

# KNOW YOUR MIND (1)

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Sravasti Abbey

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# Topics covered

- Why it's important to know the mind
- What is the mind?
- There are different types of mind, e.g six consciousnesses
- Perception and conception
- Minds that are correct and wrong
- Seven types of awareness

# The importance of mind

“There are two reasons why it is important to understand the nature of the mind. One is because there is an intimate connection between mind and karma. The other is that our state of mind plays a crucial role in our experiences of happiness and suffering.”

From *What is the Mind?* by the Dalai Lama

<https://www.lamayeshe.com/article/what-mind>

# Mind and karma

Mind is the fore-runner of [all evil] conditions.

Mind is chief, and they are mind-made.

If, with an impure mind, one speaks or acts, then pain follows one, even as the wheel [follows] the hoof of the ox.

Mind is the fore-runner of [all good] conditions.

Mind is chief, and they are mind-made.

If, with a pure mind, one speaks or acts, then happiness follows one, even as the shadow that never leaves.

*The Dhammapada*

# Mind and happiness / suffering

- Two people in the same situation—e.g. a delayed flight-- can have very different experiences.
- One person gets upset, angry, complains and blames—i.e. their mind is disturbed, unpeaceful, unhappy.
- Another person accepts the situation, remains calm, and uses the time constructively—i.e. their mind is peaceful, and even happy (if they're doing virtuous things).
- Unhappiness and suffering are due to afflictive states of mind. But we can learn how to manage these so they don't hijack our mind and destroy our peace and happiness.

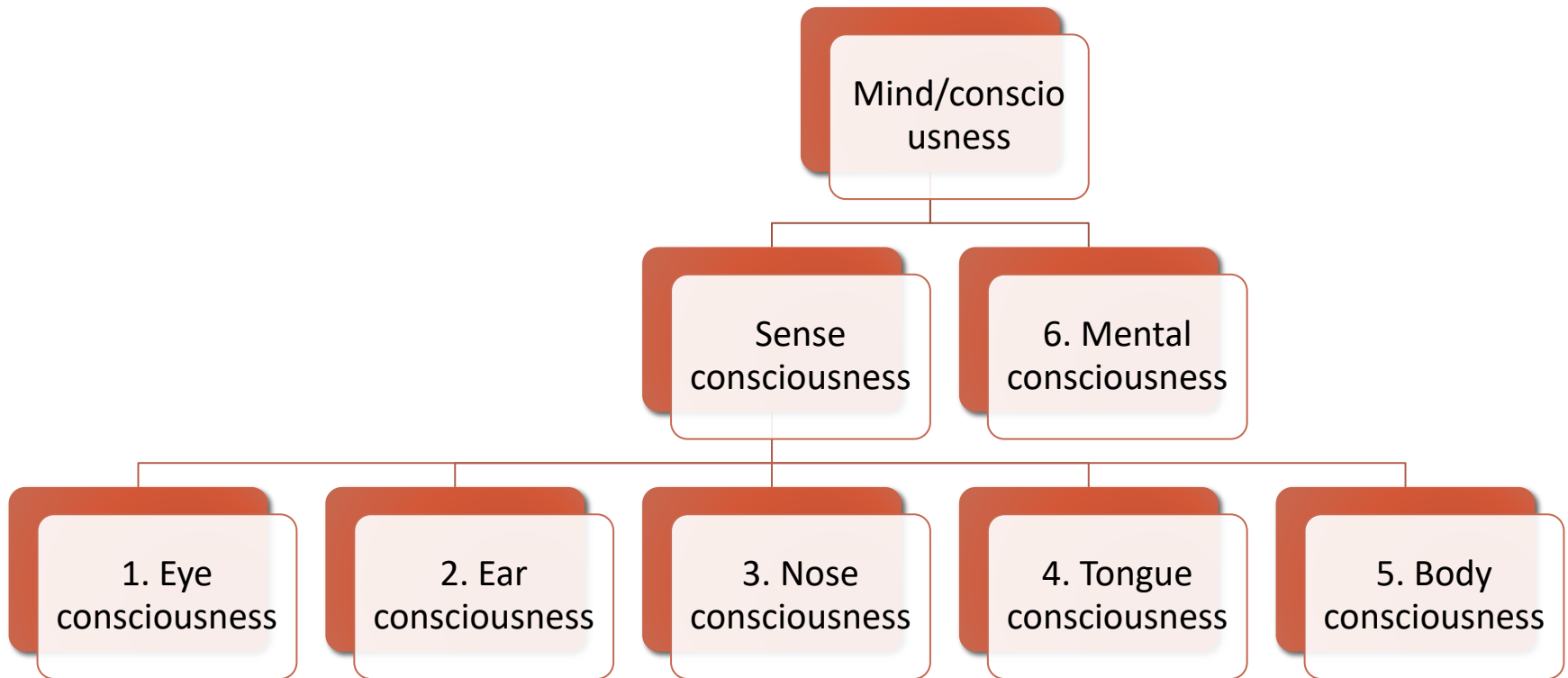
# What is mind?

- Clarity and awareness.
- “Clarity” refers to the non-materiality of the mind: it is not made of atoms; it does not have color, shape, or tangibility; and thus it cannot be perceived by our senses.
- “Awareness” means that mind knows / experiences / is aware of an object.
- Mind always has an object
  - But it does not have to be fully conscious of its object
  - And it does not have to understand its object.

# Other information about the mind

- Mind is impermanent, constantly changing.
- Each moment of mind arises from the previous moment of mind, and lasts only a moment then ceases, giving rise to the next moment of mind.
- This stream/continuum of momentary experiences has been existing from beginningless time...
- And will never end. Even after our mind becomes enlightened mind, it will continue forever.
- Each person has their own individual mind-stream... And there is no universal mind or “cosmic” consciousness that we are all part of.

# Six consciousnesses (main minds)





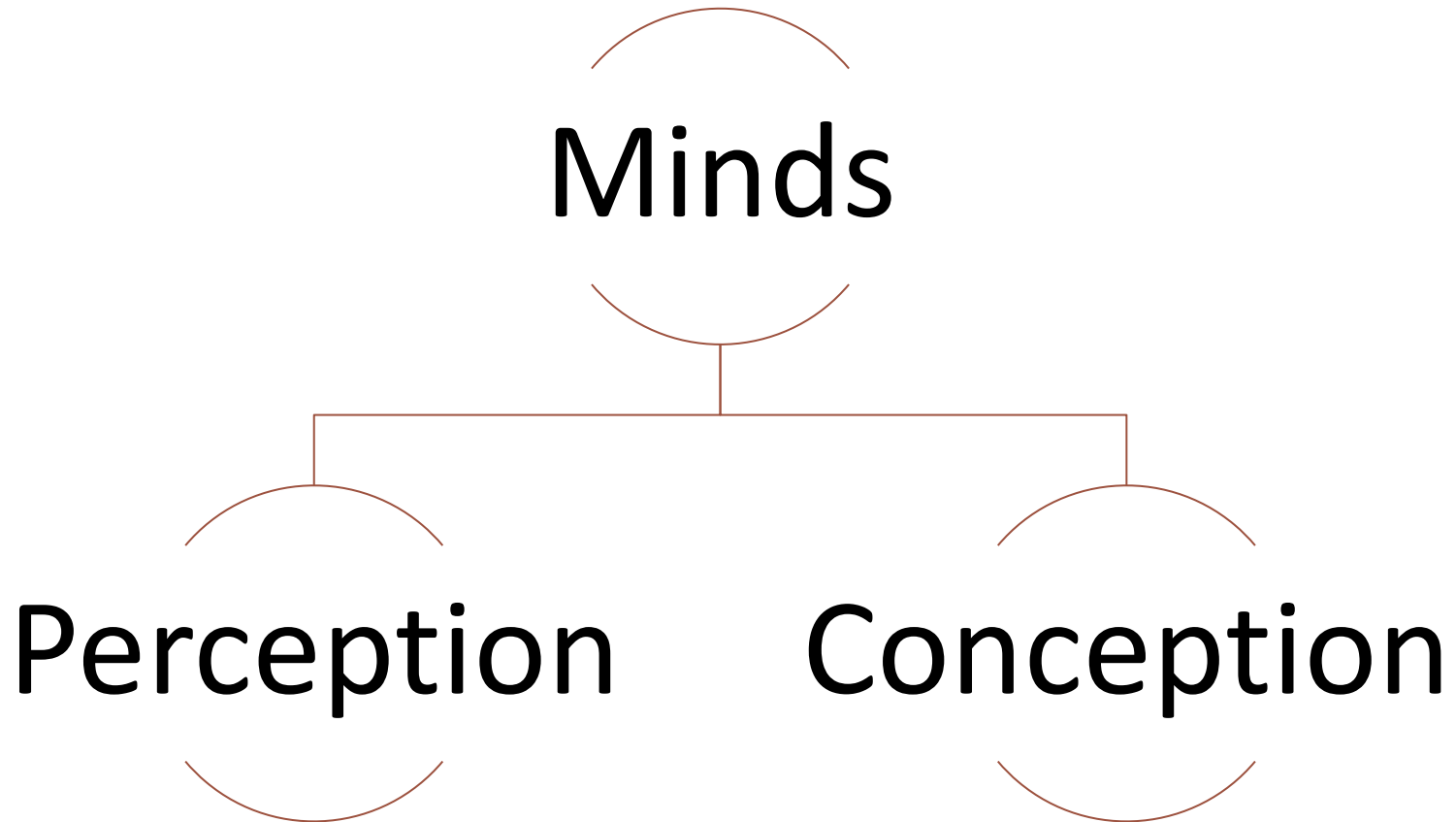
# How does a mind arise?

- A sense consciousness has three conditions:
  1. An object (e.g. the color red)
  2. Sense power (subtle matter within the sense organ)
  3. The previous moment of that same type of mind
- A mental consciousness has three slightly different conditions:
  1. An object (e.g. any of the five objects, or a mental object)
  2. The mental power (the previous moment of mind, which could be any of the six consciousnesses)
  3. The previous moment of mind

# Various terms for mind

- Mind/awareness (lo)
- Knower/cognizer (rig pa)
- Consciousness (she pa)
- All three are equivalent; all have the characteristics of clarity and awareness.

# Two types of mind



# Perception (non-conceptual mind)

- These are minds that directly perceive an object, rather than through the medium of a mental image.
- There are six kinds, related to our six senses:
  1. Eye/visual perception
  2. Ear/audial perception
  3. Nose/olfactory perception
  4. Tongue/gustatory perception
  5. Body/tactile perception
  6. Mental perception
- The first five are sense consciousnesses. The sixth is mental consciousness that directly perceives an object, e.g. another person's mind.

# Conception

- These are only mental, never sense consciousness.
- They *do not* directly perceive their object. Instead, they know their object via a mental image (meaning-general, conceptual appearance).
- The mental image appears like the actual object, and conception can't tell the difference.
- Because of this, conceptions are always mistaken—they mistake the mental image (the appearing object to a conception) for the actual object.
- In addition to being mistaken, some conceptions are also wrong...

# Wrong conceptions and perceptions

- Correct conceptions apprehend their object correctly/as it is, e.g. thinking a rope is a rope, or thinking that sound is impermanent.
- But some conceptions are wrong, e.g. thinking a rope is a snake, or thinking that sound is permanent.
- Among perceptions, most are correct—e.g. seeing green as green, or seeing rabbit ears as ears. But some perceptions are wrong, e.g. seeing green as red, or seeing a rabbit's ears as horns.
- Mental afflictions (anger, attachment, ignorance, etc.) are examples of wrong conceptions.

# Different objects of mind

Instance of mind	Focal object (observed object)	Appearing object (apprehended object)	Engaged object (object of the mode of apprehension)
1. Eye consciousness apprehending green	green	green	green
2. Eye consciousness apprehending rabbit horns	rabbit ears	rabbit horns	rabbit horns
3. Conceptual consciousness apprehending a rope	a rope	mental image of a rope	a rope
4. Conceptual consciousness apprehending a rope as a snake	a rope	mental image of a snake	snake