



Definition of Existence

Root Text

ཚེང་མས་དམིགས་པ་ཡོད་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད།

TSE ME MIK-PA YÖ-PAY TSEN NYI

“The definition of existence is perceiving valid perceptions (*pramanas*).”

Comments

This is an example of a definition found in Buddhist scriptures, in this case from the ཚེང་མ TSE MA Buddhist logic studies, *studies of valid perception* (Sanskrit *pramana*). This topic is studied to figure out hidden and very hidden objects by using reasoning. An example of a hidden object is if Buddhahood could be achieved, and is it possible to end all sufferings or not.

With Tibetan sometimes it helps a lot to read the sentence backwards, so let’s do this!

མཚན་ཉིད TSEN NYI means *definition*.

ཡོད་པ YÖ-PA means *existence*, from ཡོད YÖ *to exist*, where the ་པ PA particle again is used to make a word from -- in this case a verb.

ཡོད་པའི YÖ-PAY here uses the ་འི Genitive particle, as ཡོད་པ ends with a vowel the genitive is ་འི .

We could translate the genitive here as ‘of’, so ཡོད་པའི་མཚན་ཉིད is *the definition of existence*. Note again how we need to read this backwards, instead of thinking in English word order such as ‘existence of the definition’ which is very much wrong.

དམིགས་པ MIK-PA means *observation, to conceive, to perceive*.

Finally, ཚོད་མེས་ལྟོགས་ TSE ME is ཚོད་མེས་ལྟོགས་ TSE MA, *valid perception*, or *pramana* in Sanskrit.

In this case it has another particle included, the instrumental particle in forms of the ending ལྟོགས་, as the word ends with a vowel. In this case, it is an **Agent**, frequently encountered in Tibetan texts. In this case, the agent is pointing out that this is a **Subject**, or speaking with more words the agent of a voluntary verb. Tibetan language differs between voluntary actions (I did it) versus non-voluntary actions (this happened to me). Non-intentional verbs can't have an agent. Anyway, expect this particle show up as the first words in a sentence for example, pointing out the agent or means by which something occurs.

Now the best is to memorize this sentence as you could learn the grammar from remembering this statement, and if someone asks what is existence you have now an answer. If you don't know what is a valid perception, then you need to find this out!