiencing, *sipe yanglag gi bagcha (Srid-pa 'i yang-lag gi bag-chags) / bhavā[ga-vāsanā / sedimental imprints of becoming*; and the third being basic to the conceptual way of experiencing, *Ngön jö kyi bagcha (mNgon-brjod kyi bag-chags) / ābhilāpa-vāsanā / sedimental imprints of notion*. Also in the Yogacara view is indicated a primordial, universal levels of *bagcha*, as well as an individual level. The primordial and the universal *bagcha / vasana* being basic to the different collective layers of *bagcha* as well as to the individual existence. Tarab Tulku, UD Textbook on Yogacara.

¹⁸ Tarab Tulku Rinpoche, 'Tendrel' *Inner Science of Mind and Phenomena, I* (Tib. *Nang-don rig-pa'i gzhung-las byung-ba'i sems-kyi tshan-rig rten-'brel snang-ba'i gzi-byin*).

These ancient researchers thus hold that we as humans have not just one possible body-mind constellation, but we have different more subtle body-mind constellations with more refined tools, with which we can access the corresponding object, i.e. letting our reality unfold in contact with *dön nga*¹⁹. So in accordance with this insight we can speak of a body-mind-reality interrelationship. It was partly by means of using these refined body-mind constellations the ancient researchers investigated the subtle levels of existence.

Through serious research these three entwined interrelationships became the naturally implicit paradigm of the ancient universe. What is really special for us in the West is that this same paradigm implicitly is being shared by modern science, particular by nuclear physicists starting with Bohr and Heisenberg, but also shared to different extent by other fields of natural science²⁰.



Explanation to the diagram: This diagram is illustrating the interrelationships between subject-object, body-'mind' as well as between matter-'energy' in regard both to naturally occurring levels of body-'mind' constellations (lower part of the diagram) as well as in regard to developed levels of body-'mind' constellations (upper part of the diagram).

Notice in particular the mirroring of the naturally occurring states of body-'mind' and the developed states. The different subtle states of body-'mind' are body-'mind' states we have naturally, but in which we are normally unconscious, whereas the tantric practitioner is explicitly making these subtle body-'mind' states conscious in the course of practice. *This diagram is created by Tarab Tulku and Lene Handberg in relation with the Unity in Duality Education.*

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¹⁹ (Tib. *Don-Inga*), the reference of our sense-minds (and any other kind of mind), not to mistaken for the object appearing, the latter being interrelated with its subject-pole.

²⁰ For instance, Kant recognized the interrelationship between conceptual mind and the conceptual object; Kabat-Zinn, MBSR and Segal, Williams and Teasdale, Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy MBCT, recognize the interrelation between subject and object. All psychotherapeutic directions recognize some sort of subject-object interrelationship.