

A Note on the Readings

The primary source I am using for the Five Skandas is a chapter from *Cutting Through Spiritual Materialism* by Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche. However, I have also included Chapter One of *Progressive Stage of Meditation* by Khenpo Tsultrim Gyamtso, a wonderful teacher with whom I have studied after the death of my root guru. It is a brilliant self-contained reasoning on the non-existence of a personal self.

It was pointed out to me that the readings did not contain any reference to the two veils. This proved harder to find, and what I have done here is to excerpt several pages of a book by Reginald Ray, another student of Chögyam Trungpa, Rinpoche. In class, on October 23, I invoked the image of a tree, with the roots being the veil of delusion or belief in a separate self, and the branches being the klesha veil. Dr. Ray refers to these (p. 321) in the reverse order as the veil of conflicting emotions and the veil of knowables (i.e. that our most basic knowledge is wrong or deluded). The order is reversed here, because as meditators we start with the klesha veil; the more fundamental obstacle is not accessible to us at this point. In fact, the klesha veil is the only veil that we address in this module.

What this means in practical terms is that we are using meditation to learn about our thoughts and emotions. This is already quite profound. It can lead us deep into the experience of no personal self.