

**Buddhist Studies Program**

**Subject: Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3**

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We have covered the stages of the path shared by a person of small capacity from the text The Great Treatise on the stages of the Path to Enlightenment. We have also covered the stages of the path shared by a person of small capacity from this text.

Now that brings us to the stages of the path shared by a person of great capacity. Geshela seems to recall that in Liberation in the Palm of your Hand, the author speaks about three different motivations that one could apply in each of these three respective scopes. We can incorporate each of these motivations in fact. For instance, in [the] context of stages of the path shared with person of small capacity, [one] is trying to stop rebirth in the miserable realms and to achieve rebirth in the happy realms, by abandoning negativity and cultivating virtue. So if we were to think, 'From now until I attain Buddhahood I am going to try and stop the rebirths in the miserable realms and achieve rebirth in the happy realms. In order to do that I am going to engage in study and practice.' Now that type of motivation would be the motivation of stages of the path shared by a person of small capacity.

Or you could think, 'All the virtues that I have accomplished through study and so forth, what is this for? It is to abandon all suffering within cyclic existence. So [may] whatever virtue that I accumulate through study and so forth act as a cause for liberation.' Now this would be sharing stages of the path with a person of medium capacity.

The third one of course would be, 'I will attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings.' This motivation is in line with stages of the path of a person of great capacity.

Geshela reckons that if we are motivated by the wish to attain buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings, then the motivations belonging to or related to the stages of the path of a person of small and medium capacity would be subsumed under that. If we are motivated by the mind of enlightenment then these other motivations of a person of small and medium capacity are included in that greater motivation. As long as we think in very, very small terms it doesn't really have a big impact on the mind, or make the mind move very much. Whereas, if you start to think more extensively incorporating more and more things, the mind begins to really move, the mind is moved through that. We are trying to train the mind, so to train the mind we must move the mind around a little bit, shake it up.

In any case the stages of the path of person of great capacity is divided into 3 sections.

1. Showing that compassion is the only entry to the Mahayana.
2. How to develop the mind of enlightenment.
3. How to train in the bodhisattva deeds after having attained the mind of enlightenment.

We covered the section 'showing that mind of enlightenment is the sole door to the Mahayana.' We have also covered the section on 'how to develop the mind of enlightenment.' These two points are covered extremely clearly here in this text.

There are two ways to understand this section on 'showing that compassion is the only entry to the Mahayana.' The first way is, if you do not develop the uncontrived mind of enlightenment it will be impossible to achieve a Mahayana path. The second point is, in order for our practice to be Mahayana dharma we must have the mind of enlightenment. Without practicing the mind of enlightenment the dharma we practice won't be Mahayana dharma. Two very important points.

We have been learning the third section 'how to train in the bodhisattva deeds after having developed the mind of enlightenment.' In this section there are three parts:

1. The reasons why you learn the trainings after having developed the mind of enlightenment.
2. Demonstrating that you will not become a Buddha by learning Method or Wisdom alone.

### 3. An explanation of the process of learning the precepts.

Why must you learn the trainings after having developed the mind of enlightenment? If someone asks you, 'Why must I learn the trainings after having developed the mind of enlightenment?' How would you respond? The mind in question is an amazing mind. We are talking about a mind that has developed after you have gone through all these preliminary steps of training the mind in equanimity, developing the mind that all beings have been one's mother. You have gone through the seven fold instructions on cause and effect to develop this mind. The mind here is already quite amazing. Why do you have to go further and train in the bodhisattva deeds?

Student: Because if you [don't] discipline your own mind you can't discipline the mind of others.

Geshela: But we have already disciplined our own mind, we have already developed the mind of enlightenment. Why do we have to train in the bodhisattva deeds?

Student: In order to guard the mind.

Geshela: You really can't be blamed, this is a kind of Tibetan style of going through the outline. We looked at that section showing 'developing the mind of enlightenment is the only entry to the Mahayana.' Maybe we have not dealt with this too extensively but the way to develop the mind of enlightenment has been explained in its entirety. From developing equanimity all the way down to developing the mind with the two aspirations, the entire process has been explained. So we are dealing with this mind with the two aspirations.

There is no pervasion to what Doug responded. Doug, the one with the white hair, geshela's relative here, there is no pervasion to what you said. It follows that there is no pervasion to what you said because having developed the mind of enlightenment if you were to familiarise yourselves with it, then the guarding of that mind would occur. By simply just meditating on that mind of enlightenment you become more and more accustomed to it and by that process the mind of enlightenment is prevented from declining. So there is no pervasion.

What is the reason for training in the bodhisattva deeds after having attained the mind of enlightenment? Give me an answer.

Student: To complete the two collections.

Student 2: To achieve enlightenment.

Student 3: To mature the qualities you will have when you are a Buddha.

Geshela: Too early, Choetzun mentioned that we should train in the bodhisattva deeds in order to complete the two collections. But that is actually covered in the next section which talks about, 'you will not achieve buddhahood by training in method or wisdom separately.' So it is a little bit early for your response. The discussion of your answer will come later. It seems that Leo's answer is the correct one.

In Lama Tsong Khapa's short or condensed Lam Rim prayer known as the Foundation of all Good Qualities, he says that 'by seeing that developing the mind of enlightenment alone that I cannot achieve enlightenment then please bless me so that I may practice the three type of ethics and guard the bodhisattva vows.'

The Foundation of all Good Qualities only mentions the three types of ethics explicitly, but implicitly in that are the six perfections. You cannot achieve enlightenment without the six perfections. The three types of ethics referred to here are basically, the vows of a bodhisattva. Without familiarizing yourself and

training in the vows of a bodhisattva you cannot achieve enlightenment. The practice of the six perfections comes into play within the bodhisattva vows.

Even if you have developed the mind of enlightenment you must still train in the bodhisattva deeds, because it is impossible to achieve enlightenment without training in the bodhisattva deeds. That is the answer, so what Leo was getting at is correct.

The responses that some of you gave can be followed and do have a certain point. That is to say a certain significance, a validity to what you say. For instance, if you were to train in the bodhisattva deeds after developing the mind of enlightenment that would certainly help to develop the mind of enlightenment further. It would help you to guard that mind of enlightenment. Also, training in the bodhisattva deeds after having developed the mind of enlightenment will indeed help you to integrate method and wisdom. So what you say is accurate, if you were to discuss it further you could kind of bring it in and prove the point that you were trying to make. They are not really direct answers; they are not to the point. The response came from Tendron who said, 'that you should train in the bodhisattva deeds in order to ripen or mature the qualities you will have when you are a Buddha.' Geshela did not really know what you were getting at there, but anyway this could also be stated and followed through, and a point could be proven. But once again it is not to the point. Leo's response was direct and to the point.

This is what we need to aim for when we are discussing things. In a group of people you get a variety of answers. Everyone reading the text, everyone engaging in study, but amidst all these different answers we have to figure out which of these responses really goes straight to the point, which of these is the direct response and that is the one to hold on to. If there are debates you can make about other people's responses by all means debate those responses.

Now we know the reason why you must train in the bodhisattva deeds after you have developed the mind of enlightenment. Secondly, demonstrating that you will not become a Buddha by learning either method or wisdom separately. Why can't you achieve Buddhahood by training either one of these alone?

Student: Because each of these leads you to achieve one of the Buddha's bodies.

Geshela: Is that everyone's response? Does everyone want to stick with what Vanessa said? The basic point is that you cannot achieve enlightenment through practicing either method or wisdom alone. To achieve enlightenment you must practice both.

Geshela: What is the wisdom here?

Student: The wisdom realizing emptiness,

Geshela: Let us assume that is the case. What is the method?

Student: Great compassion.

Geshela: Everyone is sitting there not wanting to make a mistake so you are not responding, but you are all thinking of something.

Method in the phrase demonstrating that you will not become a Buddha by method separately, refers to great compassion certainly. But also and more to the point, generosity, ethics, patience, joyous effort etc. the sixth of these of course is wisdom. The point is this you cannot achieve buddhahood by either of the two collections alone. Because you must integrate the two collections in order to become a Buddha.

The collection of sublime wisdom is called wisdom and the collection of merit is referred to as method. Whether you talk about the integration of method and wisdom or the integration of the two collections, these two aspects must be integrated if we are to attain Buddhahood. This is what Vanessa was getting at but it was not really phrased in the way a Tibetan might have phrased it. Geshela's not saying that you

should say it like a Tibetan, perhaps her response was clear to you but for geshela it was not to the point. If you get a carpenter that wants to join two 2 x 4 's, he makes a little mark on them showing where these two join, so that when he joins them together they are a perfect fit. That is the kind of response we are trying to respond to a question [with], we try to give a perfect match.

The point is, through integrating the two collections we can achieve the two bodies of a Buddha. Through the collection of merit we achieve the rupakaya or form kayas of a Buddha, through the collection of sublime wisdom we achieve the dharmakaya, the dharma body of a Buddha. You cannot achieve the two kayas if you do not integrate these two collections. You cannot achieve the two kayas if you train in method or wisdom separately. If you train only in method you cannot achieve the rupakaya, the form body. If you train in method alone you cannot achieve the Dharmakaya. This is the logic behind the response. But having phrased it in that way there must be some people thinking, 'Oh, some have achieved the dharmakaya but have not achieved the rupakaya, or people who have achieved the rupakaya but have not yet achieved the dharmakaya.' That is not the case, it is not like this, you cannot achieve one without the other. However when you are stating reasons you should state them in this way.

In the section 'Explanation of training in the precepts' it has two sections:

- a. *How to train in the Mahayana in general.*
- b. *How to train specifically in the Vajrayana.*

How to train in the Mahayana in general has three sections.

- 1' *Establishing the desire to learn the precepts of the spirit of enlightenment*
- 2' *Taking the vows of the conquerors' children after establishing the desire to learn the precepts*
- 3' *How to train after taking the vows.*

Of these three sections the last, 'How to train after taking the vows' this is what we are looking at, 'the process of learning the perfections in particular' and 'how to train in the bodhisattva deeds in general'.

The process of learning the perfections is explained over two sections:

1. How to train in the bodhisattva deeds in general.
2. How to train in the final two perfections in particular.

In 'How to train in the bodhisattva deeds in general' you have got one section on 'training in the perfections that mature the qualities you will have when you become a Buddha.' On top of page 111 of the English translation you have this section, 'training in the perfections that mature the qualities you will have when you become a Buddha' and then 'training in the four ways of gathering disciples that help others mature.' Two sections basically, how to train in the six perfections and how to train in the four ways of gathering disciples.

The section on training in the six perfections is going to have six parts:

- How to train in the perfection of generosity,
- ethics,
- patience,
- joyous effort,
- meditative stabilization and
- wisdom.

Of these six we have covered the first two on generosity and discipline. That brings us to the third, patience. Let us go in to the section on patience.

The outline is very important for the way that we study. Maybe you have to refer to the book to get the

outline. But as you do so you should consider with each section what is the main point? It is possible that [in] reflecting on the title of the section you are dealing with you remember what the real kernel or essence of that section was. Of course a more extensive reflection of the material can only be done by reading through the text, still that summary or kernel of the section is very helpful. When [we] study this type of thing we need to refer to the outline and have some basic idea of each section. The outline gives us a way to understand the meaning and the subject matter of these classic texts. The meaning of the text can be understood through the outline.

The outline is a little bit problematic. Why is the outline so difficult to understand? Geshela will give us a reason. The reason the outline is problematic is that when you are going through it you really must do so single pointedly. If you are not one pointed when going through the outline you cannot really get everything set and certain. The reason it is difficult for us is anything that involves one-pointedness is not easy for us.

You all have driven quite a bit in your lives, actually this requires quite a bit of concentration. You really must be guarding your mind when you drive because you really have to take great care. Otherwise [when] you are driving along, if you really do not take care of what you are doing then you will get in an accident. We have some experience of this, we already become accustomed to this way. Geshela does not know how to drive [but] he reckons that if he got behind the wheel he would immediately have an accident.

So we really do have some experience there of really guarding the mind, being careful and watching what we do. We can apply this.

In patience we are looking at the divisions of patience. There are three divisions of patience,

1. *Developing the patience of disregarding harm done to you.*
2. *Patience accepting the suffering done to you.*
3. *Developing certitude about the teaching.*

Of these three we have covered the first, 'Developing the patience of disregarding harm done to you.' There is quite a lot in the section 'developing the patience of disregarding harm done to you.' We should try to read it as much as possible. It is very beneficial to do that. Lama Tsong Khapa has said so much in that section. The focus is on the benefits of patience and the drawbacks of anger. Having accepted the dharma then we try to accumulate virtue. Anger destroys all this virtue that we have worked so hard to accumulate. It is really terrible, it is that bad. The one that should be locked up in prison for life is anger. This is the real thief, but nobody can seem to get hold of him.

We left off on page 180 of the English translation. It says the reason you must develop patience has three parts.

1. The reason you must definitely accept suffering
2. The way to develop acceptance
3. A detailed explanation from the viewpoint of the bases

*Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* states:

*The causes of happiness sometimes occur,  
Whereas the causes of suffering occur frequently.*

As you continually experience whatever suffering is appropriate to you, you absolutely must know how to bring it into the path. Otherwise, as the Compendium of Trainings says, you either generate hostility or you become discouraged about cultivating the path, either circumstance interfering with applying yourself to virtue.

Look at the quote from the Bodhisattva Deeds, 'the causes of happiness sometimes occur (you could say occur sporadically), whereas the causes of suffering occur frequently.' This quote from Shantideva is generally understood in terms of the causes. He is saying that suffering is predominant because we have so [many] causes for suffering and that happiness and pleasure are so sporadic because we have so few causes for happiness and pleasure. The frequency of the experiences is related to the causes, that is what the author is really talking about.

We could phrase it in terms of a reason of result. We could say; in the continuum of a samsaric sentient being the causes of suffering are so prevalent because the effect, suffering is so prevalent. It is like saying on a smoky path there is fire because there is smoke. You could turn it around and say that the causes of happiness are so few because happiness is so rare, infrequent. You get the point?

Geshela: Less

On an ocean at night, there is no smoke because there is no fire.

In order for happiness to be prevalent and to occur more often, the causes for happiness must be more prevalent and occur more often. In order for suffering to be more infrequent and occur less, then the causes of suffering must be more infrequent and occur less. Really here the precious Lord, Lama Tsong Khapa is giving us advice that if we want more happiness and less suffering, then we must pay attention to the causes for those things, this is really solid advice.

Excuse me, Geshela was saying that Lama Tsong Khapa's advice here calls our attention to the fact that we have so much suffering don't we? We have so much suffering and so long as we do not find the suffering intolerable and feel impatient towards it then that is not going to decrease, it is going to continue to be very difficult and we are not going to practice the dharma.

Excuse me I misunderstood Geshela about three times in a row there. Really what he is trying to say is that if we are unable to accept suffering then our practice of the dharma will not turn out well.

Like for instance it is getting hotter and hotter, summer is really here, Chenrezig gompa is especially hot. Geshela says he is just teasing, just having a dig at Colin.

If we cannot accept the suffering that comes along with this heat, then we are not going to be able to study well. That is what the Precious Lord is trying to say. The Precious Lord probably understood the situation at Chenrezig!

Lama Tsong Khapa does not actually say accept suffering, but rather he talks about knowing how to bring suffering on to the path.

It says:

*As you continually experience whatever suffering is appropriate to you, you absolutely must know how to bring it into the path. Otherwise, as the Compendium of Trainings says, you either generate hostility or you become discouraged about cultivating the path, (in either case that would be an obstacle to your virtuous activities) either circumstance interfering with applying yourself to virtue.*

Bringing suffering on to the path is accepting suffering, whether or not you could say that always bringing it on to the path is necessarily accepting it is another question. But here we can say that if you bring suffering on to the path, then you are necessarily accepting suffering.

For instance, we think, "Oh, it is so hot, but wait this experience is exhausting the karma for experiencing this heat, through experiencing this, I can exhaust the karma whereby I would have to take rebirth in the hells. So may my experience of this heat while I am studying here act to eliminate that

karma”. There are enormous benefits from adopting this type of attitude.

This would be accepting suffering, you accept suffering with that attitude knowing that the karma is being exhausted and so forth. Whether you talk about it as accepting suffering or as bringing suffering on to the path, this is the point.

From time to time we are hot, from time to time we are cold, this is a shortcoming or fault of cyclic existence, it is not a fault of practicing the dharma. It is not about practicing the dharma, it is not the fault of Chenrezig’s gompa or assembly hall. By reflecting on the shortcomings of cyclic existence like this heat and cold we must develop the determination to be free, renunciation.

Here it is saying that it is absolutely indispensable to know how to take suffering on to the path, which means you must know how to accept suffering.

*Moreover, some sufferings will be caused by others, and some will be produced by your former karma, whether or not you strive at the path. Some, as will be explained below, occur when you engage in virtuous activity but do not occur when you are not so engaged. That is clear to us.*

*For the time being, you cannot dispel the sufferings definitely produced by the power of former karma and immediate conditions. You must accept them when they arise, because (1) if you do not do this, in addition to the basic suffering, you have the suffering of worry that is produced by your own thoughts, and then the suffering becomes very difficult for you to bear;*

Here we also have logic from *The Commentary on The Compendium of Valid Cognition*, a text by Dharmakirti, *The Pramanavarttika* which says; *for the time being, you cannot dispel the sufferings definitely produced by the power of former karma and immediate conditions. You must accept them when they arise.* What this is saying is that you cannot dispel or get rid of suffering that has already been established or the suffering that results when all of the causes and conditions for it are already assembled. When either of these circumstances takes place you cannot dispel or get rid of the suffering that has already been established or suffering whose causes and conditions are all present.

In the text *The Commentary on the Compendium of Valid Cognition*, Dharmakirti says, “How can you overcome the effects when the causes and conditions are not incomplete?” In other words, once the causes and conditions for an effect are totally complete, you cannot dispel it. How can you overcome the effect of causes which are not incomplete?

Geshela’s commenting on this phrase on the bottom of page 180 which reads, *for the time being, you cannot dispel the sufferings definitely produced by the power of former karma and immediate conditions.*

Once the causes and conditions are totally complete you cannot overcome the effect and that is what it is saying here. So what must you do? You must accept that suffering, the basic suffering is present already. If you do not accept the suffering then you will exacerbate the suffering, you will add to the suffering by thinking things like, “I am terrible. This is such a bad experience”. Through your worry you add to your present suffering [so] that is why we must accept the suffering once the basic suffering is already present. Once you have this additional suffering it becomes very difficult to bear.

So secondly it says:

*(2) if you accept the suffering, you let the basic suffering be and do not stop it, but you never have the suffering of worry that creates discontentment when you focus on the basic suffering – this is really accurate.*

*and (3) since you are using a method to bring even basic sufferings into the path, you greatly lessen your suffering, so you can bear it. Therefore, it is very crucial that you generate the patience that*

*accepts suffering.*

That marks the end of the section on the reasons why you must accept suffering. Now we need to have a short and to the point response to that question. Are we prepared to answer the question why must you accept suffering?

Geshela reckons you could respond in the following way, that you must definitely accept the suffering because if you do not it will be an obstacle to study, it will be an obstacle to practicing the dharma. That is why you need the patience that accepts suffering. This works as a reason, doesn't it?

A further explanation of that can be found in Lama Tsong Khapa's commentary here. We have given an answer why you must definitely accept suffering, so our job is done. But if the questioner persists and continues to ask, "Why is that, why is that?" then you can respond by mentioning the things that Lama Tsong Khapa does in here.

Your response could also be based upon something that is a conclusion you have reached through your own reflections too, you could think about it and answer.

The next section is:

***(b") The way to develop acceptance***

*which has two parts:*

- 1. Rejecting the idea that when suffering occurs it is absolutely unpleasant*
- 2. Showing that it is appropriate to accept suffering*

We are really getting into a Bodhisattva's practice here.

***(1") Rejecting the idea that when suffering occurs it is absolutely unpleasant***

*If you can remedy a situation wherein suffering occurs, you do not need to feel that it is unpleasant. If you cannot remedy it, it is not helpful to find it unpleasant, so there is no need for, or effectiveness to, your displeasure; there is even a disadvantage. If you are very impatient, a slight suffering is extremely difficult to bear, whereas if you minimize your impatience, you can endure great suffering. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:*

*If there is a remedy,  
Why be displeased?  
If there is no remedy,  
What is the use of being displeased?*

We have this type of attitude, at least the attitude described in Lama Chopa where it says that 'we do not want even the slightest of sufferings, yet are never content with the happiness we have.' We do find suffering of any type absolutely unpleasant but this makes our experience of it even worse. That is why it is so important that we learn about this.

It says, *If there is a remedy, why be displeased?* If we experience some type of physical or mental suffering and we know that there is a remedy for that, then without being mentally disturbed, without getting stirred up, we should apply that remedy.

If there is nothing that we can do to remedy that situation, it is still certain that being displeased and upset about that doesn't help at all. We can be quite certain that there is no benefit in being displeased, so do not allow the displeasure to occur.



This is where accepting the suffering comes into play. Our experience of suffering is a sign that we have the seed which is the cause for that suffering within our continuum. So if medical treatment is not helping, if looking after your health in other ways does not help, then at that point practice something like giving and taking, accept the suffering because after all you are experiencing the effect because you had the cause in your mind.

The giving and taking practice in that type of situation is really good practice of giving and taking or Tong-Len. Let us say that you have a particular physical illness and there are many other people who also have this physical illness. At that point you think, “May my experience of this physical illness count so that the others do not have to go through this”. In addition to people who are currently suffering from this illness there are many more who have the cause for experiencing this illness, so “Through my experience of this illness, may they also not have to undergo it”. This is a practice of compassion, as Geshela has often said - the practice of taking in giving and taking is a practice of compassion.

If we are able to adopt this attitude then our experience of the illness becomes quite significant, or it accomplishes great things, for in doing so you accumulate a great number of roots of virtue.

If you are sick and medicine would help you get better then you must rely on a doctor and do what the doctor advises you to do. Otherwise to just sit there and practice Tong-Len without seeking proper medical treatment when medical treatment would be effective is mistaken, that is not what we are meant to do.

The Precious Lord’s statement is quite accurate, if we have a great deal of patience then we can endure and be patient with great sufferings, if our patience is low then we cannot bear or tolerate even small suffering. Here it is good to apply Santideva’s advice.

*And also:*

*I shall not be impatient with  
Heat, cold, wind, and rain,  
Illness, bondage, beatings, and so on;  
If I am, the harm increases.*

It says it quite clearly, if we are not patient with these circumstances it makes it worse, the harm increases. Are we clear about this section, ‘stopping the idea that suffering that has occurred is absolutely unpleasant?’

We have some of this within us, many people here who have done Nyung Nays. When you do a Nyung Nay you know you are going to get hungry, thirsty, you know there are certain hardships involved in that. But you accept that and do the Nyung Nay nonetheless, those difficulties do not act as obstacles, you still do the Nyung Nay. Similarly in studying there are certain hardships, if you cannot tolerate and therefore are impatient with the difficulties of study you won’t be able to study. But we know that there are difficulties and we are patient with them, we tolerate them so that we can study. So we do have some of this within us, it is not totally unfamiliar, we have some experience.

The things we need to really be scared of are killing, stealing and sexual misconduct, these types of things. We know that if we perform any of these actions then a great deal of suffering will ensue. The result of acting in this way is suffering, so we definitely want to find the prospect of undergoing those sufferings unpleasant. When you think about it, there are two things – one, the suffering that you do want to find absolutely unpleasant and two, the suffering that you do not want to find absolutely unpleasant. You have to make a distinction.

In brief we should think, “If there is a purpose being served, then it is OK even if suffering arises. If

there is no purpose being served then it is not OK, we do not want that suffering to occur”. We have to have two different attitudes depending on the circumstance.

The next section is:

***(2”) Showing that it is appropriate to accept suffering***

and there are three parts to this:

- 1. Reflecting on the good qualities of suffering*
- 2. Reflecting on the advantages of bearing suffering’s hardships*
- 3. How it is not difficult to bear suffering if you gradually grow accustomed to it, starting with the small*

the explanation here follows the explanation given in Santideva’s text Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds.

***(a)) Reflecting on the good qualities of suffering***

Suffering itself is a faulty thing, but this faulty thing, suffering, does have its own positive qualities too – there are five of them.

*Suffering has five good qualities: (1) The good quality of spurring you on to liberation. This is because if you had no suffering, you would not develop the determination to be free of it.*

The attachment in which we are attached to the pleasures of the desire realm prevent us from achieving the states of mind belonging to the higher realm. Likewise our attachment to the pleasures of cyclic existence prevents us from achieving higher states, namely the pleasures of liberation. As long as we are completely focused on experiencing the pleasures of cyclic existence that would be an obstacle to our achievement of liberation. When you experience suffering, you begin to think, “How can I become free of this?” so that experience of suffering spurs you on to achieve the pleasure of liberation.

Do we understand the first quality, how suffering spurs us on to liberation?

*(2) The good quality of dispelling arrogance. This is because when suffering strikes you, it reduces your sense of superiority or you might say your conceit. This is quite good isn’t it, you suffer, you become a little bit more humble, your pride falls. One of the qualities of suffering then is that it helps us to be without pride.*

*(3) The good quality of causing you to shun sin. This is because when you experience very painful feelings, they arise from nonvirtue, so if you do not want these effects, you must avoid their causes.*

This would be quite difficult if you did not understand [karma], that is why gaining an understanding of karma and its effects is very important.

*(4) The good quality of causing you to like cultivating virtue. This is because when you are tormented with suffering, you desire happiness, and once you want it, you must cultivate the virtue that causes it.*

*(5) The good quality of producing compassion for those who wander in cyclic existence. This is because after you have assessed your own situation, you think, “Other beings suffer like this.”*

*From these five and what they indicate, recognize other good qualities on your own and then repeatedly train your mind to think, “This suffering is a condition that I want.” Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:*

*Since without suffering there is no determination to be free,  
You, mind, stay fixed!*

*And also:*

*Furthermore, the good qualities of suffering are that you  
Dispel arrogance with your disenchantment,  
Develop compassion for the beings of cyclic existence,  
Carefully avoid sin, and delight in virtue.*

Here we have a verse that supports the explanation Lama Tsong Khapa was giving earlier. These are the type of things that we should think.

Are we clear about the material leading up to this point? Any questions? Geshela prevented us from asking questions earlier, so are there any questions now?

Student: If there is a chance to remedy the suffering and you were to remedy it, then you wouldn't have a chance to do this practice.

Geshela: Let us say you have a headache, there is medicine you can take to relieve that headache, pain relieving medicine. If you do not take that medicine then that headache can be an obstacle to your study and to your practice, you are not able to study and practice because you have this headache. Rather than allow that to occur you take the medicine so that you can eliminate this obstacle to study and practice. That is not an obstacle to accepting suffering, because accepting suffering is meant to help us stop this thought, "Oh, why is this happening to me, why do I have to go through this?" It is meant to help us overcome this mental displeasure that we feel at the prospect of suffering, or at suffering. Basically, accepting suffering is meant to help us recognise how suffering is the result of negativities and therefore taking the medicine is not an obstacle, because we can still recognise that and still overcome the mental displeasure and that is the point here.

(Geshela: Understand, necessarily medicine I think, necessarily health look after, this very important)

You must take medicine, you must look after your health. Here when we talk about accepting suffering we are being advised to not allow this great mental displeasure to occur, do not feel so displeased at suffering.

So how can you do that? Well by thinking about how suffering is the result of negativities that you yourself have performed, these types of things. That this experience of suffering counts for something, we want to make sure that our experience of suffering counts for something.

This is the meaning of accepting suffering. To say that you should practice accepting suffering does not mean that you should not go to the hospital. You doctors are going to get angry if we start saying that. If people do not go to the hospital then you doctors do not have any work to do.

Student: You see how it is not an obstacle to the practice but would there be more purification if you were not to diminish the physical or mental suffering?

Geshela: The purification of negativities depends on your attitude, to purify negativities you must have the four opponent powers complete. How much you purify negativities depends on the type of thinking that you do when you are going through that. OK this one is especially for you Colin. If you have this headache say and you are suffering, but as you suffer you can think, "this is the result of negativities I have performed in the past, this is a fault of cyclic existence, now I am not going to perform negativities again". Then it is probably OK not to take the medicine, to just sit there and experience that suffering would probably be OK. But if you were to experience that suffering and you were not able to think about those types of things, all you could do was sit there and dwell on suffering and you were not able to adopt these more helpful attitudes then it would be better to take the medicine so that you could then

think about those types of things. Otherwise as you sit there suffering from your headache, you are going to be yelling at Kaya saying, “Hey Kaya, bring me some water, I have got a headache.” You are going to yell at Kaya and Kaya’s going to suffer, so probably better to take the medicine.

What does it mean to accept suffering? It means that when suffering occurs, at that point do not become displeased with it but rather do what you can to pacify any displeasure. That is what it means to accept suffering. Otherwise you might misunderstand what it means to accept suffering, you might think, “Oh, that means when I do not have suffering I have got to do something to create or bring about more suffering.” That is not the meaning, do not misunderstand.

Geshela says a similar thing in another context. Another person does something to harm us and we suffer, so to say that you must accept suffering in this case does not mean that you just have to sit there and take the beating that they give you. That is not at all what is being advised. Consider what you can do. Do not become displeased, do not allow your mind to become disturbed but do what you can to address the situation. Do not become angry.

Santideva says it quite clearly in his text Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds, he says on page 181:

*If there is a remedy,  
Why be displeased?  
If there is no remedy,  
What is the use of being displeased?*

We understand the meaning of this don’t we?

So we will leave it there, accepting suffering.

**Buddhist Studies Programme**

**Subject : Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3**

**Teacher : Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter : Ven Lozang Zopa**

**Number of the teaching: 6**

**Date of the teaching: 27<sup>th</sup> October**

Let's just go straight into it. *Developing the patience of accepting suffering* has three parts:

1. *The reason you must definitely accept suffering*
2. *The way to develop acceptance*
3. *A detailed explanation from the viewpoint of the bases*

We're discussing the second of these; *the way to develop acceptance*. It has two parts:

1. *Rejecting the idea that when suffering occurs it is absolutely unpleasant*
2. *Showing that it's appropriate to accept suffering.*

Yesterday we covered the first of these. The second part has three sections:

1. *Reflecting on the good qualities of suffering*
2. *Reflecting on the advantages of bearing suffering's hardships*
3. *How it is not difficult to bear suffering if you gradually grow accustomed to it, starting with the small*

Yesterday we went through the good qualities of suffering. Suffering has five good qualities, doesn't it? Today we'll begin with the next section:

***(b) Reflecting on the advantages of bearing suffering's hardships***

This is found on page 183 of the English translation.

There are two parts to this:

1. *Reflecting on the crucial benefits such as liberation, etc.*
2. *Reflecting on the benefit of dispelling immeasurable suffering*

***(1) Reflecting on the crucial benefits such as liberation, etc.***

*Repeatedly make your mind steadfast, thinking, "I know that in the past while passing through cyclic existence I suffered for the sake of trifling desires and minor needs, yet I belittled the many sufferings and then underwent a great deal of purposeless suffering that will in turn cause immeasurable suffering for me in my future lives. Given this, now that I know that I am engaged in virtue that will accomplish immeasurable benefits and happiness for myself and others, it is appropriate that I accept suffering a trillion times more than before, so of course I will accept sufferings smaller than that."*

This is clear isn't it? "In the past, when I didn't know what to adopt and what to discard, I accumulated many negativities in trying to accomplish small, inferior desires. Although there were hardships involved in that, I disregarded those hardships, and in the process accumulated a great many negativities". This is something we all know about. It is something we can understand by simply reflecting on our own experiences.

We now know that we should work for the welfare of both ourselves and others, but how can we do that? The text says that we're '*engaged in virtue [the Mahayana dharma] that will accomplish immeasurable benefits and happiness for myself and others*'. Now that we're engaged in such a thing '*it*

*is appropriate that we accept suffering a trillion times more than before, so of course we will accept sufferings smaller than that*’ in the process of accomplishing this welfare.

*Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:*

*For the sake of my desires I have experienced  
Being burned, etc., thousands of times in the hells,  
But have not achieved either my own welfare  
Or the welfare of others.*

*This is not as harmful as that,  
And it achieves great purpose,  
So it is correct here only to delight  
In suffering that clears away all beings’ hurt.*

What does this quote mean? Look in particular at the first line and a half, which reads;

*For the sake of my desires I have experienced  
Being burned, etc.*

Perhaps ‘desire’ here is a reference to the desire for liberation. Some religious traditions say that in order to attain liberation a person must put their body through certain hardships such as burning. There are religious traditions that espouse such a path so perhaps this a reference to such actions. The word ‘burned’ here could also be interpreted in relation to killing, whether oneself or another. Of course if you were to kill yourself, the question would arise as to whether or not that karma could actually come to completion. For instance, could a fully ordained monk who kills himself actually incur a defeat in doing so? That’s an issue to be debated, but certainly to kill either yourself or another person is a serious negativity and could lead to rebirth in the hells where you suffer burning and so forth. Whatever the case, in the past we have experienced a great deal of suffering for things that really did not achieve any great ends, yet now we have the opportunity to engage in something that is not harmful, and which does accomplish great aims. It’s only reasonable, therefore, that we delight in the opportunity to endure the suffering that accompanies achieving such things. As the text says:

*This is not as harmful as that,  
And it achieves great purpose,  
So it is correct here only to delight  
In suffering that clears away all beings’ hurt.*

The meaning is that it is correct to delight in the suffering you incur in your attempt to accomplish the welfare of yourself and others.

Geshe-la wasn’t able to consult the commentary to *Engaging in the Bodhisattva’s Deeds*, but he wanted to raise this question in relation to the wording of this first verse, in particular the word translated here as, ‘burned’ (*bsreg*). It’s similar in meaning to word (*bsad*) translated here as ‘belittled’ but which can also mean ‘disregard’. It’s found in the above paragraph by Lama Tsongkhapa: *yet I belittled the many sufferings and then underwent a great deal of purposeless suffering that will in turn cause immeasurable suffering for me in my future lives*. The question therefore is, does this word translated as ‘burned’, actually mean that or does it mean ‘disregard’ in the sense of ‘disregarding a suffering’. For instance, there are some traditions that say that if you cover your arm in oil and set it on fire, you make a light offering of it, and by doing this you achieve liberation. Of course setting your arm on fire and letting it burn would entail a great deal of suffering, but you disregard that suffering with the thought that it will lead to liberation. There is therefore this question as to whether to interpret these words as ‘burned’, ‘belittle’, or ‘disregard’.

The point is that we have accumulated a great many negativities while disregarding the sufferings associated with that. Of this we can be quite certain. Now that we are accomplishing virtue, of course we should be patient. Of course we should disregard the sufferings that come along with our pursuit of virtue.

*Thus, after you reflect on how you have previously created only hardship that did not accomplish any of your own or others' aims, uplift your mind, thinking, "Why am I not now bearing a suffering that achieves great purpose? Although I am suffering, how excellent that I have found something like this to do."*

This is real advice for us these days isn't it? Think; "No matter how hot it gets I'm going to disregard it because look at what an excellent opportunity for study I have right now. I'm going to continue doing it." This really is applicable advice for the situation that we're in right now!

Student: If somebody is really burning on fire, it's no point for that person to complain about how hot the fire is.

Geshela: The point is that certain Indian religious traditions have a practice where they 'rely on the five fires'. It is a practice of hardship, of asceticism. A practice where they disregard the hardship involved in it.

Geshe-la was speculating that the first two lines of this quote from *Engaging in the Bodhisattvas Deeds*, is a reference to these Indian traditions which encourage the performance of these ascetic practices. It mentions the word 'burn' in the context of 'burning for the sake of one's desires'. Geshe-la thinks perhaps this is setting part of one's body on fire in order to achieve the desired liberation. He is speculating that this is the case. If he gets a chance he will consult the commentary to Shantideva's text but he thinks that is probably what it's referring to. There are definitely religious traditions which encourage these practices. There is no question about that.

Continuing on, the text says:

*Moreover, develop a fearless attitude toward hardship, thinking how you were misled by bad teachers to ignoble, purposeless paths whereon you endured ascetic practices such as leaping on a trident, sitting close to five fires, and the like. Also think how for the sake of inferior, mundane purposes you made yourself bear many sufferings in farming, business, and war.*

There it is right there - 'sitting close to five fires'. This paragraph lends credence to the interpretation Geshe-la just gave.

Consider the outline heading of the section we're dealing with here: *Reflecting on the crucial benefits such as liberation, etc.* If you cultivate patience, there are benefits that come from that, such as liberation. The word 'etc.' allows us to say other things such as buddhahood and higher status rebirths could be included as these benefits. For that matter, we could also include happiness in this life. All of these are potential benefits that come from cultivating patience.

The point of this is that it seems if you do not get angry, if you do not develop the intention to harm others, but instead practice patience, one of the benefits that come from that is the achievement of liberation. If on the other hand you were to accept suffering in terms of disregarding the suffering arising through sitting close to five fires and engaging in other ascetic practices as espoused by other religious traditions, that would not be a correct path to liberation. The Buddhist explanation is that the patience involved in doing such ascetic practices that they are encouraging us to do, does not lead to liberation, whereas the patience involved in not becoming angry with those who are trying to harm you and so forth, does lead to liberation.'

Do you understand what ‘*leaping on a trident*’ means? When you think about it, it would take a lot of courage to do that, wouldn’t it?

That then is the first part. The second outline heading under *reflecting on the advantages of bearing suffering’s hardships* is:

**(2)) *Reflecting on the benefit of dispelling immeasurable suffering***

The text reads:

*Reflect well on the differences between short-term and long-term suffering, thinking, “A man who is to be executed is overjoyed when he is freed from execution by having merely his finger cut off. How excellent it would be if similarly, by means of this slight suffering of human hardship, I could permanently dispel the suffering of limitless cyclic existence in general and in particular the suffering of miserable rebirths such as the hells, etc.” If you do this well, you produce fearless courage with respect to hardship. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:*

*How is it unfortunate if a man who is to be executed  
Is freed from that by having his hand cut off?  
How is it unfortunate if by human suffering  
You are released from hell?*

Do you understand this clearly? If you do not respond by developing an intention to harm when another person harms you, it’s quite possible that you’re going to suffer. You’re not allowed to develop that intention to harm them so when another person acts harmfully towards you, you restrain yourself. You bind yourself, stopping yourself from developing that intention to harm, and work on developing something else; such as the intention to benefit that person or looking for some other way to deal with the situation. In doing this, you’re going to have difficulties - you’re going to experience suffering, but this is the suffering of a human. If you were to instead develop the intention to harm and retaliate against this harmdoer, then that could lead to sufferings in the hell realms. Such sufferings are far worse than those of a human.

The authors are talking about quite serious situations here. They are talking about when another person does something harmful to you that threatens your very life. If someone does something that threatens your life, do not respond by acting in a way that’s going to harm their life because if you do, that can lead to an enormous amount of suffering that lasts for a very long time. Rather than retaliate by trying to kill the person who has tried to kill you, do not develop the intention to harm. It might be, that in doing so you die, you don’t know. But even if you don’t die, the chances are you’re going to experience a great deal of suffering yet still, this is human suffering, which is smaller in comparison to the long and intense suffering you would experience, were you to lash out at them and do something to them that harms their life. This then is the type of situation they’re talking about.

Of the different advice found within Buddhism, these are some of the more difficult to apply, aren’t they?

In the Vinaya it says; ‘it’s easy to allow yourself to lose your life but allowing your ethics to decline is not like that.’ It’s saying that if you’re faced with a situation where you might lose your life, that’s not all that difficult. The reason given for that is that in becoming separated from your life, your lifespan is bought to an end and you die, but that’s all. If however you were to allow your ethics to decline, you would experience suffering in hundreds of thousands of rebirths subsequent to that. The point here is that when you think about it, allowing yourself to be killed when faced with no other option is not that difficult. You simply die, and the suffering is rather short lived. Alternatively if you were to retaliate by taking another persons life then there’s a great deal of suffering to experience in future lives in the miserable realms and so forth.



As the text says ‘*How excellent it would be if similarly, by means of this slight suffering of human hardship, I could permanently dispel the suffering of limitless cyclic existence in general - [in general cyclic existence has no limit] - and in particular the suffering of miserable rebirths such as the hells, etc.*’

We should think that, ‘If by experiencing this human suffering I can get rid of all that other stuff, then that’s really good!’ It’s as if someone were to tell you when you’re bound to be executed; ‘Hey, we’re going to cut off your fingers so you don’t have to get killed.’ You’d think; ‘Oh! That’s great, isn’t it?!’ Some people have already had their fingers cut off and they’re really happy!

So that’s the end of the section: *Reflecting on the benefit of dispelling immeasurable suffering*. Do you understand its significance? If you understand the heading, then you have something to think about. As you go through the different headings of the outline, if you understand their meanings, then you can reflect on the points contained within them.

We might think; “How could I bear this great suffering! Losing one’s life is an enormous suffering.” You should think that actually the sufferings of humans are rather small when compared to other sufferings such as those of the miserable realms and so forth. Actually to experience a little human suffering and for that to mean not having to experience those other sufferings is just like having your finger cut off and thereby not having to be executed. However we think; “Wait a minute! These human sufferings are actually quite significant. If I lose my life, how could I possibly be patient with that? How could I bear that?”

Does this doubt arise? The next section gives the answer to such a doubt. It says:

***(c) How it is not difficult to bear suffering if you gradually grow accustomed to it, starting with the small***

*Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:*

*There is nothing whatsoever  
That does not become easier through habituation.  
So by becoming used to small harms  
You will bear great harms as well. This is the answer to that doubt, isn’t it?*

We need to accustom ourselves to small sufferings. If we do this, then over time we’ll be able to bear or tolerate greater sufferings. Actually Geshe-la talked a little about this morning [in another course of teaching] Let’s see what the Precious Lord has to say about this:

*After you have conceived the armor-like thought to accept suffering, you gradually blend it with suffering, starting with small sufferings. When you do this, you steadily increase your capacity to accept suffering.*

Think about it. Let’s say that it’s a bit easier to accept the suffering that comes when a person says something nasty to you – criticizes you, for instance. It’s easier to be patient then than when someone physically acts to harm you, isn’t it? So try that, when someone says something nasty to you, try not to respond with your own nasty words. If you do this, eventually you will reach a point where you don’t feel the need to respond with nasty words at all. We can pretty much guess that that would happen, can’t we?

Without developing the intention to harm you might find yourself in a situation where you have to correct the person but this is a different matter. Of course you can correct a person; informing them of

the way things actually are, without feeling ill will towards them. You could think about doing this, couldn't you?

When Geshe-la was a young boy, maybe eleven or twelve years old, there were two boys who were very good mates, and got along quite well. But then someone else came along and decided to create some problems between them. He told one of them that the other had been saying all sorts of bad things about him. So the kid who was told that his friend was saying all sorts of bad things about him, became angry and grabbed a stick and went after his friend. He came up behind him and whacked him right in the head with the stick. At first, this kid who was hit in the head thought it didn't really hurt. He thought his friend was just playing around. He turned around with a smile on his face and said; 'Hey! What are you doing??!!' His friend's scowling at him, saying; 'You said this and this and this. You did all sorts of bad things!' His friend was obviously annoyed with him so he said; 'Now we've gotta fight!' Then he thought; 'Oh, boy! That really hurt!!' When he was first hit in the head it didn't really hurt that much because he thought he was kidding but when he realized his friend was angry with him, he thought; 'Oh, that really hurt!' So he stands up and really socked it to him. Really nailed him!!

It was this idea that his friend wanted to hurt him that made the difference. At first when he was hit and thought his mate was just playing around he didn't really make much of it. Of course it hurt but he said it didn't really hurt that much. But then when he realized when his friend was serious, his thinking about the situation changed – his preconceptions or ideas changed and then it really started to hurt. Our suffering is exacerbated by our preconceptions and ideas so if we can reduce our preconceptions and ideas, we can reduce the sufferings that we undergo.

*The Compendium of Trainings says:*

*Once you have first grown used to small sufferings, you will become accustomed to the difficult and the very difficult. For example, just as all living beings have the idea that suffering is happiness through the power of conditioning, so you maintain the idea of joy whenever you experience suffering by becoming used to applying the idea of joy to these experiences.*

Geshe-la is not sure that this is what the quote means but thinks perhaps it is. It says; *just as all living beings have the idea that suffering is happiness through the power of conditioning*, it's as if contaminated pleasant feelings are not real pleasures - not real happiness. Contaminated pleasant feelings are actually the suffering of change in that they lead to suffering. Due to conditioning however, we think of them as being a perfect, correct form of pleasure. In the same way, through conditioning we can think of that which is actually suffering as a form of pleasure. We can maintain the idea of joy when you experience suffering.

For instance, if you're really thirsty and drink water, the suffering of thirst decreases a little and something resembling pleasure appears to arise. But that's not a perfect form of pleasure. It's something resembling pleasure that appears due to the decrease of our suffering of thirst. This is how we usually talk of the suffering of change.

If you look at the way the analogy is phrased, this would seem to be the meaning. ... *'just as all living beings have the idea that suffering is happiness through the power of conditioning'*. It seems to be a reference to the way we conceive of contaminated pleasures, which are in fact suffering of change, as being perfect forms of pleasure, or as being pleasurable.

This could also be understood in a different way. Think of all the different games we play, or the competitions we enter. Think of all the difficulties that are involved in these competitive games where winning or losing is involved. Think also of other activities like for instance, swimming. Swimming is really hard work, but after you go through all that hard work, afterwards you think; "Oh, that was really nice! That was really pleasurable – phew!!" It's much like this, isn't it? Think of all the different things

in this world that actually involve a great deal of difficulty and problems. Afterwards you sit back and think; “That was really good! That was really pleasurable!” So this quote doesn’t have to be understood as a reference to the contaminated pleasures of suffering which are in fact sufferings of change. It could also be understood as a reference to these types of experiences.

There are many instances of suffering that we think of as happiness and pleasure, aren’t there? This occurs due to the power of our conditioning. So just as this occurs in those circumstances, *‘so you maintain the idea of joy whenever you experience suffering by becoming used to applying the idea of joy to these experiences’*. It would seem that you begin to think of those experiences as joyful. You begin to enjoy them,.

There’s a logic behind this. Do we all understand the logic? This is quite important, these reasons provide us with wisdom.

*As to how this comes about, the Questions of Householder Ugra Sutra states:*

*Free yourself from a mind that is like a piece of cotton.*

*And the Array of Stalks Sutra says:*

*Daughter, in order to destroy all afflictions you should develop a mind that is hard to defeat.*

*Thus, you need courage that is very firm and stable; you will not be able to accept suffering with a fragile mind.*

Don’t have a fragile mind that is harmed when the slightest discomfort occurs or something slightly unpleasant happens. We don’t want this fragile mind that is like a piece of cotton. We need a very firm, stable mind that is hard to defeat.

*If you initially develop a significant degree of courage, even great suffering becomes helpful. It is just like the case of warriors entering a battle and using the sight of their own blood to increase their boldness.*

This analogy comes from *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*.

*If right from the start you belittle yourself, saying, “I have never heard of such a thing, and even if I had heard of it, I could never do something like that,” then even a small suffering becomes a cause for you to turn back from the path. It is just like the case of cowards who see others’ blood and, fainting, fall unconscious.*

Some warriors will become more bold when they see the sight of their own blood whereas others will fall unconscious when they see the blood of another. This described in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*:

*Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:*

*Some, seeing their own blood,  
Become more intrepid.  
Some, seeing others’ blood,  
Fall unconscious.*

*This comes from the mind’s fortitude  
Or from its timidity.*

That completes the section on; *How it is not difficult to bear suffering if you gradually grow accustomed to it, starting with the small.* If you get used to bearing small sufferings, you eventually become able to bear greater ones.

The next section is:

***(c”) A detailed explanation from the viewpoint of the bases***

This brings us back to one of the main points in this outline. It is the third division in the section on ‘*developing the patience of accepting suffering*’.

*Question: Given that one must accept the suffering that occurs, from where do these sufferings come and how does one accept them?*

*Reply: There are eight bases for accepting suffering:*

What follows is an explanation of the way in which you accept suffering, so please read along carefully.

*1. Acceptance of suffering that is based on objects. Robes, alms, bedding, seat, medicine, and necessities are objects that enhance pure conduct. Without displeasure and disappointment you accept the suffering that arises when these are given to you and you find them to be inferior or too few, or when they are given with disrespect or after a long delay.*

This is a discussion from Vinaya; the texts on discipline. In India in former times, when a person became a monk, they would be offered alms, or food, they would be offered a seat to sit on, a room to stay in, these types of things. The donors might give it early or late. They might be erratic in terms of the timing that they give it and so forth. This explanation here refers explicitly to monks or nuns but it could also be understood more broadly. For instance, if someone is meant to give you something but is late or early in doing so, you must accept the suffering that comes with that.

The text also mentions things given being inferior or too few, or that the way that they are given being inappropriate or disrespectful. For instance if for ones birthday or at Christmas you expect a gift, if someone gives you a gift, but you think, ‘Oh, it’s so small! I thought I was going to get this or that.’ There can be a dissatisfaction that comes from the type of gift given. This kind of thing is meant.

Geshe-la: I have a story to tell. Tshering will understand. A few months ago I was taking English classes in Melbourne from an 82 years old Englishman. At that time I was asked to give a talk in public about Christmas. At that talk I said ‘The importance of this Christmas is spoken of in terms of its importance for business people. Because business people sell a lot people say; ‘Ah! Christmas, Christmas, Christmas!!’ But Christmas is really religious, isn’t it? It’s meant to be something special. Properly speaking, Christmas is a time to remember Jesus. It is a time to remember his life story, to remember his kindness. It’s really a time to practice the advice that he gave us – his teachings. That’s what Christmas is really meant to be about, isn’t it?

Presents aren’t important, are they? If you like to give a present then just give it. Don’t hope; ‘if I give this maybe he or she will give me something.’ If you don’t hope for such things then it doesn’t matter. If you’re going to give, then give with the highest intention; without any hope for something given in return. What’s more, try and give something that’s going to be useful or beneficial for the other person. Don’t hope or expect that you’re going to get something in return. If you do that, everyone gets along, every gets close and when people get along and are close they’re happy.

The next time I had my English class this old man asked me; “Geshe-la, what did you say about Christmas?” I explained to time what I had done and he said “Excellent!”. He told how his son had

given him a \$70 book as a Christmas present. He was very upset - not happy! He said; "I am 82 years old. What will I do with a \$70 book. He has lost his money! What you said is excellent!!" (laughs) He said; "Presents are really not important. Really it is harmony that is important." His son had bought him a \$70 book in the hope that his father would be happy but his father was unhappy!!

So then, if something uncomfortable or unwanted that you don't like happens – accept it. Accept these types of things. That's what this first one is about.

*2. Acceptance of suffering that is based on worldly concerns. The nine worldly concerns are: (1) loss; (2) disgrace; (3) blame; (4) pain; (5) disintegration; (6) extinguishment; (7) aging; (8) sickness; and, (9) the death of what is subject to death subsequent to its decay. After you have analyzed the sufferings based on all or each of these, you accept the suffering.*

We often talk of the eight mundane concerns, don't we? How we're pleased when someone praises us, how we're unhappy when someone puts us down. How we're pleased when we get something, and displeased when we do not. We talk about these all the time, don't we? It important that we keep a level head with respect to these eight mundane concerns. Don't blow things out of proportion. If someone criticizes you, try not to find that too unbearable; to be too impatient with that. If someone praises you, or if something good happens to you, try not to get overly excited, and so forth, just try to keep a level head with respect to these mundane concerns.

Many westerners get really happy when they have good dreams. You shouldn't get so excited about that.' It's just a dream, isn't it? They're not real! The problem is that when you have a bad dream, then things go bad and you start to suffer. It's a dream. You can dream a good dream, but it's still a dream. You can dream a bad dream but it's still a dream. Don't blow these out of proportion or get too excited or too upset.

When Geshe-la first came he had all sorts of problems with this. It seemed as if everyone was asking him what their dreams meant. It didn't matter how many times Geshe-la said he didn't know, everyone still kept asking about their dreams. Forget it!!

We're born, we don't control it. We get old, we don't control it. We get sick, we don't control it. We die, we don't control it. Many things happen to us that we don't have any control over, so when this suffering comes about through these uncontrolled circumstances, we shouldn't be impatient. We should accept that suffering.

*3. Acceptance of suffering that is based on physical activities. The four physical activities are moving around, standing, sitting, and lying down. When all day and all night you purify your mind of obstructions by means of the first [moving around] and third [sitting] of these four, you are accepting the sufferings that arise from them; however, you do not relax on a couch, chair, or bed of straw or leaves when it is not the time to do so.*

There's a funny story in the Vinaya about this. Some fully ordained monks went to someone's house. There was kind of a couch or a bed there. It wasn't a very strong bed, so when they sat down rather heavily, the bed broke. So when this sort of thing happens, you have to accept the suffering and deal with the hardships. The point of the story is that when you have a bed or seat and you want to sit down, because you're tired, you should do so in a relaxed fashion. Check it out as you sit down!

*4. Acceptance of suffering that is based on upholding the teaching. The teaching is upheld in seven ways: by (1) worshipping and serving the three jewels; (2) worshipping and serving the guru; (3) understanding the teachings; (4) teaching extensively to others what you have understood; (5) reciting its praises in a loud, clear voice; (6) correctly reflecting on it in solitude; and (7) cultivating calm abiding and insight that is imbued with yogic attention. When you strive at these, you accept the sufferings that arise.*

When you strive at these you accept the sufferings that arise.

*5. Acceptance of suffering that is based on living by begging. The seven aspects of living by begging are (1) you experience having an ugly appearance due to shaving off your hair, beard and so forth; (2) you experience wearing cloth that is patched together and is of poor color; (3) you live by restraining yourself from the conduct of worldly persons and act in a way other than they do; (4) you give up farm work, etc., and then live by getting material goods from others, so you live in dependence on others; (5) since you do not accumulate or employ material gain, you seek things such as robes, etc., from others for as long as you live; (6) since you give up sexual intercourse, you turn away from human desires until you die; and (7) since you give up dancing, laughter, and the like, you turn away from human merriment until you die in order to give up friends, intimate companions, childhood friends, and the like, as well as pleasures and enjoyments. You accept the suffering that comes about based on these.*

These are mainly aimed at the ordained.

*6. Acceptance of suffering that is based on fatigue due to perseverance. You accept the suffering that arises from mental and physical fatigue, hardship, and disturbance while you are persevering at cultivating virtues.*

Like us! This is one for us, right?

*7. Acceptance of suffering that is based on acting for the welfare of living beings. There are eleven activities for others' welfare; you accept the sufferings that occur because of these.*

The 'eleven activities for others' welfare' are described in terms of the eleven types of beings, which can be found on page 228 and note 240. It says there are:

1. those who need help,
2. those who are confused as to the proper method,
3. those who have given help,
4. those afflicted by fear,
5. those afflicted with sorrow,
6. those poor in goods,
7. those who want a dwelling,
8. those who want mental harmony,
9. those who proceed correctly,
10. those who proceed wrongly and
11. those who need to be disciplined by supernormal powers.

In brief we are talking about accepting the suffering that comes when you are trying to help others. It's very simply, isn't it.

*8. Acceptance of suffering that is based on current tasks. You accept the suffering that arises from tasks for a renunciate, such as the work associated with the begging bowl, robes, and so forth, or from the tasks for a householder, such as faultless work on a farm, in business, as a government employee, etc.*

In short, whatever job you do, be it in business or otherwise, you should do it in a way whereby you do not incur misdeeds or negativities. Try to make sure that in your work you are not doing things that are negative by nature.

*Even if you are stricken with any of the sufferings that arise in dependence on these eight bases, you do not give up your joyous perseverance at each. You act for the sake of enlightenment, joyfully, not letting such sufferings become an obstacle that causes you to turn back once you have set forth.*

That marks the end of the section on *the patience of accepting suffering*.

In Geshela's opinion, practicing patience of accepting sufferings means that when a suffering occurs you think about how it arises in dependence upon causes and conditions, and so forth, and in this way you don't develop displeasure, or become upset, and therefore in turn do not develop the intention to harm, or ill will.

When suffering occurs make sure you do not develop this displeasure. Take steps towards avoiding becoming displeased and if you do become displeased try to stop it straight away. It's possible that you might feel displeased because things happen. Without any effort being required at all we become displeased with the situation but if you do become displeased then immediately try to stop it. Please understand 'accepting suffering' in this way. If you were to go away thinking that someone who accepts suffering doesn't seek medical help when required, that they don't take medicine when they're unwell, that is not at all what Geshela is trying to say. Geshela doesn't approve of such an understanding. Yesterday Colin asked a question underlying which was the assumption that if you go to the hospital or take medicine when you're unwell you're not really accepting the suffering. Geshela does not accept that to be the meaning of 'accepting suffering'.

Let's debate it. Let's consider the implications if that were what accepting suffering means. Buddhism and science are extremely compatible. They're both based on reasons aren't they? If the Buddhist scriptures advise us to accept suffering and that meant not to take medicine when you're unwell or not to go to hospital when you're hurt; that one should just sit there and suffer, scientists would think that's pretty stupid. They would definitely say that's idiotic. They would say that wouldn't they, and they would have a good point. There's some truth to that.

Student: Sometimes you hear stories about Lamas who don't take medicine or go to hospital when they're sick so why are they doing it?

Geshela: We must assume that the Lama in this case has a purpose for doing what he does. You would have to really ask the Lama why he chose to do that. If you say that the Lama is unwell and doesn't take medicine and that therefore he is accepting suffering, we don't know that. Who knows if he's even suffering? Maybe he is just displaying the aspect of being sick. We can't really say. You'd have to ask the Lama but you would probably assume that the Lama has a purpose for doing what he does. When you're dealing with a person who has control over birth, illness, aging and death it is a totally different situation. You're dealing with a person who has basically gone beyond the world.. Here the advice to accept suffering is given for people like us. We need to accept suffering. It's probably better if we go to a hospital isn't it!

So be careful! Otherwise, if you go around telling that to scientists, you run this risk. They're going to think "Gosh Buddhism is really stupid isn't it! Even when you're sick you don't go to a hospital, you just sit there and suffer!" Not only scientists, maybe doctors and nurses in the audience might think this. Accepting suffering here does not refer to those situations. It's mainly talking about not becoming upset. Not being displeased when those circumstances arise. That's most important.

### ***(3') Developing the patience of certitude about the teachings***

*The patience of certitude about the teachings means generating the forbearance of conviction.*

Translator: this term translated here as 'conviction' is *mu-pa (mos pa)*. It is notoriously difficult to translate into English. It means that you have an affinity for something, a desire to achieve it. 'resolution' or 'conviction' are possible ways of translating it. It's often used in conjunction another word in which case you it means a person's inclination or affinities. Given the option to do a few things

you might say that you have an affinity towards that one but no affinity towards this. In other words you'd like to do that but you wouldn't like to do this.

Geshela believes 'affinity' is getting to the point because first you have a faith occurring when you see good qualities in something. That leads then to the aspiration and then from the aspiration comes the affinity or the liking for something. Some people have an affinity towards practicing the Mahayana teachings, other people have an affinity towards practicing the Hinayana teachings. Some like to practice Mahayana, others like to practice Hinayana. Therefore when the text says here that; '*It has eight objects*' it's talking about how there are eight objects that you like, the things you have an affinity towards. Is that nice? Just keep in mind in another context this word might be translated in another way. So the first object of one's affinity is

1. *The object of faith. This is the good qualities of the three jewels.*
2. *The object to be actualized. This is the reality of the two selflessnesses.*
3. *The desired object. This is the great powers of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, of which there are three—the power of the superknowledges, the power of the six perfections, and the power which is innate.*
4. *The object to be adopted. This is wanting both the cause—good deeds—and the effect of these deeds.*
5. *The object to be discarded. This is wishing to avoid both the cause—misdeeds—and the effect of these deeds.*
6. *The object of meditation that is the goal to be achieved. This is enlightenment.*
7. *The object of meditation that is the method for achieving the goal. This is all the paths of training in the spirit of enlightenment.*
8. *The object of subsequent practice through study and reflection. According to Dro-lung-ba (Gro-lung-ba), this refers to the province of what is to be known, such as impermanence and so forth.*

'The province of what is to be known' is a technical term which could be translated as 'the scope of objects of knowledge' however this is quite nice English translation.

*The Power-Lineage Chapter (Bala-gotra-parivarta) of the Bodhisattva Levels mentions that the eighth is the sublime teaching—the twelve branches of scripture and so forth—so I think you have to take it as being this.*

So Lama Tsong Khapa believes that the eighth: *the objects of subsequent practice through study and reflection* should be understood as explained in the *Bodhisattva levels*. 'The twelve branches of scripture' mentioned following that are the different teachings that Buddha gave. They are combined in different ways such as into the twelve branches of scripture. It is the speech or teachings of Buddha.

*The way to have conviction (or affinity) is to become certain about these objects just as they are, and then to think about them again and again, apprehending them without conflict.*

The term 'the patience of certitude about the teachings' is commonly seen but it's never explained as clearly as it is here. It says the way to have this affinity is to become certain - which is where 'certitude' comes it - to become certain about these objects as they are, and to think about them again and again, apprehending them without conflict.



*In accordance with passages in the Bodhisattva Levels, I have set forth the set of eight bases with respect to the patience of accepting suffering and eight objects with respect to the patience of certitude about the teachings. In particular, there is extensive coverage there of the patience of certitude about the teachings.*

So in the Bodhisattva levels there is this type of explanation.

Taking care with our studies, really making an effort to understand them; this is all ‘certitude about the teachings’, isn’t it! It is the patience of being certain or having certitude about the teachings.

#### **(d') How to practice**

*When practicing any kind of patience, you practice it in association with the six supremacies and all six perfections. These are the same as in the earlier explanation, except for the generosity of patience means to establish others in patience.*

Do you remember the six supremacies? They were first introduced in the section on the perfection of generosity on page 120 of the English translation. The only difference with this and the earlier explanation is how you understand the generosity of patience, it means to establish others in patience. You can find the six supremacies on page 120 and read them for yourselves.

The fifth section is a summary on the perfection of patience:

#### **(e') A summary**

*The recollection and cultivation of the spirit of enlightenment—the basis of the bodhisattva deeds—is the root of the wish to establish all beings in a patience wherein they have extinguished the contaminations. After you steadily increase this spirit, aspire to practice the patience of those at high levels and then train your mind in it. Distinguish the trainings for the patience of a beginning bodhisattva, and then learn these properly.*

Beings on the high grounds have patience in their continuums, don’t they? Just as Buddhas have patience in their continuums. The buddhas have the perfection of patience, consummate patience, patience developed to its utmost extent. These we hold as goals to achieve. So ‘*distinguish the trainings for the patience of a beginning bodhisattva, and then learn these properly*’.

*If you transgress the boundaries as explained, you must make an effort to amend this. If you neglect these transgressions at the time of practicing these trainings, you will be continually tainted by many great misdeeds, and even in future lifetimes your practice of the marvellous deeds of the bodhisattvas will be extremely difficult. Seeing that the essentials of the path are supreme, practice right now what you can, and inculcate the intention to practice even those you now cannot. If you do this, then, as the Questions of Subahu Sutra says, you will bring the perfection of patience to completion with little difficulty and minor suffering.*

Are we clear about this? Do you have any doubts? It says to distinguish the patience for the beginning bodhisattva and learn these properly. This can be applied to any practice. ‘Distinguish’ means to understand clearly. Distinguish the trainings; ie clarify what these trainings are, and then train in them. Actually the Tibetan says ‘distinguish the trainings for the patience for the beginner’, it doesn’t actually say ‘beginning bodhisattva’. So; ‘distinguish the trainings for the patience of a beginner and then learn these properly’. When we’re learning about any practice whatsoever, it’s important initially for us to distinguish it, to understand it well. If we understand it clearly and well it will become easy for us to practice. Naturally it will be easy for us to practice. Does that make sense to you, is that likely to happen?

In doing this you would be talking about the practice of patience, how you need to practice patience, how you must cultivate patience, must apply patience. Now we could all talk about this, couldn't we. If we understand the presentation of the practice of patience as the Precious Lord has explained here, don't you think a special understanding of some of the particulars of patience will arise? Wouldn't you obtain something special, learning about it as presented here by Lama Tsong Khapa - some insight (not in the technical sense) into what it means to practice patience? This is the point. If you clearly understand something, and if you go to meditate on it once you understand it your meditation is going to be really good. It's going to be excellent isn't it, a potent or powerful one.

We need to understand things well. This is an important point. Try to understand things. Work hard. Try to develop your knowledge of it. This is something we need to do. If we become familiar with something, if we develop the capacity to do it in our minds then in future lives we will want to engage in it, we'll enjoy applying ourselves to it. It will become easier for us to understand and to do. These are the types of things that arise from efforts we make now; through developing our familiarity. These are causally concordant effects aren't they. In fact earlier Lama Tsong Khapa spoke about times in which anger destroys the roots of virtue but doesn't destroy the causally concordant effects.

Geshela's going to leave his commentary there. Do you have any questions?

Student: If an arya buddha has no anger to suppress and no suffering to accept in this consummate realisation of the dharma, how can we say that an arya buddha has patience in its continuum?

Geshela: An arya buddha could have the perfection of patience in its continuum – the patience that has been developed to its utmost extent – consummate patience. That is not to say that the arya buddha has the patience of accepting suffering in its continuum. That is not what is said. Do you understand? It's possible that somebody could come along and try to bully a buddha, isn't it? In that case the buddha would have patience in relation to that.

Student: But not as an antidote to anger.

Geshela: It's not an antidote to anger. He has no anger. That buddha has no anger.

Student: So what type of patience does he have?

Geshela: A Buddha has the patience which is the antidote to impatience. A Buddha has no impatience, does he?

Student: How can he have the antidote to it?

Geshela: It does not allow impatience to occur.

Generally speaking there is such a thing as impatience, isn't there. Even if you tried to harm a buddha, you cannot make that Buddha become impatient. Why? Because that buddha has the perfection of patience in his continuum which is an antidote to impatience. (Clicks fingers). This is enough?

Student: Let's say a person has mental problems based on a chemical imbalance in their brain. A doctor prescribes a medicine for them. Is it better for the person to take the medicine or just to practise the dharma because taking the medicine isn't really getting to the root of the problem.

Geshela: You need both. The medicine and the dharma. We don't know if the dharma antidote is going to help this person. Therefore you need the medicine.

Student: This morning Geshela quoted a text saying that it doesn't matter what type of imprint there is - be it non-virtuous or virtuous – the imprint that it leaves is necessarily neutral. So how can a

nonvirtuous intention leave an imprint that is neutral, but still have the capacity to produce something unpleasant or suffering; a pleasant effect?

Geshela: Whatever it is that places the seed or imprint in one's continuum - be it virtuous or nonvirtuous - the seed that it leaves behind is a potency, a capacity, which is neutral. So let's say that you're talking about somebody who has killed. The action or karma of killing is non-virtuous, isn't it. When the act is complete then it places in that person's mind a seed – a potency which is itself neutral, even though the karma that placed it there is non-virtuous. Similarly, you could talk of a person who abandons killing, in which case the karma or action concerned is virtuous. Though the action that places the seed or potency is a virtuous one, the seed or potency that it places is neutral.

Those seeds at some later point when the conditions for it occur will become karma once again. At that time they will be either virtuous or nonvirtuous depending on what placed that seed there, and it will then produce effects in accordance with that. Therefore it's not that the neutral seed becomes virtuous or non-virtuous but rather that the neutral seed becomes a karma which is virtuous or nonvirtuous.

In the twelve links of dependent arising you have craving, grasping and existence. 'Existence' @ is a seed manifesting into karma @ [is a karma manifested from a seed] due to the influence of craving and grasping.

- ❖ When a seed of nonvirtue becomes a karma it becomes a non-virtuous karma and this induces an unpleasant effect. It induces rebirth in a miserable realm, for instance.
- ❖ When a seed of virtue becomes manifest, as in 'existence', it transforms to become virtuous karma and this induces a happy realm rebirth. (Claps hands).

Think about it.

Student: I'm still not really sure about what is being destroyed when anger destroys the roots of virtue, because Lama Tsong Khapa says that a causally concordant effect might not be destroyed. So in a future lifetime a person experiences something that's compatible with the cause or with the previous action. In this case what pleasant effect has been destroyed by anger?

Geshela: In this case the pleasant effect has been destroyed.

Translator: I asked if the causally concordant effect is not considered a pleasant effect. Geshe-la said no, it's not, because the causally concordant effect is the liking of this particular type of action, which is neither pleasant nor unpleasant, because it's not a feeling.

Geshela: When anger destroys a root of virtue it renders it incapable of becoming or producing a pleasant effect.

Translator: Geshela used a somewhat ambiguous term; 'the exact effect'. I asked what he meant by that and he said the fruitional effect.

Do you understand? If you boil a seed of barley or corn in water, after being boiled the effect which is a sprout has been destroyed. The capacity to produce the sprout effect, is what really has been destroyed. This clear?

It would be destroyed wouldn't it.

It would destroy it, and once you boil it in water it cannot produce the sprout.

But you could still make it into tsampa or roasted barley flour. You could still eat it right – so the seed still has an effect. All of the effects aren't destroyed by it.

Geshela: Is this clear

Student: Yes

Geshela: You want to eat barley don't you. You want to have this barley seed.

Student 2: I don't understand how you destroy the roots of virtue. You use the example of boiling the barley seed but you have said the roots of virtue are not seeds, they are non-attachment, non-hatred, non-hostility, non-delusion.

Geshela: To begin with, do you remember what Geshela said this morning when he brought that up? He said that any virtue could probably be considered a root of virtue although in general we say that there are three roots of virtue – non-attachment, non-hatred, non-delusion.

We talk about 'destroying the roots of virtue' but this is just a term. This is just how we talk about it. What happens is that it is the seed of a root of virtue that is being destroyed. Or more precisely if we are talking about fruitions then that seed's capacity or ability to produce a pleasant fruition has been destroyed. That seed is rendered incapable of producing a pleasant fruition. That seed being rendered incapable of producing a pleasant fruition is called or referred to as 'destroying a root of virtue'.  
(Claps).

**Buddhist Studies Programme**

**Subject: Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3**

**Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa**

**Number of the teaching: 7**

**Date of the teaching: 28<sup>th</sup> October 2004**

Having finished with the presentation of the practice of patience, then we've come to the presentation on how to practice joyous perseverance, or 'joyous effort' as it's also known. This section starts on page 191 of the English translation.

The section on the practice of generosity has a summary, the section on ethics has a summary, and the section on patience ends with a summary. The summary here, basically gathers together the different meanings and points that have been discussed over the preceding chapter; the summary of the meaning. On page 189 we see the summary for the practice of patience, where it says;

*The recollection and cultivation of the spirit of enlightenment—the basis of the bodhisattva deeds—is the root of the wish to establish all beings in a patience wherein they have extinguished the contaminations...*

Now the practice of patience itself is a bodhisattva deed. It's also known as a type of conduct, whereas the basis for that is the mind of enlightenment.

*..After you steadily increase this spirit, aspire to practice the patience of those at high levels and then train your mind in it. Distinguish the trainings for the patience of a beginning bodhisattva, and then learn these properly. If you transgress the boundaries as explained, you must make an effort to amend this. If you neglect these transgressions at the time of practicing these trainings, you will be continually tainted by many great misdeeds, and even in future lifetimes your practice of the marvellous deeds of the bodhisattvas will be extremely difficult.*

*Seeing that the essentials of the path are supreme, practice right now what you can, and inculcate the intention to practice even those you now cannot. If you do this, then, as the Questions of Subahu Sutra says, you will bring the perfection of patience to completion with little difficulty and minor suffering.*

[then, continuing on to the perfection of joyous perseverance:]

***(iv) How to train in the perfection of joyous perseverance***

*How to train in the perfection of joyous perseverance has five parts:*

- 1. What joyous perseverance is*
- 2. How to begin the practice of joyous perseverance*
- 3. The divisions of joyous perseverance*
- 4. How to practice*
- 5. A summary*

These are the same five divisions that we had in previous chapters with ethics and generosity.

Let's begin by considering what the nature of joyous perseverance is:

***(a') What joyous perseverance is***

*When you have focused upon something virtuous, joyous perseverance is enthusiasm for it. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:*

*What is joyous perseverance? It is delight in virtue.*

In brief, joyous perseverance is a consciousness. What type of consciousness? It is a delighted or joyful attitude.

What type of object is it joyful or delighted in? Well, a virtuous activity.

Joyous perseverance is delight in a virtuous activity. Generally speaking you could delight in activities that are not virtuous. You could delight in a non-virtuous activity, couldn't you? You can delight in any number of different things, but joyous perseverance as one of the six perfections, here, refers specifically to delight in a virtuous activity. So the object of joyous perseverance as one of the six perfections must be something virtuous.

In Tibetan when a person applies a lot of joyful effort towards any type of endeavour; work or otherwise, you can say that that person has joyful effort, joyful perseverance. Geshela wonders if we might say this in English. In any case, in Tibetan you could very well use this term 'joyous perseverance' for something very ordinary like work, in which case you would have to say that that joyous perseverance is not really joyous perseverance; it's not really joyful effort/joyous effort.

You could say it's not really joyous perseverance or perhaps you could say it's not joyous perseverance that belongs to the six perfections. In any case, you need to make a distinction, however way you choose to make that distinction.

*The Bodhisattva Levels explains it as a flawless state of mind that is enthusiastic about accumulating virtue and working for the welfare of living beings, together with the physical, verbal, and mental activity [that is, 'actions' or 'karma' (las)] such a state of mind motivates.*

Judging by this presentation here then joyous perseverance or 'joyous effort' as I would prefer to call it, isn't necessarily consciousness, is it! Because it says here that according to the *Bodhisattva Levels*; that joyous effort includes 'the physical, verbal, and mental activities or actions that such a state of mind motivates'. So a physical action, for instance, would not be a consciousness.

Translator: At that point I asked Geshela about this. I had obviously forgotten about the explanation that he had given earlier that Consequentialists accept that karma or action can possess form. Because if you maintain that karma is necessarily the mental factor of intention, then you could not uphold that position that karma could be form. But the Consequentialists maintain that fully qualified, or karma proper, isn't necessarily the mental factor of intention. It can be that which possesses form like physical activities in which case, according to the *Bodhisattva Levels* in this presentation we find here, then joyous effort isn't necessarily consciousness.

Geshela is just calling me up on my use of a particular term which is 'bears similarity to'. I was talking about "the intention that 'bears similarity to' a physical activity" and I said that because I was trying to illustrate what I thought physical action or physical karma really refers to. I thought physical karma refers to the mental factor that 'accompanies' a physical activity. But here, in English the word 'accompanies' works fine, but if you say that in Tibetan it sounds very strange because the word when translated directly into Tibetan is only used when you're dealing with mind and the mental factors, and the mental factors that are associated with one another. You don't use that term when you're talking. Rather you should say 'the mental factor that goes together with a physical action'. Anyway, the term in Tibetan is *tsung den* (*mtshungs ldan*) which translates literally as 'bearing similarity to' and we oftentimes talk about as 'accompanying' actually only refers to the mind and states of mind, not mind and the actions that in goes together with.

Remember from mind and mental factors where we talk about how a mind and the mental factors in its retinue bear five similarities? They have a similar focus, a similar aspect, a similar basis, and so forth.

Do we now understand what the nature of joyous effort is?

***(b') How to begin the practice of joyous perseverance***

*Frequently reflect upon the benefits of joyously persevering and the faults of not doing so, for you will develop joyous perseverance if you habituate yourself to this reflection. As to its benefits, the Sutra Commanding a Surpassing Attitude (Adhyasaya-sa codana-sutra) says:*

*Always rely upon noble joyous perseverance,  
Which clears away all suffering and darkness,  
Which is the basis of freedom from miserable realms,  
And which is praised by all the buddhas.*

*One who joyously perseveres  
Has no difficulty accomplishing any project  
Whether mundane or supramundane.  
Who among the learned is disheartened by joyous perseverance?*

Do we understand these verses well? It's clear what these verses mean, isn't it.

Just to begin with here, clearing away suffering, and darkness, and miserable realms depends on having joyous effort, doesn't it! Yes?

The accomplishment of vast mundane projects or worldly projects comes about in dependence upon joyous effort. Here, the word 'mundane' or 'worldly' could actually be understood in a few different ways. You could be talking 'worldly' in a very conventional sense of 'worldly affairs' but you could also be talking about great projects like accomplishing the paths of accumulation or the paths of preparation. After all, these are mundane, or worldly paths, aren't they! The verse itself just mentions 'mundane' so it therefore leaves some room for interpretation about what mundane actually refers to. It makes sense to say that 'mundane' in the very conventional sense, 'mundane worldly projects' that are vast in scope, require joyous effort in order to be brought to completion. You could also interpret this 'mundane' as a reference to 'mundane paths' in which case you could still say that achieving mundane paths like the path of preparation, the path of accumulation, comes about in dependence upon joyous effort. Either way you understand it, you still see the need for joyous effort, and therefore it's not right to become disheartened about joyous effort. We shouldn't become disheartened about joyous effort, required as it is, to accomplish extensive and vast projects. To say nothing of the supramundane.

*Those who set forth for the buddhas' enlightenment,  
Perceive the faults of lethargy and sleepiness,  
And then continually persevere with enthusiasm.  
So have I advised them.*

Once we have engaged with Buddha's teachings, we must know the faults of lethargy and sleepiness. This is important. The meaning of this is obvious.

*Also, [from the Protector Maitreya's] the Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras states:*

*Joyous perseverance is supreme among virtues;  
Based on it, you subsequently attain the rest.  
Through it you immediately gain a supreme state of joy,*

*As well as the mundane and supramundane attainments.*

*With joyous perseverance you attain the pleasures desired in life;  
Become possessed of utter purity;  
Are liberated, transcending the view of the perishing aggregates;  
And reach buddhahood, the supreme enlightenment.*

Quite clear! There's really nothing in here that we don't understand.

*And also:*

*One who has joyous perseverance  
Is not brought down  
By prosperity, afflictions,  
Discouragement, or petty attainments.*

In Tibetan actually there is a certain repetition to the verse where it's like:

'One who has joyous effort is not defeated by prosperity.

One who has joyous effort is not defeated by afflictions,

... is not defeated by discouragement,

...is not defeated by petty attainment'.

If we just consider this phrase 'not defeated by' for a moment; if there's something that you want to achieve but you fail to achieve it, you have been 'defeated'. Yet someone with joyous effort is not defeated in this way. Rather, you achieve the meaningful things that you set out for. So you're not defeated by prosperity, or afflictions, discouragement, or petty attainments.

The point is this; if something can be achieved, then of those different things, then there is nothing that joyous effort will not help you to achieve - of the things that can be achieved, joyous effort will help you achieve all of it.

*The Bodhisattva Levels as well says:*

*Because joyous perseverance alone, nothing else, is the principal and highest cause for the correct attainment of a bodhisattva's virtuous qualities, the tathagatas have pointed it out, declaring, "Joyous perseverance is what brings about the attainment of unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment."*

*The Compendium of the Perfections also states:*

*If you are free of fatigue and have great joyous perseverance,  
There is nothing you cannot attain or accomplish.*

*And also:*

*Even all non-human beings delight in helping you;  
You attain all types of meditative concentrations*

*And spend all periods of the day and night fruitfully.  
Your collection of good qualities does not decline,  
And your purposes surpassing the affairs of humankind  
Flourish like the blue utpala flower.*

In the quotes that we just covered, there's really nothing that we can't get our heads around. There's really nothing that we don't understand.



The Precious Lord has quoted a number of different texts and just left it at that, because the verses themselves are so clear.

We need to recollect these points. We need to think about these points so that our mind is sort of infused with, or penetrated by the thought that these quotes really are accurate, and there is good reason for the statements made therein. In order to be sure that our minds are infused or penetrated with this type of thought, then we must draw upon our own experience. Think about cases in which a person has turned out well due to having joyous effort. Whereas a person has not turned out well, has not done well with their lives, for instance, because they lack joyous effort. So that if we are able to apply examples as we think about the individual points, that will help to be sure that our minds are penetrated or infused with the recollection and awareness of these quotes' meanings.

The Precious Lord has laid out a number of different quotes. Geshela has read them out to us. We've listened to them. But that's not enough, is it! Of course it's not enough! Because both the speaker and the listeners need to do something about it - we need to make sure that this stuff is beneficial, and in order for it to be helpful, you need to take it further.

So the above quotes indicate the benefits of joyous effort and we need to read over them, recollect them, and reflect upon them. This is quite important.

Let's consider the drawbacks of not having joyous effort:

*As to the faults of not joyously persevering, the Questions of Sagaramati Sutra states:*

*The enlightenment of the lazy is exceedingly far off and distant. The lazy lack all perfections from generosity to wisdom. The lazy do not work for others' welfare.*

*And the Mindfulness of the Excellent Teaching (Sad-dharmanusm, ty-upasthana) states as well:*

*Whoever has laziness—  
The single basis of the afflictions—  
Whoever feels some laziness  
Lacks all good qualities.*

*Thus, if you lack joyous perseverance, you come under the influence of laziness and become poor in all good qualities, so you lose every temporary and ultimate purpose of being human.*

This is quite clear. We know about this from our own experience. If you become lazy, then the good qualities that you have go into decline, and you cannot develop good qualities anew. So there are two aspects here; that laziness causes the qualities that you've already developed to decline, and prevent you from developing new qualities.

These benefits and drawbacks are mentioned as a way to help us begin the practice of joyous perseverance. So we've finished with that section.

### ***(c') The divisions of joyous perseverance***

*The section on the divisions of joyous perseverance has two parts:*

- 1. The actual divisions*
- 2. The method of developing joyous perseverance*

#### ***(1') The actual divisions***

*The section on the actual divisions has three parts:*

1. *Armor-like joyous perseverance* [joyous effort]
2. *Joyous perseverance of gathering virtue*
3. *Joyous perseverance of acting for the welfare of living beings*

***(a") Armor-like joyous perseverance***

*When bodhisattvas joyously persevere, prior to actively engaging themselves they put on the armor of a preliminary enthusiastic thought such as, "For a trillion sets of three immeasurably great eons each composed of days as long as a thousand great eons, I shall not relinquish my practice of joyous perseverance. For the sake of relieving the suffering of a single living being, I would rejoice at remaining only as a hell-being until I attain buddhahood. As I exert myself in this manner for the sake of complete enlightenment, what need is there to mention my perseverance over a shorter period or in the face of lesser suffering?"*

*Such is the joyous perseverance that is like armor. A bodhisattva who produces even an aspiration for, or just faith in, such joyous perseverance is steadfast; how much more so one who is endowed with this perseverance, given that he or she develops measureless causes for joyously persevering for the sake of unsurpassed enlightenment.*

This is called 'armour-like' joyous effort.

And there's a word in Tibetan; *jor wa* (*sbyor ba*) which has to be translated according to context - it's not one particular word, so let's say 'preparation'. So the 'preparation preliminary'.

Oftentimes we will analyze an action in terms of four phases, or four different elements; you've got the basis, you've got the intention, you've got the performance, and you've got the completion. So here, the 'preparation' that we're considering falls into the category of intention. So here, what we're considering with this armour-like joyous effort is sort of the preparation that you engage in before you perform an action. It's like the intention or the motivation. Look at the text; in fact it says here in the text that '*prior to actively engaging themselves they put on the armor of a preliminary enthusiastic thought*'. So this armour-like joyous effort is like a preliminary. It's like setting the motivation before you engage in the action. A particular motivation; that of 'enthusiastic thought'.

This is quite important for a range of practices, no matter what practice it is that you're engaged in. Take generosity for instance; before you practice generosity, you develop the intention that 'I am going to increase my generous attitude', 'I am going to develop my intention to give' so 'may I be able to increase my generous attitude, come what may!' So before you actually engage in the practice of generosity, you sort of set the intention, or your motivation, to do that beforehand; as a preliminary - as a preparation. By setting your intention in this manner means that other things cannot prevent you from increasing your intention - other things cannot act as obstacles. The same is true with the practice of ethics, the same is true with the practice of patience as well. If let's say that your going to practice generosity, and you set your intention by thinking 'I am going to increase my generous attitude. Come what may I am going to persevere'. So you steel yourself beforehand. Another person then comes along and says 'Oh no, no! You shouldn't bother practicing generosity. Don't do that! This is going to become of it, it's going to be difficult, you should just forget about it entirely'. Because you have steeled yourself beforehand with this armour intention, the other person's statements don't prevent you from carrying out your practice of generosity. The other person's statements are not obstacles for you. So this is very important; this armour of intention. By donning the armour of intention before any practice, it helps to ensure that other things are incapable of being obstacles.

This isn't made clear earlier but here it is stated very clearly. Let's say that you are going to study. Setting your motivation or intention initially is very important. You think "Come what may, I am going to study well. I might get tired. I might get hot. I might find it difficult, but still I am going to study well". By setting your motivation in this way, it helps to prevent obstacles so this is very important. Basically, we're talking about setting the motivation.

This is like a motivation, really.

*The Bodhisattva Levels says that for such a person there is absolutely no action for the sake of others and for enlightenment that is discouraging or entails hardship. When you become conditioned to such a state of mind, it becomes the definite cause of awakening your potential for the Mahayana lineage, so train in it.*

What does it say in here? It mentions 'discouraging or entailing hardship'.

We need some of that, actually. We need hardship that entails; that can be discouraging. We need to engage in actions, which entail some hardship and can be discouraging in order to achieve enlightenment for the sake of others. Yet, as it says here, that with this joyous perseverance, none of these actions are discouraging or entails hardship. Particularly when you become conditioned to such a state of mind, that occurs. In fact, when you become conditioned to such a state of mind, it becomes the definite cause of awakening your potential for the mahayana lineage. So train in it. The potential for the mahayana lineage - how do we know when that has been awakened? What is the range or the borders for that? Well it's when you develop great compassion in your continuum; that marks the awakening of your mahayana lineage.

This is explained in *Ornament of Clear Realizations*. In that text it states that the borders, or the range for having awakened the potential for your Mahayana is the development of the great compassion within your continuum.

It talks about 'discouraging hardship' in the text, almost as if to equate the two. We really need to get used to hardship. If we were able to get used to, and become conditioned to hardship, then we'll be able to awaken the potential for our mahayana lineage. And this is where the mahayana sort of begins. If we're able to develop great compassion and thereby awaken our potential for the mahayana lineage, then we are then certain to develop the experiences and realizations of the mahayana. The experiences and realizations of the mahayana definitely follow on from our development of this mahayana lineage. So it's very important that we become conditioned to hardship.

It says here on page 195 that '*When you become conditioned to such a state of mind, it becomes the definite cause of awakening your potential for the Mahayana lineage, so train in it.*' If we condition ourselves to hardships, then that will become a cause for awakening the mahayana lineage.

*Concerning armor-like joyous perseverance the Compendium of the Perfections says:*

*In as many eons as there are drops of water in the ocean,  
Eons in which the years are composed  
Of long, drawn out days and nights equal in duration  
Even to the temporal limits of cyclic existence,*

*You produce the spirit of supreme enlightenment once.  
Though you likewise have to accomplish every other collection,  
You do not become disheartened because of your compassion,  
And undiscouraged you achieve sublime enlightenment.*

*To generate this immeasurable steadfast armor*

*While disregarding your suffering in cyclic existence  
Is declared the first proper undertaking  
For the disciplined hero possessed of compassion.*

We shouldn't think short-term, after all, we're trying to achieve buddhahood, aren't we? We shouldn't think that we can achieve buddhahood in such a short period of time. If we start thinking short-term, then it's going to be an obstacle to our development. It's going to create problems for us, it's going to make us lazy. So rather than think short-term, we should think that 'I am going to make effort for as long as it takes to achieve enlightenment'. It's like it says in the Lama-Chopa text; 'even if I must remain for an ocean of aeons in the fiery hells of avici for the sake of a single sentient being, we seek your blessings that we may complete the perfection of joyous effort, and strive with compassion, and not become discouraged'. Yes? 'strive with compassion and not be discouraged'; we're not going to give up our compassion.

*Furthermore, even if it took you a hundred thousand years to produce the spirit of enlightenment once and to see one buddha, where each year is composed of twelve months, each month of thirty days, and each day as long as the time from beginningless cyclic existence to the present, and even if it took you this length of time multiplied by the number of grains of sand in the Ganges River to know the mind and behaviour of one living being, you similarly must come to know the minds and behaviours of all living beings. The Teachings of Aksayamati Sutra says the armor of being undaunted is the inexhaustible armor; it is armor-like joyous perseverance of the highest calibre.*

Now this is really amazing! Isn't it?

The English word 'if' is quite important here, because the attitude we're meant to develop is that 'even if it requires that amount of time, that I am prepared to make effort for that amount of time'. So it's not as if this is a calculation for how long it's actually going to take for everyone. You know, like with a year is composed of twelve months, and twelve months is composed of thirty days, and thirty days is so many hours, and each hour is equivalent to this amount of time; this many aeons. Rather, it's that even should it take that long. Even if this huge amount of time is required, then still I will make effort - I will persevere and continue.

We need to have the attitude that no matter how long it takes to achieve buddhahood, that I am going to continue to make effort, that I am not going to give up. So the armour-like joyous effort then encourages us to adopt this attitude; to be prepared to work for as long as it's going to take to achieve buddhahood.

*In short, if you can generate a single attitude such as this, you easily complete limitless accumulations and purify measureless obscurations. This becomes the most excellent cause for never turning back; by just being joyful no matter how long it takes, you quickly become a buddha. Those who want to become a Buddha in a short time, but take no joy at all in the limitless deeds and great length of time required, take a very long time to reach buddhahood, because they thereby fail to produce the wonderful courage of the conquerors' children.*

There's a difference between these two propositions; having the attitude or not.

Geshela said that we need to have this type of courage where we're prepared to work for that amount of time. We need this courage.

The reason it takes these other beings so long to achieve buddhahood is because they fail to produce the wonderful courage of the conquerors children...

*After you have put on such armor, you joyously persevere for two purposes: to gather virtue and to act for the welfare of living beings.*

***(b”) Joyous perseverance of gathering virtue***

*The joyous perseverance of gathering virtue is applying yourself to the practice of the six perfections in order to properly accomplish them.*

It says here; ‘applying yourself’, which really means that your preparing yourself to practice generosity, ethics, patience, and so forth; ‘I am going to practice these things’; Increasing your enthusiasm, your joy about practicing them. This is the joyous effort of gathering virtue.

***(c”) Joyous perseverance of acting for the welfare of living beings***

*The joyous perseverance of acting for the welfare of living beings is properly applying yourself to the practice of the eleven activities for others’ welfare.*

We read through these eleven types yesterday.

In short, it’s about providing whatever help sentient beings require; doing whatever you can to help sentient beings. So this sentiment is expressed in different aspirational prayers where you aspire to, for instance, be a nurse to tend to those who are unwell and so forth.

***(2’) The method of developing joyous perseverance [effort]***

*As explained above, since you produce, maintain, and increase all the virtues of the two collections in dependence upon joyous perseverance, the practice which develops it is very crucial.*

As explained above, the two collections are the collection of merit and the collection of sublime wisdom.

*I shall discuss the system of the text of the great scholar and adept Santideva, Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds, noting that it is complete as well as easy to understand and to sustain in practice. The method of developing joyous perseverance has four parts:*

- 1. Eliminating unfavorable conditions that prevent joyous perseverance*
- 2. Gathering the forces of the favourable conditions*
- 3. Based on the elimination of unfavorable conditions and the accumulation of favourable conditions, being intent on joyously persevering*
- 4. How to use joyous perseverance to make the mind and body serviceable*

***(a”) Eliminating unfavorable conditions that prevent joyous perseverance***

*Eliminating unfavorable conditions that prevent joyous perseverance has two parts:*

- 1. Identifying factors incompatible with joyous perseverance*
- 2. Employing the methods to eliminate the incompatible factors*

***(1”) Identifying factors incompatible with joyous perseverance***

*There are two factors incompatible with entering the path: (1) not entering even though you see that you can do the practice, and (2) not entering because you become discouraged, thinking, “How can I do such a practice?”*

*Indeed there is also not practicing because you are unconcerned with whether you are capable or not, [Indeed there are also cases in which a person does not practice because they haven’t turned their mind*

to whether or not they're capable] *but this is irrelevant here since this explanation is for those pursuing liberation.*

Yes. We do not need to deal with this.

Then there are those who see that they can do the practice; they can achieve enlightenment, yet still do not enter the path. So within this factor or first type there are two possibilities:

*Within the first factor, there are two possibilities: (1) you have the laziness of procrastination, thinking, "There is still time"; and (2) you are not procrastinating but you are overwhelmed by your attachment to inferior and common activities.*

Here we have laziness really entering the picture. Laziness; the factor that's incompatible with joyous effort.

*In this vein Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:*

*The factors incompatible with joyous perseverance  
Are said to be laziness, adhering to what is ignoble,  
And self-contempt out of discouragement.*

So there are three types we can draw from this quote from Santideva's *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*;

There's a laziness in which you adhere to what is ignoble.

The next one would be discouragement. So you start an action but then you end up giving it up because of becoming discouraged and thinking 'Oh, I can't do that' or something of that nature, and then finally there's the third type which is related to self-contempt; thinking that 'somebody like me is not capable of accomplishing a task like this'

So three types. Below it says:

*Causes for the production of laziness are indolence, attachment to the taste of inferior pleasures, craving the pleasure of sleep, and a lack of disenchantment with cyclic existence.*

So here it's identifying the causes for developing laziness.

*Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:*

*Laziness arises from craving based upon  
Indolence, enjoyment of pleasure, and sleep;  
And from a lack of disenchantment  
With the suffering of cyclic existence.*

*Some assert that the first two lines indicate the form that laziness takes rather than its causes.*

The next section is:

## ***(2") Employing the methods to eliminate the incompatible factors***

This has three parts.

Lama Tsongkhapa identifies two possibilities within the first factor he describes [above], doesn't he! The first is the laziness of procrastination where you are thinking there's still time. Then you have the second case in which you are not procrastinating but you are overwhelmed by your attachment to inferior and common activities. So what we have here is a slightly different presentation then in what follows

The explanation that Lama Tsongkhapa gives only identifies two types of laziness, doesn't he:

- ❖ First of all the laziness of procrastination, and
- ❖ Second of all the laziness that comes from being attached to inferior and ordinary or common activities.

So the second type that Lama Tsongkhapa identifies; not procrastinating but being overwhelmed by your attachment to inferior and common activities is like the first type of laziness that Santideva describes in the *Bodhisattva Deeds* text: the laziness of adhering to what is ignoble. Can you see how these are similar, or the same?

There are some difficulties with this translation here because it says 'self contempt out of discouragement' but Geshela is saying we have to separate these two. So discouragement then would be to begin to study but then think 'Oh no, this isn't coming along', and giving it up; discouragement. [the word for discouragement is *ji lug pa* (*sgyid lug pa*) ]. And then you have this 'self-contempt'.

So Geshela would like to ask a question. Is being discouraged and having self-contempt the same? Geshela would posit that there are three possibilities. Or better yet, Geshela didn't ask if they were the same, he asked if your discouraged, do you necessarily have self-contempt?

If you are discouraged, you don't necessarily have self-contempt.

No pervasion is there?

Self-contempt is sort of included under discouragement, or it comes quite close to being included or classed as a form of discouragement.

Discouragement doesn't have to be self-contempt though, because you can think 'I'm capable of this type of action but I don't have time', or 'it's just not happening right now', or quite simply, 'I don't feel like doing it'. This explanation basically highlights the shortcomings of the translation 'discouragement'. The English translation 'discouragement' simply doesn't capture the essence of what the Tibetan does. The Tibetan can mean discouragement, but more particularly it means simply not wanting to do something, and you might not want to do something for a number of reasons; maybe because you have self-contempt, maybe because you don't feel capable, but also maybe because you just don't want to; there's not enough time. It doesn't matter.

Geshela reckons there's a difference between self-contempt and discouragement and on that basis says that Santideva identifies three types of laziness in this first quote from *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*. If we would like to think of them as two we're free to do so, but Geshela reckons that there are probably three types. Now here, self-contempt would involve thoughts like 'I'm incompetent', 'I'm not capable of this type of thing', 'I'm not very intelligent', 'I couldn't do such a thing', and therefore not engaging in an activity - self-contempt. But then there's also discouragement which can be quite different, so...there we go. We have a problem in the English translation, that the last line says '*and self-contempt out of discouragement*' which sort of links the two. So it should say; '*are said to be laziness, adhering to what is ignoble, self-contempt, and discouragement*'.

It's all right. It should become clearer as we go along..

*Employing the methods to eliminate the incompatible factors has three parts:*

1. *Stopping the laziness of procrastination*
2. *Stopping attachment to ignoble activities*
3. *Stopping discouragement or self-contempt*

**(a)) *Stopping the laziness of procrastination***

*This involves the following three meditations: you contemplate that the body you have at present is rapidly disintegrating, that after death you will fall into miserable realms, and that it will be difficult to find an excellent life such as this one again. Meditation on these stops the laziness that holds to the notion that there is plenty of time, thereby generating the conviction in your mind that there is no time to spare. These three meditations were explained earlier in the section on the person of small capacity.*

We already talked about these in the section on death and impermanence.

### ***(b)) Stopping attachment to ignoble activities***

Another type of laziness Lama Tsongkhapa identified earlier..

*You see that the sublime teaching is the source of endless joy in this and future lives, and that you lose its great purpose when you are distracted in idle chatter and amusements which are the source of much pointless suffering later. Meditate on this and stop your attachment. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:*

*How could you abandon the source of infinite joy,  
The highest of pleasures, the sublime teaching,  
And delight in distractions and amusements  
That are the causes of suffering?*

Distraction is associated with attachment.

Are we clear about that? This is clear; stopping attachment to ignoble activities?

Generally speaking, there are any number of things, there's no limit to the things that we might enjoy, but of all the things we might enjoy, the supreme, the best, are the sublime teachings.

*“How could you abandon the source of infinite joy,  
The highest of pleasures, the sublime teaching,  
And delight in distractions and amusements  
That are the causes of suffering?”*

How can you delight in these things when they are the causes of suffering? That's the basic question.

### ***(c)) Stopping discouragement or self-contempt***

*It is not enough just to delight in the sublime teaching after you have stopped your procrastination and your attachment to ignoble activities; you must train as a Mahayana practitioner. Therefore, if you become discouraged, thinking, “Someone like me is unable to practice that,” you must eliminate this discouragement.*

Stopping discouragement or self-contempt has three parts but maybe we should leave it there.

In wrapping up today, what are some of the most important points we've covered today? Well, to begin with then the nature of joyous effort. The first thing we looked at was what joyous effort is.

The second point was how to begin the practice of joyous effort.

The methods through which we can begin the practice of joyous effort come down to reflecting on the benefits of joyous effort and the drawbacks of not having it.



That's explained quite extensively. That's probably the most extensive part thus far.

Thirdly you have the divisions of joyous effort.

In the section on the divisions of joyous effort, you have the actual divisions, and the method of developing joyous effort. Two parts

The actual divisions are:

- Armour-like joyous effort,
- The joyous effort of gathering virtue, and
- The joyous effort of acting for the welfare of sentient beings.

We've covered all of these points.

So then the second part; after having considered what the actual divisions are, we look at the methods of developing joyous effort, and there's four parts to this:

- Eliminating unfavourable conditions that prevent joyous effort,
- Gathering the forces of the favourable conditions,
- Based on the elimination of unfavourable conditions, and the accumulation of favourable conditions, being intent on joyous effort, and
- How to use joyous effort to make the body and mind serviceable.

Eliminating unfavourable conditions talks about eliminating laziness.

Ok? Of the divisions of joyous effort, the most important is the armour-like joyous effort, isn't it?

If we have a strong armour-like joyous effort, then laziness cannot harm us. It cannot obstruct or be an obstacle for us, can it?

Do you have any questions?

Student 1: On page 191 you've got the first line of the quote from the Sutra Commanding a Surpassing Attitude and it says 'always rely upon a noble joyous perseverance' and I was wondering if there was any significance to this word 'noble'.

Geshela: It means 'higher' or 'supreme' form of joyous effort

Student 1: In the continuum of an arya being?

Geshela: No special meaning has to be applied to the meaning of the word 'noble' here. It's referring to the supreme, one of the best forms of joyous effort

Student 2: The aspect of joy is clearly an important part of this joyous effort and another part is the determination to continue on. I see a lot of instructions here about how to continue on or persevere, but not a lot on how to develop joy.

Geshela: Isn't the delight the simple thought to do it? Or the desire to do something? The thought that "I must really do this".

Student 2: it would make me content or really feel satisfied that what I'm doing is worthwhile but the 'joy' part seems harder to conjure up

Geshela: Generally joy and delight are taken to be the same here, and desire. Ok, maybe we can't discuss this exhaustively today. First of all we're clear that what is joyous perseverance? It is delight in

virtue. I mean this much we can conclude. As it says on page 191 the quote from Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds; '*it is delight in virtue*', yeh? It is '*focused upon something virtuous, joyous perseverance is enthusiasm for it*'. No questions about that, right?

We need to conclude that joyous effort is delight in virtuous activity.

So over the next few days we can discuss about how this fits in with the presentation given in the text.

And if that doesn't work out, we can't resolve it, then we'll have to write a letter off to Santideva, who very conveniently lives at Sera.

So Palden [Student 1], you were asking a question, Geshela's a little bit confused about why the question might arise. [Interpreter: I think it may have something to do with the translation] What they are saying is that the best thing to clear away all suffering and darkness, the best thing which acts as a basis for the freedom from miserable realms and which is the best thing which is praised by all the buddhas is joyous effort.

*And spend all periods of the day and night fruitfully.  
Your collection of good qualities does not decline,  
And your purposes surpassing the affairs of humankind  
Flourish like the blue utpala flower.*

[In response to another question] '*your purposes surpassing the affairs of humankind*' refers to a purpose that is higher than qualities possessed by a human. There are certain qualities that humans have, and qualities or things that you can achieve that are more exalted, they're higher than that; referring to those things.

**Buddhist Studies Programme**

**Subject : Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3**

**Teacher : Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter : Ven Lozang Zopa**

**Number of the teaching: 8**

**Date of the teaching: Friday 29 October 2004**

We'll just go straight into the section on joyous effort. We left off on page 198 of the English translation.

There are five basic sections on joyous effort, which is pretty much standard for the perfections. Most of them have five sections. First you look at what the nature of the perfection is, what the nature of joyous effort is, then you look at how to begin the practice of joyous effort, the divisions of joyous effort, how to practise and a summary. Five sections.

Yesterday we looked at what the nature of joyous effort is, let's not forget that. And we talked about how to begin the practice of joyous effort. We talked about how, in order to do so, you must reflect on the benefits of joyous effort and the drawbacks or shortcomings of not having it.

*The section on the divisions of joyous effort has two parts:*

- 1. The actual divisions*
- 2. The method of developing joyous perseverance [effort]*

In the actual divisions, there's three types:

- 1. Armor-like joyous perseverance [effort]*
- 2. Joyous perseverance [effort] of gathering virtue*
- 3. Joyous perseverance [effort] of acting for the welfare of living beings*

Of these three, the most important is perhaps the armour-like joyous effort. The Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa spoke about how important armour-like joyous effort is, didn't he. Generally, no matter what practice it is we're doing, it's important to have this type of armour.

Then we have the method of developing joyous effort, which seems to be where we left off.

The method of developing joyous effort has four parts:

- 1. Eliminating unfavorable conditions that prevent joyous perseverance [effort]*
- 2. Gathering the forces of the favorable conditions*
- 3. Based on the elimination of unfavorable conditions and the accumulation of favorable conditions, being intent on joyous perseverance [effort]*
- 4. How to use joyous perseverance [effort] to make the mind and body serviceable*

Here, Lama Tsong Khapa identified two factors that are incompatible with joyous effort. He talked about on the one hand, not engaging in the practice even though you know you're capable of doing so, capable of achieving it. And then on the other hand, he talks of not engaging in the practice because of the thought that you are not capable of doing such a thing.

There's a third option of course, in which a person doesn't practise due to not even having considered whether or not they're capable, but this is irrelevant here, as Lama Tsong Khapa said.

With respect to the first factor that there are two possibilities -- this being where you don't enter, even though you see that you can do the practice. And in relation to the second possibility, *you are overwhelmed by your attachment to inferior and common activities*. So you're not procrastinating in this case, but still you don't enter.

And then we have a quote from *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*, which says:

*The factors incompatible with joyous perseverance  
Are said to be laziness, adhering to what is ignoble,  
And self-contempt out of discouragement.*

**Here, looking at the quote, you could assert that there are either two or three types of laziness being identified but it comes down to the same basic point. Shantideva is making the same point that Lama Khapa did.**

Geshela was wondering what it said in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*. Sometimes if you look at a commentary of that type you will find that it states the point very clearly and it will clarify it for you. There wasn't that type of clarity in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, but it does say that there are three types of laziness there. The first is *gyi-lug* @.

[Interpreter: Now in this translation, they translate *gyi-lug* as discouragement. But last night I looked it up in the dictionary and Jampa pointed out that it also has the connotation of idleness. And Geshela explained – I'm speaking to you directly here, about translation – yesterday Geshela said that it can mean simply not wanting to do something. So discouragement is clearly an unsatisfactory translation. I looked in the dictionary last night and the word is made up: *gyi* as in @*gyi-po*@?? which means taut or firm, so in a sense, resolve. And *lug* means to collapse, or to cave in. So it means that your resolve has collapsed or caved in, so you shrink away from doing an action. So the first type of laziness is this laziness where you shrink away from an action due to your resolve having collapsed. The second type of laziness is the laziness of adhering to what is ignoble, ignoble activities. And the third type of laziness is the laziness of discouragement, *shum-pa* @.

In *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, it describes this first type of laziness, the laziness of shrinking away from the action, in the following way. It says that if you fall prey to procrastination about virtue, then you put things off, saying things like, "I will do it tomorrow or the next day, or the day after that". So according to *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, this first type of laziness occurs because you are procrastinating. You don't engage in virtue, you're always putting it off to another day. This accords exactly with the first type, the laziness that Lama Tsong Khapa identifies in the second paragraph on page 197: (1) *you have the laziness of procrastination, thinking, "There is still time"*.

Then *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* goes on to describe the laziness of adhering to ignoble activities as being a type of laziness that comes about due to our involvement in gain and honour, seeking profits - the worldly hustle and bustle. You get really involved in talking about this and that, all the commotion and hustle and bustle, and you develop the laziness that adheres to ignoble activities.

That matches up exactly with the second type of laziness Lama Tsong Khapa identifies in the second paragraph on page 197. It says, (2) *you are not procrastinating but you are overwhelmed by your attachment to inferior and common activities*. So due to our attachment to conversation and discussing different things, we are overwhelmed, so that we adhere to ignoble activities and don't engage in virtue as a result. Here, the second type identified in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* matches up exactly with the second type identified by Lama Tsong Khapa, doesn't it?

The third type of laziness identified in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* is the laziness of discouragement, which the author explains as being like thinking, "Oh, someone like *me* isn't able to attain buddhahood". That is just like the type of laziness Lama Tsong Khapa associates with self-contempt, isn't it. We talked about this yesterday.

[Interpreter: There are a few translation problems! In English they have translated two words as discouragement. One is @*shum-pa* and the other is *gyi-lug*. I would make the argument that *shum-pa* is proper discouragement, where *gyi-lug* is much more about shrinking away from.]

So in *Liberation*, the third type of laziness is the laziness of discouragement or self-contempt. So that accords exactly with what Lama Tsong Khapa is saying. Even if the same words aren't used in the outline, when you look at the commentary to the outline, you see that the third type Pabongka speaks about and the third type that Lama Tsong Khapa speaks about are basically the same thing. As illustrated by the thought, "How could someone like me be capable of achieving enlightenment? How could I become a buddha?"

It's like thinking, "I'm so poor and pathetic" - basically belittling yourself, thinking, "I'm not capable, I'm incompetent. I don't have the intelligence to achieve such a thing".

So Geshela would argue, in his opinion, that the laziness of shrinking away isn't necessarily the same as the laziness of discouragement. Would you agree?

To illustrate this, Geshela would say: Take a person who considers themselves to have a reasonably high level of intelligence and is capable of doing hard work. And the person recognises that to achieve this goal of buddhahood, a high level of intelligence and the ability to do a hard bit of work is required and understands that he(or she) is capable of achieving the goal - but doesn't feel like doing it, making the effort. [laughter]. That's not discouragement, is it? The person's resolve has caved in and he (or she) shrinks away from the actual performance of it but not because he (she) is thinking, "oh, how could someone like me do it, I'm not capable of doing it, I'm not competent enough." This type of discouragement is not the reason in this case. Rather, let's say they've done a fair bit of work towards the achievement of that goal and think, "If I were to continue I probably could achieve it, but I really can't be bothered." This would be a case of the laziness of shrinking away. Your resolve caves in, but there is no real discouragement. This type of laziness would be found in those who have some pride.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds mentions three types of laziness as well. In the first quote, we find on page 197. It says

*The factors incompatible with joyous effort  
Are said to be laziness, adhering to what is ignoble,  
[S]elf-contempt and discouragement [shrinking away].*

The point is that we can accept that there are three types of laziness.

Even though Lama Tsong Khapa only mentions only two of these, if you look at the explanation he then later gives, you can conclude that his presentation has three types of laziness as well.

Interpreter: Anyone interested in translation terms and the confusion can approach me after the class.

Then it says, *Causes for the production of laziness are indolence, attachment to the taste of inferior pleasures, craving the pleasure of sleep, and a lack of disenchantment with cyclic existence.*

Then there is a quote from *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* which lists those very same things. We discussed all this yesterday, didn't we?

The next section deals with the methods that you can use to abandon or eliminate these incompatible factors. We read through the first part of this section but we'll start from here today, at the bottom of page 197.

*Employing the methods to eliminate the incompatible factors has three parts:*

- 1. Stopping the laziness of procrastination*
- 2. Stopping attachment to ignoble activities*
- 3. Stopping discouragement or self-contempt*

*(a)) Stopping the laziness of procrastination*

*This involves the following three meditations: you contemplate that the body you have at present is rapidly disintegrating, that after death you will fall into miserable realms, and that it will be difficult to find an excellent life such as this one again. Meditation on these stops the laziness that holds to the notion that there is plenty of time, thereby generating the conviction in your mind that there is no time to spare. These three meditations were explained earlier in the section on the person of small capacity.*

So this can take the form of an aspirational prayer. This was already explained in the earlier section though, wasn't it.

You might remember the three points related to death and impermanence, thinking about death.

By reflecting on how death is certain you conclude that you must practise the dharma.

By reflecting on the fact that the time of death is uncertain, you conclude that you must practise the dharma right now.

By reflecting on how at the time of death nothing helps but the dharma, then you conclude that you must practise only the dharma.

That's one way that it's phrased - you conclude you must practise only the dharma but it can also be that you must practise a pure dharma, or practise the dharma purely. Lam Rim Chen Mo mentions both, doesn't it.

Take the phrase, "must practise pure dharma" or "practise the dharma purely". The significance of this is that you must the dharma that's going to be beneficial for future lives, right? Which makes sense when you consider that the basic, the context for this type of reflection occurs when thinking about how at the time of death, nothing but the dharma helps.

*(b)) Stopping attachment to ignoble activities*

*You see that the sublime teaching is the source of endless joy in this and future lives, and that you lose its great purpose when you are distracted in idle chatter and amusements which are the source of much pointless suffering later. Meditate on this and stop your attachment. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:*

*How could you abandon the source of infinite joy,  
The highest of pleasures, the sublime teaching,  
And delight in distractions and amusements  
That are the causes of suffering?*

Geshela explained this yesterday, didn't he, saying that although there are many things that we might like, of all those things, the best, the most supreme is the sublime dharma.

The next section says:

*(c)) Stopping discouragement or self-contempt*

Here it appears that Lama Tsong Khapa is treating two types of laziness as one. But it's important to point out that here that discouragement is *gyi-lug-pa@*. So we're dealing with a different meaning of this term *gyi-lug-pa@*. Before we were looking at it in Pabongka's text in terms of procrastination. Here we're looking at it more just in the sense of shrinking away. The same word is used, even if there are different connotations.

[Interpreter: [aside] What do you think Jampa? How should we deal with this? Do we leave *gyi-lug* as discouragement for the following section? It should be OK here, right? We'll just continue using discouragement for *gyi-lug* in section (c)) ]

The problem isn't just in English: there's a problem in Tibetan too! As Geshela quoted, Pabongka's statements in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* say that the laziness of *gyi-lug-pa@*, or shrinking away, is to always be putting things off, because you have fallen prey to procrastination about virtue. You're always thinking, "Oh, I'll do it tomorrow, do it the next day, I'll do it later," because you have fallen prey to procrastination. When Lama Tsong Khapa talks about the laziness of shrinking away, he

talks about something entirely different.

It says:

*It is not enough just to delight in the sublime teaching after you have stopped your procrastination and your attachment to ignoble activities; you must train as a Mahayana practitioner. Therefore, if you become discouraged or if you shrink away, thinking, "Someone like me is unable to practise that," you must eliminate this shrinking away, this discouragement.*

So, if you look at what Lama Tsong Khapa says here, he says that having stopped this procrastination and your adherence to ignoble activities, you will delight in the sublime teachings. However, that alone is not enough. You must train in the Mahayana and therefore, if you become discouraged, thinking that someone like you is not capable of achieving the goal, then you must eliminate that. This is clearly shrinking away from something because of not feeling capable.

So for Lama Tsong Khapa, this laziness of discouragement or shrinking away is associated with the thought, "someone like me can't achieve that, I'm not capable of achieving that".

Pabongka gives a different explanation of shrinking away, although certainly he has a source. He wouldn't say this without having a source for his statement. His explanation seems to refer to shrinking away from the path by which you achieve things, from the methods that lead to attainment. You might think, "I don't think I'm going to apply myself to the path today, maybe tomorrow, maybe the next day..." It seems that for Pabongka, the laziness of shrinking away is shrinking away from the path, and the efforts required to attain something.

Considering it in this way, there are two types of shrinking away.

Shrinking away from the object you're trying to achieve and shrinking away from the methods for achieving that. Do you think so?

Those of you who have a copy of *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, please read it. You will see that there this form of laziness, the laziness of shrinking away, is described as putting things off because you're under the sway of procrastination, procrastinating about virtue, thinking, "I'll do it later, I'll do it tomorrow, I'll do it the next day." That's the illustration given, very clearly.

*Therefore, if you shrink away, thinking, "Someone like me is unable to practise that," you must eliminate this shrinking away.*

*Stopping the shrinking away or self-contempt has three parts:*

Now Geshela realises that what he was just saying now comes right here in the text. Yesterday Geshela went to the doctor and then went to the beach and when he came home, he didn't have time to read the text [laughter]. Then this morning, after his prayers, Geshela immediately grabbed Pabongka Rinpoche's *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand* and by the time he finished reading through the relevant sections there, it was time to come down. He didn't get a chance to read through the Lam Rim Chen Mo. As it turns out, Lama Tsong Khapa says that there are three parts to self-contempt:

1. *Stopping shrinking away from the goal*
2. *Stopping shrinking away from the method or means to attain the goal* (exactly what Geshela was just saying) and
3. *Stopping shrinking away because wherever you are is a place to practise*

So you have two parts,

1. *Identifying factors incompatible with joyous perseverance*
2. *Employing the methods to eliminate the incompatible factors*

Then when he actually identifies the factors that are incompatible with joyous effort, first he only says there are two:

- (1) *not entering even though you see that you can do the practice, and*
- (2) *not entering because you become discouraged [shum-pa], thinking, “How can I do such a practice?”.*

But then as he explains you find that there are actually three. So everything’s alright.

[Interpreter: I’m going to go back on what I said before and translate gyi-lug as shrinking away, just for the sake of clarity, so that you know when there are different words being used in the Tibetan.]

(1)) *Stopping shrinking away from the goal*

*Qualm: If the goal is buddhahood—the total elimination of all faults and the total completion of all good qualities—then, since it is extremely difficult for me to accomplish even a few good qualities or to remove even a few faults, how could someone like me be capable of attaining such a result?*

*Reply: If such a sense of discouragement manifests, it is a very great fault because it constitutes giving up the mind of enlightenment. Even if such a thought does not fully manifest, you must stop it at its incipient stage.*

Since it’s such a great fault, we should definitely not allow these types of thoughts to occur. It’s inappropriate to think in this way, do we understand that? It’s inappropriate to think, “oh, to achieve buddhahood, you need so many causes and conditions, how could someone like me gather together all the different causes and conditions that are required? I don’t think I’m capable of achieving buddhahood.”

That type of thought is quite inappropriate. After all we have made a pledge or a commitment to developing the mind, haven’t we and therefore there is a fault in thinking in that way. What’s more, if you have the bodhisattva vow, then there is the danger that you incur the root downfall of relinquishing the mind of enlightenment.

It says here, don’t think, “how would I be capable of achieving complete perfect enlightenment?”. It follows that you are capable of achieving perfect and complete enlightenment because you are a sentient being, because you have buddha nature or the potential to become a buddha. There is a logic behind this.

We are capable of attaining enlightenment. Whether it happens in this lifetime or not depends on one’s one effort. We are capable of attaining it and it’s inappropriate to think, “I’m not capable of attaining it, I can’t attain it.”

*Even if such a thought does not fully manifest, you must stop it at its incipient stage.*

And even if such a thought does not occur, if you have not even thought this, you must still reflect on how it’s inappropriate to think in this way and work to prevent it from occurring.

Here’s how to stop this type of thinking.

*How to stop it? Encourage yourself with this thought: “The Bhagavan—the authoritative person who speaks what is true and correct, never what is false or erroneous—said that even flies, etc. will attain enlightenment. That being so, why should I not attain it—so long as I do not give up persevering—inasmuch as human birth gives me an excellent basis and I have the mental capacity to analyze what to adopt and what to cast aside?”*



Now here's something that perhaps needs to be proved for some of us. It says that the way to stop this is by thinking how the Bhagavan said we *can* attain enlightenment and that's credible because the Bhagavan is an authoritative person who speaks what is true and correct, never what is false or erroneous. But you might not be quite sure that the Bhagavan, Buddha Shakyamuni, is a valid or authoritative person. If you haven't studied tarig (the types of reasons), you might still have questions about this.

In the second chapter of his *Commentary on the Compendium of Valid Cognition*, the glorious Dharmakirti establishes how the founding teacher, that is Buddha Shakyamuni, is an authoritative or valid person. There are hundreds of pages of commentary to this text, by Lama Tsong Khapa and by his students Kedrup Rinpoche and Gyalsab Rinpoche. Through all that material, the authors prove how Buddha Shakyamuni is an authoritative person.

When practising Buddhism, it is of utmost importance to first realise how Shakyamuni Buddha is an authoritative person. Why is this so important to realise if you're going to be practising Buddhism? In practising Buddhism, you're following Buddha Shakyamuni, aren't you? It will be very difficult to proceed if you do not understand how Buddha Shakyamuni is correct, how Buddha Shakyamuni is himself very deep and profound. It's difficult to develop conviction in what he says if you have not first realised that he himself is an authoritative person.

This is why Geshela says it's so important to study types of reasons (tarig) and things like Dharmakirti's text, *Commentary on the Compendium of Valid Cognition*.

Those who say it is not necessary to study tarig can't really be blamed for this attitude. It existed in Tibet as well. There was, and still is, the idea in Tibet, that the study of reasoning (tarig) and Dharmakirti's *Commentary on the Compendium of Valid Cognition* were simply intended just in order to debate with other people. Many people don't understand that these texts are meant to help us develop wisdom about the methods to achieve the goal and the goal itself. They think of this solely as something used for debating with opponents and so forth, without realising its significance for developing wisdom about the path and what we're trying to achieve.

Lama Tsong Khapa actually mentions this attitude. He says that earlier Tibetans thought that you did not have to study and read through Dharmakirti's *Commentary on the Compendium of Valid Cognition* because it was written to refute the positions of non-Buddhists - and since there are no non-Buddhists in Tibet, then it is not necessary to study this text! Lama Tsong Khapa states very clearly this idea that many earlier Tibetans held.

Buddha Shakyamuni is an authoritative person – do we understand this? Authoritative can also be translated as valid. So to call him an authoritative person means that he is a person who does not mislead. Valid or authoritative means not misleading - Buddha Shakyamuni is not a misleading person.

Buddha Shakyamuni actually became an authoritative person. How was it that Buddha Shakyamuni became an authoritative person? That process is explained in the second chapter of Dharmakirti's *Commentary on the Compendium of Valid Cognition* where he talks about developing the loving concern for migrating beings and the realisations and wisdoms that he developed in relation to that. It talks about how, through this development of wisdom and compassion, he became an authoritative person. At one point, he was a person just like ourselves but through this process, he became an authoritative person.

Why is Geshela bringing this up at this point? It says, on page 199, that to stop this type of discouragement, we must encourage ourselves with the thought: "*The Bhagavan—the authoritative person who speaks what is true and correct, never what is false or erroneous—said that even flies, etc. will attain enlightenment. That being so, why should I not attain it.*"

The quote from Shantideva -- *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* says:

*“How could I attain enlightenment?”  
I shall not indulge in such discouragement [shrinking away],  
For the truth-declaring Tathagata  
Has spoken this truth:*

*“Even flies, mosquitoes,  
Bees, and worms will attain  
Unsurpassed enlightenment, so hard to attain,  
Once they generate the power of perseverance.”*

*Why should someone like me—  
Born into the human race, recognizing benefit and harm—  
Not attain enlightenment,  
As long as I do not give up the bodhisattva deeds?*

*Furthermore, stop your discouragement with this thought: “In the past there were former buddhas, now there are living buddhas, and in the future there will also be those who reach buddhahood. It is not the case that just one person who has already become a buddha accomplishes the path. Rather, those just like myself, gradually progressing upward, have become buddhas and will become buddhas.”*

All the buddhas of the three times are also mentioned in the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*. This refers to those buddhas who have already achieved buddhahood in the past, those who are achieving buddhahood in the present and those who will achieve buddhahood in the future. All buddhas of the three times.

The buddhas of the future are us, aren't they? We are the buddhas of the future.

*The Cloud of Jewels Sutra* says:

*The bodhisattva thinks as follows: “All the tathagatas, arhats, perfect buddhas who have attained, who are attaining, and who will attain complete enlightenment have, are, and will attain complete enlightenment through this kind of method, this kind of path, this kind of joyous effort.” Thus, it is not the case that all these tathagatas are just one person who has already become a tathagata attaining complete enlightenment. Rather, I too shall reach total perfection in utterly unsurpassed, perfect, and complete enlightenment. With joyous effort in common with all living beings and joyous effort focused upon all living beings, I too shall seek and strive for enlightenment.*

*The Praise of Infinite Qualities* also says:

*“Even some who have earlier obtained the state of a sugata previously fell to states much lower than this one.” Thinking thus and in order to inspire us, you [Bhagavan] did not disparage yourself even when you fell into a dreadful condition. To disparage oneself is wrong, causing those with well-developed faculties to become discouraged.*

These are the types of things we need to think about to stop the laziness of shrinking away, which we must do. It says here, very clearly, that to disparage oneself, to belittle oneself is wrong.

So what does this word discouragement mean to you? What does it mean to be discouraged?

Student: To want to give up.

Geshela: Geshela would argue that perhaps we need a little bit of discouragement. Or @shum-pa, at the very least, which is probably why Geshela's asking about the English translation. What does it mean?

[Interpreter: And Jampa was agreeing with Terry, saying in effect it means to have given up on certain things. And I was saying also it's like if you work very hard at something and you're unable to achieve it, then you sigh and say "now what to do? I haven't been able to do it. There's nothing left for me". Geshela asked if you become a bit upset when you're discouraged because that's not the connotation of the Tibetan word *@shum-pa*. He wonders if maybe to be discouraged can imply or contain some degree of fear or apprehension. Is that possible?]

Student: Losing confidence.

Student 2: A sense of being too hard.

Geshela: Whatever your current understanding of discouragement is right now, just keep that in the back of your mind when you're reading through the following sections of the text. And try to work out, does Lama Tsong Khapa's explanation seem to fit in with your understanding of discouragement. It would seem from Lama Tsong Khapa's explanation that we do need a bit of discouragement or *shum-pa*. We really need to determine first of all, whether discouragement is a good translation for this word *shum-pa* and whether Lama Tsong Khapa's explanation – to decide that we need to see if Lama Tsong Khapa's explanation accords with the way we understand that word.

In Tibetan this word has a meaning that includes: "I wonder if I can?" Let's say there's something on the ground that you need to pick up. If you have this *shum-pa* then you would look at and think, "I wonder if I can lift this?" And if you thought this then you would take great care in trying to lift it, wouldn't you. That's the point. Whereas if you didn't wonder at all whether you could lift it, if you just thought "Sure, I can lift this!" and it turned out to be really heavy, then you would be shown up to be a fool, wouldn't you.

But if you think, "Oh I wonder if I can lift this?" and you approach it with care, it might turn out to be quite light. But also the way you lift it is going to be very careful. This is what Geshela reckons ...

At the Olympic Games, weightlifters go through a whole elaborate procedure, don't they? Rubbing their hands together ... getting ready ... this is the type of thing that we need right?

*As to this discouragement, since a buddha's good qualities are infinite and results follow from causes, you must accomplish good qualities and remove faults through limitless avenues while on the path. After you have understood this well, you may become discouraged when you then take a look at yourself.*

*However, this particular discouragement will never arise at a time like the present when an erroneous understanding of the path is in operation.*

Geshela argues that this *shum-pa* is required, it's necessary to have this thought. Let's say that a person thinks about achieving enlightenment and they think, "Well, I don't really want to work that hard to do it, but if I did work that hard then I'd be able to achieve it." Let's say a person has that type of confidence, that if they could do the work that was required, then they would be able to accomplish it. They don't really develop the intensity of power, or the intensity of effort directed towards that goal, because they're just thinking that if they do the work, it will happen... They don't really gather in the intensity and potency required to bring that about.

Similarly in the illustration that Geshela brought up, the person who just looks at this thing on the ground that needs to be lifted, and thinks, "Oh yeah, I could lift that." and leaves it at that. There must be a sense of "I wonder if I can do it" so that we can gather the strength required to accomplish it.

*Now, when practicing to attain the limitless Buddha qualities, you suppose that they are achieved by one-sidedly pursuing just a single, small portion of a quality and intensively working on it. Yet, in this*

*case your not getting discouraged is not a good sign. Rather, it is the result of your not being certain about how to proceed on the path—or, though you have a rough understanding, you have not put it into practice—so you are confused about its apparent ease. For, when you come up against the practice and receive an explanation of a fairly complete outline of the path, roughly arranged from beginning to end, you say, “If that much is needed, who could do it,” and thoroughly give it up.*

In this case, you’re likely to give it up, aren’t you? You just take a cursory glance at it and think, “yeah, yeah” – but then when you actually gain an understanding of what is required, when you actually begin to work on bringing it about, then it dawns on you how much is actually required. You didn't realise the implications before. Now that you begin to have an understanding of what’s actually required, there’s the great danger that you will give up.

*Also, Sha-ra-wa said:*

*For bodhisattvas who have not engaged in practice all the bodhisattva deeds seem easy, like looking at a target for arrows, and they do not even get discouraged. At present, we lack a complete practice of the teachings, so we have not even reached the level at which we would have discouragement or self-contempt. When we more fully appropriate the teaching, then there is great danger of discouragement and self-contempt.*

Regardless of how you choose to translate *shum-pa*, it’s clear from Lama Tsong Khapa’s explanation that some degree of it is required. For instance, consider the beginning of the path. We look at the very first part of the stages of the path, how to correctly rely upon a spiritual teacher and all the different stages from there, up to and including buddhahood. We look at all that’s required on the stages of the path and we develop an understanding that it’s not at all easy, that in fact to achieve enlightenment is quite difficult. From Lama Tsong Khapa’s explanation, it would seem that we should develop an understanding like this as we study through these different stages of the path. It is good for us to develop an understanding of the enormity of the path and the fact that it’s not easy to accomplish it. We must understand the way in which the path is arranged, and the different stages that you go through along those paths. We must have an understanding of these points.

What comes from this type of understanding? The thought that it’s not at all easy to accomplish this, that to really achieve the goal would take a few lifetimes, that I’m going to have to work for lifetime after lifetime in order to accomplish the goal.

It’s quite possible that we’ll develop the thought that “it’s not easy, I’m going to have to work hard for a long time to achieve it,” if we understand the way the path is arranged and the stages along it. If we have this understanding and attitude, what happens? It doesn’t matter how many books you read, how many teachings you receive, you’re never going to stop practising because you know what’s required and you know that it’s not easy. Otherwise if you lack this attitude, or think that it's not that hard, if you work hard it can be achieved quite easily, then you might read a few dharma books and receive some different teachings, but when things start to get tough, you’re likely to give up. You might do some reading, go to a few teachings, but when things start to get tough, you might think, “it’s just not happening, it’s not coming along,” and then you’re likely to give up. It’s possible isn’t it?

Once again, regardless of how you choose to translate this word *shum-pa* into English, Lama Tsong Khapa’s explanation indicates that we must develop an understanding of the different stages of the path, beginning with the way to rely upon a spiritual teacher all the way up to and including buddhahood, and we must understand the sources behind them knowing how these are based on authoritative sources. We must also understand how it’s not easy, and that to achieve it, requires a lot of hard work. That’s what Lama Tsong Khapa is trying to convey to us.

Sha-ra-wa gives a good analogy. It’s translated into English as looking at a target for arrows. Sha-ra-wa's antiquated terminology notwithstanding, Geshela thinks this is probably what it means. For an archer to shoot an arrow and hit the target is not easy, is it. But someone else could be standing to one

side watching and think it is quite easy - just aim straight ahead and it will hit the target. An observer may think it's pretty easy but for the archer it's not that easy is it.

These masters are saying, don't be like this, don't have this attitude. Rather, understand that it's not easy and much hard work is required. Know how tough it is.

Lama Tsong Khapa comments on what Sha-ra-wa said: *This is quite true.*

*(2)) Stopping discouragement about the means to attain the goal*

*Qualm: To accomplish buddhahood you have to give away your feet, hands, etc., but I am not capable of such feats.*

*Reply: You must bear suffering to that extent, for even those who live as they please without engaging in the bodhisattva deeds experience as they pass through cyclic existence unspeakable sufferings such as having their bodies cut open, torn to pieces, stabbed, set on fire, and so forth, but they do not accomplish even their own welfare. The suffering occasioned by undergoing hardships for the sake of enlightenment is not even a fraction of this suffering, and also has the great purpose of accomplishing both your own and others' welfare.*

*Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:*

*"But it frightens me that I must  
Give away my feet, hands, and the like."  
Without distinguishing heavy suffering from light,  
Confusion reduces me to fear.*

*For countless tens of millions of eons  
I will be cut, stabbed,  
Burned, and torn asunder numerous times,  
Without thereby attaining enlightenment.*

*This suffering which brings about my enlightenment  
Does have a limit.  
It is like undergoing the pain of an incision  
To excise an injurious internal disease.*

*All doctors eliminate illness  
Through forms of discomfort which heal it.  
Thus, I will bear a little discomfort  
To destroy numerous sufferings.*

This is done to stop discouragement, isn't it. It says *Stopping discouragement about the means to attain the goal.*

We need to stop discouragement, but in order to do so, we must first develop a bit of discouragement. Look at the way it's explained in the text, develop some discouragement -- and then stop it.

How do you develop discouragement? Think about all the bodhisattva deeds and the different things that bodhisattvas need to train in, and the different stages of the path and so forth. Then it's quite possible that you might wonder how it's possible for all that to come about for you. In this way then discouragement could arise. And it's at that point you need to work on stopping it. Discouragement arises, but then you say, "OK, no big deal, I don't have to worry."

There are a lot of things that you could think about at this point - like for instance, how certain medical conditions require that your arm or your leg be amputated for instance. In order to treat something you

have, you might have to lose your arm or lose your leg. Think about how you might lost a limb in a car accident. Through all the different rebirths that you've taken, think about how many times you've lost your arms and our legs. Recognising that this happened many, many times before but to no end, you then think about now, "If I were to lose my arm or my leg, if these difficulties were to arise in the pursuit of enlightenment, then that's OK." So don't become discouraged. This is one way to stop discouragement.

First develop discouragement by thinking about and reflecting on the bodhisattva deeds. And then stop that discouragement by thinking about how you've lost your arms and your legs and so forth many times in the past, but you haven't been able to accomplish anyone's welfare. Now: "OK, I'm prepared to undergo that, in order to accomplish those welfares". Think in the way that Lama Tsong Khapa prescribes and stop your discouragement.

We'll leave it there, just at this point, on page 202. We should remember that we're not allowed to indiscriminately give our bodies. You can't give your body until you've reached a certain point, the measure at which you're capable of this kind of action.

Geshela spoke on that point earlier, didn't he? Lama Tsong Khapa emphasises how important it is to understand the way in which the stages of the path are laid out and built upon.

Do you have any questions?

Student: For this word which is translated as 'discouraged', I suggest the word 'daunted'.

Interpreter: In fact that is how they translate it later in the text, they do use the word "daunted".

Student: Because being daunted means you know the enormity of the task.

Interpreter: It's an interesting possibility, I think there's a lot of merit to that translation. The translators of this text opted for that too in another section. Not only does it imply a sense of understanding what's required; it also has that connotation of fear that Geshela brought up a moment ago. So that's an interesting suggestion.

If there are no questions, we'll leave it there.