

USING FAITH TO OVERCOME LAZINESS

A PREAMBLE TO THE CAUSES OF CONCENTRATION

1. What is the definition of faith? *The definition of faith is a mental factor that functions principally to eliminate non-faith. Faith is a trust or confidence that has been developed over time through reasoning and experience. It overcomes disinterest and lack of conviction. Gyatso p142*
2. What is the function of faith? *Faith has the function of (a) acting as the basis for generating an aspiration for wholesome qualities that have not yet been generated and (b) increasing any such aspiration already generated. In brief it acts as the doorway through which all positive qualities manifest. Rabten p125*
3. What are the three types of faith? *There are three types of faith:*
 - ▯) *Believing faith (confident, clear)*
 - ▯) *Admiring faith (an aspiring & longing)*
 - ▯) *Wishing faith (vivid) Gyatso p142*
4. What is the faith of belief? Describe this confident faith. *Confident faith believes in any object that is conducive to our spiritual development, such as the two truths, the two paths of method and wisdom and the three resultant bodies of a Buddha. This faith is based on vivid faith but is much stronger and more definite because it involves holding a special view. Gyatso p142*
Confident (Believing) faith is a state of complete conviction and certainty in such things as the Triple Gem, the infallibility of the law of cause and effect and so on. It is unshakable and cannot be enticed away by other propositions. Rabten p125
5. What is Admiring faith, the longing faith of aspiration? *Longing or aspiring faith is a state in which one has considered the object of faith to be attainable. It is thus characterized by a strongly interested longing to attain it. Rabten p126*
Wishing or aspiring faith is a wish to follow any dharma path, based on recognition of its good qualities. All virtuous aspirations are wishing faith. Gyatso p142
Aspiring faith is our eagerness to be free of the sufferings of the lower realms when we hear them described; our eagerness to enjoy the happiness of the higher realms and of liberation when we hear what they are; our eagerness to engage in positive actions when we hear what benefits they bring; and our eagerness to avoid negative actions when we understand what harm they cause. Patrul p172
6. What is wishing faith? *The faith called wishing or vivid faith is a tranquil, lucid state of mind, free from negative conceptions, that arises when we contemplate the good qualities of virtuous objects or holy beings such as the spiritual guide Gyatso p142*
Vivid faith is a state in which the object of faith is held to be particularly excellent and dear. Rabten p125
Vivid faith is the faith that is inspired in us by thinking of the immense compassion of the Buddhas and great teachers. We might experience this kind of faith on visiting a

temple containing many representations of the Buddhas' body, speech and mind, or after an encounter with a great teacher or spiritual friend we have just met personally or whose qualities or life-story we have heard described. Patrul p171-172

7. In relation to the advice he gave to the Kalama's, how did the Buddha explain faith to be a working hypotheses when going for Refuge? *The Buddha said to not go by reports, by legends, by traditions, by scripture, by logical conjecture, by inference, by analogies, by agreement through pondering views, by probability, or by the thought, "this contemplative is our teacher". When you know for yourselves that "these mental qualities are skillful; these mental qualities are blameless; these mental qualities are praised by the wise; these mental qualities, when adopted and carried out, lead to welfare and to happiness" - then you should enter and remain in them. Anguttara Nikaya 3.65*

Although the Buddha recommends tolerance and a healthy skepticism towards matters of faith; he also notes a conditional imperative: if you sincerely want to put an end to suffering (that's the condition) you should take certain things on faith, as working hypotheses, and then test them by following his path of practice. The advice to the Kalamas, in fact, contains the crucial caveat that you must take into account what wise people value. The above caveat gives balance to the Buddha's advice: just as you shouldn't give unreserved trust to outside authority, you cannot give unreserved trust to your own logic and feelings if they go against experience and the genuine wisdom of others. As other early discourses make clear, wise people can be recognized by their words and behavior as measured against standards set by the Buddha and his awakened disciples. The proper attitude toward those who meet these standards is faith: p71 'Faith in Awakening' Thanissaro Bhikkhu, Tricycle, Summer 2006

8. What important lesson can faith in the awakening of the Buddha connote for us? *The most important lesson, and the most important item of faith, is simply the fact of the awakening itself. The Buddha achieved it through his own efforts, and he did so, not because he was more than human, but because he developed mental qualities we all have the potential to develop. To have faith in his awakening thus means having faith in our own potential for awakening. Thanissaro p74*

RESOURCES;

Rinpoche, Patrul; *the Words of my Perfect Teacher*, Translated by the Padmakara Translation Group, Ithaca: Snow Lion Publications, 1998
 Gyatso, Geshe Kelsang; *Understanding the Mind*, London: Tharpa Publications, 1997
 Rabten, Geshe; *the Mind and its Functions*, Mount-Pelerin, Switzerland: Editions Rabten Choeling, 1992
 Bhikkhu, Thanissaro; *Faith in Awakening*, Tricycle, summer 2006

AN EXPERIENCE PRODUCING FAITH

My thoughts spun more and more slowly; and then they stopped. Someone rang a gong to signal the start of a new session of sitting meditation, and the resonance of the gong struck up a sympathetic chord with a knot of tightness in my own heart to which I had never before been fully attuned.

It was as if I had been clenching something so tightly, for so long, in the center of my chest, in the center of my mind, that it had somehow never dawned on me, until that moment, that I could simply release it, and stop holding on. The knot unfurled in that fresh silence, and when it had opened, I was gone with it.

My body was still there, and with it all the usual sense perceptions. But it was no longer my body, my feelings, my thoughts or perceptions. There continued to be a flow of awareness from moment to moment, but the sense that this awareness was centered inside my skull and physical body was gone; it was more like a field, extending off into space without any particular center or boundary.

For lack of better words, my presence had expanded way out beyond the confines of my body and my thoughts. Oddly, while there was a sense of mental exaltation and profound physical well-being, any feeling that those experiences belonged to me was almost (but not quite) entirely lacking. Rather, the thought that this experience was happening to me was just another event or sensation that came and went within this sparkling expanse of awareness.

As this state persisted, each time awareness, out of blind habit, identified momentarily with a thought or feeling that arose, the sense of spaciousness became just slightly more cramped, or confined. By the end of the day, "I" was more or less back to my old size, except the heightened state of thought-free awareness persisted.

This single, sustained experience of wakefulness instilled in me an unshakeable conviction about the veracity of the teachings of Buddhism. This conviction set in motion a resolve to pursue meditation practice that has sometimes faltered, but never fully lost momentum. It has served as my torch even as I have stumbled and tripped my way through inky, spiraling corridors of depression, and has stayed within reach even as I lay buried and trapped under karmic landslides.

Sherdor, Tulku; *A Path Strewn With Flowers and Bones*, New York: Blazing Wisdom Publications, 2009

THE AIM OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN BUDDHISM

We in the West are accustomed to treating everyday unhappiness with psychotherapy. However, as Freud notes in *Civilization and Its Discontents*, successful psychoanalysis merely alleviates neurotic suffering but does not address everyday unhappiness. Buddhism picks up where successful therapy leaves off, addressing ordinary unhappiness and how to overcome it.

Buddhism from the beginning has emphasized the importance of liberation from suffering. This emphasis is exemplified by the doctrine of the four noble truths, according to which every aspect of life is characterized by some form of suffering. The goal of spiritual development through Buddhist meditation is to eradicate suffering by attacking its root cause.

The Pali word typically translated as “suffering” is *dukkha*, which could also be rendered as “reactivity.” For, as we experience events unfolding in our stream of consciousness moment-by-moment, the ordinary mind reacts based on ingrained habits. If the event is experienced as pleasant, the mind habitually gravitates toward the event. If it is experienced as unpleasant, the mind pushes it away. In Buddhism these automatic reactive tendencies are referred to as clinging and aversion, and lapses in the continuity of awareness are called non-awareness, or ignorance. Together these “three poisons” mark every moment of ordinary experience. They are habitual. They obscure the mind's natural condition from us and in so doing become the fundamental cause of everyday unhappiness. In other words, Buddhism defines everyday unhappiness in terms of a habitual dysfunction in the way we process our experience. Seen in this way, it can be identified and corrected, and the root of everyday unhappiness can be eradicated.

Disciplined meditation practice leads to a series of changes in consciousness that result in a transformation known as enlightenment. In early Buddhism, enlightenment meant the eradication of the mind's reactive tendency and its lapses in awareness. Such enlightenment does not change the content of our experience. Instead, whatever event we experience is experienced with full awareness and without any reactivity whatsoever. All life experiences - positive and negative - are embraced equally, with complete and continuous awareness, so that the quality of everyday experience is greatly enriched, moment-by-moment.

The later Mahayana Buddhism developed a new perspective on enlightenment. Early Buddhism is cast primarily from the perspective of the individual practitioner, and enlightenment means freedom from suffering for the individual. In the Mahayana perspective, the practitioner strives to awaken the minds of every sentient being. In this lofty perspective, individual meditative experience can access a fundamental level of consciousness common to all minds, a consciousness, at the very subtle level, that is the very mind of the realized Buddha.

Mahayana meditative practice toward enlightenment is, in essence, enlightenment for all

sentient beings. For when the individual attains enlightenment, the experience, through dependent origination, subtly affects all beings.

Thus, for the Mahayana, enlightenment is both liberation and also a manifestation of omniscience - the awakened wisdom of the Buddha. The awakened mind of the Buddha manifests as infinite wisdom and inexhaustible compassion. Thus while early Buddhism emphasizes the eradication of negative qualities, Mahayana enlightenment entails the full manifestation of all positive qualities of mind, the quintessence of our human potential.

Brown, Daniel P. PhD; *Pointing Out the Great Way, The Stages of Meditation in the Mahamudra Tradition*, Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2006

ADVICE ABOUT SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

We need to be patient. A practice that is suitable for one person is not necessarily suitable for someone else, and a practice that is appropriate for one person at one time is not necessarily appropriate for that same person at another time. Buddha did not expect us to put all his teachings into practice right away; they are intended for a great variety of practitioners of different levels and dispositions. There are also some instructions that cannot be practised while we are emphasizing other practices, just as it is not appropriate to drink tea and coffee together at the same time. Dharma instructions are like medicine and need to be administered skilfully, taking into account the nature of the individual and his or her particular needs. For example, to encourage us to develop renunciation, the wish to attain liberation from samsara, Buddha gave extensive teachings on how ordinary life is in the nature of suffering – but not everyone can apply these teachings right away. For some people, meditating on suffering only causes them to become despondent. Instead of developing a joyful mind of reneunciation, they just get depressed. For these people it is better for the time being not to meditate on suffering but to come back to it later when their minds are stronger and their wisdom clearer.

If we practice advanced teachings and find that our pride or confusion increase, this indicates we are not yet ready for such teachings and should first emphasize building a firm foundation of basic practices. If any meditation or practice is not having a good effect on our mind, is making us unhappy, or is increasing our delusions, this is a clear sign we are practicing incorrectly. Rather than stubbornly pushing at the practice, it may be better to put it to one side for the time being and seek advice from senior practitioners. We can go back to that practice once we understand where we are going wrong and what is the correct way of practising. What we should never do, however, is reject any Dharma instruction by thinking “I will never practise this.”

When we go shopping we do not feel impelled to buy everything in the store, but it is useful to remember what the store stocks so that we can return later when we need something. In a similar way, when we listen to Dharma teachings we may not be able to practice all that we hear, but it is still important to remember everything so that we can build up a comprehensive understanding of Dharma. Later, when we are ready, we can put the instructions we have heard into practice. One of the great advantages of Lamrim, or the stages of the path to enlightenment, is that it gives us a structure, or storehouse within which we can keep all the Dharma we have heard.

If we remember only those teachings that we are immediately able to apply in our immediate situation, when our circumstances change we shall have nothing to fall back on. However, if we can remember all the teachings we have received we shall have at our disposal a huge range of instructions that we can apply at the appropriate time. A practice that may seem obscure and of little significance to us now may later become an essential part of our spiritual practice. What is important is to proceed carefully and at our own pace, otherwise we might feel confused or discouraged, and may even end up rejecting Dharma

altogether.

Our most important task at the moment is to train our mind, and in particular to strengthen our intention to be of service to others. Although we may not have the ability to help others now, if we keep the intention to do so in mind all the time, our ability to help them will gradually increase. This is because the more we cherish others, the more our merit, wisdom, and capacity to actually benefit them will increase, and opportunities to help in practical ways will naturally present themselves.

When you're walking, standing, sitting or lying down, when you consider others, thinking or saying these four brief sentences will hugely impact your life if you do it consistently.

“You are important to me. Your happiness matters to me.
My happiness depends on you. I am here for you.”

Rabten, Geshe *Oral Advice about Mind Training* London: Tharpa Publications, 2000

MEDITATION CLASS NOTES 1

1. What is the purpose of meditation according to Dharmamitri? *Dharmamitri explains meditation to “make the mind accustomed to, or take on the state or condition of the object of meditation”.* **LRCM1p111**
2. What is meditation? *There are many ways to meditate.*
 - *Two basic types of meditation are (1) analytical meditation and (2) stabilizing meditation.*
 - 1) *In analytical meditation you analyze a topic trying to understand it through reasoning. For instance, you might meditate on why things are impermanent by reflecting on how they are produced by causes or how they disintegrate moment by moment.*
 - 2) *In stabilizing meditation you fix your mind on a single object or topic.*
 - *Another way of dividing meditation is between subjective and objective meditation.*
 - 1) *In subjective meditation, your aim is to cultivate in the mind a new or strengthened perspective or attitude. The cultivation of faith is an example of this type of meditation; faith is not an object on which you are concentrating but an attitude that is being meditatively cultivated.*
 - 2) *In objective meditation you meditate on a topic, such as on impermanence, or an object, such as the golden body of a Buddha.*
 - *You can meditate in the manner of wishing. For example you might wish that “all sentient beings have happiness and the causes of happiness” as in the Four Immeasurables prayer.*
 - *Another way of meditating is called imaginative meditation in which you envision that you have qualities that you actually do not yet have. The practice of deity yoga, for example, calls for meditating on your self as an ideal being whose body is made from the light of wisdom.* **How to Practice HHDL p118-119**
3. What do you understand by analytical meditation? *Analytical meditation is the process of examining various points of view until you thoroughly establish the truth.* **Sopa1p237**
4. Why is it important? *It is important because it brings about an awareness that is long – lasting, very forceful and capable of changing the mind. Without analytical meditation you cannot achieve any of the realizations that are necessary steps on the path.* **LRCM1p112**
5. How does it work? *Analytical mediation works by analyzing an object again and again, examining it from many different angles until you understand it all in*

- detail. **Sopa1p237** It begins when you first produce a small understanding from listening and study. Then you become accustomed to the topic by thinking about it in various ways. Then you focus with single – pointed concentration on the understanding that emerges from your analysis. **Sopa1p238**
6. Meditation is explained with the analogy of an elephant. Describe the analogy and what the components represent. *A wild or crazy elephant that needs to be tamed with a hook, a rope and a firm stake in the ground is given as an analogy for the process of taming the untamed mind.*
 - 1) *The firm stake represents a virtuous object of focus and*
 - 2) *The rope represents mindfulness that is used to hold the mind to the focus. It needs to be strong to keep the mind held on the object without forgetfulness.*
 - 3) *The hook of vigilance is used to prod the mind to keep it progressing properly through the elements of the meditation.* **M1d10p16**
 7. What is meditation? What is the aim or need for it? *Meditation is familiarization with a virtuous object. Meditation is needed to bring the untamed mind under control and to make it serviceable.*
 8. What hinders meditation? *What hinders meditation is jumping to different objects of meditation without order.* **LRCM1p99** *Excitement and laxity also hinder meditation.* **LRCM1p100**
 9. Why is it important to prepare the meditation you are going to do beforehand and why is it important to stay with those topics? *It is important to prepare before doing the meditation so that you can direct your mind as you wish toward a virtuous object of meditation thereby accomplishing your wishes. It is important to stay with the topics to make the mind serviceable.* **M1d10p16**
 10. Three types of wisdom are outlined. What are they? *The three types of wisdom outlined are*
 - 1) *The wisdom arisen from study*
 - 2) *The wisdom arisen from reflection and*
 - 3) *The wisdom arisen from meditation* **LRCM1p109**
 11. What is the order and process through which each is developed? *Each of the 3 wisdoms is developed in a specific order of mutual dependency. They arise sequentially as cause and effect because*
 - 1) *We come to know what we intend to practice second-hand; through hearing and reading. Study precedes the wisdom arisen from study. The wisdom arisen from study is the effect of reading and listening to the teachings. The more that you study the greater will be the wisdom arising from hearing. The greater that wisdom, the more you will have to reflect upon.* **M1d12p38; Sopa1p232**

- 2) *Then you examine what you have heard about the goal, how to reach it, obstacles to reaching that goal etc. Based on your own powers of reasoning and scriptural sources, a proper understanding of what is correct and what is not arises so that you know the object firsthand. This is the wisdom arising from reflection. **LRCM1p109***
 - 3) *Having eliminated doubt and become certain about the object of meditation as a result of the first two types of wisdom, you concentrate on that topic over and over again. Becoming familiar with what we have ascertained using the wisdom that comes from reflection is meditation. The wisdom that comes from meditation is a product of the wisdom that comes from reflection and the union of shamata and vipasyana. **LRCM1p109; Sopa1p232***
12. Can one attain the third type of wisdom without the first two? *One cannot attain the wisdom of meditation without depending on the wisdoms arisen from reflection and study because the wisdoms arisen from reflection and study are the sequential causes that support the resulting wisdom of meditation. It is analytical meditation that establishes the proper object to meditate on; an object of meditation must be ascertained to be correct by the analytical thought, reflection necessarily precedes the wisdom that arises from meditation. **Sopa1p232***

MEDITATION CLASS NOTES 2

1. How is the actual meditation session divided? *The actual session is divided into those three parts*
 - 1) *The preparation*
 - 2) *Actual Session*
 - 3) *What to do at the conclusion* **LRCM1p94**
2. List the 6 aspects of preparation outlined by Lama Tsong Khapa for the meditation session. *The preparation for the meditation session has six parts; these are*
 - 1) *Cleaning the room & arranging the altar*
 - 2) *Making the Offerings*
 - 3) *Sitting in the meditation Posture & motivation*
 - 4) *Generating a Visualization of the field of Accumulation – & then to take Refuge, motivate with a Mind of Enlightenment & to generate the Four Immeasurable thoughts.*
 - 5) *The Co-operative Conditions of the Seven Limbs and*
 - 6) *Offering the mandala & the three-fold supplication* **LRCM1p94-99**
3. Preparation during the actual meditation session includes the 6 preliminaries. Describe in a few lines any one of 1) Cleaning the room etc. OR 2) Obtaining offerings etc. OR 3) sit on a comfortable seat etc. *The key points when (1) cleaning the room are to arrange the representations of the enlightened body speech and mind ‘neatly’ on the altar meaning that they should be placed in their proper order. If you have a picture of the guru, this should be placed or hung in the centre and at the top – nothing should be placed higher than this. Then a statue of Buddha is placed in the centre. From the point of view of the Buddha, texts should be placed to the right and higher than the statues. Statues should not be placed upon texts. A stupa representing Buddhas mind may be placed to the left of the Buddha. **M1d9p3** The key points when (2) obtaining offerings are to obtain offerings of good quality without deceit e.g. stealing, etc and to arrange them beautifully. The key points when (3) taking your seat are to sit with a straight back in the 8 point Vairochana posture and then to take refuge and generate bodhicitta from the heart. **Sopa1p170-171***
4. What does it mean to arrange the representations of the body speech and mind of various teachers ‘neatly’ on the altar and what should go above, the Texts or the statues? *To arrange the representations of the body speech and mind of various teachers ‘neatly’ on the altar means that they should be placed in their proper order. The texts should be placed higher than the statues. Statues should not be placed upon texts. **M1d9p3***
5. List the 7 branches of worship and what is the main purpose for doing these? *The 7 branches of worship are commonly known as the 7 Limb prayer; these branches are (1) Obeisance (2) Offering (3) Confession (4) Rejoicing (5) Imploring (6) Supplicating (7) Dedicating. The main purpose for doing this practice is to accumulate merit and to purify obstacles **LRCM1p94-99***

6. What is the essence of 'obeisance' and how are the body, mind and speech involved in Prostration? *The essence of 'obeisance' is to honor and respect the Buddha's good qualities. Paying homage by way of all three doors means that you respectfully bow down your body, you offer praise with your speech, and mentally you feel great faith and respect.* **Sopa1p187**
7. What are the four points at which we place the hands during prostration and why? *The hands are placed at four points during prostration to accumulate a special kind of merit. In order to create the causes to have all the excellent qualities of a Buddha, we place our hands on these spots when we make prostrations. These places are*
 - 1) *The crown of the head – the cause to create the crown ornament*
 - 2) *The forehead – the cause to create the treasure hair (tsur pu)*
 - 3) *The throat – the cause to create the 60 qualities of a Buddha's speech*
 - 4) *The heart – the cause to generate the enlightened mind of a Buddha***Sopa1p190**
8. Surpassable and unsurpassable offerings are made; explain the difference between these two and give examples of each? *Surpassable (ordinary) and unsurpassable offerings are made to the field of Assembly*
 - 1) *Surpassable offerings are made by those who do not abide on any of the Bodhisattva Grounds. These people make offerings of flowers, musical instruments, ointments, and umbrellas, lamps, incense, garments and so forth.*
 - 2) *Unsurpassable offerings are made by those who do abide on the Bodhisattva Grounds. These offerings can include certain supernatural items, such as wish-fulfilling jewels and wishing trees.* **Sopa1p197**
9. What are the three ways to engage in a negativity of body, speech or mind? *There are three ways to engage in a negativity of body, speech or mind. We can*
 - 1) *commit the negative action,*
 - 2) *we can encourage another to do the negative action or*
 - 3) *we can rejoice in the completion of the negative action* **M1d9p8**
10. What are the results of confessing sins? *The results of confessing sins are to*
 - 1) *Prevent the growth of past negative karmic actions,*
 - 2) *Reduce the heaviness of past negative karma &*
 - 3) *To prevent yourself from acting in that negative way in the future* **M1d9p9**
11. Describe the visualizations when we implore the lama to turn the wheel of the teaching and supplicate the lama to remain. *The recommended visualization when we Implore the lama to turn the wheel of the teaching is to*
 - 1) *Imagine that from your own body duplicates of it equal in number to the Buddhas of the 10 directions before you appear and offer a golden wheel to each of the Buddhas. You can also make other offerings like a mandala.*
 - 2) *When Supplicating the lama not to enter nirvana you once again imagine that from your own body duplicates of it equal in number to the Buddhas*

*of the 10 directions before you appear and make the request for the lama to remain. **Sopa1p204-206***

12. When we dedicate our positive actions to the attainment of great enlightenment how do we benefit greatly? *The great benefit of dedicating our positive actions to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all beings is the*
 - 1) *Increase or expansion of merit and the*
 - 2) *Merit not being used up or dissipating until enlightenment (unless it's destroyed by anger). **Sopa1p209***

13. Explain one of those you have listed more fully including the antidote.
 - 1) *Obeisance - types of physical prostration – full, half, hands touching the four places; combines merit from three doors; how, with numerous bodies to Buddhas of three time and ten directions. The homage or prostration counters afflictive pride. **M1d9p11***
 - 2) *Offering – types are Surpassable & the Unsurpassable; Surpassable offerings are made by those who do not abide on any of the Bodhisattva Grounds. Their gifts include offerings of water, flowers, musical instruments, ointments, and umbrellas, lamps, incense, garments and so forth. Unsurpassable offerings are made by those who do abide on the Bodhisattva Grounds. These offerings can include certain supernatural items, such as wish-fulfilling jewels and wishing trees. **Sopa1p197** Making offerings counters all three poisons and miserliness or stinginess **M1d9p11***
 - 3) *Confession of your misdeeds – types of vow and natural misdeeds; how, by using the four opponent powers especially regret and the promise of restraint. Confessing counters all three poisons. **M1d9p11***
 - 4) *Rejoicing in your own & others virtues – types are the virtues of the Buddhas, bodhisattvas, learner and non learner Hearers and Solitary Realizers, and ordinary beings; how, thinking of the ten directions & three times. Rejoicing counters envy **M1d9p11***
 - 5) *Imploring the buddhas and gurus to teach the Dharma – types of dharma include both the paths of sutra and tantra; how, by imagining many duplicate selves going out with a golden wheel to offer and request the Buddhas of the ten directions to teach. Imploring the Buddhas and gurus to teach the Dharma counters the negativities of having abandoned the dharma **M1d9p11***
 - 6) *Supplicating them to remain for a long life – types; imagine many duplicate selves going out requesting the Buddhas of the ten directions to remain to bring temporal and ultimate benefit to sentient beings. Supplicating the Buddha counters the negativities we have accumulated through disturbing the mind of the guru **M1d9p11***

14. How are the 7 branches condensed into the 3 of accumulation, purification and expansion? *The 7 branches may be condensed into 3 – accumulation, purification and expansion.*

- 1) Accumulation of merit includes
 - i. Obeisance (Homage)
 - ii. Offering
 - iii. Rejoicing in your own & others virtues
 - iv. Imploring the buddhas and gurus to teach the Dharma
 - v. Supplicating them to remain for a long life
- 2) Purification is the
 - i. Confession of your misdeeds &
- 3) Expansion and the lack of dissipation is the
 - i. Rejoicing in your own virtue &
 - ii. Dedication **LRCM1p98-99**

15. In the explanation from Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand, describe the differences in how you set up your mandala offering if it is part of an offering or a requesting mandala. In Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand differences in how you present the mandala are explained. If an offering mandala is made the

- 1) East is opposite and
- 2) You pour towards yourself to accomplish siddhis and
- 3) You pour away from yourself to dispel obstacles.

- If a requesting mandala is being made the East is closest to you. **M1d10p14-15**

16. After the seven branches and the mandala offering have been completed what are the three main aspects of the supplication prayer? After the seven branches and the mandala offering have been completed a prayer of supplication is made. This prayer has three aspects and they are

- 1) To stop all flawed states of mind ranging from disrespect to the lama up to conceiving signs of true existence in the two kinds of self & to
- 2) Produce all flawless states of mind ranging from respect to the lama and ending with knowing the two types of selflessness &
- 3) To quell all inner and outer obstacles **LRCM1p99**

MEDITATION CLASS NOTES 3

1. How is the actual meditation session divided? *An actual session of meditation is divided into these three parts*
 - 1) *The preparation*
 - 2) *The actual Session &*
 - 3) *What to do at the conclusion* **LRCM1p94**
2. In the section: preparing for calm abiding, in the section (a') Relying on the preconditions for calm abiding, what are the six conditions? *The six conditions needed for preparing for calm abiding are (1) Dwelling in an appropriate area, (2) Having little desire, (3) Being content, (4) Completely giving up many activities, (5) Pure ethical discipline, (6) Completely getting rid of desire etc* **LRCM3p28-29**
3. From among these six which are most important? *From among the six conditions the most important are (5) Pure ethical discipline, (6) seeing desires as disadvantageous and (1) dwelling in an appropriate area.* **LRCM3p30**
4. Name the perfections that act as preconditions for meditative stabilization: *The perfections that act as preconditions for meditative stabilization are the perfections of generosity, ethics, patience and effort.* **LRCM3p30**
5. What is the relevance of using the posture of Vairochana? What are the eight elements of this posture? *The relevance of using the posture of the Buddha Vairochana is that Buddha Vairochana is said to be the deity who is the purified aspect of the aggregate of form. In other words, he is the ideal for physical form. That's why we try to hold our bodies in a posture that resembles his.* **M3d19p31**
 - 1) *Cross your legs in the manner of the venerable Vairochana, using either the full-vajra [fully crossed] posture or the half-vajra [half crossed] posture as appropriate.*
 - 2) *Your eyes should be neither wide open nor too far closed, and they should be fixed on the tip of your nose.*
 - 3) *Sit with your awareness directed inward, keeping your body straight without leaning too far back or being bent too far forward.*
 - 4) *Keep your shoulders straight and even.*
 - 5) *Do not raise or lower your head nor turn it to one side, set it so that your nose and navel are aligned.*
 - 6) *Set your teeth and lips in their usual, natural positions*
 - 7) *Draw your tongue up close to your upper teeth.*
 - 8) *Your inhalation and exhalation should not be noisy, forced, or uneven; let it flow effortlessly, ever so gently, without any sense that you are moving it here or there.* **M3d19p31-33**

6. What reasons are given as to why the posture of Vairochana is the best?
- 1) *This posture in which the body is pulled together well is conducive to the arising of pliancy, so you will develop pliancy very quickly.*
 - 2) *Sitting in this way makes it possible to maintain the posture for a long time; the posture does not lead to physical exhaustion.*
 - 3) *This posture is not common to non-Buddhists and our opponents.*
 - 4) *When others see you sitting in this posture, they are inspired.*
 - 5) *The Buddha and his disciples used this posture and bestowed it upon us.*
- Asanga's Sravaka Levels says that, in light of these reasons, you should sit cross-legged. It also says that you keep your body straight so that lethargy and sleepiness will not occur. **M3d19p33***
7. In the section (a) what to do prior to focusing the attention on an object of meditation, what does one need to eliminate when beginning to cultivate concentration? *When beginning to cultivate concentration one needs to eliminate laziness **LRCM3p33***
8. State the four states that counter laziness in the order that they're generated. *These four states when practiced in the order they're generated counter laziness; (1) Faith, (2) Aspiration, (3) Effort and (4) Pliancy **LRCM3p33-34***
9. In the section: (2') who should meditate on which objects, five behavioral flaws and five remedies to them are mentioned. In the first column list the flaw and in the second the appropriate remedy: **LRCM3p39**

	The person dominated by	Objects of purification
1	<i>Attachment</i>	Ugliness
2	<i>Hatred</i>	Loving-kindness
3	<i>Ignorance</i>	Dependent Arising
4	<i>Pride</i>	Differentiation of Constituents
5	<i>Discursiveness</i>	Breathing

10. These five remedies constitute which of the four types of object of meditation? *These five remedies constitute the meditation for purifying behavior **LRCM3p36***
11. In general how do we visualize the field of assembly (merit) for these meditations? *The field of Assembly as it is presented in Lama Tsong Khapa's 'Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment' is generally the image of Lama Losang Thubwang Dorje Chang. **M1d9p4***
12. Why is the meditation object an 'image'? *They are not the actual form of an object of meditation, but 'images' or mental appearances of it which arise to the primary mental consciousness. **LRCM3p35** They are called images because they are mental appearances of the objects of meditation; they are 'points upon which the attention is kept,' or 'meditative bases for concentration.'*

13. List some of the synonyms used for 'image'. *The synonyms for image are called*
- 1) *Sign of concentration,*
 - 2) *Object in the domain of concentration,*
 - 3) *Technique of concentration,*
 - 4) *Door to concentration,*
 - 5) *Basis of attention,*
 - 6) *Body of internal conceptualization, and*
 - 7) *Appearing image* **M3d21p6**
14. In the section: (b')) identifying objects of meditation for this context, many objects are mentioned but the image of the body of a Buddha is recommended. What special advantage does this object have? *The body of a Buddha is recommended because such an object assists in mindfulness of the Buddha when we die, generating limitless merit, assisting yogic activity, etc* **LRCM3p43**
15. What are the results, and some of the benefits, of meditating on the physical form of the Buddha? Why is meditating on the physical form of the Buddha the best object to focus on (after having dealt with any particularly strong afflictions)? *To recall the Buddha gives rise to limitless merit, you amass merit through prostration, offering, aspirational prayer, etc., as well as on the field in relation to which you purify obscurations through confession, restraint, etc. This kind of meditation serves many purposes. As stated earlier in the extract from the King of Concentrations Sutra it has advantages such as your not losing your mindfulness of the Buddha as you die. And when you cultivate the mantra path, it heightens deity yoga.* **M3d21p8**
16. Explain the two possible ways to visualize the bodily form of the Buddha and to use it as a meditation object. Which is best and why and how are we advised to 'seek our object of meditation'? *If you were to focus on a statue or an image of a Buddha's body, this would be a case of looking outward. There's a difference between Buddha's body and a statue of a Buddha because Buddha's body could be a phenomenon included within a continuum whereas a statue would not be. Looking inward by reflecting upon the meaning of the eloquent descriptions of the Buddha's form is best.*
- 1) *When you seek your object of meditation, the basis upon which you first keep your attention, look for an excellent painting or sculpture of the Teacher's body and view it again and again. Remembering its features, firmly familiarize yourself with the mental appearance of the object.*
 - 2) *Or, seek your object of meditation by reflecting upon the meaning of the eloquent descriptions of the Buddha's form, which you have heard from your guru and make this image appear in your mind.* **M3d21p9**
17. What are the two ways of taking the body of a Buddha as an image? *The two ways of taking the body of a Buddha as an image are*
- 1) *Newly imagining the Buddha's form &*
 - 2) *Visualizing the Buddha's form as though actually present.* **LRCM3p44**

18. Is it advised to meditate looking at a statue? Explain your answer. *Concentration is not achieved in the sensory consciousnesses, but in the mental consciousness; thus, the actual object of meditation of a concentration is the actual object of a mental consciousness. Furthermore, we should not let the object of meditation have the aspect of a painting or sculpture; rather, learn to have it appear in your mind with the aspect of an actual Arya-Buddha, a living, breathing person. M3d21p9-10 Visualizing the Buddha's form as though actually present is better because it assists in generating faith, and fits within the context of practices common to sutra and tantra etc. LRCM3p44*
19. How should we start to develop our meditation upon the bodily form of a Buddha? *You have to focus your mind on the appearance of the actual concept, or mental image, of the object of meditation. Furthermore, there are both subtle and gross features of the Buddha's bodily form. It is stated elsewhere that at first you focus on the gross features, and later, when these are solid, you must focus on the subtle. As experience also shows that it is very easy to raise an appearance of the gross features, you must develop your object of meditation in stages starting with the gross features. M3d21p8-10*
20. What must we avoid as we begin to develop a meditation practice? *An especially important point is that, until you have accomplished satisfactory concentration as explained below, it is never appropriate for you to cultivate meditative concentration by shifting your focus to many different types of objects of meditation. For, if you cultivate concentration by moving to many dissimilar objects of meditation, it will be a great impediment to achieving calm abiding. M3d21p11*
21. What is Lama Tsong Khapa's advice to help us establish stability in our meditation? *Imagine several times in sequence the head, two arms, the rest of the trunk of the body, and the two legs. After that, if when you bring your attention to the body as a whole you can raise before your mind just half of the gross components, then, even without radiant clarity — you should be satisfied with just this and fix your attention upon it. M3d21p10-11*
22. Of the two aspects, stability and clarity, which should we develop first and why? *If, dissatisfied with just the above, you fail to fix your attention on it and want more clarity instead, then, as you visualize it again and again, the object of meditation will become a bit clearer but you will not obtain a stable concentration; in fact, you will prevent yourself from getting this. Even though the object of meditation is not very clear, if you keep your attention on precisely this partial object of meditation, you will quickly obtain concentration. Since this then intensifies clarity, you will readily achieve clarity. M3d21p10-11*

23. What is the difference between tantric and non-tantric practice of this kind of meditation? *When you are practicing deity yoga in the mantra vehicle, you definitely have to establish a clear image of the deity. So until this arises, you must use many methods for developing it. However, in this non-tantric context, if you have great difficulty in making an image of a deity appear, you may adopt any one of the objects of meditation presented above and keep your attention on it because the main purpose is simply to achieve a concentration of calm abiding.* **M3d21p10-11**
24. In the section: (2)) how to focus your mind on the object of meditation, what are the two special features of the concentration that we seek to accomplish? *The two special features of the concentration that we seek to accomplish are (1) vivid intensity or clear sharpness and (2) non-discursive stability.* **LRCM3p47**