

Buddhist Studies Program

Subject: Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3

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The stages of the path of a person of great capacity include a section on how to develop the mind (of enlightenment) and how to train in the deeds once you have developed that mind. In brief, that's the material covered in that section. It's good to read through the outline. It helps us solidify the points in our mind. Although we might find it difficult to get the time to read through it, we should be aware how helpful it is to look at this material again and again.

In the section on how to train in the bodhisattva deeds after you have developed the mind of enlightenment, Lama Tsong Khapa identifies three major sections. He first talks about;

1. *The reason why you must learn the trainings after developing the spirit of enlightenment*
2. *Demonstrating that you will not become a buddha by learning either method or wisdom separately*
3. *Explanation of the process of learning the precepts.*

We need to understand clearly the reasons why we must train in the bodhisattva deeds after developing the mind of enlightenment. The next section deals with why you can't become a buddha by training either method or wisdom separately. This discussion is given to eliminate the misconception that you can become a buddha by focusing on one alone, that you don't have to cultivate both. In particular, it's intended to eliminate the wrong idea that you can achieve buddhahood by cultivating and meditating on emptiness alone. These are two important steps that we must be certain of.

Then in training in the six perfections, in particular you have: training in generosity, training in ethics and patience, all of which we have already read over. This brings us to joyous effort. The Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa has explained each of these six perfections over five sections. He seems to have a purpose in doing so. It's significant that chooses these five as a way of discussing each of the perfections.

Generally speaking, joyous effort is taking delight in virtuous karma, taking delight in virtuous action. Correct? Yet Lama Tsong Khapa mentions a further three types of joyous effort, the physical, verbal and mental actions that are motivated by that delight in virtuous action.

How do we begin the practice of joyous effort? We do so by reflecting on the benefits of joyous effort, and the shortcomings of not having joyous effort. These are the means by which we engage to begin the practice of joyous effort and that brings us to the divisions of joyous effort. In this section there are two parts.

The actual divisions, and the method of developing joyous perseverance.

The actual divisions of joyous effort are:

- (a") Armor-like joyous perseverance
- (b") Joyous perseverance of gathering virtue
- (c") Joyous perseverance of acting for the welfare of living beings.

We've read though those sections haven't we? The actual divisions of joyous effort.

Of the five main divisions used to explain joyous effort, the second is *How to begin the practice of joyous perseverance* isn't it. In explaining the divisions of joyous effort Lama Tsong Khapa speaks about the method for developing joyous effort. These two are related to one another aren't they? We need to think about this.

What are the methods through which we can begin the practice of joyous effort? We reflect on the benefits and reflect on the shortcomings. Simply put, the benefits of joyous effort are all sorts of mundane and super mundane good qualities, which arise dependent on having initiated some joyous effort. The joyous effort acts as a basis for developing all these good qualities, be they mundane or super mundane. If you want to think about it in an easy way, that's it.

The drawback of not initiating joyous effort is that we'll fall prey to laziness and we'll run into all sorts of problems because of that. This is something that we can talk about from our own experience, isn't it? These are what Lama Tsong Khapa describes as the methods for beginning the practice of joyous effort. Now let's look at the methods for developing it. There are four types and we've read through them already. It says on page 196 of the English translation that in the method of developing joyous perseverance there are four parts:

1. *Eliminating unfavorable conditions that prevent joyous perseverance*
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 joyously persevering.*
4. *How to use joyous perseverance to make the mind and body serviceable.*

The second section here is of particular importance. Consider the first, *Eliminating unfavorable conditions that prevent joyous perseverance*; clearly it's important that we dispel circumstances that are not conducive to the development of joyous effort - circumstances that would prevent or hinder it. But also it's important that we develop those that are conducive, the favorable conditions. We talk about gathering the accumulations and eliminating obscurations don't we? That can be traced back to here. Once you've eliminated the unfavorable conditions and gathered the favorable conditions you need to be intent on joyously making effort, joyously persevering. And once you are intent on making joyous effort, what comes about due to that? Your body and mind become serviceable and when your body and mind become serviceable it becomes easier to direct your body and mind towards virtue.

What is the factor most incompatible with joyous effort? Laziness. That's what Lama Tsong Khapa discusses here in identifying the unfavourable conditions. When Lama Tsong Khapa first mentions the unfavourable conditions he speaks about two aspects, but when he goes in to discuss the different types of laziness he speaks about three. Alternatively you could talk about four types of laziness. It becomes problematic when you begin to enumerate different types of laziness because there are so many different options, but in general, it's not problematic at all, because we really know laziness so well. (laughter) So, laziness is the factor that's so incompatible with joyous effort.

Lama Tsong Khapa talks about overcoming our tendency of shrinking away from the goal and shrinking way from the means to obtain that goal. [Here the word @ ge lu @ is translated as discouragement, so the outline says stopping discouragement toward the goal, stopping discouragement about the means to attain the goal]. And then, thirdly, he talks about a sense of being daunted because wherever you are is a place to practise. It all becomes quite clear once Lama Tsong Khapa goes through the outline.

We left off on page 202 about half way down the page it says:

With respect to giving away your body, you do not give it in the beginning when you are afraid. But through graduated training in generosity, you end your attachment to your body.

What section is this found in? It is found in stopping discouragement about the means to attain the goal, ie stopping being daunted by the means to attain the goal. Geshela was just talking about how there's a section on stopping the tendency to shrink away when you think about the goal, and stopping being daunted by the means to attain that goal. So here we are in that second section just mentioned. At the beginning of this section a qualm is put forward;

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

This is referring to the advice that in order to achieve buddhahood you must really practise generosity to a great degree in fact, you must even be able to relinquish your body and your life. As it says here you must give away your feet, your arms your legs. You might wonder, however, whether you are capable of doing this, of giving your arms and legs in order to achieve buddhahood. Lama Tsong Khapa says you don't have to worry, because you work up to it. With respect to your body, you don't have to give it away at the beginning when you are afraid, but through graduated training in generosity you can bring your attachment to your body to an end and you will have no difficulty in giving it away, provided that it's for a great purpose. Our present inability to relinquish our body is due to our attachment to it. If we overcome that attachment and strengthen the force of our great compassion, then we'll be able to give even our body.

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. Once you have increased the strength of your great compassion, you have no difficulty when you give it away, provided it is for a great purpose.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*The Supreme Physician does not employ
Ordinary remedies such as those.
He heals limitless chronic diseases
With the most gentle treatments.*

*At the beginning the Guide enjoins you
To give vegetables and so forth.
Later, after you are used to this,
You gradually offer even your flesh.*

*Once I come to conceive of my body
As being like a vegetable and so forth,
What difficulty will there be in giving away
Such things as my flesh?*

It's clear isn't it? And here is another doubt someone raises.

Some say that since practitioners of the perfection vehicle must give away their bodies and lives, they undergo torment and are on a path that is very difficult to follow. This text clearly refutes this, because you do not give away your body so long as you perceive it to be a difficult deed, but rather do so once it becomes very easy, like giving a vegetable.

Geshela used to think in a certain way, and upon reflection he feels he still thinks in this way. If you're

able to endure certain hardships it's good to endure those, but generally speaking practising Buddhism is made somewhat easier than practising other religious traditions. There are other religious traditions that specifically teach that you must give up eating for instance, or to sit close to five fires and so forth. Such religious traditions do exist don't they? You don't find those types of instructions in Buddhism however, do you? Rather, Buddhism asks you to train the mind, train the mind, train the mind, train the mind - until you reach a certain point where you have the ability to do something, then at that point you can do it - if you want to. It's only when you have reached that point where you have the capacity that you engage in these types of hardships and so forth. From that respect Geshela thinks Buddhism is somewhat easier to practise than some other religious traditions might be. Maybe that's because Geshela is partial to Buddhism, but maybe also what he says is accurate.

We are encouraged to stop attachment to the body aren't we? What if we reached the point where we didn't have any attachment towards our body at all? Could we begin to think of the body as being like a vegetable? First, we need to determine whether or not you can adopt that attitude. We know clearly that you can indeed stop attachment. So having stopped attachment can you then begin to think of the body as a vegetable? If you can, then it wouldn't be all that difficult to give it away. It would be much easier, don't you think?

Most of you don't remember this, but some years back a rather tall, young man arrived here at the institute with his mother. In Perth he had met a teacher of another religious tradition who had told him that he shouldn't eat for seven days and to practise meditation during that time. He did this, but after the seven days of not eating he had become so weak that he couldn't support himself and his mother became quite concerned about him. She took him away from the teacher and brought him to Chenrezig Institute. As he left, the teacher encouraged the young man to continue not eating as much as he was able to. When his mother brought him up here, Geshela told him it was better that he ate but Geshela knew what to do in such a situation. He advised him not to start with solid foods but to start with lighter things and then gradually build up until he could eat solid foods again. And Geshela also told him that after he recovered, if he still thought there was some substantial essence to this tradition, well then he should check it out carefully. The mother didn't like this but the boy did.

He stayed for a month or two and in that time he actually ended becoming quite sturdy maybe even a little fat. Then he came and told Geshela he had eaten too much and become fat but Geshela said it was no big deal - now he could cut down to eating just lunch each day, and on top of that he could take the mahayana precepts.

So there are these kinds of situations, these kinds of things do happen. We discussed this practice of sitting close to the five fires the other day, didn't we? There are traditions that espouse this kind of thing. We don't know what the real intentions behind them are, but still Buddhism is not like this is it? Buddhism encourages us to practise in a way that accords with our own capacity. Train your mind, develop your capacity and make sure your practice is in line with that ability. That's what Buddhism encourages doesn't it.

It's not appropriate to do something just because someone else is doing it. That is not a good reason for you. Make sure that what you do accords with your own ability. Let's say that a person has absolutely no attachment to this or her body, and they are able to think of their body as being like a vegetable so that they then give that body to some sentient being to eat and we see this happening. And we think that since we also want to attain buddhahood we ought to do that too. But if we have not reached a certain level where we really have the ability to act like that person, then that could be quite dangerous. When you give your body to a sentient being to eat, then all sorts of different things could arise in your mind and you could accumulate a lot of non-virtue in the process. So, when deciding what you ought to do, don't base it what you observe others doing. Base it on what you yourself are capable of. This is an important principle for any virtuous activity that you might engage in. First, assess your own ability,

and your own mind and then make the determination about how you should behave.

That brings us to the third section. We've discussed,
Shrinking away from the goal
Stopping discouragement about the means to attain the goal.
Stopping discouragement because wherever you are is a place to practise.

Qualm: Reaching buddhahood requires taking limitless rebirths in cyclic existence, so I will be harmed by the suffering therein. I am not capable of such a thing.

Reply: Reflect as follows. Bodhisattvas have eliminated all sin; therefore, sin's effect—the feeling of suffering—will not arise because they have stopped the cause. Through firm knowledge that cyclic existence lacks an intrinsic nature, like a magician's illusion, they also have no mental suffering.

Given that their physical and mental bliss increases, bodhisattvas have no reason to become disheartened even though they are still in cyclic existence. It says '*Through firm knowledge that cyclic existence lacks an intrinsic nature, like a magician's illusion*' ie by realising that cyclic existence and things do not exist inherently. We use different analogies to illustrate this principle. They do not exist inherently - they like illusions, they are like reflections. If your mind becomes firm in this realization then there will be no mental suffering. There will be no mental suffering if you have this realization confirmed in your mind. Such persons are working for the benefit of all sentient beings, and, since they don't have physical and mental suffering, their physical and mental bliss is increasing and they don't find it difficult to work for those sentient beings. There is no reason for them to become disheartened though they might be in cyclic existence.

That makes an earlier statement in Lama Choepa seem somewhat easy:

Even if we must remain for an ocean of eons in the fiery
Hells of Avici, even for the sake of one sentient being alone,
We seek your blessings to complete the perfection of joyous effort
To strive with compassion for supreme enlightenment and not be discouraged.

You know, earlier reading that, it would seem rather difficult but once you develop to a certain level, it's not that difficult at all. This understanding makes that earlier statement that seemed so intimidating before, not that hard.

In brief where do our problems come from? Firstly, from our inability to abandon our attachment to our body, and second, from our inability to realise that phenomena are like illusions, that they lack inherent existence. Basically our problems come down to this. If we were to abandon these, it seems it would become much easier. If we guard our vows (eg bodhisattva vow) properly, we won't accumulate negativity and so the result of negativity, suffering, will not occur. That's a correct reason isn't it?

[Interpreter: Before I go on to read the quote from the bodhisattva deeds, just a point on translation. The Tibetan says that bodhisattvas have eliminated sin. It doesn't actually say 'all sin' as it says here in the English translation. Therefore sin's effect, the feeling of suffering, will not arise because they have stopped the cause.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*Since sin is eliminated, there is no suffering.
Through knowledge, there is no lack of joy.*

*Misconceptions and sin
Harm the mind and body.*

*Through merit the body is blissful
Through knowledge the mind is too.
Though remaining in cyclic existence for others' welfare,
Why should the compassionate ones be disheartened?*

What if we were to debate about this? Geshela reckons a bodhisattva might have some suffering. We talk about patience and impatience or perhaps more appropriately here, being able to bear or not bear, tolerate or not tolerate. Perhaps the difference lies therein.

Because bodhisattvas have abandoned sin they have no suffering, no feelings of suffering? Perhaps that could be altered to say 'because bodhisattvas have abandoned all sin they are not impatient with suffering feelings - they do find suffering feelings intolerable'.

Let's say someone comes along and tells us that we cannot leave our house for a month – maybe there would be some feelings of physical suffering associated with that, maybe not. But there would be some problems; you would have some difficulty in that situation, wouldn't you?

In this kind of situation some people will be patient or tolerate and other people will be impatient and unable to tolerate it, right?

You put two people in two adjacent houses and they're going to have the same type of problems, same type of troubles. But one person might be impatient with it and find it intolerable, so they yell and scream and bang on the door - do all sorts of different things, right?

And then the other person might just think that it is no big deal. If they're Tibetan they might sit there reciting OM MANI PADME HUM, or they could sit there and meditate and when it comes time to sleep, go to sleep. They'd be pretty relaxed and just wait the month out. They would have a totally different approach. It's possible that you could have these two different approaches.

So bodhisattvas then might face certain problems and difficulties but there's absolutely no sense of impatience or intolerance about that. They accept them, they rejoice and embrace their difficulties, doing so for the benefit of beings.

Geshela thinks that it might be difficult to maintain this position that they have absolutely no feelings of suffering in the face of a very sharp debate. Difficult really to support that, if somebody is debating in a pointed way against it. Although it is what Lama Tsong Khapa seems to say, isn't it?

If a person has attained an actual meditative stabilisation then they wouldn't have feelings of suffering but in other cases you could question whether a bodhisattva who sits in a fire for the sake of sentient beings experiences feelings of suffering or not. Certainly once a person has attained an actual meditative stabilisation they would not have any feelings of suffering.

Geshela encourages us to continue to think about this point.

So it says:

*Through firm realisation that cyclic existence lacks an inherent nature, like a magician's illusion, they also have no mental suffering. Given that their physical and mental bliss increases, they have no reason to become disheartened even though they are still in cyclic existence.
Since bodhisattvas have eliminated sin; therefore, sin's effect—the feeling of suffering—will not arise*

because they have stopped the cause.

Given that this is the case, it's clearly important for us to give up negativities. So continuing on:
And also:

*Thus, after mounting the steed of the enlightenment mind,
Which dispels all dejection and fatigue,
You proceed from joy to joy.
What sensible person would become discouraged?*

Back then the only thing they rode were horses, so it says *Thus, after mounting the steed of the enlightenment mind, Which dispels all dejection and fatigue, You proceed from joy to joy.* Nowadays you could say 'thus after mounting the aeroplane of the enlightened mind' or 'thus after mounting or riding in the car of the enlightenment mind'...in which case you would think that that would be even quicker to dispel the dejection and fatigue and proceed from joy to joy!

Likewise, do not become discouraged even by being delayed in cyclic existence for an immeasurable length of time, because a long length of time is not in itself a reason to be disheartened.

Do not become daunted by the prospect of having to remain in cyclic existence for an immeasurable length of time because a long length of time is not in itself a reason to be disheartened.

If suffering is extremely intense, even a brief period of it is disheartening. But if there is no suffering and you are happy, even a long time is not disheartening.

Now, the reason we shouldn't become disheartened is explained in *Nagarjuna's Precious Garland* which states:

*When suffering, even a short time is hard to bear;
What need mention a time that is long?
But when free of suffering and joyful,
What harms you over even endless time?*

*Bodhisattvas have no physical suffering;
How could they have mental suffering?
Out of compassion they feel distress for the world;
Thus they remain for a long time.*

*So do not be discouraged,
Thinking, "Buddhahood is far away."
Always strive at these collections
So as to eliminate faults and gain good qualities.*

There's another doubt that might arise:

Also, since the completion of endless collections is not difficult, do not discourage yourself with the thought, "To become a Buddha requires completing limitless collections of merit and sublime wisdom. This is so difficult that I could not possibly do it." First, motivate yourself with the desire to attain the goal of limitless Buddha qualities for the welfare of the limitless beings you intend to help. Next, focus on remaining in cyclic existence for a measureless period of time and take the bodhisattva vows, thinking: "I shall accomplish limitless collections!" Then, as long as you keep the vows, whether your mind is distracted by other things or not, asleep or awake, you will constantly accumulate merit as vast as space.

This was mentioned earlier in the text when we were discussing the benefits of developing the engaging mind of enlightenment.

Here talking about acting without conscientiousness means to act playfully the mind being distracted in little games and things that you might do.

The Precious Garland states:

*Just as in all directions
Space, earth, water, fire, and wind
Are limitless, so, we assert,
Suffering beings are without limit.*

*With compassion the bodhisattvas
Extricate these limitless beings
From suffering and then determine
To set them in buddhahood.*

*Those remaining steadfast in this way
Properly make this commitment,
And then, whether asleep or awake,
And even when careless, (here careless or without acting conscientiously)*

*They constantly accumulate merit as limitless
As living beings, for beings are without limit.
Because of the limitlessness of this, know
That limitless buddhahood is not hard to gain.*

*Those who remain for an immeasurable time
Seek immeasurable enlightenment
For the sake of immeasurable beings
And accomplish immeasurable virtue.*

*Hence, though enlightenment is measureless,
How could they fail to attain it
Before long through a combination
Of these four immeasurable ways?*

The four immeasurables here are immeasurable time, immeasurable enlightenment, immeasurable beings and immeasurable virtue.

For those of you who are curious, here the word translated as immeasurable is **@ pa te mepa @** which also means inestimable, it's different from the word **@ tse me @** which is used for immeasurable loving kindness, immeasurable compassion and so forth.

It is most wonderful to think, "If only I could attain buddhahood in a brief time for the sake of living beings," because you are moved by the very intense power of your loving kindness, compassion, and mind of enlightenment. However, when you are not within the sphere of these motivations, and you see the necessity of a very long training in endless deeds and that much hard work is required, you might think, "If this is the case, who could possibly do it?" If you should then claim that you are seeking a quick path, you directly damage the engaged mind of enlightenment and indirectly damage the aspirational mind of enlightenment. Your capacity for the Mahayana lineage steadily weakens, and your enlightenment fades into the remote distance,

We're going to be thinking about this today.

Let's say a person develops loving kindness, compassion, the mind of enlightenment and develops them so that they are very strong – they become very, very firm in their mind – they are *moved by the very intense power of your loving kindness, compassion, and the mind of enlightenment*. Due to the fierceness and the firmness of these attitudes, then they think “*If only I could attain buddhahood in a brief time for the sake of living beings,*” in that case developing this attitude is most wonderful.

A person with such an attitude is of course going to put great effort into maintaining these different qualities and in working to achieve that, aren't they? In this circumstance that thought is most wonderful.

However a person who does not think like this, one who sees the necessity of a very long training in endless deeds and that much hard work is required and might think “*If this is the case, who could possibly do it?*” If that person then seeks a quick path, that person would directly damage the engaged mind of enlightenment and indirectly damage the aspirational mind of enlightenment. What's more their capacity for the Mahayana lineage is said to be weakened and their enlightenment fades into the remote distance.

There is this type of thought amongst us, isn't there?

We do think like this, don't we. We would like to grasp the essence of the buddhadharma without a great deal of hardship or difficulty!” (Geshela laughs)

If you think like that, then it directly harms the engaging mind of enlightenment and if you have the vows of the engaging mind, that type of thinking directly harms them.

Why might that be? In order to have the engaging mind, you must take the vows of the engaging mind. And if you take the vows of the engaging mind then you're making a pledge to practise the six perfections like generosity from eon to eon. This pledge is directly harmed by that kind of thinking, isn't it?

Having taken the vow of the engaging mind we need to reflect on these points. We take the vow of a bodhisattva and in doing so we pledge to practise the perfections like generosity for as long as required to achieve enlightenment for the sake of all sentient beings. Some people may question this saying: “But isn't that really difficult, you have to work so hard and endure so much in practising these six perfections, isn't that difficult?”

The Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa is saying that there will come a time when it is not difficult. Once you eliminate your attachment to the body and realise how phenomena are like illusions, it will no longer be difficult for you. This is how Lama Tsong Khapa addresses the person who says “But that is so difficult!”

How does this attitude directly damage the engaging mind of enlightenment? It creates an inability to tolerate or be patient with the hardships that you have to endure for a long time. In the engaging mind we make a commitment to try and be patient, to try and tolerate the hardships over a long period of time and this attitude works against that and directly damages it.

And then you have the aspiring mind of enlightenment, that mind that thinks “May I achieve buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.” That is indirectly damaged by this way of thinking. Why? Because you are explicitly thinking that you won't be able to hold out until enlightenment - that it

is too long and too hard. That attitude does indirect damage to the thought “I will attain buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings.”

So the Mahayana lineage steadily weakens, and your enlightenment fades into the remote distance,

This is why we must understand how to increasingly strengthen the mind of enlightenment. These things happen:

for you have utterly contradicted what Nagarjuna and Asanga determined to be the Conqueror's own thought on how to increasingly strengthen the mind of enlightenment.

Thus, since becoming discouraged and remaining so brings no benefit at all and only leads to further discouragement, understand well the methods for achieving enlightenment and uplift your mind. When you do this, the completion of your aims is as if in your hand.

Why Nagarjuna? He is the trailblazer who opened the tradition of the Middle Way. And why Asanga? He is the trailblazer who opened the tradition of Mind Only. Buddha Shakyamuni prophesied the appearance of these two beings and they came into this world and trained and worked for the sake of others. Through a great deal of difficulties in training they were able to determine the respective systems of the Middle Way and the Mind Only. Just as they came into this world and worked hard to accomplish these aims, so we should try to act like Nagarjuna and Asanga in working hard to understand how to increasingly strengthen the mind of enlightenment. Once we understand how to do this, things will not be that difficult.

It says here *understand well the methods for achieving enlightenment* - this refers to developing wisdom. By reflecting on this we uplift our minds, we inspire ourselves and when we do so, it is as if the completion of our aims is in our hands.

The Garland of Birth Stories says:

*Discouragement does not help to free you from misfortune,
So, rather than torment yourself in sorrow,
Develop stable proficiency in the required goals.
Then even the very difficult becomes easy, bringing liberation.*

*So achieve what must be done by the indicated method
Without making yourself fearful and unhappy.
Support yourself with stability that has the brilliance of proficiency,
Then, the achievement of all aims is in your hand.*

In Tibetan 'proficiency' also implies being knowledgeable.

Arya Asanga says repeatedly that you have both to know well the methods of training in extensive practice without being discouraged and to not be satisfied with only minimal qualities. At present you think, "I have reached a high level of the path," when you have produced a single approximation of a good quality; even if it is an actual good quality, it is only one aspect of the path. You are content to meditate solely on it. But then those knowledgeable in the key points of the path explain from within the guidelines of scripture and reasoning that it is indeed a fraction of virtue, but with just that alone you have not reached anywhere. When you understand what they have said, you become extremely discouraged. Thus, those who do not remain satisfied with just some portion of virtue, who seek higher distinction, and who are not discouraged even with the necessity to learn limitless trainings are extremely rare.

It seems that Arya Asanga was perhaps himself a bit saddened, a bit disappointed.

There are three sections here aren't there?

1. *Stopping discouragement about or shrinking away from the goal*
2. *Stopping being daunted about the means to attain the goal*
3. *Stopping being daunted or discouraged because wherever you are is a place to practise*

Within each of these sections there are smaller sections that give us a lot to think about. These little points help to clarify the doubts that we might have – they're given to develop this clarity.

For instance in the section on *Stopping being daunted about the means to attain the goal*, the question is raised "To achieve enlightenment you must give away your legs and arms and so forth and it's difficult to do that, isn't it?" That's one doubt that's addressed, isn't it?

In the third section, you look at how you stop being daunted *because wherever you are is a place to practise*. Another doubt that arises in relation to this is that you might think that in order to achieve enlightenment you're going to have to take rebirth in some very rough and tormented and difficult places and that you're not capable of such a thing. But Santideva makes it quite easy. He says:

*Since sin is eliminated, there is no suffering.
Through knowledge, there is no lack of joy.*

He talks about how for bodhisattvas who eliminate sin there is no suffering and how through their knowledge there is no lack of joy.

The Precious Lord then goes on to say that in effect if you take the vow of a bodhisattva and guard it well, then feelings of suffering won't arise and once you realise that phenomena are like illusions then mental suffering will not arise. Thus it would be no problem to remain in cyclic existence in these difficult and hard places.

Another doubt is brought up - that you have to gather limitless collections of merit and sublime wisdom and this is so difficult that "I could not possibly do it." We might feel daunted by the difficulty of having to accumulate the limitless collections that are required for buddhahood.

And once again we're encouraged not to worry because, after all, the thing we're seeking to achieve here, buddhahood, has limitless qualities. And we set out to achieve this buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings. We think about the buddhahood we are striving for, think about its limitless qualities etc and in doing that we accumulate limitless merit. And we think about the sentient beings that we're trying to achieve that enlightenment for – friends, neutral people, enemies. Sentient beings are as limitless as space, so innumerable that they are countless and that by working for their benefit and striving to achieve enlightenment to alleviate their suffering, then again you gather limitless merit. Although in order to achieve enlightenment we must gather the limitless collections, we are engaged in these acts through which limitless merit and so forth are accrued, so it is not a problem. Focusing on the limitless qualities of buddhahood and limitless sentient beings for whose sake you're striving, gathers in the limitless collections necessary for enlightenment.

As it says here, stated quite easily at the bottom of page 205, top of page 206:

*Those who remain for an immeasurable time
Seek immeasurable enlightenment
For the sake of immeasurable beings
And accomplish immeasurable virtue.*

*Hence, though enlightenment is measureless,
How could they fail to attain it
Before long through a combination
Of these four immeasurable ways?*

What the Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa is saying is that we must develop a strong, fierce sense of loving kindness, compassion and the mind of enlightenment to be able to strongly engage in the bodhisattva deeds that lead to enlightenment. It's important to develop this powerful loving kindness, compassion and the mind of enlightenment.

If, without developing strong loving kindness, compassion and the mind of enlightenment, we begin to think "Oh I must achieve enlightenment in a short time" there are certain dangers or risks that go along with that. It's dangerous to think like that, as long as you lack those qualities.

Geshela really likes this statement:

*Since sin is eliminated, there is no suffering.
Through knowledge, there is no lack of joy.*

This is a true verse - keep it in your hearts!

Buddhist Studies Programme

Subject : Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3

Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering

Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa

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In the method for developing joyous effort we have four sections.

1. *Eliminating unfavorable conditions that prevent joyous perseverance*
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 joyously persevering*
4. *How to use joyous perseverance to make the mind and body serviceable*

The unfavourable condition that prevents joyous effort is basically laziness, whether you talk about two types or three types.

We begin today with the section on page 207:

(b”) Gathering the forces of the favorable conditions

There’s a bit of advice just before the beginning of this section that Geshe-la would like to read through once again.

Arya Asanga says repeatedly that you have both to know well the methods of training in extensive practice without being discouraged (or being daunted) and to not be satisfied with only minimal qualities. At present you think “I have reached a high level of the path,” when you have produced a single approximation of a good quality; even if it is an actual good quality, it is only one aspect of the path. You are content to meditate solely on it. But then those knowledgeable in the key points of the path explain from within the guidelines of scripture and reasoning that it is indeed a fraction of virtue, but with just that alone you have not reached anywhere. When you understand what they have said, you become extremely discouraged (you might become extremely daunted). Thus, those who do not remain satisfied with just some portion of virtue, who seek higher distinction, and who are not discouraged, (that is, daunted) even with the necessity to learn limitless trainings are extremely rare.

The point is that we shouldn’t be content with our qualities. If we develop a quality we should then work to develop the next higher quality.

The same applies to study. Even if we gain a good understanding of one area we shouldn’t be content with that thinking ‘oh, ok, that’s enough.’ We should continue to study so that we work to develop a more complete understanding and not be content with knowledge of a specific area thinking that that’s enough. Therefore in seeking higher qualities we must develop this delight or enthusiasm. In order to do so we gather the forces of the favourable conditions. You eliminate the unfavourable conditions, and gather the forces of the favourable conditions so as to increase the joy you find in developing or seeking these higher qualities.

That’s why the next section is entitled *gathering the forces of the favorable conditions*.
This section has four parts:

1. *Developing the power of aspiration.* (The Tibetan word here is *mö pa*, which Jampa was saying should be translated as ‘resolve’)

2. *Developing the power of steadfastness*
3. *Developing the power of joy*
4. *The power of relinquishment.*

(1") Developing the power of resolve

As it is said that aspiration acts as the basis for joyous effort, resolve here refers to aspiration.

What's the difference between aspiration and resolve?

In the presentation of mind and mental factors you have the five 'object ascertaining mental factors.' Aspiration and resolve are presented as being different mental factors.

Geshe-la has talked about how you develop faith in buddhas, or the mind of enlightenment for instance, by seeing the good qualities that they have. This quality of faith is very closely linked with wisdom that understands the good qualities that an object possesses. That type of faith then in turn leads to aspiration. So for somebody who has not attained the good quality in question, that aspiration will take the form of a desire to attain that quality, whereas if a person has already attained that quality, they could have the desire not to be separated from that good quality. So faith arises upon seeing the good quality of the object. Faith leads to aspiration - the wish to attain or the wish not to be separated from.

Therefore aspiration is a state of mind that is intent on something, that strives for something. So aspiration acts as the basis for joyous effort.

The precious Lord says that resolve here refers to aspiration (the text says aspiration here refers to yearning).

What does resolve mean? Resolve as one of the five 'object ascertaining mental factors' refers to 'liking,' a liking of, or as 'affinity'. So resolve is a mental factor that cherishes an object or holds it dear.

If there's an object that you really like, then you're always taking it and rubbing it in your hands. Even when there's no reason for you to have it in your hands, you'll kind of reach for it, lovingly caressing it, and turning it over. This kind of thing!

In a similar way a person might have this type of resolve or affinity towards the Mahayana path. Or a person might have this affinity or resolve towards the Solitary Realizer path, or the affinity or resolve towards the Hearer path. That person is resolved on or feels affinity towards these things so that they're continually thinking about achieving those paths or listening to teachings about them, trying to develop an understanding of those paths. They really hold such things dear, don't they?

So there is this slight difference between resolve and aspiration, isn't there?

Aspiration is this mental factor that desires to attain something, or desires not to be separated from it. Whereas resolve, or if you like, affinity, is a mental factor that likes an object, that cherishes or holds its object dear.

Given that that is the case, resolve begins to resemble joyous effort quite a bit, doesn't it? Joyous effort would be foremost within this quality of resolve. After all, delight in virtuous actions is the essence of joyous effort, isn't it?

Delight in the Mahayana paths would be like the definition for joyous effort on the Mahayana paths.

That's kind of a general definition of joyous effort.

Resolve, or being resolved on the Mahayana path or having an affinity towards the Mahayana path would also be a liking of the Mahayana path. So quite a strong resemblance.

Resolve or affinity is what makes you choose one amongst a number of things. Whereas joyous effort doesn't make any particular choices, it's simply that delight in the virtuous activity – the virtuous action itself. Therefore within aspiration and resolve and joyous effort, you have these slight, slight differences distinguishing the one from the other.

These different factors like joyous effort inspire and spur us on to study. They are very important.

In the Tibetan, Lama Tsong Khapa, together with the other authors he quotes uses the term *mö pa* which is 'resolve' or 'affinity'. But as he says at the very outset, resolve refers to aspiration. So since Lama Tsong Khapa's saying that the two words here are the same, then later when they translate *mö pa* or resolve as aspiration, I'm just going to leave it. Lama Tsong Khapa then quotes Shantideva and in this quote Shantideva uses the word *mö pa*, or resolve, many times. So Lama Tsong Khapa's saying that in this quote, Shantideva's use of the word *mö pa* (resolve), is referring to aspiration. That is 'resolve', used in this context, means 'aspiration'.

The need to generate it is stated in Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds:

*My present destitution has arisen
From my not aspiring for the teachings
Both now and in the past.
Who would forsake aspiration for the teachings?*

*The Sage declared aspiration
The root of all aspects of virtue.*

It then states how to develop aspiration:

*Its root, in turn, is constant meditation
On karma's fruitional effects.*

This means that the way to develop aspiration is to meditate on how pleasant and unpleasant effects arise from virtuous and nonvirtuous karma respectively. This is because it is taught that faith acts as the basis for yearning, so that the faith of conviction in the two types of karma and their effects will generate two kinds of desire: to eliminate nonvirtuous karma and to adopt virtuous karma.

We often talk about karma and its effects, and how the effects of virtue are pleasant effects and that the effects of non-virtue are unpleasant effects, or unhappiness and suffering. Understanding this state of affairs then we're bound to develop some resolve or affinity, some aspiration towards the antidotes to non-virtue, and to develop similar things toward the virtue that causes happiness and so forth.

Furthermore, you consider karma and its effects in general, and in particular, the causality underlying the benefits of the bodhisattva deeds and the faults of violating them. Understand these from the relevant sections of this text.

Once you aspire to the Mahayana, you enter its door through a commitment to clear away all faults and achieve all good qualities for yourself and others. You must exhort yourself, thinking, "I will have to meditate for many eons to purify myself of every single fault along with its imprint and to develop every

single good quality to the fullest extent. Yet since I have not even a fraction of the joyous effort needed to clear away faults or accomplish good qualities, I have pointlessly wasted my leisure."

We ought to think in this way but we ought to know why we're thinking in this way too. Remember that you're doing this to spur yourself on to joyous effort so you can apply yourself to the vital points of karma and its effects. So you remember that the Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa and the master Shantideva talked about the importance of these points, and in talking down to myself, saying that '*I have not even a fraction of the joyous effort needed to clear away faults or accomplish good qualities, I am pointlessly wasting this opportunity and leisure that I have,*' you're doing so because you want to spur yourself onto the joyous effort. It's important that you recall that. It's not like you're thinking 'oh, karma and it's effects....I really haven't done a thing. This is just not acceptable. Ohhhh, what do I do now? I might as well just curl up and go to sleep and put a blanket over my head.' It's not like that. Remember that you're thinking like this to spur yourself onto joyous effort.

There are certain purposes that need to be served according to context. So there are going to be times when we really ought to talk down to ourselves. There are times when we ought to think about just how very important this body is. So, according to context, know what is appropriate – what type of attitude you ought to adopt and what type of attitude you ought not to adopt, according to the specific circumstances. Doing so, inspire yourself or spur yourself on.

The precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa makes the point that we need to abandon each and every fault. We need to develop an antidote to each and every fault so that we may get rid of them. If you were to count all the different faults, there would probably be millions upon millions of faults. The same could be said of the qualities of a buddha. We have to develop each and every quality that a buddha possesses, and if you were to count those, once again you would end up with millions upon millions of qualities that we have to develop. But our development of these good qualities and the abandonment of these faults doesn't happen like a bird pecking at individual seeds, picking up a grain at a time. If you were to debate you could say that in cultivating the mind of enlightenment, in cultivating the wisdom that realizes emptiness, you can achieve millions of good qualities all at the same time. But there are times when we sort of need to talk down to ourselves, to remind ourselves that 'hey! Look what needs to be done! All the qualities that need to be developed, all the faults that need to be abandoned.' So sometimes you can talk to yourself when you're really, really busy and think 'oh!! I better get moving! I better get started with these things!' So Geshe-la reckons that here we adopt this type of attitude to create that type of urgency. So that's the purpose. But Geshe-la says we do have grounds to debate with Lama Tsong Khapa, don't we?

If you were to think 'oh yeah! Just meditate on the mind of enlightenment, cultivate the wisdom realizing emptiness, then it's all going to happen so easily!' That type of thought can lead to laziness which then becomes an obstacle, so we're not allowed to think in that way. Spur yourself on by adopting the attitude appropriate to the situation.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*I will destroy the immeasurable
Faults of myself and others.
To destroy each fault
Will take an ocean of eons.*

*But if I cannot see in myself even a fraction
Of the effort needed to terminate a fault,
I am a source of measureless suffering.
Why does my heart not break?*

*I will accomplish numerous
Good qualities for myself and others.
To cultivate each good quality
Requires an ocean of eons,*

*But I have never conditioned myself
To even a mere fraction of a good quality.
Somehow I have obtained this life—
It is appalling to waste it.*

We really must think about how we can pass our lives without meaning, without any purpose. We must understand how up 'til now we haven't been able to accomplish significant purpose.

That marks the end of the section on the first power, the power of resolve. Here, resolve refers to aspiration, so develop that strong aspiration of 'I am going to achieve these good qualities in this life. I am going to work to develop these good qualities before this life is finished. I am going to work to develop the determination to be free, the mind of enlightenment and the correct view. I am not going to allow this life to go to waste but I am going to work to develop these things.' Develop a strong aspiration.

(2") Developing the power of steadfastness

Developing the power of steadfastness means that you bring to conclusion, without turning back, anything at which you make joyous effort.

This is referring mainly to the vows we might take. We talk about making this pledge or promise to the aspiring mind of enlightenment. We talk about how we develop a firm mind of resolve. The power of steadfastness refers mainly to stability, to being steadfast or firm with respect to our vows.

First, do not try to do everything; examine the situation carefully. If you see that you can do it, you engage in it; whereas if you cannot do it, you do not engage in it. You should not even start in the first place things you will do for a while and then discard.

This is referring mainly to vows, not to practicing the mind of enlightenment. Maybe you start to practice the mind of enlightenment then later you don't, in which case you've accumulated virtue in the process, so this is to be understood mainly in reference to vows.

The reason is that if you become habituated to giving up in the middle what you have committed yourself to do, then through this conditioning you will in other lives again abandon your commitment to the training, etc. Consequently, your sin will increase in that life, and in subsequent lives the suffering that is the effect of this sin will increase. Furthermore, you will not accomplish other virtues because you will be thinking of carrying out your earlier commitment; there will be an inferior result because you turned away from your earlier commitment; and your earlier commitment itself will not be fulfilled because you did not follow through. In sum, committing yourself to do something but leaving it unfinished is a hindrance to your accomplishment of other projects, and the conditioning also destabilizes your commitment to the vows you have taken.

With whatever vows you might take you should think 'will I be able to guard these?' If you conclude that 'I will be able to guard these,' then you ought to take those vows. If you think 'I don't know if I can guard them. I wonder if I can guard them?' then it is better not to take them in the first place, because vows are commitments. You're making the commitment, saying 'I am going to guard these vows.' If you don't have this commitment then the vow will not be generated properly. The vow taken

with a commitment 'I am going to guard these vows' is a pure one. Without that the vow will not be developed properly.

Those of you who have already taken vows – it's over! You've taken them! (laughs) There's no thinking about it now!!

Whether it's the vow of bodhisattva, mantra vow, vow of approaching virtue or vows of individual liberation, you've already taken them. You think 'I am going to guard the vows. I am going to guard these vows the best I can.'

For those who have yet to take the vows you must think about these things, so that when you do take the vows you take it with the commitment 'I am going to guard these.' Take the 24 hour mahayana precepts - you take them from morning until sunrise the next day. If you do not have the commitment 'I am going to guard these vows from now until tomorrow's sunrise,' then the vow will not be generated properly. Take the vows of individual liberation - whether they be of the ordained person, or the vows of approaching virtue - you take them from now for the rest of your life. So you must have the commitment 'I am going to guard this from now until I die.' If you do not have the commitment you will not develop the vow properly.

If you take the vows with the attitude 'well, if I can guard them I'll guard them. If I can't guard them, that's alright – I'll just do as I please. I can do whatever I want,' that is not at all appropriate. This is the important point. If you have that attitude, the vows will not be generated at all.

What's mentioned in the text are some of the effects that come from not guarding your vows properly? It says that *your sin will increase in that life, and in subsequent lives the suffering that is the effect of this sin will increase. Furthermore, you will not accomplish other virtues because you will be thinking of carrying out your earlier commitment;* and so on. There is the causally concordant effect also. If you take vows and then give them back, then this places a seed for the causally concordant effect that in the future you will not guard your vows for the full amount of time.

There is the possibility of offering back ones' vows. We must point this out, otherwise people are going to go around saying 'Geshe Tashi Tsering is saying you can't offer back your vows.' He's not saying that. What he's saying is that at the time of taking the vows, if you think 'oh, I'm going to take these vows, and if I can guard them, I'll guard them, and if I can't, then I'll just give them back,' you will not develop the vows properly.

When you're going to take vows, make a clear and definite commitment to guard them for the prescribed amount of time.

In this vein Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*First I examine the endeavor
And then undertake it or not.
If unable, it is best not to undertake it,
But once begun, I will not turn back.*

*Otherwise I will be conditioned to this starting and then stopping in other lives
And my sin and suffering will increase.
Also, other actions and their results
Will be poor and unaccomplished.*

Therefore, if you want to complete what you have committed yourself to do, cultivate three types of

pride. There are three types of pride you can cultivate to help yourself carry to completion what you've committed yourself to.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*You should have pride in three areas:
Action, ability, and afflictions.*

The first is pride about actions.

Generally there are many types of pride. There are many types of pride that we need. The pride that we do not need is a pride in which you are belittling or looking down upon others. This type of pride is an object to be abandoned, a type of pride that is considered to be an affliction.

Pride about action means that no matter who else may be your companion as you practice the path, you do not count on them but accomplish it yourself alone. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*"I alone shall do it."
This is pride about action.*

Not counting on others, not relying on others has to be understood in a very specific way. It's probably not talking about how you don't need to rely upon a teacher. It's not talking about how you don't need dharma companions, how you don't need to rely upon people to discuss things with. It's more that in terms of achieving liberation it's up to you alone. So it's like this saying that 'negativities cannot be washed away with water. The suffering of migrators cannot be wiped away with one's hands. A realization cannot be transferred with one's hands.' So it's this idea that achieving liberation is up to you and you alone. That's what it means to say 'do not count on others.'

Also Nagarjuna's Friendly Letter says:

*Liberation depends on oneself;
It never occurs through the help of others.*

The thought, "I alone shall achieve this without having any expectation of others," is similar to pride, so it is given the name "pride about action."

Next we have pride about ability.

Pride about ability means that you accomplish your own and others' welfare, thinking: "Since living beings are under the power of afflictions, they are unable to achieve even their own welfare, much less the welfare of others. I am able to accomplish the welfare of both myself and others." Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*The beings of this world, subject to the afflictions,
Cannot achieve their own welfare.
They are not as able as I am,
So I shall do it for them.*

We practice the mind of enlightenment and therefore we're committed to working for the sake of both oneself and others. So we have a commitment to continue to work for the sake of all sentient beings.

Furthermore, practice while thinking, "If these beings strive at lowly activities without interruption, why should I not perform the actions that will achieve the perfect effect?" Engaging in the Bodhisattva

Deeds says:

*If others perform lowly actions,
How can I be idle?*

We're able to work so hard to accomplish lowly and inferior mundane tasks. So when the work is done to achieve a great purpose, of course, all the more reason why we ought to work hard for it.

However, when you achieve these two prides [about action and ability], you should not do so with self-conceit, out of contempt for others. Here's the negative type of pride that Geshe-la was talking about where you disregard or look down upon others. Rather, regard others with compassion, and do not mix in any pride. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*I do not do it out of pride,
I should have no pride.*

This is the bad type of pride.

Thinking, "Others are not capable; I am able," again resembles pride, so it is labelled "pride." Lama Tsong Khapa's saying that these instances are just called pride.

Pride about afflictions means that with contempt for the afflictions on all occasions, you think, "I shall be victorious over these; they shall never defeat me." It means being steadfast after you have generated the courageous thought to destroy the incompatible factors. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*I shall conquer all;
Nothing shall defeat me.
I, a child of the Victorious Lion,
Shall continue to have this pride.*

A child of the Victorious Lion is referring to a bodhisattva.

Dharma is the actual refuge, buddhas and bodhisattvas are the beings who reveal the refuge and help us to accomplish it. They themselves actually can't give us refuge.

If you apply the aforementioned three prides, even great incompatible factors cannot block you, so you must generate these three kinds of pride. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*Against one who strives with pride
Even great obstacles will be in trouble.*

*So with a steadfast mind
I will overcome my shortcomings.*

Otherwise, if practitioners are defeated by their shortcomings, their desire to conquer the afflictions of the three realms will be an embarrassment among the learned. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*If I am defeated by shortcomings,
My desire to conquer the three realms is a joke.*

The English translation reads "defeated by shortcomings" but it's actually "defeated by their downfalls or lapses." So a defeat refers to a case in which a vow has completely collapsed or completely

degenerated, it's lost. Only the fully ordained have defeats, the idea here being that it's through a lapse or a downfall one is defeated. With the vows of approaching virtue you have the three roots and so forth, so that through a downfall or a lapse of one of these four roots then you lose the vow, it completely degenerates.

My desire to conquer the three realms is a joke.

Here the three realms refer to desire realm, form realm and formless realm.

It is called "pride about afflictions" because you have contempt for the afflictions and then want to destroy them. This also is just called pride.

Some commentators to Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds explain this pride about afflictions differently, but I think the above explanation accords with the text.

Thus, stop expecting something from others and put on the armor of doing it alone.

This refers to stopping the expectation that buddhas and so forth are going to simply provide refuge for you. People sometimes think for instance, when going for refuge that you'll receive blessings and your study will be taken care of, that you can sit around and wait to receive the blessings and the blessings will then give you the refuge you seek. This is not the case. Rather, come to a firm determination that we must do something ourselves, we must do it alone. Even blessings require something from us. There are limitless buddhas, and those limitless buddhas are capable of bestowing blessings so then it would be alright for them to just bless all beings, but that isn't what happens is it? It would seem that blessings are something that comes about after we ourselves have done something. It wouldn't seem the case that you could just sit there without doing a single thing and you just get blessings.

Generally blessings are said to bring about a transformation. Blessings refer to a change that takes place. So you could go to a holy place for instance, and your mind experiences a change, you develop positive states of mind, you really receive a blessing. The point is here that the mind must undergo some change, some transformation. Real blessings come from Lam Rim Chen Mo. Is that not the case? Geshe-la's amazed.

Persons of small capacity, persons of medium capacity, karma and its effect. There are sections on all different things we talk about on a regular basis. We could just open the book up and read through it and so many of our questions are answered. Just by reading this book alone so many issues are addressed.

That is, be confident and think, "Unlike me, others cannot do it. I can do it." When you practice with this perspective, you are sure that you will defeat the afflictions — that they will never defeat you — and you consider that it would be a mistake to abandon your commitment after a while. Train yourself until your mind is steadfast in the desire to finish everything to which you have committed yourself after you have carefully examined whether you can do it.

(3") Developing the power of joy

You develop the power of joy after the power of aspiration, an intense yearning, produces a joyous perseverance not previously present, and you have achieved the power of steadfastness (also called the power of pride) which causes the perseverance that has already developed to be irreversible. The power of joy means that when you first engage in an activity, you do it joyfully, and once you have engaged, you have a sense of being insatiable in that you do not want to discontinue the activity. With respect to how you develop this sense of insatiability, Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*Like those who want the pleasure that results from play,
Bodhisattvas are passionate
About any activity they have to do.
Insatiable, they take joy in their work.*

So strive with an attitude like that of children who engage in play without being satiated. That is, you must be just as unsatiated by what causes pleasurable results as you are unsatiated by those results. For, if ordinary persons strive even when they are uncertain whether they will obtain a pleasant result, what need is there to speak about activities which are certain to bear pleasurable results?

Business people work to make a profit, farmers plant a field to grow a crop but neither are completely sure they are going to get what they seek. A farmer plants his seeds assuming he is going to harvest something but there's no certainty to that. A business person engages in their trade assuming that they're going to make a profit but they're not sure that those results or fruits are going to happen because so many different conditions need to be present in order to gain the profit, to get that harvest. But with positive karma, its effect is happiness, and there's absolutely no doubt as to whether or not that pleasant effect comes from having performed positive karmas. So why can we not work hard when our results are certain? These people are working hard when the results are uncertain.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*Even though they work for the sake of happiness,
It is uncertain whether happiness will come.
But as for those whose work itself is happiness,
How can they be happy unless they work?*

This is also the reason why being satiated is wrong. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*If I am never satiated by sensual desires,
Which are like honey on a razor's edge,
How could I be satiated with merit,
Whose fruition is happiness and peace?*

Develop an attitude of being insatiable, thinking, "Indulging in sensual pleasures is like licking honey off the sharp blade of a razor; it is the source of a little sweetness, but it slices up the tongue. If I cannot get enough of this experience, which gives me great suffering for the sake of just a slight, temporary pleasure, what sense could there be in feeling that I have had enough of the collections of merit and sublime wisdom, which give flawless, infinite happiness, both immediate and long-term?"

The author is talking about the dangers of becoming attached to small contaminated pleasures. You can have a razor and there might be a little honey on it. If you want to taste the sweetness of the honey you lick the razor and there's a nice taste, it's sweet and there's a little bit of pleasure, but you also cut your tongue. The main point is that we shouldn't be attached to contaminated pleasures and should shy away from them, do what you can to reduce them.

If I cannot get enough of this experience which gives me great suffering for the sake of just a slight temporary pleasure, what sense could there be in feeling that I have had enough of the collections of merit and sublime wisdom which give flawless infinite happiness, both immediate and long term? So this is how we develop the attitude of being insatiable.

Geshela received this teaching from his own teacher the former abbot of Sera Je monastery a long time ago – who Geshe-la refers respectfully to as the precious former abbot. He has also received this

teaching from His Holiness' teacher Ling Rinpoche and then later received this teaching from His Holiness the Dalai Lama himself so in reading out this text to us it also functions as an oral transmission. This is why Geshela would like to read through the entire text so that here attending this BSP is not just study but we also get the oral transmission of the Lam Rim Chen Mo.

Geshela says that although he has no power himself, you would think that through having received this through these victorious Vajradharas – His Holiness the Dalai Lama, the tutor Ling Rinpoche and Geshela's precious teacher – that there would be some potency or power in that, that comes from them. So please hope that you receive the blessings.

Thus, in order to bring to completion the virtuous activities in which you have engaged, enter them as a sun-scorched elephant enters a pleasing lotus pond at noon. Train in this attitude until you produce it. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*Thus, in order to finish the work,
I shall enter into it just as
An elephant, scorched by the midday sun,
Comes upon a pond and plunges in.*

(4") The power of relinquishment (or setting aside)

If you become physically or mentally fatigued from your perseverance, you must rest for a while. Otherwise, you will become exhausted and very disheartened, thereby later preventing your joyous perseverance. Immediately after you have rested, persevere again, and when you have completely finished your earlier activity, do not let this satisfy you. You must joyously persevere at other, higher activities.

Generally our joyous effort should be balanced and even. If you really put a whole lot into joyous effort at first then you might become fatigued and stop. So rather than do that, we want our joyous effort to be somewhat easygoing, it should be relaxed. If you work to have a relaxed and long term joyous effort and you still get fatigued, then rest and take a break. Then once you've rested, return to the activity.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*When my strength declines,
I shall leave the task so I can do it later.
When it is really done, I shall set it aside,
Seeking the next task and the next.*

The next task is important, because if you consider each earlier good quality sufficient, this will be a big obstacle to the attainment of many higher attributes.

If your joyous effort is coming along well then you look towards the next quality that you can try to develop and move on to work on that one. If you think 'oh OK I've got this good quality that ought to be enough' then that's going to be a big obstacle to developing later and higher qualities.

The above presentation shows how to joyously persevere. Do not overexert yourself. You must avoid both being overly intense and being overly relaxed, so make your effort continuous like a river. The glorious Matrceta's One Hundred Fifty Verses of Praise (Sata-pancasatka) states:

In order to make yourself more exalted

*You never overexerted or relaxed too much.
Thus your good qualities are indistinguishable
By former and later phases.*

Bo-do-wa also said:

The scouts of Se-mo-dru-wa (Se-mo-dru-ba), for instance, never get there. But the scouts of Chang-wa (Byang-ba) take their time at the start and pursue the robbers until they reach them. Likewise, practice at a measured pace that you can sustain. For example, a louse proceeds at a modest pace but never stops, so it soon arrives; whereas a flea takes great successive leaps and then stops, so it never gets there.

Kids tell stories about a louse and a flea. The flea is very confident about his ability to jump so he makes a big jump and then he just sits there. The louse makes slow progress – he just keeps going and going and going. The louse arrives at the place he needs to go before the flea does.

The next section reads:

(c'') Based on the elimination of unfavorable conditions and the accumulation of favorable conditions, being intent on joyously persevering

After you have thus identified the three conditions unfavorable to joyous perseverance, you attend to their remedies. You generate three powers: the power of aspiration which is the favorable condition for weakening those as-yet unweakened unfavorable conditions, the power of steadfastness which is the cause of not turning back once you have started, and the power of joy which never wants to discontinue the activity once you have engaged in it. Through the power of relinquishment you become adept at how to joyously persevere. At this point you must develop the power of being intent on joyous perseverance, so I will explain this.

This third section gives somewhat of a summary. Based on elimination of unfavourable conditions and the accumulation of favourable conditions then we're intent on joyously persevering. Before this section we have the section where we discuss the different powers – the power of resolve, the power of steadfastness, the power of joy and the power of relinquishment.

We'll leave it there for today. Are there any other doubts that you wanted to address?

Student: How can someone develop the vows of mantra if they don't know what they are before they take them?

Geshela: With the vows of mantra and the vows of individual liberation you must think carefully about whether you are able to guard them before you take them. But you're not allowed to receive commentaries on those vows before you receive an empowerment or before you actually take the vows.

With the bodhisattva vow, which has associated with it the 18 root downfalls and the 46 secondary offences, you can receive explanations of them before you take the vows.

With the vows of the ordained, the vows of individual liberation, you make a pledge to guard them from now until you die – for the rest of your life. So you must go into it having made the decision that I'm going to guard these for the rest of my life. That's most important.

If you really make an effort to guard them then there's none in there that you cannot guard. Its not like there are some included within these vows that you have to set aside as something you have to aspire to,

that's not the case.

With the mantra vows you are dealing with something much more extensive and there's certainly things in there that you might not be directly able to accomplish. So when you take the vow of mantra you go with the thought 'I'm going to guard what I can,' and it might be that some of these different vows or downfalls are difficult to guard against, given the type of object it is or due to the lack of one's own capacity or ability or so forth. You aspire to be able to guard them. You shouldn't go into it thinking I might not be able to guard it at all, but rather with the recognition that there might be some smaller or minor things involved in these vows that I'm not able to guard against. In fact there are measures that are taught to help a person in that situation. One is encouraged to do what is known as the self-entry practice which many people call self-initiation, or these confession and purification practices in the presence of a drawn mandala, and so forth. So there are different things that one can do when there things that one cannot guard against in relation to the vows.

It is important that you make a decision that I'm going to guard these vows and that I am going to follow whatever discipline is outlined in these vows. If you have doubts about whether you're going to be able to guard them or not then it acts as an obstacle to the development of the vows. So you must go in there with that decision that I'm going to guard the vows. Its like Lama Tsong Khapa says here.

Have you taken the vows? You've taken the vows haven't you? You've received Kalachakra haven't you? So the time for asking questions is over.

[Interpreter: I said to Geshela that your question was 'if you don't know what the vows are, how can you develop them?' and I said the presumption it seems is that 'how do you develop them if you don't know how many there are and what each of them is?']

Geshela said you don't have to know how many there are and what the ways to break vows are in order to develop it. It's not required.

Is that what you were asking? Like with the bodhisattva vows – if you don't know what the 18 root downfalls are how could you develop the bodhisattva vow?

You don't have to know what they are in order to develop the vow. In the process of the ceremony an indication is given and the master communicates something and at that point you must listen and as that indication is given the vows are born within you.

Geshela was saying that with a vow you decide that 'I'm going to take this vow, I'm going to guard this vow.' In doing so you're taking or making a vow. You have that intention that desires to take the vow, so you've taken the vow. Then having taken that you must know the different enumerations related to that vow – how many there are, what it takes to break it and so forth.

We must understand the way in which you guard vows. In taking a vow its not like we're told that you cannot violate this in any way. It's not what is said. If we do violate the vow in some way, then we try to confess and purify it immediately. So we must understand the way to confess and purify as explained by the precious lord Lama Tsong Khapa here. We need to act like this. This is very important. That's why around here from time to time we'll do the self entry practice or self initiation. This is very important.

Student: With the two types of pride: pride in action and pride in ability, they seem contradictory. With pride in action you say "I'm not going to rely on anyone, I'm going to do it alone" but then with pride in ability you say "Others can't do it, I'm going to do it - the implication is I'm going to do it for them, for their sake". So they seem to be in contradiction.

Geshela: The conflict one might see with the two types of pride is based on the thought that, with for instance the pride of action, another person cannot achieve our welfare. But there are aspects of our welfare that others can achieve, and aspects of our welfare that others cannot achieve. So the first thing we must address in this question is this, that there are aspects of our welfare that another person can achieve. When you talk about accomplishments this is something different - like we must develop within our continuum the determination to be free, the mind of enlightenment, the correct view. Another person cannot develop the determination to be free, the mind of enlightenment in our continuum for us can they? That is something that we ourselves must accomplish. Does that make sense - aspects of our welfare that others can achieve and aspects that others cannot achieve? We must achieve our own path, another person cannot achieve our path for us can they? It's not as if buddhas and bodhisattvas could bless us so that we develop a path without needing to meditate and accomplish it. There's no such thing as achieving a path without meditating because the buddhas and bodhisattvas blessed you to develop it, which addresses the point about the first type of pride, pride about action. You need to do it yourself.

With the second, pride about ability, we work to try and develop the mind of enlightenment within our continuum and make a pledge that we are going to work for the welfare of sentient beings. We practice the mind of enlightenment, so we try to reduce our self-cherishing and increase our cherishing of others so that we can accomplish the welfare of both self and others. In doing so we can achieve their welfare to a certain degree. It's actually our pledge to do that. Whereas if a person doesn't develop these things and they're controlled by their self cherishing without cherishing others, then not only are they unable to achieve the welfare of others, they're not even able to achieve their own welfare very well. Does that make sense, does that address your question?

Student: It's more about an attitude achieving the highest welfare for them, rather than being able to achieve the highest welfare?

Geshela: Yes, it is about an attitude. Now look at the title of the second type of pride, pride about ability, and think about how we cultivate loving kindness and compassion. When we cultivate loving kindness and compassion we think about all sentient beings, and we start by developing equanimity and then go on to reflect how they have all been our mothers at one point. So we think of ourselves as being the child of all these mother sentient beings who want to be happy but do not know how to achieve it, do not want to suffer but do not know how to abandon the causes of suffering due to their ignorance and lack of understanding. So we think how can these beings, controlled by ignorance as they are, achieve their own welfare, how can they achieve their own good, and that I as their child must work to achieve, to accomplish their welfare. I must work to accomplish their welfare because I know how to abandon the causes of suffering, I know how to achieve the causes of happiness and therefore I must do it on their behalf. So you must think the time for me to work for sentient beings has come.

Here we're talking about the pride of ability and we're talking about how we are practicing the mind of enlightenment, so in practicing the mind of enlightenment we develop the ability to accomplish the welfare of others. The majority of sentient beings are controlled by disturbing emotions so they cannot achieve the highest aims, the highest welfare - buddhahood and liberation. They don't have the ability to achieve that at the present moment. I have the ability, so I must work to achieve these paths of liberation for their sake. I must work to achieve the paths of liberation, for their welfare.

Does this clear away the doubt? Ok, honestly speaking we know how to achieve our own welfare, we know how to achieve the welfare of others. Since we know how to achieve their welfare we must try to achieve it. If we know how to achieve their welfare but do not achieve their welfare we're being controlled by laziness. We need to apply the remedy for laziness. We're not saying that I'm the only one that knows how to achieve their welfare, are we?

From time to time we need to talk down to ourselves to spur us on to virtuous activity and from time to time we need to praise ourselves, uplift ourselves to spur us on to virtuous activity. Lama Tsong Khapa is saying that sometimes we need to put ourselves down, sometimes we need to lift ourselves up, according to context and need. Geshela thinks that this is the case and he would encourage us to once again read the text, continue to think about it and if there are further doubts then we can discuss them later.

We'll leave it there.

Buddhist Studies Programme

Subject: Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3

Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering

Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa

Number of the teaching: 11

Date of the teaching: 4th November 2004

Geshe-la meant to bring down the Tibetan for ‘*Illuminating the Three-fold Path*’. He forgot so he apologises but it is important that we recall the kindness of these masters. Buddha Shakyamuni did indeed teach the 84,000 bundles of doctrine, of dharma, as antidotes to these different classes of disturbing emotions yet these are very difficult to understand and difficult to apply. Yet the masters mentioned in this text really analysed the Buddha’s teachings and clarified them; arranging them in their respective works, so that the readiness with which we can consult their works and look into the Buddha’s texts is due to the kindness and hard work of these past masters of Nalanda. It’s very important that we recall their kindness.

Let’s pick up where we left off yesterday - it’s page 216 of the English translation. Towards the bottom of the page it reads:

As to how you are to act when you joyously persevere at eliminating what is to be eliminated, Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

Just above that there’s quite a nice summary. It might be a nice lead-in to the section we’ll cover today by reading over that summary that Lama Tsong Khapa has written for us. It says, about half-way down, after the heading:

After you have thus identified the three conditions unfavorable to joyous perseverance, you attend to their remedies.

What are the three conditions unfavourable to joyous effort?

Students: Laziness of procrastination, attachment to ignoble activities, and discouragement

Geshe-la: Ok! Excellent!!

These come from an earlier section of the outline, don’t they! It says, under ‘*the method for developing joyous effort*’ you’ve got; ‘*eliminating unfavourable conditions that prevent joyous effort*’. In there, there’s a section on identifying the factors that are incompatible with joyous effort. This is where it comes from, isn’t it!

Please read along in the text:

You generate three powers: the power of aspiration which is the favourable condition for weakening those as-yet unweakened unfavorable conditions,

It mentions the power of resolve, which was mentioned in the section just before this one; ‘gathering the forces of the favourable conditions’.

In the section on gathering the favourable conditions, or the forces of the favourable conditions, there are four points, aren’t there.

❖ The power of resolve,

- ❖ The power of steadfastness,
- ❖ The power of joy, and
- ❖ The power of relinquishment, or 'setting aside' (*dor ba*)

Three types of laziness. Or laziness and the three things that are unfavourable conditions, are counterproductive to joyous effort. So this power of, as Lama Tsong Khapa calls it, 'aspiration'.. 'is a favourable condition for weakening those as-yet unweakened unfavourable conditions'.

...the power of steadfastness which is the cause of not turning back once you have started,

Then, once we have engaged in something, it's important that we do not go back upon it. So that we need to be irreversible, which is where the power of steadfastness comes in to it. The power of steadfastness, or being firm or stable.

.....and the power of joy which never wants to discontinue the activity once you have engaged in it.

Once more, having engaged in something, we do not want to lose interest in it but rather we want to always continue in the activity. So the power of joy helps so that we never want to discontinue the activity once we have engaged in it.

Understand? There's a difference between these two. Is the difference apparent in English? If I were to just look at the Tibetan - Geshe-la reads it off it says;

- ❖ 'The power of steadfastness is a cause for becoming irreversible in what you've engaged in'.

And then

- ❖ 'The power of joy creates this dislike of discontinuing something once you've engaged in an activity'.

Can you see a difference between these two?

There's a difference, isn't there!

Once you've engaged in a thing, be it study or something else, you might fall prey to laziness and due to being controlled by laziness, you go back on what you've done - That's the first point. Steadfastness helps us not to go back - it makes us irreversible. And then, once you engage in an activity like study, for instance, you might not fall prey to laziness but you think 'Oh! Ok, I'm not going to do this anymore!' 'I'm not going to do it anymore!' - that is necessarily falling prey to laziness, right, but you are discontinuing the activity that you're doing. So can you see the difference between the two? To see the difference we have to focus in on this reversing or going back on what you've done, and discontinuing what you've done.

Understand? Is this clear? Going back on what you've done through laziness, and discontinuing what you're doing because you decide you're not going to do it anymore.

We must distinguish between these two because we have to know how to utilize the power of steadfastness, how to use the power of joy, and if we don't know how to distinguish between these two, that would be difficult. It leads to other different circumstances or situations.

Through the power of relinquishment you become adept at how to joyously persevere

The power of relinquishment; the fourth power: 'you become adept at how to joyously persevere'.

At this point you must develop the power of being intent on joyous perseverance, so I will explain this.

Once you have become knowledgeable about how to make and apply joyous effort, then you must develop the power of being intent on joyous effort, so I will explain this. Once you gain that knowledge, then you become 'intent on joyous effort' - you become quite eager to apply it.

The Precious Lord has summarized some of the earlier points to demonstrate how we must think about these, and how they are used. He's demonstrating how some of the later points apply to the earlier points. Can you see that? A short summary.

Geshe-la was saying to us earlier in the course that are many pages to this text and we need to try and draw out the real essential bits from this text so that we become certain of those essential parts in our mind. Geshe-la did speak about the importance of drawing out the essential bits and becoming certain about those.

Furthermore, joyous effort is one of the most important factors. Whatever virtue you apply yourself to, the component of joyous effort is very important.

As to how you are to act when you joyously persevere at eliminating what is to be eliminated, Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

Shantideva gives us a really nice analogy that clearly illustrates the idea here. He says:

*As a seasoned warrior approaches
A sword-fight with an enemy,
I shall parry the blows of the afflictions
And strongly strike the afflictions, my enemies.*

Quite nice, isn't it?

When a seasoned or skilled and proficient warrior is fighting with an enemy, he's not only thinking about striking a blow to the other person; trying to kill or stab that person. He's also thinking about how to avoid being struck by the enemy. So the skilled warrior's approach to this type of fight is a combination of trying to land a blow on the enemy, and avoid having the enemy strike himself. So this is a good analogy about how we need to approach our fight with the disturbing emotions - the afflictions.

Since we must fight the enemy of disturbing emotions, the precious lord Lama Tsong Khapa is giving us a warning saying; 'Hey! When you're fighting with one disturbing emotion, another disturbing emotion might try to attack you. We must be cautious and take care.

For example, when seasoned warriors—the adepts who are accustomed to the activity of fighting battles—enter into a sword fight, etc., with their enemy, they do not put value only on destroying their opponent. Rather, they must accomplish two things—skilfully avoiding the blows of weapons directed at them and destroying their opponent. Likewise, when practitioners battle their afflictions, they must persevere as they become proficient in two things—taking defensive precautions and thus avoiding a wound to their mind, and, on the offensive, destroying the afflictions by applying their remedies. For, otherwise, while they may use the remedy to stop the activity of one portion of the afflictions, they are either robbed of some aspect of virtue by other afflictions, or else they develop a great fault in their mind so that the harm of the afflictions and the creation of virtue are equal, in which case it will be hard to make further progress in the virtuous practice of applying the remedy.

Lama Tsong Khapa gives us an example of this:

To cite an example, some people may think that knowledge is most important for practicing the teaching and make knowledge alone crucial. When they then inquire into the teachings, they dispel by means of study the confusion of ignorance, but meanwhile—because they were not cautious about the other afflictions—their mind-stream is utterly ruined by the stain of wrong behaviour.

This really happens, doesn't it!

When a person only studies, thinking knowledge is so important and they only study, all sorts of different faults can occur. They might end up being quite knowledgeable at the end; through their study they know a lot but they might become quite proud - they've got a lot of pride. That happens, yes? You study so much, you learn a lot and you become proud. You look at others, you see what they're learning and you become envious or jealous of them. That also happens, doesn't it? Or maybe through the movement of the subtle winds they become quite angry. They're all these dangers, aren't there! pride, envy, becoming angry through disturbances of wind, and so forth - for someone who is only focused on study.

Study is important of course. Knowledge is important as Lama Tsong Khapa says again and again. He talks about how we need the assistance of knowledge. Wisdom is important, we need the assistance of wisdom, yet when we're studying, we should be aware of whether we're falling prey to other afflictions or disturbing emotions.

So be skilful, or intelligent about it. That's what we're being advised, which is actually quite similar to the warrior, the swordsman.

Some people have another idea:

Other people may think that disciplining the mind is much more important than knowledge and thus emphasize meditation.

'Disciplining the mind' or 'subduing the mind' is quite important yet these people think that disciplining the mind is much more important than knowledge and thus emphasize meditation.

....Casting away caution about the enemy, confusion, they neither study nor learn the teachings, so they become greatly confused about engaging in what is to be adopted and rejecting what is to be cast aside under the rules of the vows they have taken and are thus continually overcome by infractions [or downfalls].

Understand? For instance, we practise the mind of enlightenment. Even if you only practise the aspiring mind of enlightenment, there are still many things that you have to adopt in light of that, and discard in light of that. So how many different things do we need to adopt and discard just the aspiring mind of enlightenment? It's important to know these, isn't it!

If you go on to practise the engaging mind of enlightenment, you take vows. With the engaging mind you take the vow of a bodhisattva, and there are things you must guard against to protect that vow. So you must know the things you're meant to guard against, and you must know the way to guard against those things. If you don't, then you might find yourself doing things which actually violate that vow but you don't realise it, you don't know it. So you must know these things there to.

They say that 'not knowing' is the entrance to many faults - or the door through which many faults arise.

It's like if you go into an area where there are many thieves, if you don't know who the thieves are then

you're going to end up getting a lot of things stolen off you, aren't you!

The 'enemy of confusion'; it's the root of suffering, it's the root of cyclic existence. It's very important that we try to destroy this enemy of confusion. The more we can reduce confusion, then the happier we will be in this life and the greater the benefits for the future as well.

We need to integrate these two. Don't divorce the one from the other. Integrate these two; knowledge and meditation. Study and meditating, knowledge and taming the mind.

We must have knowledge so that we understand things but then we must use that knowledge to discipline or tame our minds. Our knowledge must be a method that we use to tame our minds. Integrating the two.

Study. Reflection. Meditation. We talk about these three; study, reflection and meditation. It's important that these are not divorced from one another.

If one is not present, then things will not turn out well. We need all three. Understand?

If in battle your sword were to fall from your hand, you would without hesitation immediately retrieve it out of fear for your life. Likewise, when you battle the afflictions and lose the weapon of mindfulness (which does not forget the subjective and objective aspects of engaging in what is to be adopted and rejecting what is to be cast aside), you must immediately reapply mindfulness out of fear of falling into miserable realms.

We must not lose mindfulness but continually cultivate it - continually rely upon it. The fundamental source for this analogy is:

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*If you drop your sword in battle,
Out of fear, you quickly pick it up.
Likewise, if I lose my weapon of mindfulness,
In fear of hell, I quickly retrieve it.*

It's repeating the paragraph above, isn't it! It carries the same meaning.

In brief, mindfulness is important.

The protector Nagarjuna [in his Friendly Letter] also taught the great importance of mindfulness:

*O lord, the Sugata declared mindfulness of the body
To be the one path to follow.
Hold fast to it and guard it.
When mindfulness declines, all virtues perish.*

Furthermore, regarding the object to which mindfulness attends, mindfulness apprehends an object that wisdom has fully discerned; mindfulness does not distinguish its object on its own.

Which is accurate, isn't it?

If someone tells you 'Don't forget!', well what do you do if you don't know it. What if you don't know what you're not meant to forget? There's nothing to forget if you don't know it, right? So clearly, for

there to be mindfulness, there must be wisdom.

Question: What does wisdom discern?

Reply: In general wisdom discerns everything to be adopted and everything to be cast aside as explained in scripture; in particular, it discerns what is to be adopted and what is to be cast aside according to the vows that you have taken. Therefore, once you apply mindfulness and vigilance to these, you will complete your practice; you will not be successful by just applying mindfulness and vigilance within the narrow confines of attention to an object of meditation.

Is that clear? The precious lord is giving us some really clear advice here!

It says here that mindfulness is important, doesn't it?

It also says that wisdom is important, doesn't it?

It says that mindfulness and wisdom support one another and that they're both important. Rather, that they both assist one another and that they're both important.

What are these then applied to? What are they relevant to? Lama Tsong Khapa says: '*In general wisdom discerns everything to be adopted and everything to be cast aside as explained in scripture; in particular, it discerns what is to be adopted and what is to be cast aside according to the vows that you have taken*'.

And then it continues and it says: '*Therefore, once you apply mindfulness and vigilance to these, you will complete your practice*,'

So that's how it is! It says then: '*you will not be successful by just applying mindfulness and vigilance within the narrow confines of attention to an object of meditation*'.

We place great importance on focusing single-pointedly upon an object, don't we. That is important in that it helps to stop distraction, and since stopping distraction is quite important, then having the mind remain one-pointedly upon an object is important. But, we don't want to emphasize that to the exclusion of developing wisdom and mindfulness that understands what is to be adopted and what is to be engaged. So if we do not develop that wisdom and mindfulness about what is to be adopted and what is to be engaged and apply it, then getting the mind to abide one-pointedly on an object is not really that great. As Geshe-la often says, it would be like simply one-pointedly dwelling on 'may all sentient beings be free of suffering', 'may all sentient beings be happy', 'may I achieve buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings'. Not much comes of just one-pointedly doing that. You don't end up understanding a great deal if that's all you're doing.

It's clear to us that you don't develop that much in following that approach. It's a great state of mind, but there's not a lot of development.

If we were to gain an understanding of how to cultivate loving kindness as Lama Tsong Khapa explains, and we would learn about the causes for developing loving kindness, and the methods that we can use in cultivating that, and then to take that knowledge and begin to cultivate that in meditation - a good type of loving kindness is bound to arise.

The mind that thinks 'may all sentient beings be free of suffering'; we can't say that that's not compassion. We wouldn't dare say that's not compassion. You can acknowledge that it's compassion and at the same time acknowledge that if that's all you do, you're not going to develop it very much.

It's important that we be mindful, and that we have knowledge to back that up. We want study, reflection, and meditation that are integrated, not divorced from one another.

Picking up again from the text:

What is more, when warriors are in a battle, they strive from the beginning not to lose their sword; when by chance they do drop it, they pick it up immediately. These two actions rest on a fear of being killed that is not mere words. Likewise, those who cultivate the path are afraid to lose the mindfulness that does not forget what is to be adopted and what eliminated; even if they do lose it, they immediately reapply it.

This clear!

These two actions are based on the development in their minds of a real terror of falling into miserable realms as a result of the pollution of infractions and faults that occur when mindfulness lapses.

Often most people do not want to think about the miserable realms. And together with that is this thought that fear is not necessary. They think 'we don't need to have fear because if you're afraid, then you can suffer and we don't want to go through that suffering. So we don't want to think about the miserable realms which creates the fear, and then leads to suffering'. We then begin to say that 'Oh, you don't need the fear of miserable realms'. There is this idea, isn't there?

Actually, Lama Tsong Khapa gives us a good parallel just a few pages prior to this. He talks about not feeling daunted by the prospect of achieving enlightenment is not a good sign. Similarly, not being afraid of the miserable realms is not a good sign. In fact, fear of taking rebirth in the miserable realms is probably a sign that you won't take rebirth there, whereas not being afraid of the miserable realms is probably a sign that you will.

In fact this question arose some time back when someone approached Geshe-la quite a long time ago and said; 'look, I've been reading through the Lam-rim and the stages of the path. I've been reading through the stages of the path shared with a person of small capacity and reading through the different texts, and I came upon this section on contemplating the sufferings of the lower realms, and I thought about these miserable realms, and I got scared and it wasn't very pleasant'. He was a little bit distressed by this and Geshe-la said; 'Hey look! That's great because it's a sign that you won't be reborn there', and Geshe-la explained to him why it's good. It's because if you're scared of taking rebirth in the miserable realms then you'll have a very strong desire not to be reborn there. So that later, when you're dying, that strong desire not to be reborn there is going to arise after all, some craving arises and the type of craving that arises leads us to the particular rebirth that we end up taking. So he's not going to develop the type of craving towards the miserable realms, so it's a sign that he won't be reborn there. Geshe-la then said that if he's scared then he's likely to develop a virtuous state of mind; looking for refuge, and looking for protection from that. So Geshe-la said 'Look, if at that time you were to make aspirational prayers out of your fear from taking rebirth in the lower realms, then it would turn out good. Geshe-la said that was a good sign that he was scared, even if it was unpleasant.

Actually, fear of the lower realms is a good sign, because if we're scared of something then we'll be cautious about it - we'll take care and try and avoid it. If we're not scared, then we won't pay it much attention, and you find yourself all of a sudden, falling into a miserable realm rebirth.

Sometime back, Zopa Rinpoche was teaching on the sufferings of the hell realms here. He talked quite extensively on the suffering of the hell realms. People were saying in fact he talked for two straight days on the sufferings of the hell realms. And Geshe-la reckons it was at that time that this gentleman started to feel afraid of the hell realms. Of course Rinpoche, in teaching, doesn't emphasize what's

going to go down well with people - what they find appealing, necessarily, but is thinking solely of what's going to benefit them. Rinpoche's emphasis in his teaching is not on presenting something that's palatable, but rather something that's beneficial. Really amazing, Zopa Rinpoche! So it's probably in this context that he became afraid.

Go to the beach with Rinpoche and you'll see. Some time ago Rinpoche said to Geshe-la; 'Oh, let's go to the beach tomorrow', and Geshe-la reckons; 'Oh yes, great! We'll go for a little bit of a wander around, have a good time, you know'. No! go to the beach with Rinpoche, you don't get a moment to sit down and just enjoy yourself. It was Geshe-la, Rinpoche, Yangdzom, Yangchen, and a lay person who was driving, so they got to the ocean and Geshe-la was expecting to sit down and relax; do whatever and have a good time, and Rinpoche gets two buckets, fills them up with water, says a bunch of mantras, you blow them into the water, you turn it back, fill it up with water, say a bunch of mantras, blow them into the water, throw it back, you fill up the bucket with water, say a bunch of mantras, blow it into there, and throw it back. Geshe-la was anticipating a day; a nice pleasant day, sitting on the beach, relaxing. No, not with Rinpoche. Geshe-la ended up a bit tired at the end of that.

Quite a lama!! Thinking of nothing but virtue.

Once again, feeling fear upon reflection about the sufferings of the miserable realms is a good sign. Not feeling that fear is not a good sign.

This, in turn, depends on having made karma and its effects central to their practice and then sustaining that approach. Those who fail to develop the awareness that these points are profound instructions sever the root of the good qualities ensuing from the practice that delights the learned, the sacred foundation of the path.

Another mention of karma and its effects, you'll notice.

Karma and its effects are very important. We should be thinking about it continually. It is like the root of all else; all of the practice. After all, the effect of negativities is suffering, the effect of virtue is happiness. So we must work to gain an understanding of karma and its effects. We must have knowledge of this point.

Question: Well, why is it necessary to look with fear upon even minor misbehaviour, and not let it continue but immediately stop it?

Reply: Take the example of a poisoned arrow that makes a tiny surface wound. Before long, the poison from this wound will spread throughout the entire body. You must operate on the wound and remove the poison. Similarly, even when wrong behaviour does not make anything more than a small wound in the mind, if you ignore it, it will quickly pervade your mind so that it becomes large. Therefore, from the start you must prevent wrongdoing before it takes place and, if it does happen, you must discontinue it immediately. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*Just as poison spreads throughout the body,
Carried by the blood,
So a fault pervades the mind
If it finds an opportunity.*

Question: Well, how do those who want victory over the afflictions apply mindfulness and vigilance?

Reply: You must concentrate, just as Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*A practitioner must be as concentrated
As someone carrying a pot full of mustard oil
Who is fearful when a swordsman before him
Threatens to kill him if he spills a drop.*

Understand this from the scriptural statement with respect to the border region in the story of Katyayana.

The point here is that you must concentrate; be alert.

Geshe-la was asking how this Tibetan word *drim* (*bsgims*) is translated into English. It's translated here as 'concentrate' but it carries the connotation of 'alertness'. It's very important that we are alert. Particularly in meditation, if you become too relaxed then you're not very alert and you lose that quality of sharpness, or intensity. So you need to be 'alert'.

If your mind is too relaxed when you meditate, then you're likely to fall prey to subtle laxity. So that's why you need to be alert, but if you fall prey to subtle laxity and then become used to that, then whenever you meditate, you'll always be in this state of subtle laxity. So we must avoid developing the habit of meditating in subtle laxity.

Whether we're practising analytical meditation, or placement, stabilizing meditation, it's important that we're alert when doing so. As it says here, 'concentrate', but the point is to be alert and if in doing so you become too tired, then apply the power of relinquishment or 'setting aside'. It mentions that when you get fatigued, stop for a while. So then if through exerting yourself, you get tired, then apply that power. Take a rest.

While you are concentrating, if in general you should behave wrongly or in particular you should experience the causes of laziness—such as sleepiness, etc.—then you must not assent to them but must confront and avert them.

Here we go:

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*Thus, if a snake came onto your lap,
You would hastily stand up.
Just so, if sleepiness and indolence come,
Quickly avert them.*

The Vinaya uses this analogy. It uses this analogy when it talks about the need to shy away from deeds that are wrong by nature. So for the ordained, it's very important that you shy away from deeds that are wrong by nature. How is it that you shy away from it? - that's when they use this analogy. So that if you should incur a fault that goes against your vows, then don't let a moment pass without doing anything about it, but immediately work to confess and purify that - just as you would act if a snake crawled into your lap. You wouldn't delay a moment.

Here, Shantideva uses this analogy to explain the way we ought to deal with sleepiness and indolence.

Furthermore, do not merely discontinue faults, but actively feel displeasure at their having occurred. Contemplate as follows, "Because I proceeded in this way in the past as well, I have been wandering in cyclic existence up to now. In particular, it is especially blameworthy that I have taken the bodhisattva vows and yet continue with things that are incompatible with the vows' precepts." Become inspired to henceforth restrain yourself, thinking, "From now on I shall make sure that this fault never

occurs.” Frequently employ both these attitudes.

You think about how this type of behaviour has caused lots of problems for you in the past and if we continue this type of behaviour, it’s bound to continue to cause problems for us in the future. So..

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*Whenever a fault occurs,
I shall reproach myself and long ponder,
“By all means I will do whatever it takes
So that this shall never happen again.”*

We ought to think for a good long while about how we are not going to act this way again.

The root of this practice is a strong, powerful mindfulness:

Strive at any deep causes that give rise to the continuous, powerful mindfulness that is the root of this practice. Rely on such activities as keeping the company of excellent teachers and excellent companions, and broad learning, which are the causes of this powerful mindfulness. In this vein Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*“In any of these situations
I will practice mindfulness.”
With this motive aspire to meet teachers
And engage in appropriate activities.*

In summary, you must study and discern well what bodhisattva training requires you to adopt and to cast aside, and then joyously persevere at continuously being mindful in all your conduct of what you have understood about what to adopt and what to cast aside. Hence, it is extremely important not to err about that at which you are to persevere.

That brings us to the fourth section:

(d”) How to use joyous perseverance to make the mind and body serviceable

You say that through joyous effort, you develop this serviceability or workability of body and mind. Sometimes it’s even called ‘flexibility’. So it explains that here:

The method for using joyous perseverance to make the mind and body serviceable is the power of mastery. Santideva sets forth in the chapter on conscientiousness the necessity of learning the bodhisattva trainings; the extremely grave consequences if you do not train in these once you have pledged to do so; how to regard the afflictions as the enemy; and the ways to generate the courage that looks upon the hardship of battling the afflictions as an ornament rather than as a burden. Meditate on these before taking up the task of training in the bodhisattva deeds. Thus stopping all the inhibitions that prevent you from using your body and mind for virtuous activity, rise gladly to that task.

Section four:

1. Abandoning the incompatible or unfavourable conditions,
 2. Gathering the forces of the favourable conditions,
 3. Based on those two, being intent on joyously persevering, and;
 4. How to use joyous effort to make the body and mind serviceable
- That’s where we’re at; the fourth section.

We often times talk about having a serviceable body and mind. You might say ‘flexible’ or ‘workable’. What does that mean to you?

Some texts describe this ‘serviceability’ or ‘flexibility’ as something that comes from having abandoned the negative habitual tendencies of body and mind. Some texts describe this serviceability as something that arises once you’ve abandoned the negative habitual tendencies of body and mind.

The body and mind can be inflexible; not really workable, due to our conditioning. Due to our conditioning and habits in the past, our mind can be quite susceptible to distraction, for instance. And it’s not very flexible or workable. Which is to say, that it can’t be easily directed towards virtue. That’s what inflexible is.

There is also a flexibility or workability of the body as well. For instance, you sit down and it’s not long before you start to feel uncomfortable. You know, you start adjusting yourself. So we don’t have this flexibility or workability of the body. So this is due to the negative habitual tendencies of body. The Vinaya talks about negative habitual tendencies of body, and how some negative habitual tendencies of body are developed through walking; going back and forth, and doing other things. In fact the Vinaya mentions specifically about how in the continuum of an arhat, there might be negative habitual tendencies. In the Vinaya it says, according to Hinayana, that in the continuum of an arhat, then there might be certain negative habitual tendencies so that when the arhat become happy, then he might jump! something like this, so the negative habitual tendencies of jumping about.

When we jump about; bounding from here, bounding from there, there’s a great danger that we end up crushing insects under foot. So properly speaking, according to the Vinaya, that’s not a proper deportment. Rather, we should carry ourselves in a calm, and peaceful way. So rather than be looking all around, we look at the ground in front of us; the path that we’re going to walk on so that we can maintain this calm and peaceful carriage or deportment, whatever. So the say, of course in the Vinaya, which is according to the Great Exposition School, that arhats could have these negative habitual tendencies. Geshe-la is not sure that the Mahayana would actually accept that or not, but they do say it. So it just demonstrates this idea.

We talk about the conditioning of body and mind, the habits of body and mind, what it’s accustomed to. We want to have the body and mind become conditioned to conscientiousness. The body and mind’s conditioning to a lack of conscientiousness or carelessness, if you will, is a negative habitual tendency. So we have the negative habitual tendency of being conditioned to carelessness; lack of conscientiousness, we want to change that so our conditioning becomes to conscientiousness.

The text mentions ‘bringing one’s body and mind under ones control’. So this is the idea; is not being controlled by carelessness or lack of conscientiousness, but actually bringing the body and mind under ones own control so that in whatever we do; when we’re going back and forth, or sitting down, or whatever, that we do so in a controlled and conscientious fashion. Shantideva’s chapter on conscientiousness covers a number of different points as is outlined in this paragraph. These are only some of them. It is important to develop this.

The last sentence in this paragraph reads; ‘*Thus stopping all the inhibitions that prevent you from using your body and mind for virtuous activity, rise gladly to that task*’. So once we direct the body and mind to virtuous activity, that’s being conscientious. So conscientiously directing the body and mind to virtuous activity helps us to stop the negative habitual tendencies.

So doing this.. ‘rise gladly to that task’. Is that clear in English?

Something was lost in the translation here. It’s actually saying ‘rise lightly to the task of training in the

bodhisattva deeds'. The attitude being encouraged here is to, as they say, 'rise lightly', or readily, to the task of training in the bodhisattva deeds. Don't procrastinate, don't feel that this is some heavy burden but look upon it as something light and rise up to that. So there's a Tibetan expression about someone being 'light on their feet', so to speak, means is that they are always ready to get up and do something. They're not always tied to the cushion, or tied to their seat, or whatever. This is the idea; readily rising to the task. Finding things light rather than looking upon them as a heavy burden.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says:

*In order to have strength for everything
Before engaging in any activity
I will recall the advice on conscientiousness
And then gladly rise to the task.*

Question: What form will the joyous perseverance produced by such efforts take?

Reply: Just as wind drives a piece of cotton to and fro, a joyful energy, enthused for virtue, controls your body and mind. When you act along with this energy, joyous perseverance is well-established.

Whatever virtue of body and mind it is we're engaged in, we should do so with energy or enthusiasm.

Once you produce this, you will easily achieve all the collections. Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds states:

*Just like cotton under the power
Of a wind that blows to and fro
So I will be driven by enthusiasm;
In this way I will accomplish all.*

When we meditate, what we're trying to do is bring the mind under our control.

It's not easy but we shouldn't give up.....

Although such tasks are difficult, it is wrong to give them up. Rather, as the glorious Matrceta's One Hundred Fifty Verses of Praise says, you must make effort:

*"The sublime state, difficult to reach,
Is not attained without hardship."
Knowing this, you intensified your joyous perseverance
Without concern for yourself.*

(d') How to practice

You must practice any kind of joyous perseverance in association with the six supremacies [as mentioned before on page 120] and all six perfections. The generosity of joyous perseverance is establishing others in joyous perseverance after you have stabilized yourself therein. The remaining perfections are in accord with the earlier explanation.

(e') A summary

The recollection and cultivation of the mind of enlightenment—the basis of the bodhisattva deeds—inspires you to train in order to set all living beings in joyous effort. So steadily increased this spirit, and then aspire to and train in the methods of joyous effort for those at high levels [high ground]. Also,

strive[as much] as you are able at the methods of learning joyous effort for a beginning bodhisattva. In particular, effectively stop the various forms of discouragement, these being uniquely subject to elimination by joyous effort. Mentally put on the armor of joyous effort that is enthusiastic about the following: the goal of enlightenment, the aim of accomplishing the happiness and eliminating the suffering of all living beings, the very long period of time, the limitless collections, and the immeasurable hardships. Strive at this attitude because, as the Questions of Subahu Sutra says, just by generating the powerful surge of such a resolve, you accumulate a great wave of merit.

This type of advice is applicable to any practice that we might engage in. When you have a practice, you do whatever you are capable of - do as much as you are capable of. As for those things that you're not capable of doing, set a goal for yourself to be able to do them eventually, without forgetting them. So do what you can, set yourself a goal to eventually be able to do what you now cannot, and don't forget them. This is very important.

If we fail to do what we are capable of because of laziness, then:

If you do not do this, you fail to secure your Mahayana lineage, and you are also continually stained by much wrongdoing. Then, in other lives as well, you will find it very difficult to learn [or train in] the bodhisattva deeds.

That would be like a causally concordant effect, wouldn't it? where in the future one is always tired out with doing these things.

Also, after you have become aware of such things, even if you do not practice perfectly, motivate yourself in that direction. If you then joyously persevere to the extent that you are able, then, as the Questions of Subahu Sutra says, you will quickly complete the perfection of joyous effort in future lives, without suffering and with little difficulty.

Tomorrow we'll pick up with the section on meditative stabilization. There isn't much to that section. Then follows a short section on wisdom. This section on wisdom is a bit longer than the one on meditative stabilization but we'll be covering these points later when we deal with the section on insight, so it's not that big a deal.

Buddhist Studies Programme

Subject : Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3

Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering

Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa

Number of the teaching: 12

Date of the teaching: 5th November 2004

The section on ‘how to train in the bodhisattva deeds in general’ covers the training in the perfections that mature the qualities you will have when you become a buddha. Of these we have covered generosity, ethics, patience, and joyous effort, which brings us now to meditative stabilisation.

As the glorious Chandrakirti said; generosity was taught first amongst the sixth, because no matter what type of sentient being it may be, their pleasure and happiness arises in dependence upon resources. For sentient beings there is no pleasure without resources and since resources are the effects of generosity, Buddha taught generosity first among the six.

The next perfection is ethics. Ethics relies upon mindfulness. It is described as the intention to guard. Mindfulness plays a very important role in achieving that because it remembers what it is that we are meant to be guarding. When you consider it from the perspective of the three trainings, ethics is the foundation or basis for the two latter trainings; those of concentration and wisdom. This quality of mindfulness which is so important for ethics, is important for these also.

Patience is important to guard the virtues that we gather through the practice of generosity and ethics.

Next comes joyous effort. Joyous effort is extremely important for any practice we engage in. If we lack joyous effort, it doesn’t matter what dharma practice you engage in, it will not turn out really well. It will not be excellent without joyous effort. Armour-like joyous effort is particularly important. Achieving enlightenment, buddhahood, is a vast task. It’s not easy, in fact it’s so difficult, that we will not be able to achieve it unless we have an armour-like joyous effort that allows us to continue. Do you understand armour-like joyous effort?

There’s a difference between joyous effort and applying joyous effort. Joyous effort is a state of mind, it’s a consciousness. We have been talking about it as ‘delight in virtuous activities’ haven’t we. ‘Applying joyous effort’ refers to actually making that effort; doing the hard work.

The precious lord Lama Tsong Khapa describes the way in which we should apply or make joyous effort, doesn’t he. He makes particular mention of the ‘power of relinquishment’. In that context he emphasizes the importance of doing things continuously for months and years at a time, without stopping and starting. In order to apply ourselves to a particular thing for a long time without interruption, we must have this proper application of joyous effort.

This year we have begun our study of the *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, the *Lam-Rim Chen-Mo*. From now, until we die, we need to continue this. We need to keep the *Lam-Rim Chen-Mo* on our pillow so that whenever we have time, we can pick it up, read it, reflect on what’s taught in it, and meditate on these things whenever we get the opportunity. This is important. Suppose someone says you are supposed to practice things continuously but without ever specifying a particular thing? Well, for us it’s the *Lam-Rim*. From now until we die we must continuously practice it whenever we get time.

In the section on the mind of enlightenment, Lama Tsong Khapa mentions the importance of great compassion. Great compassion is important, he says, in the beginning, the middle, and in the end. He emphasizes how important great compassion is quoting the glorious Chandrakirti as support.

Again and again, the importance of great compassion is emphasized. How do we cultivate great compassion and great loving-kindness? In fact Lama Tsong Khapa explains how to do that in this text. He encourages us to follow a specific order, starting with equanimity and then proceeding through different stages all the way up to and including loving-kindness. He also gives us an order to follow in the specific reflections. For instance, for loving-kindness he says to start with friends; those that you're close to, then go on to neutral persons, then onto enemies, and then include all sentient beings. So then if you ask how to cultivate great compassion, loving-kindness, you do so exactly as Lama Tsong Khapa describes in his text.

Let us make great compassion our main practice! When you look at the different stages, the different topics covered in this text, you can trace them all the way back through the stages of the path of a person of small capacity and beyond to the initial section on how to properly rely upon a spiritual teacher. All of these are methods that help us develop great compassion. For instance, look at the section on the stages of the path that are shared with a person of small capacity. There we are encouraged to reflect on the sufferings of the miserable realms. The more strongly you cultivate your awareness of the suffering of the miserable realms, the stronger your great compassion becomes. You reflect on impermanence for instance, and the more you do so, the more you have the means through which to develop great compassion. Then in the stages of the path shared with persons of medium capacity, the emphasis is on the root of cyclic existence. Although we didn't mention a particular type of great compassion explicitly at that time, there is something known as 'non-referential compassion' that we should take note of it. Most of you will be familiar with it. Non-referential compassion refers to a compassion that is imbued with wisdom realizing emptiness. By reflecting on how grasping at the self of persons is the root of cyclic existence and developing a wisdom realizing emptiness that is the opposite to that, we can then merge that with compassion to develop this non-referential compassion. This is very important.

It is as Geshela explained when discussing insight; although no phenomena exists inherently, samsaric sentient beings do not understand this state of affairs. Although they do not outwardly necessarily accept or subscribe to this idea that things exist inherently they still have an innate misapprehension which holds things to exist inherently within their continuum. This acts as the root that causes this cycle of suffering. It depends on that misapprehension.

There's a slight difference between great compassion and the wholehearted resolve of great compassion. Are you aware of that? The sixth of this seven-fold instruction on cause and effect is wholehearted resolve. We could also speak of the wholehearted resolve of loving-kindness. In brief, the wholehearted resolve of great compassion is a mind that thinks, "I assume responsibility for alleviating the suffering of all sentient beings". Other things such as; generosity, ethics, compassion, and joyous effort are also methods for us to develop and improve our great compassion.

Practicing dharma is not just reading a bit from here, a bit from there, reading a bit from this text and that text, and then just meditating a bit on this and a bit on that. That's not it, is it? We're trying to develop loving-kindness and compassion; that's where our emphasis lies. Therefore, with whatever you read, really reflect on it and cultivate it in meditation. Try to understand how these things link back to the development of loving-kindness and compassion. Our studies must come back to this point.

We talk about this term 'the mind of enlightenment'. It's unique to Buddhism, it's not found elsewhere. It's a specifically buddhist term. We often talk of the need to practice this mind of enlightenment, how, in applying the teachings of buddhism and so forth, we try to cultivate this mind of enlightenment. Geshe-la thinks that speaking of loving-kindness and compassion is quite similar. He thinks that if you really cultivate loving-kindness and compassion, this naturally leads to the development of the mind of enlightenment. The difference is simply the difference between a mind and a mental factor, or states of

mind. Really, in effect, that's the difference. However it's quite simple to talk of loving-kindness and compassion, isn't it, because they're terms used widely outside of a buddhist context, but if you begin by talking of 'the mind of enlightenment', it's much more difficult to explain. First of all you will have to explain 'enlightenment'. How do we begin to explain enlightenment? Therefore, Geshela believes loving-kindness and compassion should be mentioned instead. In referring to the mind of enlightenment, one is introducing a religious term. Loving-kindness and compassion, however do not require any religious sentiment, do they? There's a difference.

The point is that we should try to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion in this life. If you really make an effort to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion, certainly, your life will be made as meaningful as possible. If there are effects to be had, those effects will come about.

There's a phrase found in *Lama Chopa* (Guru puja) that Geshela believes indicates an attitude that if we could develop it, it would be really quite amazing. The phrase he's referring to is 'like a mother towards her beloved son'. You could translate it as 'like the love between a mother and her beloved child'. You could actually look at it from the perspective of either the child or the mother; either you're a mother feeling love for her beloved child, or you're a beloved child feeling love for your mother. Should her child become ill, the mother would think continually, day and night, about her child and how it's unwell. Whatever she's doing, sitting or staying, engaging in whatever activities, she would always be thinking, "Ah, my child is sick, I hope my child gets well. How can I help my child to get well?". Continually she will be wanting it to get better. Alternatively, if the mother gets ill, the child will be thinking all the time about how it can help its mother to recover. This type of sentiment is felt one towards the other. Geshela believes that we should continually be meditating by placing ourselves in that position as if we were the beloved child and our mother sentient beings are suffering from their illness.

If we were to cultivate this type of attitude it would be really quite amazing, wouldn't it! We need to make aspirational prayers to develop this type of sentiment, because we don't have it right now. As it says in the *Lama Chopa*; 'Please bless me that I may develop uncontrived compassion like the sentiments between a mother and her beloved child'.

"Please, bless me that I may develop uncontrived compassion!"- When you're making aspiration prayers, you have to look up, because you're looking for blessings! You think the blessings are coming from something up above, so you cast your eyes up and look for them [laughter]

This is the way that we must regularly practice. If we spend much time studying but are not knowledgeable about the way to practice, then we might come out losers. We stand to lose. This is very important; we really need to become wise in *how* to practice. There is much said on this point in the section on joyous effort, isn't there.

We talked of how, if you emphasize knowledge above all else and do not emphasize taming your mind, you might gain knowledge, but you open yourself up to the other enemies of the disturbing emotions so that they can come and bully you. That's one danger, another is if we emphasize disciplining the mind or meditation, without study and reflection. In this case, because you're not studying and reflecting, the enemy of confusion or ignorance comes to bully you. So as the text mentions, we need to take the approach of one who is a skilled swordsman; a seasoned warrior, one who in battle makes an effort not only to strike his opponents but also to avoid being struck down. Our approach should be something like this.

A buddha is described as one possessing consummate knowledge, consummate love, and consummate ability, or; 'ultimate wisdom, compassion and capacity'. The point here is that if you develop this knowledge and love, or wisdom and compassion to their utmost extent, you become a buddha.

Therefore the main practices are those of knowledge and love, wisdom and compassion.

(v) *How to train in the perfection of meditative stabilization*

The explanation of how to train in the perfection of meditative stabilization has five parts:

1. What meditative stabilization is
2. How to begin the cultivation of meditative stabilization
3. The divisions of meditative stabilization
4. How to practice and
5. A summary

(a') *What meditative stabilization is*

Meditative stabilization is a virtuous, one-pointed state of mind that stays fixed (*or that remains*) on its object of meditation without distraction to other things. The Bodhisattva Levels says:

It is the one-pointed state of mind—stabilized on virtue, and either mundane or supramundane—of bodhisattvas who have first studied and reflected on the Scriptural Collection of the Bodhisattvas Sutra. Whether it is oriented toward calm abiding, toward insight, or toward both as the path that conjoins them, understand that this one-pointed state of mind is the bodhisattvas' meditative stabilization.

Notice the text mentions it is '*without distraction to other things*' which means not being distracted towards things other than its focus, or object of meditation. We use different terms. Often we talk of 'concentration' as in *ting-nge-dzin* (*ting nge 'dzin*) and of 'meditative stabilisation', as in *sam-ten* (*bsam gtan*). We need to consider what the difference between these terms is. Here, we're talking of meditative stabilisation which is described as a *virtuous, one-pointed state of mind*.

It says in *The Bodhisattva Levels* that it's a one-pointed state of mind, remaining on virtue *and either mundane or supramundane—of bodhisattvas who have first studied and reflected on the Scriptural Collection of the Bodhisattvas Sutra*. It goes on to state; '*Whether it is oriented toward calm abiding, toward insight, or toward both as the path that conjoins them*' - it mentions three types doesn't it?

Notice that it says, '*of bodhisattvas who have first studied and reflected on the Scriptural Collection of the Bodhisattvas Sutra*'. Study and reflection come first. A person goes through those stages and only then approaches the meditation described as *the one-pointed state of mind stabilized on virtue, and either mundane or supramundane*.

Let's look at these terms, 'mundane' and 'supramundane'. First you must achieve calm abiding. Calm abiding is the very root of the mundane and supramundane paths that follow. When you have achieved calm abiding you may then follow either mundane or supramundane paths.

We'll cover these points along the way but we will just make a quick mention of the methods you use to achieve calm abiding. In particular there are what are known as 'the nine stages of mental abiding'. These are the methods that you use or the stages that you go through in applying the methods to achieve calm abiding. Basically they are stages in which your mind is able to remain or abide on its object in progressively better ways. You progress through each of them until eventually you develop the ability to remain upon your object as you wish. That stage is accompanied by mental pleasure.

There is a difference between the ninth stage of mental abiding and calm abiding. In the ninth stage of mental abiding, you can effortlessly place your mind upon the object of meditation in which ever way

you please, but what you have in calm abiding which you don't have in that earlier stage is the bliss of physical and mental pliancy. That's only found in calm abiding

Lama Tsong Khapa earlier talked of making 'the mind and body serviceable' didn't he? Yesterday we talked about this 'serviceability or 'flexibility'. This is like pliancy. He said that a workable body and mind come about in dependence upon joyous effort. When the bliss of physical and mental pliancy imbues the mind that is capable of abiding on its object in whichever way it pleases, you have developed calm abiding.

We'll cover this material as we go along, so don't worry. For the time being, let's consider what happens after you achieve calm abiding. Having achieved calm abiding you can then go on either a mundane or supramundane paths. Here, the words mundane and supramundane do not refer to this distinction between the paths of an arya, and paths of ordinary beings. We're not talking about those. Here, we're talking about something different. Having achieved calm abiding, a person might choose to pursue, or try to attain the actual meditative stabilizations that belong to form and formless realms, and in order to achieve this they try to abandon the disturbing emotions of the desire realm.

You might wonder why someone would try to do this. Remember Geshe-la said that there are no feelings of suffering in the form and formless realm. So a person thinks about that and then wants to abandon the disturbing emotions of the desire realm so they may achieve an actual meditative stabilization of a form or formless realm state. They then do so by abandoning those disturbing emotions and cultivating meditative stabilization. Here, when they 'abandon' the disturbing emotions, they're not actually abandoning them together with their seeds. This is a different form of abandonment in which they stop those disturbing emotions from becoming manifest.

You can progress in this way all this way up to the peak of existence. There are eight stages that you can go through. You can go through the first actual meditative stabilization, the second actual meditative stabilization, the third actual meditative stabilization, and the fourth actual meditative stabilizations that belong to the form realm. Then you can go through the four levels of the formless realm which are called 'limitless space', 'limitless consciousness', 'nothing at all', and 'the peak of existence'. By cultivating meditative stabilizations you can progress through each of these levels. That is the mode of progress through the mundane paths.

How do you cultivate meditative stabilization to achieve these? You look at the desire realms as being coarse and the higher realms as being more peaceful, and in doing so, you hold the disturbing emotions of the desire realm to be things you want to abandon, and hold the higher realms as something you want to achieve. It's as if they are, for instance, looking at the desire realm as being cyclic existence and these higher realms as being a form of liberation. It's something like this.

There are no feelings of suffering in the higher realms, whereas in the desire realm, lifespan is short, there are many illnesses and all sorts of things.

These are also known as common, or shared paths because you do not have to be a buddhist to attain them. There are many non-buddhists who have progressed through these levels all the way up to the peak of existence. When it says in the text; *either mundane or supramundane*. That's what the 'mundane' is referring to.

How do you go through the supramundane paths? First you attain calm abiding, then you regard true sufferings and true origins as being coarse, and true cessations and true paths as being peace. This is actual, proper peace we're talking about here. Doing this, you proceed through the supramundane paths.

When you regard true sufferings and true origins as coarse, you're viewing or considering the

shortcomings of cyclic existence, aren't you? Then, when you look at true cessations and true paths as being peaceful, here you're talking about proper peace, because it's a pacification of suffering and it's causes.

It mentions; *Whether it is oriented toward calm abiding*,. This would be abiding one-pointedly upon the object, without analysis. In insight, analysis is emphasized - that is first and foremost - although, it must be said that you do not have insight until after you've achieved calm abiding. This insight could be focused or directed towards emptiness, but it could also be directed towards other things. You can achieve insight focused upon a number of different things. In any case, when you have insight, the emphasis is on analysing the object, for instance through the use of many reasons.

Although it says here; *Whether it is oriented toward calm abiding, or towards insight*, Geshe-la is explaining this as meaning 'in the direction of', or 'in the category', so; '...whether it's included within the side of calm abiding or included within the side of insight...'. You could also talk about this as 'placement', or 'stabilizing' meditation, and 'analyzing'/'analytical' meditation. So, to say that it's included within the category of calm abiding means that it's placement or stabilizing meditation, while to say it's included within the category or direction of insight means it's an analytical meditation.

The quote then mentions conjoining calm abiding and insight. Having achieved calm abiding, with one corner of the mind you analyze the object and in this way you integrate calm abiding and insight. You 'conjoin' them, as it says here:

Whether it is oriented toward calm abiding, toward insight, or toward both as the path that conjoins them, understand that this one-pointed state of mind is the bodhisattvas' meditative stabilization.

Take note; it says very clearly here in Arya Asanga's *Bodhisattva Levels* that meditative stabilization includes both analytical meditation and placement or stabilizing meditation.

And Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds also says:

*Having thus generated joyous effort,
Set your mind in concentration....*

Does analytical meditation abide one-pointedly? What if we were to debate this point? Can you consider analytical meditation to be a case where mind abides one-pointedly? There's something to think about here isn't there?

If Geshe-la were to state his understanding of these English phrases, then to him, 'remaining one-pointedly' sounds as if you're just focused on a single object and that alone, whereas 'analytical meditation' seems as if you're making use of a number of different reasons and applying those to a thing. Can both of those types of meditation involve minds that remain one-pointed?

When you cultivate compassion, you must first use analytical meditation, mustn't you? You must do so because you have to analyze people you're close to, people who are neutral to you, and people who you dislike – your enemies and so forth. You must think about the different reasons you feel certain sentiments towards them, you must think about how they must lack self control; all sorts of different things like this.

Is this type of meditation on compassion one-pointed? Is it?

It follows that it is one-pointed because you are remaining one-pointedly upon compassion.

Lozang Zopa: Gen Jampa was saying perhaps it doesn't need to be one-pointed.

What if you were meditating on compassion and your mind jumps to another topic such as the recognition that all sentient beings have been your mother, or recalling their kindness, or towards any other different thing, such as the determination to be free. In this case when the mind jumps to another topic, it's become distracted from compassion.

If you lose the root of your meditation, compassion, then that's distraction, isn't it? If you do not lose it, it is one-pointed. You could state many reasons supporting it.

Student: That means that mindfulness is one-pointed.

Geshe-la: Are you saying that mindfulness is necessarily one-pointed? No pervasion!

Geshe-la is just raising this issue for us. It's not a huge deal. When we cultivate compassion, we must access or use many different reasons to support that. When we do this, the reasons we employ must be contributing to strengthening our compassion. If it doesn't we will get lost in pursuing these other points and our meditation will not turn out well. Both analytical meditation and stabilizing meditation must be undistracted.

Therefore Geshe-la would say that analytical meditation is also a meditative stabilization.

Concentration, or *ting-nge-dzin* involves the mind abiding one-pointedly on a single object. In the *Great Stages of Mantra*, or *nag-rim chen-mo* by Lama Tsong Khapa, he says that concentration is; 'remaining one-pointedly upon a virtuous object for any period of time'. So we must think about how exactly we distinguish meditative stabilization and concentration and how this relates to the issues of analytical and placement meditations. Here, it says that; *Meditative stabilization is a virtuous, one-pointed state of mind*. This statement seems to resemble the statement Lama Tsong Khapa makes on the *Great Stages of Mantra*.

In the *Bodhisattva Levels*, the author says that meditative stabilization is a one-pointed state of mind that remains on virtue and can be directed towards insight, or calm abiding, or could be directed towards the path that conjoins them. So it seems that one-pointed states of mind could be divided into calm abiding and insight. That's basically what you're dealing with – there's a division here. Calm abiding and insight can both be considered one-pointed states of mind.

By the looks of things then, Lama Tsong Khapa doesn't seem to be distinguishing between meditative stabilization and concentration. Let's understand that. Keep that in mind. Then we have this issue of analytical versus placement or stabilizing meditation. There's a distinction in English. Let's retain that – it's fine as it is.

(b') How to begin the cultivation of meditative stabilization

Think over the benefits of cultivating meditative stabilization and the faults of not cultivating it. I will explain this in the calm abiding section.

(c') The divisions of meditative stabilization

In line with the above citation [from the *Bodhisattva Levels*], if you subdivide meditative stabilization according to nature, there are two kinds: mundane and supramundane; and if you do so according to orientation, there are three kinds [oriented toward serenity, toward insight, or toward both conjoined]. If you subdivide it according to function, there are three types: meditative stabilization that

stabilizes the body and mind in bliss within the present life, meditative stabilization that achieves good qualities, and meditative stabilization that carries out the welfare of living beings.

The main division would have to be the division according to function. So if you look at that, the division according to function has one type of meditative stabilization that causes your body and mind to remain in bliss within the present life, the second achieves good qualities and the third carries out the welfare of living beings.

The first, meditative stabilization that stabilizes the body and mind in bliss within the present life, is all meditative stabilizations that generate mental and physical pliancy when you enter them with equipoise.

The second, meditative stabilization that achieves good qualities, is all meditative stabilizations which accomplish good qualities shared with Hearers—the superknowledges, liberations, totalities, masteries, etc.

It mentions the superknowledges. These are types of supernormal power. Here, the type of superknowledges being discussed are those that are attained after having achieved calm abiding. Generally speaking, superknowledges can also be achieved through karma. For instance, they say that beings in the intermediate state have what we would term ‘supernormal powers’. Even vultures are held to have supernormal powers. In fact in Dharmakirti’s commentary on *The Compendium of Valid Cognition*, he says that if you’re interested in the superknowledges or supernormal powers, you should try to get yourself the body of a vulture. ‘Superknowledge’ doesn’t just refer to clairvoyance as we know it, the supernormal power in the case of the vulture is the ability to see long. Here, when it mentions this *meditative stabilizations which accomplish good qualities* like—the *superknowledges*, it’s referring to that type of supernormal power that arises after having achieved calm abiding.

We talk of the fault of pretending to possess qualities higher than those of humans. It is said that if you do this by acting as if you have supernormal powers, there’s a danger that you relinquish your vows. The idea being that superknowledges or supernormal powers belong to higher realm minds - higher than those of a human. Therefore in order to have those you must have achieved a higher realm mind.

The third, meditative stabilization that carries out the welfare of living beings, is meditative stabilization that accomplishes the eleven activities for others’ welfare

‘The eleven activities for others’ welfare’ were mentioned earlier, right?

That’s brings us to the fourth section:

(d’) How to practice

Whenever you practice any virtuous meditative stabilization, you do so in association with the six supremacies and all six perfections. The generosity of meditative stabilization is maintaining meditative stabilization yourself and then establishing others in it.

Understand the other perfections from the earlier explanation.

Lama Tsong Khapa’s gives a very similar presentation for each of the perfections including joyous effort, doesn’t he? He mentions for instance the generosity of meditative stabilization. When he describes that, he doesn’t speak of it solely as establishing others in meditative stabilization. In addition, he says it is maintaining meditative stabilization yourself and then establishing others in it. Being established in it yourself seems to be quite an important element doesn’t it! Way back at the beginning of the text in the section on how to properly rely upon a spiritual teacher, Lama Tsong Khapa’s

mentioned that if you don't have a quality yet praise it, it would be like somebody who has no sandalwood praising the virtues of sandalwood and then, when someone asks them "do you have the sandalwood?" saying "no I don't have the sandalwood". We shouldn't act like that. This relates to two of the four means of gathering disciples, working at the aims, and consistency of behaviour. In particular, when working for the aims of others, your behaviour should be consistent with what you are teaching. That's very important.

Whenever you practice this virtuous meditative stabilisation you do so in association with the six supremacies mentioned earlier. Now understand the other perfections from the earlier explanation.

(e') A summary

The recollection and cultivation of the spirit of enlightenment—the basis of the bodhisattva deeds—is what inspires you to train in order to set all living beings in uncontaminated meditative stabilization. After you have increased the stability of this (mind) spirit, aspire to the high meditative stabilizations and train in these. Even if you are unable to fully develop the meditative stabilizations, you must strive to train from time to time in one-pointed concentration to whatever extent you are able. For, if you do not do so, you will be continually stained with the fault of breaking the precepts,

We should practice meditative stabilisation, one-pointedness of mind, to whatever extent we are able, so that we can develop the higher states. There are going to be, of course, higher meditative stabilisations that we are not at present able to cultivate, such as the noble being's sublime wisdom of equipoise, or 'arya's primordial wisdom of equipoise' or 'arya primordial equipoise', whichever way you want to translate it. These are really quite inconceivable types of meditative stabilisation but they do indeed exist. These that we are not able to cultivate at the moment should be set as something for us to aspire to. We talk of aspirational prayers, setting the aspiration to achieve these types of things. If we fail to do this, we will accumulate a fault in which we're contradicting or going against our trainings. As it says; *'if you do not do so, you will be continually stained with the fault of violating the precepts'*.

Then it goes on to also mention something that you would expect to be a causally concordant effect:

and in other lives as well you will find it most difficult to learn the trainings for entering the many doors of the bodhisattvas' meditative stabilizations. Whereas if you never give up your effort, even in this life your mind will become steadily less distracted, making your accumulations of virtue very powerful. In future lives, as the Questions of Subahu Sutra says, you will have physical and mental bliss and a joyful mind, thereby easily completing the perfection of meditative stabilization.

I will not elaborate further here as I will be explaining this at length in the section on calm abiding.

We need to make effort in meditation to cultivate one-pointed states of mind as much as where able. It's important that we make time to do that. When we have trouble trying to get the mind to remain one-pointedly, the masters of old in scriptures encourage us to get the winds to sit evenly. Literally you could say 'place the winds in an even state'. The reason for this is that the mind's movement all around and distraction and so forth, are linked to the movement of wind. So we're encouraged to get the winds to settle into an even state so we can then get the mind to settle and remain one-pointed. The instructions for doing this include focusing upon inhalation and exhalation of the breath and so forth.

(vi) How to train in the perfection of wisdom

How to train in the perfection of wisdom has five parts:

1. What wisdom is
2. How to begin the cultivation of wisdom
3. The divisions of wisdom

4. How to practice

5. A summary

There are five as before.

(a') What wisdom is

In general wisdom is what thoroughly discerns the ontological status of the object under analysis ...

Or better, it just simply; 'thoroughly discerns the object under analysis'

... but in this context wisdom refers to proficiency or being knowledgeable on five topics of knowledge and the like. The Bodhisattva Levels says:

Know that the bodhisattvas' wisdom is the thorough analysis of phenomena that engages or has engaged all of what is to be known and that operates through focusing on the five topics of knowledge – Buddhist knowledge, grammar, logic, technical arts, and medicine.

This is right! We have to know the five topics of knowledge, don't we? In fact we have to know everything that can be known. We're talking about wisdom after all, and unless we are able to develop the wisdom of everything that can be known - that is, all objects of knowledge or all objects of awareness, we won't become buddhas. So clearly we must know all of these: we need to know English, we need to know Tibetan..... The point is that here wisdom doesn't refer solely to the wisdom realising emptiness. It refers to a wisdom that distinguishes between good and bad, and more generally, to a wisdom that thoroughly discerns an object of knowledge.

The quote mentions '*engages or has engaged*'. Lama Tsongkhapa explains this:

here the wisdom that engages refers to wisdom prior to attaining the bodhisattva grounds, wisdom that has engaged refers to wisdom after attaining such grounds.

(b') How to begin the generation of wisdom.

The way to begin the generation of wisdom is to contemplate the benefits of generating wisdom and the faults of not generating it. Since I will explain the benefits and faults of having or lacking the wisdom of reality – selflessness – in the insight section, I will not elaborate on it here. But I will discuss the remaining types of wisdom a little.

We will leave Geshela's commentary here for today. Are there any questions you'd like to ask?

Student: In the summary of meditative stabilization it says; "And in other lives as well you will find it most difficult to learn the trainings for entering the many doors of the bodhisattva's meditative stabilization as well". What are the 'many doors'?

Geshela: Door is door, is it not? You could have a great number of different ones. For instance you have concentrations which are the things you cultivate in meditation. For instance, loving kindness, compassion, recognizing all beings have been your mother, recalling their kindness, all these different aspects are concentrations of the thing that you're cultivating. So trying to engage in those concentrations. Or for instance, trying to engage in the mind of enlightenment. If Geshela were to express his understanding he would express it like this.

Earlier he talked of how we should emphasize the cultivation of loving kindness and compassion, didn't he? So in our meditations we need to meditate in a way that accords with our own ability. We assess our own capacity and meditate in a way that is in line with that. If we don't make any effort in meditation whatsoever that can be problematic because in order to attain enlightenment we need the deeds of a bodhisattva. The methods for attaining enlightenment are so vast and varied that unless we make some effort in meditation we won't be able to enter or engage it at all. So if Geshela was to express his understanding he would say that engaging in the many doors of concentration is referring to meditating in line with our capacity; to making effort on many fronts where we're able to.

Geshela's opinion of what this line is saying is that we must try to meditate in an unmistakable and proper way. Geshela doesn't think that every time you sit down and look as if you're meditating, that that's necessarily meditation. So what this line is indicating is the need for us to meditate in an unmistakable way to the best of our ability. If we don't make this effort from right now, if we don't try to meditate in an unmistakable and proper way then later when we go on to engage in the bodhisattva practices we will find it difficult to engage in them, no matter what practices they may be. Not making effort now means that it will be difficult to engage in these practices in the future. So something like this.

Does anyone have any other opinions? Is there anything you'd like to say? There have been no questions yesterday or today.

Student: Is there a difference between pliancy and flexibility

Geshela: Physical and mental flexibility, and physical and mental pliancy carry the same meaning. They should be understood as the same. Through the force of cultivating concentration we develop physical and mental flexibility. Through the force of cultivating concentration we develop physical and mental pliancy. The meaning you draw from these is the same. The definition of calm abiding is given as 'remaining on one's focus in whichever way one pleases that is imbued with the bliss of physical and mental pliancy'. When that definition is explained 'pliancy' is explained as 'flexibility'. Geshela thinks that this will be covered more later.

Student: If we maintain a virtuous frame of mind does that mean we won't experience mental suffering?

Geshela: Geshela would say that just because you have a virtuous frame of mind manifest, it doesn't mean that you won't experience mental suffering. Your statement is rather general, Geshela would suggest maybe using a specific subject; for instance; 'a virtuous state of mind manifest when you're reflecting on the suffering of sentient beings'. Geshela would say there is no pervasion to your assertion. For instance, if you are cultivating compassion, you're really thinking 'may all sentient beings be free from suffering, may I free sentient beings from suffering, I must achieve enlightenment so that I can free sentient beings from suffering'. In doing so you might focus on the ways that individuals or groups of sentient beings are tormented by that suffering, and as you dwell on this you just might experience some mental discomfort.

So you're meditating on compassion and you're thinking about a certain type of suffering and you remember that actually one of your close friends is actually suffering from this type of suffering as well - a bad illness or something like that. Geshela thinks that if you were to think in this way then at that point you would definitely have some mental suffering even if you haven't lost the compassion and virtue.

It's possible - that it could be anything. We don't know the causes and conditions for it.

Interpreter: So does that render your second question unnecessary or shall I ask that, because clearly there is at least one type of suffering. If the fact that you have a virtuous mind doesn't eliminate the mental suffering there's no need to mention the physical suffering, is there? Geshela has asked if you

have a second question so I have explained it to him - ie if you have a virtuous frame of mind would physical suffering be eliminated?

Geshela: If you had very, very strong familiarity perhaps this is possible, but that would be very difficult for us ordinary sentient beings.