

Buddhist Studies Program

Subject: Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3

Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering

Interpreter: Ven. Lozang Zopa

Number of the teachings: 04

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We'll start off where we left off last week, on page three of the supplement - the section on the perfection of wisdom - how to train in the perfection of wisdom.

Of the six perfections, we've covered the perfections of generosity, ethics, patience, joyous effort and meditational stabilisation - five of six so far. These are bodhisattva deeds and the basis of these is the mind of enlightenment. The six, like generosity, are bodhisattva deeds and they are supported by or based upon the mind of enlightenment. So if you practice any of these six, like generosity, for instance, with the basis of the mind of enlightenment, that is a bodhisattva deed. Lama Tsong Khapa makes the same point in the section on meditative stabilisation. He talks about the need to train these bodhisattva deeds to whatever extent we are able. Even if we are not able to train in them fully, in their entirety, we should definitely try to train to whatever extent we are able. If we don't, a number of different faults occur. For instance, as the text says, you will be continually stained by the fault of breaking the precepts, and in other lives, you will not be inclined to train in the bodhisattva deeds, due to not having trained to whatever extent you are able, in this life time. In addition to this it will be very difficult for you to train the bodhisattva deeds - there will be great hardship involved. Thus is very important.

We must keep this advice, as well as that found in the section on joyous effort, in our hearts and in our minds. It is vital advice. In the section on joyous effort Lama Tsong Khapa talks about how if you think knowledge is most important and neglect meditation, this becomes a source for all sorts of faults. Or, if you emphasise meditation to the exclusion of knowledge, this also becomes a source of various different faults. This really vital advice, advice that we must integrate and keep in our hearts.

So please remember this. These are pieces of personal instruction, these bits of advice that come throughout the text.

You might wonder how thinking that meditation is most important and therefore neglecting knowledge becomes a source for these different types of faults? It's because without knowing the trainings and so forth you incur faults that are as if falling like rain (ie there are so many) because you don't know what to engage in and what to guard against. And if a person feels that knowledge is most important and neglects meditation, then it's clear how all sorts of faults can arise. The person can become prideful, jealous etc. All sorts of different negative emotions can arise because that person, in pursuing knowledge, has failed to tame or discipline their own mind.

So you might then wonder, what's the fault in emphasizing meditation to the exclusion of knowledge? Well in this case, there are lots of things you wouldn't know. You would only know that single thing to which you were trying to discipline the mind. You might sit there trying to hold your mind to this single thing but, in the meantime, all sorts of different infractions are falling like rain because you don't know to guard against them. This is the problem - our ignorance of what we 're meant to guard against. That kind of lack of knowledge becomes a source of all sorts of faults.

Etcetera, there are many things that could be mentioned but we don't have time to go over them.

So let's look at the section on wisdom. As we went through them last week, there are five parts to this section.

(a') *What wisdom is*

(b') *How to begin the cultivation of wisdom*

(c') *The divisions of wisdom*

(d') *How to practice*

(e') *A summary*

What wisdom is

In general, wisdom is what thoroughly discerns the ontological status of the object under analysis, but in this context wisdom refers to proficiency in the 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.

We often talk about the wisdom that thoroughly discerns phenomena. Lama Tsong Khapa the Precious Lord mentions it here in the first line: *wisdom is what thoroughly discerns the ontological status of the object under analysis*. This aspect of wisdom that thoroughly discerns, that differentiates different phenomena is very important, isn't it? There is a quote about this in the abhidharma, in the root text of Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosa*. It says that – if you don't have the wisdom that thoroughly discerns phenomena, then you don't have the method for pacifying disturbing emotions.

This is the point. Without the knowledge that thoroughly discerns phenomena, you won't have the means by which to pacify disturbing emotions. If you don't have the means to pacify disturbing emotions, then you will not be able to reverse the process of cycling in samsara - a process which is controlled by those disturbing emotions. Geshela brought up this quote, the term 'wisdom that thoroughly discerns phenomena' – to stick in our mind.

Here, the wisdom that “engages” refers to wisdom prior to attaining the bodhisattva levels; wisdom that “has engaged” refers to wisdom after attaining such levels.

Let's read over the next section.

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 are talking about the wisdom that realises selflessness, reality, things as they are, in the section on insight, so there's no need to cover it now.

With respect to indicating wisdom's benefits, wisdom is the root of all good qualities for this and future lives. As the protector Nagarjuna's Hundred Verses on Wisdom (Prajna-yataka) says:350

*Wisdom is the root of all good qualities,
Seen and not yet seen.
To achieve both of these,
Embrace wisdom.
The great source for what you seek
And for liberation is knowledge.
So, esteeming it from the start,
Adhere to wisdom, the great mother.*

That's clear. Wisdom is like an eye for the other five perfections.

*When the other perfections are completed by wisdom,
They acquire their eye and fulfill their name,
Just as a painting may be complete except for the eyes,
But until the eyes are drawn, no wage is obtained.*

How wisdom enhances other good qualities is illustrated by the example of a special piece of jewelry made of fine gold that becomes even more breathtaking when adorned with a precious emerald. Likewise, if the gold ornament of the five perfections from generosity to meditative stabilization is adorned with wisdom, which is able to distinguish right from wrong, they become more magnificent, because wisdom makes them much purer. It is similar to the way that the mental consciousness, by distinguishing the merits and faults in the objects of the five sensory faculties (the visual faculty, etc.), causes you to engage in what is to be adopted or reject what is to be cast aside.

We have a few different points made over this section. First of all wisdom is likened to an eye for the other five, like generosity. Then we talk about how it is necessary for the other good qualities. And thirdly, wisdom is likened to an ornament for gold jewelry. It's clear why wisdom is like an eye for the other five. You might say that it's the foremost among all six. And then, in each of the individual sections on the different perfections Lama Tsong Khapa has talked about why wisdom is needed for each and every one of them. In fact he's said quite a bit about that. And finally, wisdom is like a special ornament for gold jewelry.

For instance look at the section on generosity. Lama Tsong Khapa talks about the needs and the benefits of practicing it, and the drawbacks of not practicing it. At the very root of each of these sections is a presentation on the importance of wisdom in relation to the other five - understanding the benefits of practicing it, understanding the drawbacks of failing to do so.

Now, support for what Lama Tsong Khapa was just saying from the root text of Aryasura's *Compendium of the Perfections*.

*The merits of generosity and so forth
Are more powerful with wisdom as their lord,
Just as an array of fine gold jewelry
Shines more brightly when inset with jewels.
It is this wisdom that renders vast
The capacity for virtue in the purpose of each one,
Just as the mind's additional power clearly displays
The respective objects of the sensory faculties.*

Similarly, wisdom is also crucial for other faculties such as faith etc. Do you remember the five faculties: Faith, joyous effort, mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom. Wisdom is crucial for the other faculties. Perhaps we should look at these five faculties again, because they are quite important. Earlier when we studying the fourth chapter, the *Ornament of Clear Realisation* described these as the five powers. You also have the five strengths. Although there is a difference between those categories, the same list is given. They are the power of faith, joyous effort, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. We talk about people of either sharp or dull faculties don't we. When you talk about whether a person is of sharp or dull faculty you are talking of these five in their continuum. Even if your faculty of wisdom is not initially sharp, you can train in it so that becomes sharp, and, the same is true of the other faculties as well. Although initially your faculties might be dull, through training they can become sharp. It's not that if you start off with dull faculties you are always to be a person of dull faculty - not at all. Through training, a person of dull faculties can become a person of sharp faculties.

If we develop an uncontrived determination to be free, then the five faculties, such as faith, in our continuum become paths. If we develop an uncontrived mind of enlightenment, then the five faculties, such as faith, in our continuum become mahayana paths. Of the different things that become paths within our continuum, these five faculties are some of the main ones.

When wisdom is present and you understand well the merit of virtue and the faults of stinginess etc, you become skilled at eliminating the afflictions and increasing good qualities. The Compendium of the Perfections states:353

*Among the various faculties of faith and so on,
Wisdom is chief, as the mind is to the sensory faculties.
With wisdom as lord, you know what is a fault and what merit, (merit = good, advantageous)
So you are skilled in the method of eliminating afflictions.*

Bodhisattvas depend on wisdom to purify the other five perfections —generosity, etc so that even when they give their flesh to someone who asks for it, they are unaffected by such thoughts as pride, discouragement, etc and it is as though they were taking a cutting from a medicinal plant. This is because their wisdom makes reality manifest. With the wisdom that sees the disadvantages of both cyclic existence and the peace of nirvana, bodhisattvas accomplish ethical discipline for the sake of others' welfare, so they practice pure ethical discipline. Through wisdom they know the faults of impatience and the merits of patience, and they then discipline their minds so that they are not overpowered by suffering, or by others' misconceptions of them. With wisdom they understand well everything at which they joyously persevere, so their perseverance brings great success on the path. This applies to each one of the first five doesn't it?

The last of those five is meditative stabilisation and through wisdom based on reasoning they accomplish the supreme delight and bliss of the meditative stabilization that is fixed upon the meaning of reality. Last week Geshela talked about the definition of calm abiding and he mentioned that it involves the physical and mental bliss of pliancy, correct? The supreme delight of bliss in meditative stabilisation.

[452] *The Compendium of the Perfections states:354*

*Once bodhisattvas have opened the clear eye of wisdom,
Even when they give their own flesh without a thought,
They never feel high or low about it,
As if they were cutting a medicinal plant.*

And also:

*Intelligent ones do not practice ethical discipline for their own aims;
They see the flaws in the prison of cyclic existence
And aspire to release the entire world from it.
So of course they do not practice it for mundane aims.*

And also:

*Injury done to the wise is not harmful
Because they possess the good quality of patience,
Like the best of very tame elephants
Who are patient with many different tasks.
Perseverance by itself ends in exhaustion;
If aided by its ally, wisdom, it achieves great purposes.*

And also:

*How could the supreme delight and bliss of such meditative stabilizations
Be established in the minds of crude people who rely
Upon reasoning that has led them to a wrong path
That is polluted by the great fault of accumulated errors?*

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Here there's a point that Geshela often speaks about. In the third verse the last two lines read;
Perseverance by itself ends in exhaustion. If aided by its ally, wisdom, it achieves great purposes.

Effort without wisdom can be dangerous because simply pushing in this way means that you run the risk of wanting to give up once you become tired. You get exhausted and you don't feel like doing it anymore. Why must you have wisdom? With wisdom, effort does not have to end in exhaustion. It's aided by its ally and used to achieve great purposes. This is important isn't it? We don't want to push ourselves in this way. If you don't understand something go and ask someone about it. Have a discussion about it, talk it over. Otherwise you'll reach a point where you no longer want to read through the text, you'll no longer want to look at these subjects. So, it's important. Don't push and be skilful in the way that you make your efforts. We all need the help of wisdom.

Two good qualities which may appear to be mutually exclusive prove to be non-contradictory for those who have wisdom. When bodhisattvas have become universal monarchs with authority over the entire world, the four continents, they still do not fall under the control of sensory objects. This is the power of having wisdom as a royal minister.

Similarly, the bodhisattvas' love that views living beings with affection is intense, but it is not mixed with even a trace of attachment; although they have a long-lasting and very forceful compassion that cannot bear for living beings to suffer, they do not have the laziness of being overcome with distress and thereby lacking enthusiasm for virtue; they have immeasurable joy, but their minds are free of instability which would distract them from their focus; and they are continually possessed of great impartiality, but they do not neglect for even a moment the welfare of all living beings. Wisdom does all this, because it is what removes the impediments to achieving a balanced strength in these good qualities.

There is truth to that; it seems that wisdom will do all this for us. It is clear isn't it?

What removes obstacles? Wisdom removes obstacles. That's the point.

Thus the Compendium of the Perfections states:

*Even bodhisattvas possessed of great kingdoms,
Who have sensory objects similar to divine substances,
Remain uncorrupted in their very nature. [453]
This is the power of having the virtue of wisdom as their minister.*

*Their love, [their loving kindness] inseparable from helping others,
Is utterly free of stain from attachment.
Their compassion, unable to bear for others to suffer,
Never succumbs to laziness due to the burden of distress.*

*Possessed of supreme joy, they do not waver from the real.
Their great impartiality never neglects the welfare of beings.
Great wisdom removes all that would counteract
These good qualities, and so it beautifies them.*

All these quotes are from the master Aryasura. He's the one that wrote the text on the twelve deeds of Buddha used by the Tibetans - stories of the Buddha before he attained enlightenment.

Matrceta's Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honor (Varnarha-varna-stotra) also says: 356

*Without rejecting the real nature,
You are also in accord with the conventional.*

Thus, you do not have to forsake the real nature that gives great certainty that there is not even an atom of what your cognitive processes apprehend as signs of true existence[that is to say what your mind fixates upon and holds to be truly existent]. And you are also in accord with and do not contradict the conventional that gives deep certainty that effects arise from their respective internal and external causes and conditions. For others these appear to totally exclude each other, but for those who have wisdom, there is compatibility and a lack of contradiction.

'Apprehends as signs' is a technical term which means apprehending something to have true existence - apprehending the signs of true existence. It mentions in the text here the point of fixation that our cognitive processes apprehend as signs. To talk about this in terms of inherent existence, for instance, the misapprehension that holds something to exist inherently has this point of focus - inherent existence to put it simply. Inherent existence is the point of fixation, or the reference point for that misapprehension. Yet, things don't have even an atom or particle, of inherent or true existence.

Beings - ordinary sentient beings apprehend things as existing inherently even though not a single thing exists inherently.

We might find some understanding of how phenomena lack inherent existence but as this understanding becomes greater it is not the case that the real nature, the dharmata, is forsaken. That's not the case at all, because dharmata or the real nature, this emptiness, is not harmed by our knowledge of how things lack inherent existence. What is forsaken is the reference point for apprehending signs, for grasping at true existence, for grasping at inherent existence. That is true existence or inherent existence itself - that's what's forsaken through finding an understanding of the real nature.

What's more is that:

you are also in accord with and do not contradict the conventional that gives deep certainty that effects arise from their respective internal and external causes and conditions.

The Precious Lord is talking about the very issue we've been discussing on Tuesday nights - he says:

For others these appear to totally exclude each other, but for those who have wisdom, there is compatibility and a lack of contradiction.

Some people think that if something doesn't exist inherently then it cannot exist at all. They assert that emptiness and the interdependence of cause and effect are mutually exclusive. What is interdependence? One aspect is that things arise in dependence on causes and conditions. For the people who think in this manner, emptiness is seen to be mutually exclusive with interdependence, but for those who have wisdom there is compatibility and a lack of contradiction between these two.

For wisdom, or for someone with wisdom, these are not contradictory.

The Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honor states:357
[Please read the text along with us.]

*Regarding your proscriptions and prohibitions,
Some of your word is definitive
While some of it is not,
But between these, there is no contradiction.*

The two facts—that there are many dissimilarities in proscriptions and prohibitions between higher and lower vehicles and between sutra and tantra, and that these are all the practices of a single person — are contradictory for those who are confused and lack the power of intelligence to seek the intended

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meaning of the innumerable scriptures. Yet through wisdom the learned know that these are not mutually exclusive.

If you do not have wisdom, you will have problems and you will see these things as mutually exclusive. If you do have wisdom, you will not have those problems and you will see how they are without contradiction, how they are not mutually exclusive.

There are limitless things that the unwise see as contradictory and the wise see as lacking contradiction—the presentations of the two truths and the many prescriptions in one scripture that are prohibitions in others and vice versa. To say that wisdom distinguishes the non-contradictory, intended meaning behind them is the peerless praise of wisdom. [454] In short, all good qualities come from wisdom. The Compendium of the Perfections says:358

*How wondrous that such excellent things come from wisdom
That is like a mother who loves her child.*

*The ten powers of the sugata, most excellent of strengths;
All superior activities, without parallel;
And all other collections of virtues in their entirety
Arise based on such wisdom as their cause.*

*The arts and the best treasures in all worlds;
The variety of sacred learning that is like an eye;
Protections, awarenesses, mantras, and so on;
The different attributes of the teachings that set these forth;*

*The multitude of enumerations; and the doors to liberation;
All such types of service to the world
That display the great power of the conqueror's children,
All arise from the power of wisdom.*

In short, all good qualities come from wisdom. Although Lama Tsong Khapa quoted quite a bit from Aryasura and from *The Praise in Honour of One Worthy of Honour*, there's not a whole lot in here that you wouldn't understand. We need to go over this section, reading through it again and again, so that we begin to understand just how important and how precious wisdom is – so we develop faith in wisdom. That in turn will lead us to develop the aspiration which thinks “How good it would be if I could develop that wisdom” and then you want to attain it. Thus a liking for and an aspiration for wisdom arises which then leads to our developing wisdom itself.

Geshela often says that seeing the good qualities of wisdom is developing faith in wisdom, doesn't he?

If you develop the desire that thinks, “How good it would be to develop wisdom” then you've developed aspiration in wisdom.

Together with that comes a continual liking for wisdom, this is resolve or affinity.

Then you apply yourself to the methods for developing wisdom and there is a sense of delight - joyous effort.

You follow the process and once you develop joyous effort then whatever practices you're concerned with, be it generosity or something else, come about through the strength...through the force of applying yourself to the training with joyous effort.

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This is how we develop; that's what Geshela's talking about – how we all can develop and improve.
First we develop the faith that sees the good qualities of a thing, and then we develop the aspiration that wants to attain that thing, and then you have this resolve or affinity, and then comes joyous effort and through joyous effort we develop.

That's the end of the section on the benefits of having wisdom. Now we look at the faults of not having wisdom: they are as follows:

Without wisdom, generosity and the other perfections are as if blind. The Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines states:359

*How could billions of blind people without a guide,
Who do not know the way, enter the city?
Once these five perfections lack wisdom, they are blind;
As they lack a guide, they cannot reach enlightenment.*

We practice the six perfections eg generosity, in order to achieve buddhahood.

What do we need? Of the six, wisdom is listed as the last, but actually it's required all the way through. In order to achieve buddhahood through the practice of the six perfections, you must understand buddhahood or enlightenment; you have to know the thing that you're striving for, understand the purpose and understand the way to achieve it. You have to understand the motivations that are necessary if your practice is going to become a cause for buddhahood – so you must know the intention. You must know the way to actually apply yourself in practice and you must understand the result that you're striving for. Do you think that if a person did not have wisdom about these different elements, that person would be able to attain buddhahood through practice? Of course not.

So, a person who practices the six like generosity must know how you achieve buddhahood – they must know that from the start, mustn't they?

It's quite a clear analogy in the text. It talks about a number of blind people who don't know the way to the city. They are not going to make it to the city are they? You don't know where they're going to end up, do you?

Consequently, generosity and the other perfections do not become pure, and you do not find the correct view. The Compendium of the Perfections states:360

*If those intent upon the final fruit are without wisdom,
Their generosity does not purify them. The Buddha said,
"Giving for others' sake is supreme generosity."
Other kinds of giving serve only to increase one's wealth.*

And also:

*Ethical discipline does not become pure
Unless wisdom's light dispels the darkness.
Ethical discipline without wisdom usually
Becomes sullied by afflictions through faulty understanding.*

And also:

*If your mind is muddled by the fault of erring intelligence,
You have no interest in keeping the virtue of patience,
You maintain a dislike for weighing merit and fault,
And are like an unworthy king who becomes famous. [455]*

And also:

*For adepts, wisdom is lauded as foremost;
Nothing else is as subtle or profound.
Without wisdom, you do not head straight for the mental path
That is unclouded by the defects of desire.*

And also:

*Without maintaining joyous effort in wisdom's ways,
Your view will not become pure.*

In the couple of verses above it mentions an unworthy king who becomes famous:

Here, the "king who becomes famous" refers to an unworthy king for whom fame occurs once, but then declines.

You do not repel the darkness of delusion's confusion as long as wisdom's great light does not shine, but when it does, you cast away the darkness, so you must make an effort to generate wisdom with whatever capacity and strength you have. The Compendium of the Perfections says:361

*Like the dawning of the sun's great light,
The enormous power of wisdom's light arises
And the concealing darkness in beings' minds
Is completely dispelled, only its name left behind.*

It's quite clear isn't it, not so difficult. What is it that dispels this lack of understanding – wisdom overcomes what we don't understand. We overcome not knowing through the development of wisdom.

And also:

*Therefore, with all the power at your disposal,
Work hard at the methods for producing such wisdom.*

Here's the advice in two lines.

Keep in mind what Geshela was saying earlier - understand the qualities of wisdom and develop the aspiration that wants to achieve that. Develop resolve and joyous effort. Employ all of these things when applying yourself to developing wisdom.

Lack of wisdom is referred to as confusion. Of course it's also referred to as ignorance, but more generally confusion.

We say that ignorance is the root of suffering, the root of cyclic existence. So you could then say that wisdom is the root of liberation, the root of happiness and that would accord exactly with what's found here.

Those are the two points that are coming to light, aren't they?

What are the causes of this confusion? They are relying on bad friends; laziness; indolence; oversleeping; taking no pleasure in analysis and discernment; lack of interest in the vast variety of phenomena; the pride of thinking "I know" when you do not; the major wrong views; and being discouraged or daunted and thinking, "Someone like me cannot do this," and thus not taking pleasure in relying upon the learned.

They are relying on bad friends – now bad friends refers to those people who create obstacles to your study, reflection and meditation. The main way to dispel this confusion is through study, reflection and meditation, and therefore a bad friend is someone who obstructs or hinders these three activities. It says in English *relying on bad friends* but it's very important that we understand what this actually means. The word here for *relying* is very close to depending on. To rely on bad friends here means that you follow their lead and act as they do, right? So following the lead of and acting as the people who obstruct these three...

Here the word *rely on* is the same word used in relying upon a spiritual teacher. We find a spiritual teacher who can teach the path to liberation unmistakably, we rely upon that person, receiving teachings and then trying to put into practice what they have instructed. This is relying on a spiritual teacher. That's the type of reliance we're talking about here.

Therefore the statement *relying on bad friends* refers to listening to people who obstruct study, reflection and meditation and acting as they do and as they tell us to.

When we're told not to rely on bad friends it means do not follow the behaviour and advice of these people obstruct our practice. We're not being told that we cannot interact with these people. Not relying on doesn't mean not interacting with, does it?

We have to help all sentient beings, we have to work for the benefit of all sentient beings, don't we? Earlier we were encouraged to adopt the attitude that all sentient beings are close to us, that all sentient beings have been our mothers. Earlier we were told to consider others as being close friends but now we're told not to rely on bad friends. So don't make this mistake – we're not talking about tossing out bad friends when we're advised not to rely on them. It's very important that we understand this point clearly.

Laziness; indolence; oversleeping – these are very clear, these do not require any explanation.

Taking no pleasure in analysis and discernment – here's a point that we ought to discuss a bit. Earlier we dealt with this view that some scholars held that all conception is bad, and therefore you shouldn't employ any discursive analysis. They said that just as a cloud whether it be black or white blocks the sun, then conceptions and discursiveness of any type is an obstacle to buddhahood – that was the Ha-shang's view, wasn't it? We talked about how this is not an accurate view.

No pleasure in analysis – so analysis refers to discursiveness, which is related to the word for conception. There are good conceptions and bad conceptions – we want to cultivate the good conceptions and eliminate the bad conceptions.

Lack of interest in the vast variety of phenomena – the Tibetan actually says *lack of interest in the vast* – it is important that we take an interest in and have an affinity towards the vast and the extensive. We need to read vast texts and study vast subjects but it's very important that in doing so we know how to bring everything together – that we know the real kernel of this vast study that we engage in and know what it all comes down to. It's like we travel by plane and cover vast distances but the plane always lands where it needs to - ends up where it needs to go, doesn't it? Similarly we study on a vast scale but we must know what it all comes back to and where it all comes down.

The pride of thinking "I know" when you do not – we should pay attention to this, we need to be careful that we're not always going "Oh yeah I know, I know." It's important that we continually check up on what we think we know and examine whether we actually understand things accurately or not.

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The major wrong views – this refers to karmic cause and effect. This would be one of the main wrong views - rejecting karma and its effects. There of course would be other wrong views like the belief that someone who has certain qualities does not, and so forth.

And being discouraged and thinking, “Someone like me cannot do this,” and thus not taking pleasure in relying upon the learned – this is a point Geshela often makes. We might say “I’m not going to study that because I don’t understand it,” but this is all the more reason for you to study. The reason why you have to study it is because you don’t understand it and so *take pleasure in relying upon the learned* and apply yourself to learning what you do not know.

Actually “I’m not going to study because I don’t know” is a contradictory reason. So please don’t posit contradictory reasons.

The Compendium of the Perfections says:362

*Laziness, indolence, and reliance upon bad friends,
Being governed by sleep, no feeling for discernment,
No interest in the Sage’s most sublime wisdom,
Inquiring under the influence of false pride,
Lacking the faith to rely upon learned persons
Due to attachment to self from feelings of inadequacy,
The great poison of false concepts which are wrong views—
These are the causes of confusion.*

There are nine causes of confusion listed here in the root verse and in the commentary just above. So we’ll leave it there for today.

In brief today we talked about the benefits of having wisdom and the faults of not having it and we talked about the nine causes of confusion.

Buddhist Studies Programme

Subject: Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3

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The *Compendium of the Perfections* says:

*Serve and venerate a guru worthy of trust,
And study to achieve wisdom.*

Once you rely on a learned person, you must study in accord with your capacity, for if you do not, you will not produce the wisdom that arises from study and the wisdom that arises from reflection, whereupon you will not know what to meditate upon. [456] And if you do study, you will produce the wisdom that arises from reflection by thinking over the meaning of what you have studied, and from this you will gain vast wisdom that arises from meditation.

We are advised not to divorce our study, reflection and meditation from one another.

The first of these three is study, or more literally hearing. There's a wisdom that arises from study and there's a wisdom that arises from reflection – reflection on what you have studied. There's also the wisdom that arises from meditation – you meditate on what you've reflected upon. These three – study, reflection and meditation - are three unique causes of wisdom. These three are usually presented as cause and effect.

They are cause and effect in the sense that to develop a wisdom that arises from meditation you must have an awareness that arises from reflection. In order to develop an awareness that arises from reflection, that is a product of reflection you might say, you must study what it is you're going to reflect on. So you have to have an awareness that is a product of study.

Again the glorious Aryasuraya says:364

*Little study is like being blind, you know not how to meditate.
Without study, what could there be to reflect upon?
Therefore, from the cause of making an effort to study
You meditate in accord with reflection and thereby gain vast wisdom.*

The master Aryasuraya is very clearly stating that these three are like cause and effect.

The venerable Maitreya also says in the Sublime Continuum:365

*The conceptualizations of the three spheres
Are asserted to be cognitive obscurations,
While conceptualizations such as stinginess and the like
Are asserted to be afflictive obscurations.
Solely wisdom is the cause
Of their elimination, nothing else,
So wisdom is supreme. Study is its basis,
So study is supreme.*

The quote mentions *the conceptualizations of the three spheres*, which is understood to be for instance, a conception of true existence. It states that these are cognitive obscurations. This is the position of the Middle Way Autonomists. For the Consequentialists, these conceptualizations of the three spheres,

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whether it's a conception of true existence, or conception of self, are not considered cognitive obscurations, they're considered afflictive obscurations. So what we have here is a presentation from the Autonomist point of view.

We have the two obscurations – the cognitive and afflictive obscurations, or cognitive and emotional obscurations.

All obscurations that mainly hinder or prevent the attainment of liberation are afflictive obscurations. All obscurations which mainly act as obstacles to the attainment of buddhahood or omniscience are cognitive obscurations.

You could posit these as the definitions for cognitive and afflictive obscurations.

What is the subtle conception of the self of persons according to the Middle Way Autonomous school?

Student: Grasping at a self-sufficient substantially existing self.

Geshela: According to the Middle Way Autonomous school, the subtle conception of a self of person is the conception that the person is self-sufficient and substantially existent. Therefore the subtle selflessness of a person would be the absence of a self-sufficient substantially existent person.

That is the subtle grasping at self of persons that is the root of cyclic existence. All tenet schools say that the subtle grasping at self of persons is the root of cyclic existence. Autonomists say that this should be understood as a misapprehension which grasps at or conceives of a self-sufficient and substantially existing person. The Mind Only school also describes it like this.

According to the Middle Way Autonomous school, to conceive of a person or a phenomenon other than persons as existing truly is a case of grasping at the self of phenomena. According to this school that's not an afflictive obscuration, that's a cognitive obscuration.

The Sublime Continuum says:

*The conceptualizations of the three spheres
Are asserted to be cognitive obscurations,*

So this presentation is given from the Middle Way Autonomist perspective. Consequentialists would not accept this. What do consequentialists say, or posit, as the subtle grasping at the self of persons?

Student: The misapprehension that grasps at an inherently existent person.

Geshela: That's correct. According to the Consequentialists the misapprehension which holds a person to exist inherently is the subtle grasping at the self of persons. This is held to be the root of cyclic existence, the root of suffering.

For the Consequentialists the misapprehension which holds the person to exist inherently is an afflictive obscuration.

You then have a misapprehension which holds phenomena other than persons to exist inherently. This is grasping at the self of phenomena. You are holding them to exist inherently as before, but this time you're holding phenomena other than persons to exist inherently. This is also considered an afflictive obscuration.

One of the unique features of the Middle Way Consequence school is that they hold the misapprehension of phenomena - grasping at self of phenomena - to be an afflictive obscuration.

So according to the Middle Way Consequence school what is this misapprehension which grasps at a self-sufficient substantially existent person?

Student: Coarse grasping at self of persons.

Geshela: That's correct. Mind Only and Middle Way Autonomists consider that to be subtle grasping at self of persons. For Consequentialists it is a coarse grasping at self of persons.

There are two obscurations - afflictive obscurations and cognitive obscurations. The Middle Way Consequence has a unique way of presenting these two obscurations and how to purify them. According to the Sera Je understanding of the Middle Way Consequence school, there are no consciousnesses which are cognitive obscurations. That's Jetsunpa's position. In the manuals of Drepung Gomang they say that there are consciousnesses which are cognitive obscurations, and they cite as their source Lama Tsong Khapa's commentary to Chandrakirti's text known as *Illuminating the Intention of the Middle Way*. In that text Lama Tsong Khapa uses the phrase 'the ignorance which is a cognitive obscuration.' He doesn't give any illustration of this but he uses the phrase 'ignorance which is a cognitive obscuration,' so the Gomang textbooks cite this saying that there is a cognitive obscuration which is a consciousness. This is a point of debate between different monasteries and schools. According to Jetsunpa and Sera Je, within cognitive obscurations you have imprints, but no consciousnesses.

Jetsunpa says the phrase 'ignorance which is a cognitive obscuration' found in *Illuminating the Intention of the Middle Way* is a case where you're simply using the word ignorance but you're not referring to a proper type, or fully qualified form of ignorance. In other words they're calling something which is not ignorance, ignorance.

*Solely wisdom is the cause
Of their elimination, nothing else,
So wisdom is supreme. Study is its basis,
So study is supreme.*

And Santideva's Compendium of Trainings says:366

*Be patient and then study;
Stay in a forest, and then
Persevere at meditative equipoise.*

His auto-commentary to this says:367

With impatience, you become disheartened and cannot forbear (be patient), so your perseverance at study, etc., declines. And without study, you do not know the means for either meditative stabilization or for clearing away the afflictions. Therefore, without becoming disheartened, study.

And the Questions of Narayana Formula also says:368

Just so, child of good lineage, if you study, wisdom will come. If you are possessed of wisdom, the afflictions will be stilled. Once you have no afflictions, demons do not have a chance with you.

Scripture and reasoning establish the following: Those who wish to properly practice the teaching need a broad study of the stainless scriptures and their commentaries, the unexcelled cause that gives rise to the wisdom which thoroughly distinguishes phenomena, which is the sacred life-force of the path. [457]

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However, not achieving wisdom while thinking that a broad study is necessary to develop it is simply the fault of your not being convinced that you need the analytical meditation of discerning wisdom when the time comes for practice, and of having the mistaken conviction that thinks that analytical meditation is not necessary. Therefore, those of you who want what is best for yourselves should eliminate such a mistaken conviction as though getting rid of poison.

The source of happiness has its root in wisdom. Of course we talk about how loving kindness, compassion and the mind of enlightenment, how all of these lead to happiness, but even those need to be combined with wisdom.

We need to recollect the good qualities of wisdom but we also need to be careful, because there are certain faults that can come about with wisdom. That is, when a person thinks that knowledge is most important but fails to apply that to their minds, it can lead to pride, envy or jealousy and all sorts of negative states. We need to be careful not to do that yet we also need to recollect and try to cultivate the good qualities of wisdom.

It's a mistake to think we don't need analytical meditation, that we don't need discerning wisdom. That's the view of Hashang.

Nal-jor-bachen-bo said:

Jo-wo-pa, when it comes to accomplishing the state of omniscient enlightenment, whether you show off or conceal that you studied only a handbook, you cannot get anywhere without reading a yak's load of books.

We reckon that we can draw a great essence out of something very small. There's the danger we fall prey to that attitude.

If you're like Milarepa and you've got all the realisations behind you, directly imbuing your mind, then perhaps all these books and study are not necessary. But for the rest of us, then study and reflection and consulting with these texts is indeed very important. It's indispensable.

Pu-chung-wa placed an opened sacred text beside his pillow and said:

We must learn the texts, so even though you do not get a chance to read them, make a wish to read them all. If someone said that you should practice the teaching without understanding it, how would you do it?

Bo-do-wa said three times to a monk of Jen-nga-wa who was escorting him a short distance, "You are enjoying yourself too much." He then continued:

You rely upon my teacher who is like the sky covering the earth, so do not salivate over other teachers. Since you do not have to read the root texts and their commentaries and mark their corresponding passages, you do not have a lot of work. You are happy because you do not think about cause and effect, while you work at certain activities by means of certain tantric practices. And you can be satisfied with these many things?

Right, here we come to it...listen to what Sha-ra-wa said:

Until you become a buddha, your studies are not finished. They are finished when you are a buddha.

They talk about the path of No More Learning, right?!

Some say, “When you practice the teachings, what need is there of knowledge,” and they degenerate. This idea is a real danger for those of us who have studied little. Others say, “If you really try you do not need knowledge.” This is very dangerous. If you are making a big effort at the teaching, knowledge is required; since it is not completed in this brief lifetime, we must resolve, “I will study continually through many lifetimes without interrupting the succession of lives having leisure and opportunity.” Some think that meditators do not need to study, only those who explain the teachings do. But those who explain the teachings and do not study merely run the risk of sinning, while it is precisely the meditator who must study to avoid straying from the path. [458]

It's possible that some people might think that if you're going to be a teacher who explains things to others then you've got to study, but if you're just going to meditate you don't need to study. That's clearly not the case. To meditate, you must study to develop the understanding of what you meditate on. Besides that, the one who explains the teachings needs to meditate on everything him or herself as well. In fact, in the four means for gathering disciples, the last two are working at the aims, and consistency of behaviour. So you must apply the very things that you are instructing others to do. You must meditate on them as well.

Thus you must be convinced that wisdom and the study that causes it are indispensable for proper practice. Moreover, unless you reach certainty about the need for analytical meditation when you practice, you will have a very hard time getting anywhere.

Even some well-regarded scholars of the scriptural collections claim, “Understand study to be either a mere preliminary to practice or to be a background support — like mountains at the back of a valley — but not the actual instructions. For this reason, you need practice to quickly attain buddhahood and study to benefit the Buddha's teaching.” This is contradictory nonsense.

In the buddhist teachings you have the teachings of scripture and the teachings of realisation. The teachings of realisation could also be called the teachings of practice, or accomplishment. For us to achieve enlightenment we must have the teachings of practice, which are the three trainings - the training in ethics, the training in concentration and the training in wisdom. The teachings of practice are most important.

The teachings of scripture refer to the three scriptural collections of the teachings of buddha.

‘For oneself to achieve buddhahood, you need the teachings of practice. To benefit the teachings, you need the teachings of scripture and study.’ To say that is contradictory nonsense - separating the two and making this type of assertion is contradictory nonsense. As it says:

There are just two kinds of teaching: teaching as scripture and teaching that has been put into practice (where the former makes known the procedures for practice, and the latter is assimilating the practice after you have understood the procedures). Therefore, doing the practice without error is the best way to uphold the teaching. Moreover, unerringly upholding the teaching in the sense of practice depends upon an unerring understanding of scriptural teaching.

It's important that the teachings of practice are unmistakable, but in order to have an unmistakable practice, we must have an unmistakable understanding of the teachings of scripture.

Therefore, it is not right to forget what you have studied at the time of practice, for you must first know many teachings and then put their very meaning into practice when the time comes to do so. Even if you do not understand the teachings from the outset, do not be discouraged, but strive to study them in accord with your mental capacity, as much as feasible, whether that be a little or a lot.

Whatever your level of knowledge, retain that knowledge. That's what you're meant to be practicing. That's very important.

Even if you do not understand the teachings from the outset, do not be discouraged, but strive to study them in accord with your mental capacity, as much as feasible, whether that be a little or a lot.

If you have ten people studying together, there's no way that everyone's going to come out with the same level of knowledge. There will be differences due to the degree of familiarity people have from the past. But since the degree of familiarity we have from the past influences how much we understand in the present, then if we work really hard to develop a lot of familiarity in this lifetime, it's going to get easy for us in the future.

Do not make study and practice into separate things. Rather, the very thing that you practice must be exactly what you first study and reflect upon. The practice of beginning bodhisattvas who fully complete the path in its entirety without becoming biased toward one side requires that they depend with certainty on a particular stage of the path.

When their mental capacity is small, they engage in conditioning themselves to just this process of study followed by practice. If their mental capacity is great or, though at first small, has become greater through conditioning, they steadily expand upon the very stage of the path they know, proceeding in connection with all the scriptures and their stainless commentaries. There is no need for them to pursue something else to study besides these. [459]

Therefore if instructions are accurate and complete, then, although abbreviated, all of the key points of the sutra and tantra paths and the paths of the higher and lower vehicles must be covered; once they have been explained at length, you must be able go through all the teachings. Until you reach something like this, it is possible to feel delight about just some portion of your practice, but it is impossible to become certain about the key points of practice for the complete corpus of the teachings. Consequently, rely upon excellent teachers and companions. Make a foundation of pure ethical discipline to which you commit yourself. Listen again and again to the instructions, do four sessions of meditation, and then sustain the object of meditation and its subjective aspects.

After you have made fervent supplications to the deities and gurus, strive at all the causes of engaging from many perspectives in accumulating the collections and purifying obscurations. If you do this, you will become profoundly certain that the good qualities in your mind will steadily improve.

It's important to do the things that are mentioned here. Make *fervent supplications to the deities and the lama*. Gather the accumulations and *purify obscurations*. Even if your wisdom is good, if you lack the support of merit it's difficult for the wisdom to do what it's meant to, so these different things are important as supports for our wisdom.

They say that a person with merit accomplishes all of their deeds, or all the things they set out on. There seems to be something to that. A person with great merit engages in an action or endeavour and things tend to work out for them, whereas when a person has weak or meagre merit, they might be doing the very same thing, but things don't work out well and they run into all sorts of problems. We see this kind of thing, don't we? We have a similar concept in English - 'That person has good luck'.

As the former excellent beings said:

Make all the teachings you have previously heard completely clear in your mind. You must reflect upon them again and again, evaluate them, and deliberate on them.

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Think about how much material we've covered thus far, over 500 pages in the English translation. It would be difficult to recall each and every single word of the text to repeat, but we can still think about it in a very general way. For instance, we start off with the section of the proper way to rely upon a spiritual teacher. The Precious Lord makes a point about how vital it is to rely upon a spiritual teacher when setting out on this path. Then in order to inspire us to adopt the practice, he talks about the pleasures and opportunities, the great meaning they can have, how significant they can be, how difficult it can be to find them, and then he talks about death and impermanence. Then, so that we do not fall into the miserable realms but rather continually take rebirth as a human with pleasures and opportunities, the Precious Lord encourages us to reflect on the sufferings of the lower realms, then going for refuge, then cause and effect.

So although there's many, many things we could say about this, all the vital points can be condensed down into this. So we are capable of reflecting in a general way about the topics that we've covered.

Then you have the stages of the path that are shared with persons of a medium capacity. There are many reasons why we must train our minds in those stages. To get the reasons in their entirety you'd have to read Lama Tsong Khapa's text, but it talks about for instance, the way in which we cycle through samsara in terms of true sufferings and true origins. He talks about the way we cycle through samsara in terms of the twelve links of dependent arising and describes the process through which we take rebirth. He describes these different stages so that we can develop the determination to be free of cyclic existence.

Initially we should try to get a small summary of the lam rims' contents. Then once we get that we work on trying to get a broader, more extensive understanding, proceeding to go on to try and get an even bigger understanding of the contents of the lam rim to arise within our minds. So that slowly, slowly we can build it up.

As it says here, *'make all the teachings you have previously heard completely clear in your mind. You must reflect upon them again and again, evaluate them, and deliberate on them.'*

His Holiness the Dalai Lama was receiving teachings, personal instructions on the mind of enlightenment from Kuntu Lama Rinpoche and in giving the teachings it became quite clear that Kuntu Lama Rinpoche had so much material readily accessible to his mind. In other words, he committed all these quotes and so forth to memory. His Holiness remarked on it, saying 'Rinpoche, these quotes and so forth are obviously quite firm in your mind,' at which point Kuntu Lama Rinpoche responded to His Holiness saying 'You must reflect again and again. You must analyse again and again. You must investigate again and again.'

'You must deliberate on them again and again. You must evaluate them again and again.' In fact a similar comment is made in *Ornament of Clear Realisation*.

The *Ornament of Clear Realisation* explains the path of meditation as being a path of meditation or familiarity, due to how you deliberate on things again and again, how you evaluate things again and again, how you cultivate things again and again. Hence, a path of meditation or familiarity.

There are bodhisattvas who realise emptiness before they even achieve the path of accumulation. Once they've achieved the path of accumulation they continue to meditate on emptiness. They continue to meditate on emptiness all throughout the path of accumulation, the path of preparation, the path of seeing. Meditating on emptiness throughout until they completely perfect that capacity, so they develop very strong and potent powers.

When you have let yourself forget the teachings, there is nothing gained by learning to stabilize your attention on one object of meditation. The best meditators are the best teachers. Mediocre meditators

Once you gain a firm certainty from such reflection, you do not pay heed when bad friends say, “All thoughts, virtuous and nonvirtuous, are conceptualizations and are therefore to be eliminated,” but rather think, “The teachings do not say this nor do my teachers assert it.”

Geshela says that Tsong Khapa is having a go at Hashang here.

Otherwise, if you are a person who possesses a little faith but no wisdom, you are like the leading edge of water running downhill — you go anywhere you are led, taking anything said to be true, wanting to cry when you see others crying, wanting to laugh when you see others laugh.

Tibetan lay people are like this. The men and women don't study at all so when a dharma teacher says something they just take it to be true. When they're in an audience and someone starts to cry then they all start to cry, when someone laughs then they all start to laugh. They are really like this. They have enormous faith, but they don't study. They don't listen to what's being said, they just sit there reciting something. Geshela says actually the situation is quite poor.

The Tibetans have a boastful statement – they say that in Tibet, the dharma has spread even to the dirt and stones. So when Geshela was back in his own area he said ‘well OK the dharma has spread to the dirt and stones, but it hasn't spread to the people. What's the big deal?’

There is still the danger that we become like that because in many respects we are a lot like Tibetans. Many westerners emulate Tibetans and the way Tibetans do things. Lay people acting as if studying the dharma is the work of monks and nuns and no one else. So it's important that we don't allow this situation to decline, we don't want this degeneration to happen. It's very important that we continue to study.

It would seem that there is some benefit even if a person only has faith, but Lama Tsong Khapa says it's very difficult to develop or to improve if all you have is faith.

That marks the end of the second section - how to begin the generation of wisdom correct. Here we've looked at the benefits of cultivating wisdom and the drawbacks of not doing so, which brings us to the third section:

(c') The divisions of wisdom

The presentation of the divisions of wisdom has three parts:

- 1. Wisdom that knows (realizes) the ultimate [460]*
- 2. Wisdom that knows (realizes) the conventional*
- 3. Wisdom that knows (realizes) how to act for the welfare of living beings*

(1') Wisdom that knows the ultimate

Wisdom that knows the ultimate cognizes the reality of selflessness, either by means of a concept or in a direct manner.

So here the wisdom that realizes the ultimate comprehends the reality of selflessness either by means of a generic image or in a direct or manifest way. That's all that the precious lord says about the wisdom that realizes the ultimate right and we go on to the wisdom that realizes the conventional.

(2') Wisdom that knows the conventional

*Without making effort at the five topics of knowledge,
Even supreme noble beings do not reach omniscience.
So they must strive for these so as to refute others,
To care for others, and to know everything.*

The topics are distinguished by the different sorts of purposes for pursuing them. To refute those who do not believe in the teaching, you pursue knowledge of grammar and logic. To help those who do believe, you pursue knowledge of the arts and medicine. To achieve knowledge of all for yourself, you pursue Buddhist knowledge. But to attain buddhahood, there are no such distinctions between them; you must pursue all the topics of knowledge.

A bodhisattva must work for the benefit of all sentient beings, developing an attitude of caring for others and familiarising him or herself with that attitude of cherishing others. So in cherishing others they are obliged to try and refute or eliminate any negative misconceptions that others might have. It says to refute those who do not believe in the teaching, or to refute those who do not have an interest in the teaching, you must pursue knowledge of grammar and logic. In other words bodhisattvas must help them overcome their innate misconceptions and help them develop correct ones. They help them to eliminate the erroneous misconceptions they have so that they may develop non-erroneous ones. In this way and others, they can accomplish the welfare of sentient beings through grammar and logic.

We need to think about this. Of course bodhisattvas need to do it - they're the ones working the welfare of sentient beings, that's their job after all, they need to do this. We have to be careful about this attitude because it begins to resemble the attitude Tibetan lay people have about monastics - monastics have to study, that's their job.

Why is it necessary for bodhisattvas to do such things? Because a bodhisattva has a mind of enlightenment. They must do these things because they cherish others. They must do these things because they're trying to achieve buddhahood. The same things apply to us don't they - we're also practicing the mind of enlightenment, we also want to become buddhas. There's the danger that we adopt an attitude where we're separating, saying "oh that's the bodhisattvas," excluding ourselves. We also cultivate and try to practice this mind with the two aspirations so it's necessary for us to do these things. Take a bodhisattva, it must study these five topics of knowledge because they are practicing the mind of enlightenment. Oh so it follows that *you* must study these five topics of knowledge because you practice the mind of enlightenment.

Logic - the ability to follow a line of reasoning is very good. You become steadfast or stable, you become a witness to yourself.

To achieve knowledge of all for yourself, you pursue Buddhist knowledge. But to attain buddhahood, there are no such distinctions between them; you must pursue all the topics of knowledge.

What they're saying is that each of the five topics of knowledge have their own specific functions but they're all required to attain buddhahood.

(3') *Wisdom that knows how to act for the welfare of living beings*

Wisdom that knows how to act for the welfare of living beings knows the way to accomplish blamelessly the welfare of beings in their present and future lives.

(d') *How to practice*

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*When you develop the three types of wisdom, you do so in association with the six supremacies and all six perfections. The generosity of wisdom is establishing others in wisdom after you have stabilized yourself in it. The remaining perfections are as presented before.*370

(e') A summary

Even if you have the wisdom that perceives emptiness, it does not become a bodhisattva deed without the spirit of enlightenment, so steadily increase the spirit of enlightenment — the basis of the bodhisattva deeds. Next, aspire to the wisdom of those at high levels and then train your mind in it. From this moment you must strive to produce the three types of wisdom — the method for completing the peerless, great collection of sublime wisdom — and you must study. For, if you do not do this, you contradict the principal precept and will then be destroyed by faults and infractions; in future lives as well you will not take pleasure in broad learning. Consequently, you will be unable to learn the bodhisattva trainings. [461] Whereas, if in this life you strive at the methods of developing wisdom, you prevent the infraction of not training in the six perfections as promised; then in other lives as well, as the Questions of Subahu Sutra says, you will easily be able to complete the perfection of wisdom.

Are there any doubts that you have in this section covered up to now? Do you understand clearly the words that they are using?

Student: What do they mean by ‘blamelessly?’

Geshela: It means without misdeeds, so without negativities. There are deeds that are wrong by nature and deeds that are wrong by prohibition, so it refers to acting for the welfare of others in a way that does not involve these things. Things like killing and harming others are deeds that are wrong by nature – negativities by nature. There are other deeds which are wrong but are not naturally negativities, such as the certain prohibitions the buddha made, saying you’re not allowed to this, you’re not allowed to do that.

For instance you’re not allowed to drink alcohol if you’re ordained, you’re not allowed to smoke cigarettes. If an ordained person were to do one of these things it would be a deed which is wrong by prohibition. It’s not that there’s no negativity involved there. In fact that could become quite a serious negativity if for instance a person, while knowing that this was something they were not meant to, were to disregard that and continue in this behaviour.

It’s like the story Geshela told some time ago about a fully ordained monk who was always getting his zen caught in a thorn bush. When he would go on alms round he would walk by this one bush, and every time he walked by it would catch the zen. So he goes by once it catches the zen, goes by again it catches the zen, and it started to tear the zen apart. So being a fully ordained monk he’s not permitted to cut this living plant, but he disregarded this prohibition thinking “oh well that’s nothing, what’s the point.” With this dismissive attitude, he cut the plant and due to it he had to spend thousands of years as a naga. The act of cutting the plant is not naturally a negativity, but since the buddha had placed this prohibition on fully ordained monks, it’s a deed that’s wrong by prohibition. The reason that it was such a heavy effect was due to the monk’s dismissive attitude about the act. We’re not allowed to have this dismissive attitude towards even small negativities, thinking “oh it’s just a small negativity.” If we have this dismissive attitude then the fault becomes much greater.

Nowadays, from among the six perfections — the center post of both the sutra and tantra paths — there exist in slight measure the stages of the practice of meditative stabilization, but the stages of the practice of the other five perfections have disappeared. Therefore, I have explained the key points of their practice in abbreviated form and a little of the method for generating certain knowledge of them. Below, I will teach at length two topics that come from the classic texts: the stages of how to practice insight — wisdom that observes the real nature and the diversity of phenomena — and the stages of the practice of calm abiding, which is meditative stabilization.

All bodhisattvas who will attain buddhahood do so in reliance upon the six perfections. The Bodhisattva Levels says this emphatically at the conclusion of its discussions of each of the six perfections. Hence, these six perfections are to be known as the one path travelled by bodhisattvas of the past, present, and future. And because these six are the great ocean of all virtues, they are the perfect summary of the key points of practice. The Bodhisattva Levels states:371

Bodhisattvas who attain unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment by these six perfections are called a great river, a great ocean of virtues; generosity and so forth are the most precious causes of all excellent things for all living beings. Accordingly, there is nothing comparable to the perfections' immeasurable completion of the collections of merit and sublime wisdom and their fruit of unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment. [462]

That marks the end of the section entitled "Training in the perfections that mature qualities that you will have when you become a Buddha." The following section is "Helping others to mature - The four ways to gather disciples."

Training in the four ways to gather disciples that help others to mature has five parts:

- 1. What the four ways to gather disciples are*
- 2. The reason they are stipulated as four*
- 3. Their functions*
- 4. The need for those who gather a following to rely on them*
- 5. A somewhat elaborate explanation*

(i) What the four ways to gather disciples are

(1) Generosity is as earlier explained in the section on this perfection. 372 (2) Pleasant speech is teaching the perfections to disciples. (3) Working at the aims is setting disciples to work on the aims as they have been taught, or involving them in correctly taking up these aims. Working at the aims is getting students to practice these things that are described in the text, getting them to engage in those. (4) Consistency of behavior is stabilizing yourself in the very aims in which you have established others, and then training in them. The very person who is instructing must also put them into practice. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras says:373

*Generosity is the same as before; teaching the perfections,
Involving others in taking them up, and involving yourself
Are asserted to be pleasant speech, working at the aims,
And consistency of behavior, respectively.*

The second of these is pleasant speech which here is described as teaching the perfections to disciples. It is called pleasant speech because what you're telling them is unmistakable and is delivered in a respectful and easily understood way.

(ii) The reason they are stipulated as four

Question: Why are the ways of gathering disciples set as four?

Reply: In order to gather a following of disciples for the sake of establishing them in virtue, they must first be pleased. This, moreover, depends on your giving them material things, providing benefit to their bodies. Thus pleased, they first must know how to connect to the path. That is to say, by using pleasant speech to explain the teaching, you cause them to cast away ignorance and doubt, and then to correctly apprehend the aims. Once they have understood these, you cause them to accomplish virtue by working at these aims. However, if you have not accomplished virtue yourself, when you say to others, "You

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have to engage in this, you have to reject that,” they will say, “Why do you tell others, ‘Accomplish this aim,’ when you do not accomplish it yourself? You still need somebody else to correct you.” They will not listen to what they have to practice. But if you are practicing yourself, they will think, “This person is established in the virtue to which he (or she) is leading us, so we will definitely derive benefit and happiness if we accomplish it.” They then either engage in it anew, or (for those who have already engaged in it) do not reject it and become stable in it. [463] So for this you have to be consistent in your behavior. The Ornament for the Mahayana sutras says:374

*Know the ways to gather disciples to be four:
A method to give benefit, involving others in
Comprehending the teachings, involving them in
Engaging, and likewise involving yourself.*

That teaching was spread in India where the four means of gathering disciples were quite important. Geshela is not so sure that that is so in the west. Perhaps we'll leave it there. Any questions?

Student: On the bottom of page 10 it says that ‘to help those who do believe you pursue knowledge of the arts and medicine.’ That sounds a bit exclusive, as if you'll help the believers but not the unbelievers.

Geshela: Generally in helping other people through the dharma you should be helping people who have an interest or an affinity with what it is that you are instructing. Otherwise it can be a bit dangerous or problematic. Actually it's true generally whether you talk about the dharma or the arts or medicine.

The practice of the mind of enlightenment is really amazing. It's the practice that draws in basically everything – it's inclusive. But if you were to explain that to a person who has no interest or affinity in the mind of enlightenment - ‘this is so great, you should practice this’ - there's a danger that even negativities are accumulated.

In six session guru yoga where they describe the root downfalls of a bodhisattva, one is described as ‘teaching emptiness to those untrained.’ You should not explain emptiness to those who do not have an interest or an affinity to it. Similarly you're not allowed to discuss or explain mantra to those who do not have an interest or an affinity. It must be kept secret.

So you haven't misunderstood, it's just the way that you understand the word ‘believe’ - those who have the interest in or affinity. So to those who have an interest in or an affinity, then you pursue knowledge in arts and medicine.

For the people who do not have this interest or affinity, then you work out how you can help them or what you can do that accords with the minds of those people.

Buddha Shakyamuni taught to the disciples of the middle way autonomist and mind only dispositions that things exist inherently, that they exist by way of their own character. Buddha Shakyamuni actually taught this to them, and then on that basis explained karma and its effects, the mind of enlightenment and what to adopt and what to avoid. To people who had an affinity for that he gave those teachings. It's something like this.

Student: I'm concerned about the use of this word ‘mainly’ in the definitions for the two obscurations because when you say that afflictions and their seeds are mainly obscurations to liberation then it implies that they're also obscurations to omniscience, and when you say that a cognitive obscuration is something that is mainly an obstacle to omniscience it implies that it also an obstacle to liberation.

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Geshela: Something that is an obstacle that obstructs the attainment of liberation is necessarily an obscuration that obstructs the attainment of omniscience. If something is an obscuration it's necessarily an obscuration to omniscience.

Speaking from a middle way consequence perspective, when you look at the obscurations you say that of the two - liberation and omniscience - afflictive obscurations are mainly obstacles to liberation. Then you have the imprints – the imprints of grasping at self, grasping at true existence. Of the two - liberation and omniscience - these imprints are mainly obstacles to omniscience.

Imprints are not obscurations that are obstacles to the attainment of liberation. Arhats have these imprints within their continuums. They do not need to be abandoned to attain liberation.

Do you remember what grasping at the self of persons is? Grasping at an inherently existent person. According to the middle way consequence school this is grasping at a self of persons.

So if a person achieves arhatship or liberation that person must abandon the grasping at the self of persons together with its seeds. They do not abandon the imprints. So then your next question ought to be 'what's the difference between seeds and imprints?' That's the question you ought to ask. Would you like to ask that?

The seeds of grasping at the self of persons are the capacities that produce the grasping at the self of persons again, whereas the imprints are leftovers of conditioning or habituation. They do not have the capacity to produce grasping at the self of persons again. Those capacities have all been abandoned.

Geshela has explained this using the analogy of garlic in a sack. If you have a sack that you've kept garlic in for a while it's very easy to remove the 'seeds' of garlic so to speak, these cloves of garlic. You just pick them up and toss them out. It's much more difficult to remove the leftover scent that the garlic leaves behind after it's been kept in there for a while. Even though all the seeds of garlic have been removed, you still have the impression that there's garlic in the bag because the scent of garlic remains. There's still the appearance of garlic in the bag due to this leftover remains or scent.

It's similar with the seeds and imprints here. Once you've abandoned the seeds for grasping at inherent existence, you still have the appearance of true existence left over. So you still have the impression that things exist inherently even though you've abandoned the seeds.

Sentient beings have consciousnesses within their continuums that realize relative phenomena. Any such consciousness in the continuum of a sentient being has the appearance of inherent existence. That is still considered a mistaken consciousness.

Valid cognitions in the continuums of sentient beings are mistaken consciousnesses because there is still the appearance of true existence. So to what can we attribute these appearances? They arise through the power of the imprints.

Let's say you tell someone 'look the relative consciousnesses in the continuum of a sentient being are necessarily mistaken consciousnesses.' That person might then ask 'does that mean that there are absolutely no unmistaken consciousnesses in the continuum of a sentient being?' You would respond that that is not the case. An arya's sublime wisdom of equipoise in one pointed equipoise upon emptiness is an unmistaken consciousness. That's the only unmistaken consciousness that you will find in the continuum of a sentient being.

This is unique to the middle way consequence.

Other than that – an arya's sublime wisdom of equipoise – all other consciousnesses in the continuum of a sentient being are mistaken, according to the middle way consequence school. The middle way

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consequence school and the middle way autonomists have totally incompatible positions in some respects. For instance, according to the middle way autonomist school a valid cognition is necessarily a non-mistaken consciousness, whereas for the consequentialist, valid cognitions in the continuum of sentient beings are necessarily mistaken consciousnesses.

It comes back to whether or not these schools assert that inherent existence is an object to be negated. For instance, Geshela's eye consciousness realizes this mug doesn't it? This mug according to the middle way autonomist is established by way of its own character and Geshela's eye consciousness is unmistaken with respect to it being established by way of its own character. It appears to be that way and it exists in that way – as being established by way of its character.

According to the consequence school this mug does not exist by way of its own character. So Geshela's eye consciousness is mistaken with respect to the appearance of existing by way of its own character. Valid cognition realizes the mug, but it still appears to exist by way of its own character and therefore it's a mistaken consciousness – valid cognition. Valid with respect to realizing the mug, mistaken with respect to its appearance of existing by way of its own character.

We're very fortunate to have this opportunity to study this text so we should rejoice, both as the one who teaches it and us as the listeners. In doing so we accumulate this great wave of virtue. So as Lama Tsong Khapa says, in enjoying our study here we accumulate the causes which can lead to the causally concordant effects in this and future lives whereby we enjoy studying the Lam Rim Chen Mo and these types of texts. This is something we can really take joy in.

We are accumulating the causes, so as support we need to make aspirational prayers. The more extensively you can make your aspirational prayers the better. Make extensive aspirational prayers.

The Tibetans have this saying – I don't know if I can translate it really well. 'If you are as keen as a mountain, in actuality you will get a yak's worth out of it.' The idea being that if you make aspirational prayers as big as a mountain, the results that you get will be at least as big as a yak.

Buddhist Studies Programme

Subject: Lam Rim Chen Mo Module 3

Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering

Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa

Number of the teaching: 15

Date of the teaching: 11th November 2004

In the stages of the path of a person of great capacity, you have the basis or support for the deeds; the mind of enlightenment, and the actual deeds themselves. In the section on the actual deeds themselves, then, you have the means by which you mature or bring your own continuum to maturity; the six perfections, and the means by which you bring the continuum of others to maturity; the four means for gathering disciples. So we've been talking about the four means for gathering disciples.

There are five sections in training in the four ways to gather disciples:

- (i) What the four ways to gather disciples are
- (ii) The reason they are stipulated as four
- (iii) Their functions
- (iv) The need for those who gather a following to rely on them
- (v) A somewhat elaborate explanation

We've already covered the first section. Basically that first section identifies what the nature of each of the four means for gathering disciples are. And then we covered the second section: the reason they are stipulated as four. So we left off yesterday on the third section where we look at the functions of the four means for gathering disciples. This is on page 13 of the supplement:

Question: What do these four ways to gather disciples do for the disciples?

Reply: Generosity makes them fit vessels to hear the teaching, for it makes them happy with the person who explains it.

Maybe they're talking about India. Ho-ho! - for Indians.

Generosity can take different forms; you have the giving of material goods, then you have the giving of dharma, and you have the giving of loving kindness, etc. It would seem that through generosity, then, the listeners are put at ease and become perhaps more pleasantly disposed. Engaging in these types of generosity would seem to make somewhat of a difference, so...

Pleasant speech makes them take interest in the teaching that is to be given, because it gives them a detailed understanding of the aims and dispels their doubts.

Each of these will be explained a few sections later. When we get to that section we will cover them in more detail. This is just a very brief introduction to each of them. So continuing on, the third one reads;

Working at the aims makes them practice in accord with what they have been taught.

Working at the aims and practice!

Consistency of behaviour makes those who have engaged in the teachings not reject them but practice for a long time.

A quote for support:

The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras says:

*By the first they become vessels;
By the second they take interest;
By the third they practice;
By the fourth they train.*

Those are each of their functions. Now...

(iv) *The need for those who gather a following to rely on them*

Because the buddhas have declared these four ways to gather disciples to be what achieves all the aims of all disciples and to be the superb method, those gathering a following must rely on them. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras states:

*Those involved in gathering a following
Rely on this means;
It is praised as the superb method,
Achieving all aims for all.*

‘Gathering a following’; if you were to discuss dharma with some other people then first you ought to set a positive motivation. So that it acts as proper generosity you begin by setting a good motivation with the intention to benefit and so forth. And then, as for actually working at their aims, you would explain to them how it is that you are meant to practice. You should try to explain clearly how they achieve the teaching that you are giving. And then the ‘consistency of behaviour’ would involve you training in and applying the very things that you are encouraging them to do. So you are instructing them in something that both yourself and others are capable of practicing and achieving. It would seem that the purpose of these four means and so forth for those gathering a following is to engender a sense of trust or conviction in others.

‘Pleasant speech’ can be understood in a few different ways; on the one hand, pleasant speech could be understood as teaching in an unmistakable way, the profound dharma, but it could also refer to delivering the teachings that are agreeable to the minds of the recipients. Because if the instructions that you give are not agreeable to the minds of the recipients, it’s not going to be very beneficial, and the idea is to benefit them. There is another aspect to this second type of pleasant speech that would be to deliver the teachings using respectful language; adopting a particular demeanour in giving the teachings. The second of the four means of gathering disciples therefore can be understood in two ways.

(v) *A somewhat elaborate explanation*

It’s in this section that we get the more extensive commentary on each of the four.

There are two types of pleasant speech. The first, pleasant speech associated with worldly customs, means that you first assume a clear expression free of anger, give a smile, and then please living beings in worldly ways, such as inquiring after their health, etc.

First when you start, always show them your teeth, then...ho-ho.

Then it says; ‘you assume a clear expression free of anger’, which is where you sort of give them the impression that there’s no hardship, no difficulty in doing this. I really enjoy teaching the dharma!, yes?

‘inquiring after their health’; you ask “how are you”? “Are you well”? (laughs)

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'Pleasant speech associated with worldly customs' - to interact with them in a way that pleases them. To make everyone feel happy or pleasantly disposed. It would seem that acting in this way so that everyone feels happy is quite important.

So when you ask someone "Are you well?" and they say "No, I'm not well", then you have to; "ooohhh", and you have to sympathise with them and ...ho-ho.

That's the pleasant speech associated with worldly customs. Next, let's look at pleasant speech associated with presenting the perfect teaching:

The second type, pleasant speech associated with presenting the perfect teaching, means that you instruct living beings in the teaching for their benefit and happiness, beginning with teachings on developing faith, ethical discipline, study, generosity, and wisdom.

This second type of pleasant speech involves giving them unmistakable teachings on how to practice faith and ethics, etc., And now we go on to look at the manner in which you speak. Sort of the motivation you might bring to this.

The avenues of pleasant speech are as follows. To an enemy who would kill you, you say helpful words without a fault in your heart. With the very dull-witted, you willingly rise to the challenge, tirelessly giving talks on the teaching and causing them to adhere to virtue.

These are cases in which it would be difficult to speak pleasantly. To begin with; an enemy who would kill you. Geshela says; "I wonder how you would know if someone was about to kill you!" Maybe a person says "hey! I'm about to kill you" at which point then you should be sure to say 'helpful words without a fault in your heart'; even to this enemy who would kill you.

Then, '*with the very dull-witted, you willingly rise to the challenge, tirelessly giving talks on the teaching and causing them to adhere to virtue*' so when a person is very dull-witted, it can be very difficult because of all the different questions that they ask. Because they don't understand, they have all sorts of doubts that they then present to the teacher. So you ensure that you willingly accept their questions and do your best to answer them. As they say: '*willingly rise to the challenge, tirelessly giving talks*'; so you do what you can to answer their questions, and '*causing them to adhere to virtue*'

The first one mentioned was where you have an enemy who would kill you, and this is quite similar to one of the characteristics described in *The Ornament of Sutras* where the qualities of a lama are given. In this text, *The Ornament of Sutras*, they say 'compassionate and patient'. Now when this word 'patient' is described, it refers to being patient with the, let's say, 'misperceptions' *lo-drub* (*log sgrub*) of the disciples. 'Misperceptions' is how they translate it here, but could also be: to go against what is... to accomplish something the opposite of what is.

So let's say that a teacher gives an explanation and the student responds by saying "No, no, no. That's not it" - they kind of turn it on it's head. They turn it all back to front so that they're basically responding in a way that's inappropriate to the situation and to the relationship. So it's not just 'misperception' but it's actually also acting in an inverted or perverted way with respect to what's happening.

So one of the qualities that a lama ought to have is to be patient with this type of behaviour in the disciples, and Geshela thinks that that's quite similar to what they're talking about in the first instance. Look at it. It says; '*you say helpful words without a fault in your heart*'; so you're patient with the disciple who acts in this way. Otherwise Geshela is not quite sure how to explain this '*to an enemy who would kill you*'.

This is quite clear; that you try to, without getting angry, you speak in a pleasant way to them, trying to help them.

In order that persons whose minds have not matured may eliminate obscurations and be reborn in happy realms, you give discourses to them on preliminary practices—generosity and ethical discipline. To persons whose minds have matured, who are rid of obscurations and possessed of a joyful frame of mind, you reveal the foremost and perfect teaching of the four noble truths.

The text distinguishes between people whose continuums are matured, and those whose continuums are not matured. So how do we understand the differences between these two? Well here ‘continuum’ refers to one’s mental continuum - one’s mind. So if a person’s mind is matured, that means that they identify with the teaching that is given, or find it agreeable. So you might even say they ‘get it’ but that’s getting a little bit loose, perhaps. So let’s say the teaching is being given on the determination to be free, or the mind of enlightenment, loving kindness, compassion; this type of thing. So when this teaching is given, there will be certain students who identify with that teaching, and those students are the ones whose minds have matured. But there are also cases in which a student’s mind is not sufficiently mature for profound teachings, in which case it’s inappropriate to deliver those teachings to these people - given that their minds have not yet matured. If that’s the case, then you would encourage them to give up killing, and adopt ethics; these types of things. As it says here; ‘discourses to them on preliminary practices’. So you would encourage them to engage in different behaviours that are considered upstanding or respectable within the world. So you say ‘give to the poor’, for instance. ‘Adopt the ethical discipline of giving up killing’; give these types of teachings. Tell them not to kill so that they won’t be reborn in the miserable realms but rather in the happy realms, etc.,

If a person’s mind has matured, and is free of obscurations and possessed of a joyful frame of mind, in this case you give them the teachings on the four noble truths. In other words, Geshe-la says you teach them which of these are meant to be adopted, and which are meant to be discarded.

You encourage householders and renunciates who are careless to be conscientious, and to those who have doubts you speak elaborately and explain the teaching to them to dispel their doubts.

These are called the ‘avenues of pleasant speech’.

- To those whose minds are not mature, you encourage them to practice generosity and ethical discipline.
- To those whose minds are mature, you give them the teachings on the vital points of what is to be adopted, and what discarded with respect to the four noble truths.
- To those who are careless, you encourage them to be conscientious, and
- To those who have doubts, you give them elaborate explanations so that their doubts may be removed.

That’s it for pleasant speech. So we move onto the next one:

Working at the aims is twofold: bringing the immature to maturity and liberating the matured.

‘Bringing the immature to maturity’: we were just talking about how someone’s mind might be mature or not, correct? We’re talking about the same issue. So first of all; bringing those whose minds are not mature to maturity, and then liberating the mature. To liberate the mature, then you help the person whose mind is mature to become free or liberated from suffering and its causes, or the two obscurations. Freedom from the two obscurations; this type of thing is liberating the matured.

It is also presented in three parts as follows. (1) Involving persons in taking up the aims of this life is causing them to employ means consistent with the teaching that gain, protect, and increase their resources.

We need resources, don't we? We need to gain, we need to protect, and we need to increase our resources. After all, we have to somehow make our way in life and these resources are an important part of that. We want to encourage others to gain and protect their resources in a way that's compatible with the teachings. So do not come by your resources through deception, or through stealing, and so forth. Rather, we should encourage others to accumulate their resources in a 'blameless' way, as it says in the text [yesterday]. In other words, without any misdeeds, or incurring wrong deeds in the process.

(2) Involving persons in taking up the purpose of future lives means to establish persons in the life of a renunciate who lives as a mendicant after they have rid themselves of possessions.

The text mentions 'a renunciate who lives as a mendicant'; so this is referring to the way things used to be in India where the ordained; the renunciates had no possessions, right? So what would happen in the past is that when a person became ordained, their livelihood was gained solely through begging. So what they needed in terms of food, and what they needed in terms of clothing, and so forth, was gained through, as we say, 'begging' or alms. And therefore they had absolutely no need for possessions. This of course was the custom of the land though, wasn't it! There was a tradition where people who became ordained then went on alms rounds, and begged for their required goods. And since there was a custom, then people found it acceptable; they didn't think it was bad or anything.

The vinaya or texts on discipline talk about 'being compatible with the time and place'. In the vinaya it says that our behaviour should be compatible with the time that we're in and the place where we are. This is very important. What's more, let's look at the phrase 'having abandoned possessions' as is found in Tibetan. It says; 'have rid themselves of possessions'. To rid oneself of possessions, or give them up, doesn't necessarily mean that you have absolutely no possessions whatsoever. If you made use of your possessions without attachment, that could also be considered having given up possessions.

If you're not attached to your possessions, then the possessions will not be a fault to your training and your practice. If you are attached to possessions, then even not having possessions can be an obstacle. For instance, you don't have anything but you're attached to possessions so you think that 'Oh, if only I could have these possessions, or these resources!'. In which case, you would have an obstacle.

Remember covetousness? If you have covetousness, then you might not have any resources but you're continually thinking; "Oh! If I could have that..", "If only I would get this!" So it's very important that we are not attached to our resources - our possessions.

Although this is certain to bring happiness in future lives, it is not certain to do so in this life.

If you don't have any possessions, then although it's certain to bring happiness in future lives, it's not certain to do so in this life. You could imagine if back at your place you had not a thing; it could be hard! You get hungry, you get cold, all sorts of discomforts, and so forth. Geshela's is just teasing of course. It's quite clear. It doesn't need any explanation.

(3) Involving persons in taking up the aims of both this and future lives means to cause householders and renunciates to take up freedom from mundane and supramundane attachment, for this generates mental and physical pliancy in the present life, and the attainment of a purified deity and nirvana in the future.

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Do you remember discussing ‘supramundane’, and ‘mundane’? So generally speaking, once you achieve an arya path, then you have a supramundane state, and before you’ve achieved an arya path you have mundane states. But then when you’re talking about calm abiding, in that context they also use the terms ‘mundane’ versus ‘supramundane’. Do you remember this?

Having achieved calm abiding, a person tries to separate from their attachment to the sensory objects of the desire realm and achieve an actual meditative stabilization; mundane paths. Alternatively, a person tries to separate from the attachment of true sufferings, true origins, and sets out on the path to liberation; a supramundane path. So we have mundane and supramundane.

As it says that here, *‘take up freedom from mundane and supramundane attachment, for this generates mental and physical pliancy in the present life, and the attainment of a purified deity and nirvana in the future’*. Deity here is as in a deity of the form or formless realms ie. a deity that has no feelings of suffering. There are no feelings of suffering in the form and formless realms. So that by developing this physical and mental pliancy and pursuing a mundane path you could take rebirth as one of these deities.

The point is that we must try to get others to achieve calm abiding. Once they have achieved calm abiding, then they take up freedom from attachment. If a person were to pursue the mundane paths, then, they would try to go on to achieve an actual meditative stabilization, and in doing so, they would develop freedom from the attachment to the desire realm: mundane. And then if a person were to follow the other course, then they would look upon true sufferings and true origins as being coarse, and look to true paths and true cessations as being subtle. In this way they separate from the attachment to the pleasures of cyclic existence. So in either case; whether you follow a mundane or supramundane path, then you are taking up a freedom from attachment of one type or another.

Again, if you achieve an actual meditative stabilization after you’ve developed calm abiding, you take rebirth as a higher realm deity. There are no feelings of suffering in the higher realms.

It would seem that that’s the meaning of ‘attainment of a purified deity’.

Alternatively, you could follow a supramundane path. There, you reflect on the drawbacks of true sufferings and true origins, and cultivate true paths and true cessations. In which case you go onto achieve nirvana in the future.

Work at the aims even when it is very difficult. It is difficult to induce those who have not previously accumulated roots of virtue to take up virtue.

If a person has never accumulated virtue before, it’s tough to say to them; ‘Hey, accumulate virtue!’ So it’s difficult but work at their aims even when that is so.

It is difficult to work at the aims with respect to those who have magnificent resources because they live in a situation where there are so many grounds for being unconscientious.

Once again, when a person is careless, and doesn’t have a sense of conscientiousness, it’s difficult to get them to begin acting conscientiously.

Then the next one mentions the views of non-Buddhist philosophers. This refers to the views that are in opposition to that of a Buddhist one:

And it is difficult to work at the aims with respect to those who are indoctrinated with the views of non-Buddhist philosophers because they are hostile to the teaching and because of their foolishness do not understand reasoning.

Those are some of the difficulties that you might encounter in working at the aims.

With respect to the stages of working at the aims, you first cause those with childlike intelligence to follow easy personal instructions. Then, when their understanding has reached a middling level, you have them follow intermediate personal instructions. Finally, when their wisdom has greatly expanded, you have them follow the profound teaching and subtle personal instructions.

That's clear. We'll go onto the next:

Consistency of behaviour means that you maintain practices equal to or superior to those in which you establish others.

You have to get others to engage in practice therefore you also should engage in that practice, or something superior; higher than that.

Accordingly, even though in whatever you do you must first focus on the welfare of living beings and not lose your resolve for others' welfare, you must discipline yourself in conjunction with these pursuits.

We must be careful. Our intention should be with the welfare of others. We must continually be thinking about benefiting others. But that doesn't mean that we can act indiscriminately in our behaviour. You know, acting as if 'Oh, this is for the sake of others', and misbehaving and so forth. No! That as far as ones intentions go, always thinking of the benefit of others, but then in your own behaviour, being sure that you 'discipline yourself', as it says.

In particular, for those who have taken vows like the vows of approaching virtue, or the vows of the ordained, it's important that we discipline ourselves and watch the way we conduct ourselves. So intention for the sake of others, in terms of the way we conduct ourselves, be it in a disciplined way. We must really take care so that in our behaviours, we don't go against any of the vows that we have taken.

Triratnadasa's Praise of Infinite Qualities says: [in support of the above explanations]:

*Some who are undisciplined use reasonable words, but
Contradict these words, so they are called "unable to help others to discipline themselves."
Knowing this, you placed all living beings in your heart,
And strove to discipline yourself wherever you had lacked discipline before.*

The four ways to gather disciples also comprise two categories [they can also be subsumed under two categories]: *gathering disciples via material things and gathering disciples through the teaching.*

Giving material things is the first of the four ways to gather disciples. The remaining three of the four ways are included in the second, gathering disciples through the teaching. Furthermore, this latter category includes the teaching of the objects of meditation, the teaching as put into practice, and the teaching for the training in this.

The source for this lies in *The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras* which states:

*The four ways to gather disciples
Are asserted as two ways of gathering:
By material things and by the teaching,
Which means presenting the objects of meditation, etc.*

Here in English it says [I neglected to read it]: 'Furthermore, this latter category includes the teaching of the objects of meditation, the teaching as put into practice, and the teaching for the training in this' Over the last few days we've been talking about the two types of teachings: the teachings of scripture,

© Chenrezig Institute Buddhist Studies Prog. - Lam Rim Chen Mo 2004 lightly edited transcripts for course participants only and the teachings of realization. So we need of course to understand the teachings, and then we need to practice or achieve the teachings for instance, through the three trainings, and so forth. Once you're practicing or have achieved the teachings, then you must familiarize yourself with it. So the teachings that you focus on are the objects of meditation. Then you have the teachings that you practice, and finally, the teachings that you train or become familiar with.

The first category says 'objects of meditation' but it could also be translated as 'the dharmas that you focus on'. So this would be the three scriptural collections, or the three pitakas. And then you try to achieve the contents discussed in those different scriptural collections, which are the "teachings as put into practice'. And then you try to bring that into your continuum; you try to familiarize or cultivate such things, and so; 'the teaching for the training in this'.

Moreover, these four ways to gather disciples are the way all the bodhisattvas of the three times work for the welfare of others, so it is the single path to travel. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras states:

*All those who have gathered disciples,
Are gathering, or will gather them
Do so in this way; therefore, this is the path
For the maturation of living beings.*

I forgot, Geshela mentioned also that in the objects of the meditation; the dharma that you focus on, it's not just the three scriptural collections, but also the Lam Rim Chen Mo can be considered that.

The Precious Lord presents these six perfections here. The last two of course are the perfections of meditative stabilisation, and wisdom. Now wisdom is going to be explained in great detail in the next volume. And then meditative stabilization also has a special section developed to it later, as well. As for the other perfections, Lama Tsong Khapa has explained them quite extensively, hasn't he? Which is quite important since we need to practice them. Remember, once we develop the mind of enlightenment, we try to achieve buddhahood, and these six perfections are the methods that we use to achieve buddhahood. So although it is perhaps difficult to actually apply these and practice them in their entirety, it's very important that we learn about them and try to practice them.

The six perfections, and the four means for gathering disciples are practices of a bodhisattva.

The method or means for achieving buddhahood are these very things themselves. It's through practicing or cultivating these that you go on to achieve that state.

From time to time the Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa will give us bits of advice. So we need to understand these bits. We need to know these bits.

When we look at how extensive these practices and this proposal is then we shouldn't become daunted or discouraged.

It's like the master Santideva said in his text *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*; that there is nothing that doesn't become easier with familiarity. When you just sit back and look at everything, it all seems quite difficult but once you begin to engage in it, it becomes easier.

At the end of each section; on generosity, on ethics, and all the rest, Lama Tsong Khapa makes this point saying that as is explained in the *Questions of Subahu Sutra*, we're extremely fortunate to receive such extensive teachings on the way to practice these. And also we get some sense of the qualities of bodhisattvas; because bodhisattvas are actually engaged in these practices. So when we begin to understand the scope and extent of the practices that they are engaged in, we appreciate the good

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qualities they possess and develop faith in them. Just in studying this, and developing that faith, and a greater appreciation of what bodhisattvas do, we ourselves are accumulating great merit.

Rejoicing and where you think ‘May I too some day develop the ability to practice these teachings in their entirety’. So based on our understanding of the qualities of the bodhisattvas, or the qualities of the six perfections, we develop faith in these things. So we have faith in bodhisattvas, and an aspiration that thinks that ‘May I too develop the ability to practice these’, and also a continual enjoyment of the efforts involved in that, or a continual liking of such things. With these; the faith, and the aspiration, and this enjoyment, comes joyous effort. These three lead to joyous effort. So we must maintain the thought that “May I too develop the ability to practice these”.

It is very extensive, but if we become daunted or discouraged by that thought that I can’t do it, there’s a great fault, as Lama Tsong Khapa says. It’s very clear. It’s as if we don’t even need to ask questions about it because it’s all laid out so clearly in the text, we only need consult the text.

Ok? What practice should I do? Well that question has to be answered by assessing your own capacity. The practice you should do should fit with your own ability. If you try and do a practice that exceeds your own abilities, your vital wind will be disturbed and you’ll go crazy.

The practices that we do should be compatible with our own ability. But it’s important that we understand the other practices that are beyond our ability. For understanding we need wisdom and we should develop together with, or in the wake of, wisdom.

There’s a useful precedent that comes from the stages of the path that are shared with a person of small capacity. We reflected about the sufferings of the hell realms in particular, and in the sufferings of the miserable realms in general. And we saw that simply knowing what these sufferings are isn’t quite enough. For instance, because if you were to look on it as “Oh, that’s just some fairy tale”, “Oh that’s just a story”, not adopting this attitude. Rather, adopting the attitude and the understanding that there are indeed beings who are at the present moment are going through these sufferings, who experience these sufferings in the hells, and in the miserable realms. So taking your understanding and recognising that there are beings going through that right now helps us to engender thoughts like ‘Ah, I don’t want to be there’. “I wouldn’t want to take rebirth there”. “What can I do for the sentient beings there”? It helps us develop a lot of positive states of mind including loving kindness and compassion,

It helps us to shy away from negativities so we abandon negativities ourselves - reflecting on the sufferings of the hell realms.

Likewise with the mahayana, you have bodhisattvas who are at present practicing the six perfections and the four means for gathering disciples. It’s not just a fairy tale. It’s not just a story. There are beings actually doing these things. Thinking about this helps us develop faith in the bodhisattvas; understanding what they’re actually doing. Then it helps us to develop aspiration; “May I myself develop or attain these things as well.” Also then a sense of resolve where you continually enjoy, or you have this continuous enjoyment of such things. These different things lead to joyous effort as well. So when we apply ourselves arises a sense of delight in the actions involved in practicing these things. So this is quite important. We accumulate a lot of virtue or merit in reflecting on these things and applying ourselves to it.

We shouldn’t be daunted or become discouraged. We looked at what the drawbacks of this discouragement are in the section on joyous effort.

Returning to text.

In general, then, though the bodhisattva deeds are limitless, the six perfections and the four ways to gather disciples are their best summation. For, bodhisattvas have just two tasks, the maturation of

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causal collections for their own buddhahood and the maturation of the mind-streams of living beings; they accomplish both of these through the perfections and the ways to gather disciples.

Support for that is found in the *Bodhisattva Levels* which says:

The perfections bring to complete maturation the buddha qualities you will have yourself. The ways to gather disciples bring all living beings to complete maturation. In sum, know these to be the active expression of a bodhisattva's virtuous qualities.

That verse, itself is quite clear

Therefore, I have set forth in this section these two categories of practice. If you want to know them in more detail, look in the Bodhisattva Levels.

So if you want to learn more about these in greater detail, read the *Bodhisattva Levels*.

With respect to the way these practices are done during and after meditative equipoise,

When are the four means of gathering disciples performed? When do bodhisattvas engage in the six perfections? In meditative equipoise or in the post attainment stage after that equipoise? This is the next topic.

the Great Elder says:

*The deeds of bodhisattvas are
The magnificent six perfections and so forth.
The yogi arisen from meditative equipoise
Resolutely accomplishes the path of accumulation.*

Beginning bodhisattvas who have taken the vows of the conquerors' children and are on the path of accumulation practice only the six perfections, whether in meditative equipoise or subsequent to it. They sustain some of the perfections in meditative equipoise and others in the post-equipoise state. Some aspects of calm abiding (which is meditative stabilization) and some aspects of insight (which is the perfection of wisdom) are cultivated in meditative equipoise,

[First a point on translation. It says here that they 'practice only the six perfections' but actually the Tibetan is more like that 'on the path of accumulation, no matter what they do, they never go beyond the six perfections']

Look at this. It says '*Beginning bodhisattvas who have taken the vows of the conquerors' children and are on the path of accumulation, no matter what they do, it never goes beyond the six perfections*'; you might even say never violate six perfections. We can distinguish between the mind of enlightenment itself, and practicing the mind of enlightenment. We've talked about this before. For those of us who don't actually have the mind of enlightenment, we can still practice the mind of enlightenment. So we do; we practice the mind of enlightenment. Now as for the actual mind of enlightenment itself, there's the aspiring mind and the engaging mind. That is, for the bodhisattva who has developed the uncontrived mind of enlightenment. That is what defines a bodhisattva. So an engaging mind is necessarily preceded by the taking of the bodhisattva vows. In other words, anyone who has an engaging mind, necessarily has the vow of a bodhisattva.

In this paragraph then it says *Beginning bodhisattvas who have taken the vows of the conquerors' children and are on the path of accumulation, no matter what they do, never go beyond these six perfections whether in meditative equipoise or subsequent to it* They sustain some of the perfections in meditative equipoise and others in the post-equipoise state. Some aspects of calm abiding and some

That's clear.

So they still have joyous effort remaining. It says here that

Joyous perseverance occurs in both the meditative equipoise and post-equipoise states, while one type of patience—certain aspects of the patience of certitude about the profound teachings—also occurs in meditative equipoise.

Remember this type of patience; the patience of certitude about the teachings? This can occur in meditative equipoise.

The Great Elder says:

*During periods after rising from meditative equipoise,
Cultivate the view that all things
Are like a magician's illusions, as in the eight similes.
Thereby emphasize in post-meditative thought*

*Purification and the training in method.
During periods of meditative equipoise
Continually condition yourself to
Calm abiding and insight in equal measure.*

If you've really realized emptiness and then you might then go and engage in meditative equipoise upon it, when you arise from that meditative equipoise into this post-attainment state, then all phenomena of whatever type appear to be like illusions due to the fact that you have realized that they lack inherent existence.

Like an illusion, like a reflection, like a reflection in a mirror we often times say, so having realized emptiness, engaged in meditative equipoise upon it, and then arisen from that state, things only appear to exist inherently. We automatically ascertain that they do not exist inherently due to that realization. Things only appear to exist inherently yet we can automatically or naturally know that they do not exist in that way. So they are, in this sense, they are like illusions. They are like reflections in a mirror. We talk about subtle conventionalities, or subtle relative phenomena - although they do not exist truly, they exist conventionally.

Therefore in meditative equipoise a bodhisattva emphasizes meditation on emptiness. Then in the post-attainment, or post-equipoise state then the bodhisattva focuses on the practices of the six perfections, and the four means of gathering disciples, all the while knowing that these phenomena are like illusions. In other words, the method aspect is emphasised in post-equipoise, and the wisdom aspect is emphasised in the equipoise state; the practices of a bodhisattva.

This is what the Great Elder Atisha is saying in this quote. He says:

*During periods after rising from meditative equipoise,
Cultivate the view that all things
Are like a magician's illusions, as in the eight similes*

There are eight similes or analogies; like an illusion, like a reflection, like the city of gandharvas, and so forth....

*And thereby emphasize in post-meditative thought
Purification and the training in method.*

*During periods of meditative equipoise
Continually condition yourself to
Calm abiding and insight in equal measure.*

When bodhisattvas whose minds are untrained in such marvellous but difficult deeds hear of them, they feel distressed. Although they are unable to practice such things....

Oh! Geshela says, “here it is, right here!”

Although they are unable to practice such things at first, they come to understand them and then intimately familiarize themselves with them as objects of aspiration. Later they engage in them spontaneously without any strain. Thus, familiarization is of the greatest importance,

Read carefully!

Thus, familiarization is of the greatest importance, for if these bodhisattvas recognized their inability to actually engage in such deeds and then gave up on even the familiarization conducive to training the mind in them, they would greatly delay reaching the pure path.

Here it says that if you don’t even familiarize yourself with such things, hence giving up on them, then these pure paths get further and further away. We only delay our attainment of them.

The Praise of Infinite Qualities says:

*Deeds that hurt the worldly even to hear about
And that even you did not undertake for a long time
You accustomed yourself to, so in time they became spontaneous.
Thus, it is difficult to develop good qualities without familiarization.*

The word they’ve translated as ‘spontaneous’ here could also be translated as ‘automatic’ or ‘natural’.

Those who have taken the bodhisattva vows have no choice but to learn the bodhisattva deeds. But even those who have not adopted the engaged spirit of enlightenment through its ritual strive to inculcate a desire to learn the deeds, thus increasing the force of their enthusiasm for learning them. Then, when they take the vows, their vows will be extremely stable, so make an effort to do this.

From among the stages of the path for persons of great capacity, this concludes the explanation of the stages of the path for training in the aspirational spirit of enlightenment and for learning the deeds of the conquerors’ children in general.

That’s it! Everyone thinks about Lama Tsong Khapa’s text the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* as being something very, very difficult. When we actually look through it, we find that he expresses himself very clearly and that the explanations that he gives at different point are very, very clear. Let’s not forget this. Remember that.

We need to try to understand everything that’s explained in the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* so that we know or understand these points. As for our practice, then we practice or apply these things in accord with our own ability. You can’t very well ask someone to apply everything in the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* because to do that requires that you’re a buddha. But we can try to understand it all and then apply it to the best of our ability.

We’ve now been at this for nearly five months. So everyone; the teacher and us as listeners included need to think about during this time, how much our merit has increased, how much virtue we’ve accumulated, how many negativities we’ve been able to purify. Really quite amazing! But not to leave

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it at that; to then go further and try to become familiar with the material, and try to practice it to the best of our abilities. Then it's even more so. I mean if you just think about the amount of merit we've accumulated, the virtue we've gathered, the negativities we've purified - without limit, really - then to take it another step further and actually try to become familiar with it, and practice it? This is really quite amazing so everyone please do what you can

Any questions?

Student: Could Geshela explain how the practice of the first five perfections in meditative equipoise impacts on the gathering of the two collections - how it relates to. So for instance if you were to practice patience, for instance in meditative equipoise, how would that relate to the gathering of the two accumulations? And which would it fall into?

Geshela: It doesn't actually say practicing the first five perfections in meditative equipoise. Rather it says that some aspects of meditative stabilization and wisdom are sustained in the post-equipoise state along with the first three perfections. In any case, as for patience, you do have one aspect of patience; the patience of certitude about the teachings is practiced in the state of meditative equipoise. For instance, reflecting on the lack of inherent existence is patience of certitude about the teachings. In which case, in meditative equipoise, when for instance you are abiding one-pointedly on emptiness, then you'll be reflecting on the lack of inherent existence - there you have the patience of certitude about the teachings, in which case it would be included within the collection of sublime wisdom.

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Buddhist Studies Programme

Subject : Lam-Rim Chen-Mo Module 3

Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering

Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa

Number of the teaching: 16

Date of the teaching: 12th November 2004

We have ‘just about finished’ going through the *Lam-Rim Chen-Mo*. It says in the Vinaya that when you’ve done something for the most part, it’s been done. At the monasteries there are certain examinations that you undergo in the presence of the abbot. You first memorize a text and then recite it from memory before the abbot. Many memorize Lama Tsong Khapa’s great text, *The Essence of Good Explanations on Provisional and Definitive Meanings*. There was once an older monk who memorised this and went to be examined before the abbot. The procedure is that the abbot is present together with a secretary who keeps track of how far the recitation has gone. After it’s all finished they give the student a khatag and if he has been able to recite the entire text it is marked down that he has done so. If, however, the student only make it part way through, the secretary will mark how many pages of the text they have recited. The abbot and secretary have the text in front of them and the abbot will just pick a page and say, “OK, recite from there,” and the monk will then recite from that point until stopped. The abbot will then pick another page and say “recite from there,” and it goes on like this. There are about one hundred and forty pages in this text and this monk hadn’t memorised them all. He was doing quite well until he got to the last fifteen or twenty pages and the abbot said, “read from there”, and he couldn’t do it. He couldn’t recite from memory because he hadn’t memorised it. The abbot, assuming that the monk had memorised the entire text said; “you didn’t finish memorizing the text did you?” at which point the monk said to the abbot, humbly and with great respect [this happened in Tibet where you have to show great respect to the abbot], “If it’s most of the way done, it’s been done” to which the abbot responded “Yes!” that’s true, that’s true!” and told the secretary to mark it down that he’d memorised it all. So here we have ‘just about finished’ the Lam-Rim Chen-Mo.

We need to really read over this text. We’ve read a great deal of it and Geshela has commented on that. There’s a great difference between reading a section of a text that you’ve had explained, and reading a section that you haven’t had explained, isn’t there. We really need to make an effort to really go through this text, reading over it again and again.

When we’re reading, we need to read skilfully. Geshela thinks this is quite important. If you pick up a newspaper, you just read it to see what’s going on but such an approach can create a lot of problems if applied to reading a text such as the *Lam-Rim Chen-Mo*. We really need to be skilful in the way that we read the text. For instance, if we look at the section which introduces the stages of the path that are shared with persons of small capacity, you cover topics like the great value and meaningfulness of the leisure and opportunities and how difficult it is to find them. Then you cover death and impermanence and so forth. While reading this, we really need to be thinking about just how valuable an opportunity it is that we have, and how great a waste it would be if we did not put this opportunity to good use and make the most of it. We think about the need to practice dharma, the need to practice dharma starting now, and the need to practice dharma in a pure way. As we read then, we set our motivation that we’re reading through this text so that we may understand these points. Reading with such a motivation inspires us or spur us on to really practice the dharma in that way. If we are able to adopt that motivation while reading this text we will not create problems for ourselves. Otherwise, if without such a motivation you approach reading this text as you would a newspaper, thinking, “Oh, let’s see what’s going on,” you’re going to run across things like: death is certain; the time of death is uncertain and you might begin to think, “Oh, how terrible!”.

The stages of the path shared with persons of small capacity also include reflecting on the sufferings of the miserable realms that are described in buddhist texts. When we think, “Oh I really ought to read about the sufferings experienced in the miserable realms”, we should at that point also set our motivation, reminding ourselves that as we read we will try to develop a sincere compassion from the

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depths of our heart, and think that the sufferings experienced in these realms are the effects of non-virtue, and that if we don't want to experience those sufferings, we must abandon non-virtues. If we set such a motivation and then reflect on these points; bringing that attitude to reading these sections, it's going to be beneficial, isn't it. If those are the types of thoughts that occur to us as we go through the text; compassion for others, the recognition that their suffering is the effect of non-virtue, the need for us to abandon that non-virtue if we don't want to experience that, you can see how such an approach would be beneficial.

If you first establish a firm motivation of this type, reading the text is only going to benefit your mind, it's not going to create problems for you.

The most important section in the stages of the path shared with persons of small capacity is that on karma and its effects. After the section we just spoke of, there is a section on karma. There is a general presentation of karma and a presentation of the particulars or specifics related to karma. This topic on karma is what we need to understand and apply. It's the most important topic in that section.

Then reading over the section on persons of medium capacity, you find there are two sections on reflecting on true sufferings and true origins, and the way you cycle through samsara. Basically these explain meditating on the aspects of the four noble truths and the way that you cycle through samsara.

The first topic of the first of these sections is actually called '*reflecting on the truth of suffering - the faults of cyclic existence*' isn't it. The point made is that when you reflect on true sufferings you realise that these are drawbacks or shortcomings of cyclic existence itself, and this helps you develop a wish to emerge from it -the determination to be free. Then how do you become free of these things? By recognising what the origins for that are, and abandoning them.

After those you have the section on the twelve links of dependent arising: '*reflection from the viewpoint of the twelve dependent-arisings*'. These come down to the same point as the previous section don't they? They carry the same type of meaning. The twelve links of dependent arising can be subsumed under true suffering and true origins. Some of the links will be classified as disturbing emotions which are true origins, some will be classified as karma which are true origins, and the remainder as true sufferings themselves. Do you remember?

This is what we need to emphasize when reading over the section on persons of medium capacity. We need to understand the way in which we go through cyclic existence; the way in which we take rebirth, beginning with ignorance, and then consider how we accumulate karma and how we experience the effects of that karma and so forth. This is what we need to read over in these sections.

The most important bits to read over in the section on persons of medium capacity deal with the way you accumulate karma and the way you take rebirth. We must definitely read these sections and understand them.

All sentient beings are bound by ignorance and by karma. This karma is referred to in the second link of composition or karmic formation. More particularly, it is samsaric sentient beings that are bound by ignorance and karma. This is like a prison, isn't it? It's like a prison that we've been locked into that we can't escape from. We are bound by karma and ignorance in the prison of cyclic existence.

We then go to the section on the stages of the path of a person of great capacity, where, as the Glorious Chandrakirti said, the emphasis is on great compassion. Of all the different things you might practice, the principal one is great compassion, and in fact we can reflect on all of the stages of the path, including those found in the section of persons of small capacity and medium capacity, to help us develop the great compassion as taught in the last section. For instance, by thinking about the sufferings that beings undergo in the miserable realms, we try to develop strength in our compassion, then by thinking about the way in which sentient beings suffer in cyclic existence in general, we try to develop

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our great compassion, and then from the very outset, in the stages of the path of a person of great capacity, from equanimity all the way up, we try to develop this great compassion. There are of course other things encountered also, but we must take all these stages as ways to help us develop great compassion. Here this is not just an ordinary compassion, but a compassion that is impartial; that extends to all sentient beings without exception.

It's something like this, isn't it? We talk about this Great Treatise on the Lam Rim being this, this, and this, but that is what it comes down to. We talk of how the seven-fold instructions on cause and effect are practices for a person of great capacity, but we see how, of those, some are causes for great compassion, while others are effects of great compassion. So then, even these instructions come back to the importance of great compassion.

Furthermore, as Geshela and Lama Tsong Khapa both emphasized, we need to do something in order that our virtues do not become true origins in the ordinary or regular sense. Whether virtue, non-virtue, whether you're dealing with pleasant or unpleasant effects, we must recollect that all phenomena lack inherent existence; that there is not even an atom of inherent existence. As Lama Tsong Khapa said, we must remember this emptiness.

When setting your motivation, take these different factors into account. On the one hand you have great compassion and the relative mind of enlightenment. There's not much of a difference. Not just compassion! Great compassion. There is a difference there. So for the side of method, you develop or engender great compassion or the relative mind of enlightenment, and for the wisdom side, you recollect that the nature of things is to lack inherent existence. Method and wisdom are therefore brought together in setting our motivation. It's important that these two are integrated.

It's because things lack inherent existence that we can abandon negativities and accomplish virtue. The fact that we can embrace happiness and get rid of suffering is due to the fact that things lack inherent existence. If things did not lack inherent existence, we couldn't do any of these things. In fact, all of the different things that we strive for are made possible by the lack of inherent existence. Without this lack of inherent existence, there wouldn't be anything to strive for.

Therefore, although reading the text is important, it's important that that reading is done skilfully, or wisely.

In the outline we've gotten up to section 2: *In particular, how to train in the last two perfections*. This follows the first section: *How to train in the six perfections in general*. So we're at the beginning of the third volume.

The most venerable teachers have great compassion; I bow with respect at their feet.

2" In particular, how to train in the last two perfections'

Training in the last two perfections, in particular, is the way to cultivate calm abiding and insight because calm abiding and insight are included under the perfections of meditative stabilization and wisdom respectively. This section has six parts:

1. The benefits of cultivating calm abiding and insight
2. Showing that these two include all states of concentration
3. The nature of calm abiding and insight
4. Why it is necessary to cultivate both
5. How to be certain about their order
6. How to train in each

The benefits of cultivating calm abiding and insight

All of the mundane and supramundane good qualities of the Mahayana and Hinayana are the result of calm abiding and insight. The Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning (Samdhi-nirmocana-sutra) says:

Maitreya, you should know that all mundane and supramundane virtuous qualities, whether of hearers, bodhisattvas, or tathagatas, are the result of calm abiding and insight.

Is that acceptable? First let's start by debating the Precious Lord, or we should say we 'offer a debate' to the Precious Lord. Are there good qualities in the continuum of a person who has not achieved calm abiding and insight? It follows that those are effects of calm abiding and insight, because they are mundane good qualities!

This is the wording found in *The Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning*, which Lama Tsong Khapa will then go on to explain. He has a purpose in quoting this as there is meaning to be drawn from the way it's stated.

Qualm: Are not calm abiding and insight good qualities in the mind-stream of someone who has reached them through meditation? How is it possible for all good qualities to result from those two?

Reply: As will be explained, actual calm abiding and insight are good qualities in the mind-stream of someone who has attained them through meditation, so all the good qualities of the Mahayana and Hinayana do not result from them. However, concentrations which at least involve one-pointedness on a virtuous object are classified with calm abiding; virtuous cognitions that distinguish an ultimate or conventional object are classified with insight. This is what the sutra means in stating that all of the virtuous qualities of the three vehicles result from calm abiding and insight, so there is no contradiction.

Calm abiding and insight are not desire realm minds, they are minds of the higher realms. A person who wishes to achieve calm abiding must go through the nine stages of mental abiding, mustn't they! The ninth stage is one in which a person can effortlessly place their mind on an object in whatever way they please. It doesn't require effort for them to do that. This is the most subtle desire realm mind. There is no desire realm mind more subtle than that.

This ability to effortlessly place one's mind on one's object in whichever way one pleases produces certain effects. It overcomes or stops the negative habitual tendencies of body and mind, giving rise to a pleasure of body and mind, and when that occurs you have achieved calm abiding.

Calm abiding is what is known as 'an awareness arisen from meditation' (*sgom byung gi blo*). It's at that point that you achieve an awareness arisen from meditation. This is the substance of this person's question when they ask; "Are these not good qualities in the continuum of someone who has reached them through meditation"? That's what the debate is predicated on. That's what it's based on.

You achieve a higher realm mind, an awareness that arises from meditation. and calm abiding, at the same time. These three occur simultaneously, the attainment of:

- A higher realm mind,
- An awareness arisen from meditation, and
- Calm abiding.

After you've achieved calm abiding, you can go on to achieve insight. It necessarily happens this way. The order between calm abiding and insight is fixed where calm abiding always precedes insight. It's not possible to achieve insight before you achieve calm abiding. The definition of calm abiding includes the phrase, "being imbued with the physical and mental bliss of pliancy in which you can place your

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mind on your focus in whatever way you please”. The definition of insight then goes on to include the phrase, “the physical and mental bliss of pliancy that has arisen through the strength of analysing your focus from within calm abiding.

We’re not necessarily talking about calm abiding and insight focused on emptiness. Any calm abiding and insight, whatever it’s object, occurs in this way: first calm abiding and then on the basis of that, insight. We will cover the order in which they arise later as it’s part of the outline. Geshela just brings this up now because it’s quite crucial to this debate raised here.

As Lama Tsong Khapa says: so all the good qualities of the Mahayana and Hinayana do not result from them. However, concentrations which at least involve one-pointedness on a virtuous object are classified with calm abiding; virtuous cognitions that distinguish an ultimate or conventional object are classified with insight”

This is what the sutra’s intention is: ‘This is what the sutra means in stating that all of the virtuous qualities of the three vehicles result from calm abiding and insight, so there is no contradiction’.

According to Lama Tsong Khapa’s *Great Stages of Mantra*, a one-pointedness of mind focused on virtue is necessarily concentration. So it says here, ‘*concentrations which at least involve one-pointedness on a virtuous object*’. Therefore, we can say that one-pointedness of mind focused on virtue is necessarily concentration but concentration is not necessarily calm abiding.

Since; ‘*concentrations which at least involve one-pointedness on a virtuous object*’ can be classified with calm abiding and; ‘*virtuous cognitions that distinguish an ultimate or conventional object*’ can be classified with insight, then ‘*there is no contradiction*’ in saying that all the virtuous qualities of the three vehicles are the effects of calm abiding and insight. This is the intention behind that statement found in *The Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning*. In short what they’re saying is that these qualities arise in dependence upon concentration and wisdom.

With that same purport [*with that same intention*], the Sutra of Cultivating Faith in the Mahayana (Mahayana-prasada-prabhavana-sutra) states:

Child of good lineage, this list should inform you that faith in the Mahayana of the bodhisattvas—and indeed, everything resulting from the Mahayana—comes from accurately reflecting on facts and meanings with an undistracted mind.

An undistracted mind is mental one-pointedness, the serenity or calm abiding aspect, while accurate reflection on facts and meanings refers to discerning wisdom, the insight aspect. Thus, you must achieve all good qualities of the two vehicles through both (1) sustained analysis with discerning wisdom and (2) one-pointed focus on the object of meditation. You do not achieve them through one-sided practice of either analytical meditation or stabilizing meditation.

Here is Lama Tsong Khapa’s actual intention. We engage in analytical meditation on those things that require analytical meditation, and we engage in stabilizing meditation on those things that require stabilizing meditation. It’s in this way, by practicing stabilizing and analytical meditation, that we develop the good qualities of the Hinayana and Mahayana vehicles. You cannot achieve these good qualities if you engage only in analytical meditation, or in stabilizing meditation alone.

Also, the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning states:

*Once people have cultivated insight
And calm abiding, they are free
From the bondage of dysfunctional tendencies
And from the bondage of signs.*

We talked about these ‘negative habitual tendencies’, or ‘dysfunctional tendencies’ the other day. Do you remember? We said all sorts of different things about them at that time. Geshela doesn’t recall coming across this statement found here before. Here Lama Tsong Khapa describes very, very clearly what dysfunctional tendencies are. He explains:

Here, "dysfunctional tendencies" refers to latent propensities [*latencies or imprints*] in your mind-stream which can produce increasing degrees of misconceptions;

Actually, rather than ‘misconceptions’, it says erroneous subjects (*yul can phyin ci log*). We have become conditioned, or habituated to erroneous states of mind. We allow these erroneous states of mind to arise and make use of them, such that we now have within our continuum, this ability or capacity to produce increasing degrees of them. In fact we have become so conditioned to them, and have such an ability that they arise nearly automatically, without requiring any effort, they so readily arise within us, don’t they? Lama Tsong Khapa says these dysfunctional tendencies are imprints. Moreover, Ratnakarasanti's *Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom* (Prajnaparamitopadesa) says that insight eliminates or abandons those.

Then, as for bondage of signs Lama Tsong Khapa says:

"signs" refers to ongoing attachments to erroneous objects, which foster those propensities [imprints].

As was stated before, ‘grasping at signs’ refers to grasping at true existence, grasping at inherent existence, these types of things. Yet through the power of objects, we can develop such grasping at signs, such grasping at true existence, such grasping at inherent existence, and this is due to the appearance of those particular objects. So *"signs" refers to ongoing attachments to erroneous objects, which foster those imprints*, which Ratnakarasanti's *Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom* says are eliminated or abandoned by calm abiding.

Interpreter: I was just asking Geshela about the Tibetan, because I wasn’t sure if it was translated accurately and he pointed out that it is indeed a difficult point.

The most subtle ‘erroneous subjects’ [*misconceptions*] are grasping at true existence, grasping at inherent existence, and so forth. Things like pride, attachment, anger, envy are also erroneous subjects, but of a coarser level. We have become habituated or conditioned to these erroneous subjects so that we have the capacity to produce them within our continuum. Those imprints are what we call ‘dysfunctional tendencies’, or ‘negative habitual tendencies’. The *Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning* describes these imprints as *‘the bondage of dysfunctional tendencies’*.

How do we abandon this bondage of dysfunctional tendencies? Well, Ratnakarasanti's *Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom* says that they are abandoned through insight. That’s what he says, isn’t it. But what this means is that they are abandoned through discerning wisdom. In fact it says in *The Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning*, that once someone has cultivated insight, they are free from the bondage of dysfunctional tendencies. Regardless of whether or not this must be a fully qualified instance of insight, it’s clear that these are abandoned by discriminating or discerning wisdom.

All sorts of different objects appear to us; good objects, bad objects, and all sorts of superimpositions, or you might even say ‘projections’, go along with those. A whole variety of them. When a bad object appears to us, we develop anger. When a good or positive object appears to us, we develop attachment. So through the strength of the appearance of these objects, our dysfunctional tendencies are ‘fostered’, ‘increased’, or you might even say ‘awakened’ (*gso ba*). This is the bondage of signs that must be stopped through the strength of calm abiding.

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Whether or not this is fully qualified or actual calm abiding, by placing one's mind one-pointedly on an object of virtue, you stop this variety of binding preconceptions from occurring. In this way through placing the mind one-pointedly on a virtuous object, you can stop this bondage of signs. You become free of the bondage of signs.

The point is that when *The Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning* talks about becoming free from the bondage of dysfunctional tendencies, it's talking about imprints, in particular negative imprints, and when it says that you become 'free of the bondage of signs', that means the imprints will not be fostered, revived or resuscitated. Is that clear? This is, as Geshela says, the reading we would give of this passage based on our understanding.

These are the benefits attributed to "calm abiding" and "insight," but even when the terms calm abiding and insight are not used, there are similar statements about the benefits of meditative stabilization and wisdom.

In short, to abandon or stop these erroneous states, we must cultivate mental one-pointedness on virtue, and discriminating or discerning wisdom, or, as they are describe here; 'meditative stabilisation and wisdom'. These are benefits of calm abiding and insight. Is that sufficient?

Mental one-pointedness is the agent which stops distraction. In fact in the section on meditative stabilisation, it mentions this very point, how mental one-pointedness helps us to stop distraction. Although grasping at the self is taught to be the root of cyclic existence, we can also say that distraction is the root of cyclic existence. That is because through distraction, we develop attachment, anger, pride and all sorts of other disturbing emotions and through the power of that, we accumulate karma. So it's very important that we stop this distraction.

Realize that such statements describe the benefits of calm abiding and insight.

That's enough for this section. Let's move onto the next:

How calm abiding and insight include all states of meditative concentration

The branches, leaves, flowers, and fruits of a tree are limitless, yet the core point at which they all come together is the root. As in this example, calm abiding and insight are the sublime core at which gathers all that the Buddha says about the limitless states of meditative concentration in Mahayana and Hinayana. The Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning states:

Know that calm abiding and insight include all of the many aspects of the states of meditative concentration which I have taught for hearers, bodhisattvas and tathagatas.

Calm abiding and insight include all states of meditative concentration. If something is 'included' within calm abiding and insight, it does not need to be calm abiding and insight. If something is 'classed' as calm abiding and insight, it need not be calm abiding and insight. This is what Lama Tsong Khapa's saying. It's quite clear.

Interpreter: Note that the word I am translating here as "classed" was previously also translated as "orient".

Therefore, since those who are intent on attaining meditative concentration cannot comprehend a limitless number of distinct forms, they should know well and always rely on the techniques for sustaining calm abiding and insight, the synthesis of all concentrations.

Kamalasila's third Stages of Meditation says:

Although the Bhagavan therein presented distinct bodhisattva concentrations beyond number or measure, calm abiding and insight cover all of them. Therefore, we will discuss just that path which unites or integrates, calm abiding and insight.

And, as stated in Kamalasila's second Stages of Meditation:

Since those two include all states of meditative concentration, all yogis should at all times definitely rely upon calm abiding and insight

Are we clear what it means to say, “All concentrations are included within calm abiding and insight”?

- The ways to cultivate all concentrations are included within the way to cultivate or sustain calm abiding.
- The ways to cultivate or sustain all forms of wisdom are included within the way to sustain insight.

The point seems to be that if you know well the way the way to sustain calm abiding and insight then you will know well the way to sustain all forms of concentration. It is in this manner that they are included.

That’s enough for the second section, *how calm abiding and insight include all states of meditative concentration*. Let’s go on to section three:

The nature of calm abiding and insight

As to the nature of calm abiding, it is as stated in the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning:

While you dwell in solitude and properly direct your attention inward, you attend to just those topics upon which you have carefully reflected. Your attention is mentally engaged by continuously attending inwardly. The state of mind wherein you do this, and stay this way often, and in which both physical and mental pliancy arise, is called "calm abiding".

There’s a little bit missed from the English translation just the end part of that quote, and it would be:

“And thus, bodhisattvas completely strive for calm abiding”.

This means that you take as an object of meditation any appropriate object, such as the five aggregates, having determined that it is a topic in the twelve branches of scripture With undistracted mindfulness and vigilance, you focus your attention on this object and fix it to the object continuously, so that your mind stabilizes of its own accord on the object of meditation. When you produce the delight and bliss of physical and mental pliancy, then your state of meditative concentration becomes calm abiding. This comes about through just sustaining your attention inwardly, without distraction from the object of meditation; it is not contingent upon understanding the reality of the thing.

So you do not need to realise emptiness to obtain calm abiding.

Geshela earlier gave a definition for calm abiding. Is it similar to the one we have here? Do they mean the same thing? What is different? Geshela mentioned that calm abiding is; ‘imbued by the physical and mental bliss of pliancy in which you can place your mind on your focus in whichever way you please’.

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Is this too short? If you'd like a longer one, you'll find it here. Anyway that is what the meaning of what is expressed here comes down to.

What is Geshela's source for his statement? Do you remember what the ninth stage of mental abiding is? In the ninth stage of mental abiding, a person is able to effortlessly place his or her mind on the object in whichever way they please. As this is so and calm abiding comes after that ninth stage as it is the effect of that stage, it goes without saying that calm abiding has those qualities. So it's not mistaken. Don't worry!

The explanation that Geshela gave and the explanation found in this text are the same.. Even if these are not the same you should think that these are the same! No, no, just teasing, they are the same.

Geshela believes that we'll find more explanations of this later as we have yet to come to the section where the author explains these individually.

As to the nature of insight, the same sutra says:

After you have attained mental pliancy and physical pliancy, you stay therein and eliminate other mental aspects. You then regard inwardly and with discernment the mental image which is the domain of the meditative concentration on the topics upon which you have reflected. With relation to the images that are the domain of such concentration, any differentiation of the meaning of these topics, or full differentiation, thorough examination, thorough analysis, forbearance, wish, differentiation of particulars, view, or thought is called "insight." Thus a bodhisattva is skilled in insight.

Insight proper involves analysis of its object from within the state of concentration known as calm abiding. There are a lot of different terms used here to describe it; '*...differentiation of the meaning of these topics, or full differentiation, thorough examination...*' and so forth. These are all meant to indicate that insight involves some type of analysis. In addition, it has a physical and mental pliancy that is induced by that analysis.

We don't need to work too hard on this section because we'll deal with these ideas later when we look at their individual presentations. So don't use up all your energy on this, otherwise you won't have any remaining when we get to the main sections.

Geshela: Easy. [laughter]

Lama Tsong Khapa quotes this sutra here composed in an archaic style. Actually these sutra quotes are often, like this,, quite difficult or tough to penetrate. This quote says at the beginning; '*After you have attained mental pliancy and physical pliancy, you then stay therein...*'. This is the scriptural source for the order of calm abiding and insight. It's based on this statement here that we conclude that insight comes after calm abiding.

It is said that the Chinese master Ha-shang, having seen this sutra's very clear and undeniable explanation that insight is discerning wisdom, exclaimed, "I don't know how this can be a sutra!" and kicked it. He did this because the sutra's statement did not agree with his claim that since all conceptualization of any sort involves an apprehension of signs, you should dispense with discerning wisdom and meditate on the profound meaning by not bringing anything to mind. This approach has a great number of adherents.

Geshela's not sure where these 'adherents' might have been. [laughter]

In that sutra passage, "differentiation" means distinguishing the diversity of conventional phenomena.

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"Full differentiation" means distinguishing their real [ultimate] nature. The noble Asanga explains that "thorough examination" is when conceptual attention possessed of wisdom apprehends a sign; "thorough analysis" means proper examination. "Examination" means rough examination; "analysis" means detailed analysis.

We talk about 'examination' and 'analysis' and these two being distinguished in terms of the former being a more general or rough examination while the later is a more detailed analysis. Examination therefore involves a rough or coarse examination. If you are not satisfied with coarse examination and you want to look at that thing in a more detailed way you will carry out a more detailed analysis. Hence 'analysis'

In general, Geshela has explained 'apprehension of a sign' as referring to grasping at true existence. We talk about how you fixate on a particular point and grasping at it, holding it to exist truly. This is 'apprehending a sign'. Here, however 'apprehending a sign' means something different:

The apprehension of a sign does not here refer to a conception of true existence, but rather to distinguishing the exact particulars of an object. Accordingly, there is both examination and analysis of both the real nature and the diversity of phenomena.

In accord with the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning, the Cloud of Jewels Sutra also clearly states:

Serenity is one-pointed attention; insight is proper discernment

Also, the venerable Maitreya says in the Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras:

*Know as the path of calm abiding
Abbreviating the name of a phenomenon;
Understand the path of insight
To be analysis of its meanings.*

And,

*Based on a genuine stability,
Through directing your attention to your mind
And through differentiating phenomena,
There is calm abiding and insight.*

This states that stabilization of your mind on the basis of genuine concentration is calm abiding and the wisdom that differentiates phenomena is insight. Since this comments to the same effect on what those sutras say, it is inappropriate to construe those sutra passages in some other sense.

Also, Asanga's Bodhisattva Levels says:

With your mind definitely directed at an object of meditation which is simply some inexpressible thing or its meaning, an attentive perception free from all elaboration and free from all mental distraction takes up any object of meditation...

Interpreter: I'll just point out that here, that the 'perception' here is not the 'perception' in the usual sense, but rather *du-she* ('*du shes*') which means 'discrimination' or 'recognition' [an object determining mental factor]

...Then, "calm abiding" exists from the point at which internal concentration stabilizes and focuses your attention on a sign, and for as long as it maintains a single, extended flow and maintains concentration. What is insight? You bring to mind the signs of those very phenomena upon which you have reflected, using the same attention with

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which you cultivated calm abiding. "Insight" is anything from the point of either differentiation, full differentiation, or full differentiation of phenomena, and for as long as skill and wisdom are operating extensively.

This statement accords with those cited above. It gives commentary to the same effect as the sutra and the text of the Venerable One [Maitreya], so it confirms the certainty of the foregoing identification of calm abiding and insight. Also, the second Stages of Meditation says:

After you have quelled the distraction of external objects, you rest in a delighted and pliant mind which naturally and continuously engages an internal object of meditation. This is called calm abiding. While you remain in calm abiding, any analysis of that very object is called insight.

Also, Ratnakarasanti's Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom says:

With regard to that, calm abiding's object of meditation is a non-discursive image of something which is either a case of the diversity of phenomena or which represents the real nature. Insight's object of meditation is a discursive image of something which is a case of the diversity of phenomena or which represents the real nature.

This states that calm abiding is non-discursive stabilization on something among either the diversity or the real nature of phenomena, and that insight is analysis of either of those two objects.

‘The real nature’ refers to emptiness, and ‘diversity’ refers to phenomena other than emptiness. This is how we distinguish them.

This is also the intended meaning of a passage in the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning:

*"O Bhagavan, how many objects does calm abiding have?"
The Buddha replied, "One, namely, a non-discursive image."
"How many objects does insight have?"
"Just one, a discursive image."
"How many objects of both are there?"
"Two, namely, the limits of existence and achievement of your purpose."*

Asanga's Compendium of Knowledge (Abhidharma-samuccaya) states that "the limits of existence" refers to both the diversity and real nature of phenomena,²¹ so calm abiding and insight each take both ultimates and conventionalities as objects of meditation, just as Ratnakarasanti explained above. Thus, calm abiding and insight are not differentiated in terms of their respective objects of meditation, for there is calm abiding that knows emptiness and there is insight which does not know emptiness (that is, realised). Also, calm abiding [zhi gnas] is your mind quieting [zhi] movement toward external objects, and then abiding [gnas] on an internal object of meditation; insight [lhag mthong] is superior [lhag pa], i.e., special, seeing [mthong].

That last paragraph gives us an explanation of the terms, ‘calm abiding’ and ‘insight’ or ‘special seeing’. ‘Calm’ comes from the fact that this state pacifies movement toward external objects and then abides on it. So it is peaceful or calm abiding. And insight or special insight if you’d perform is a special form of seeing that comes from the analysis that it carries out. So we have ‘calm abiding’, and ‘insight’.

In the section that follows this, a few doubts are brought up and then addressed so as there’s no need for us to push through that section and finish it, we’ll just leave it here for today.

Interpreter: A few questions came from the discussion group yesterday afternoon.

Question 1: What is the definition of equipoise?

Geshela: Generally this term ‘equipoise’ is used in connection with equipoise focused one-pointedly upon emptiness. In that case, ‘equipoise’ refers to how dualistic appearances subside in the face of emptiness. The word equipoise can, however, be used not just for perceptual consciousnesses such as that, but also for conceptual consciousness. You therefore couldn’t say that that is what equipoise always refers to for there are cases in which equipoise exists in the continuum of a person before they have perceptually realised emptiness. Geshela can’t recall a definition for equipoise that’s generally accepted or given. Geshela would like to know where this doubt stems from.

Interpreter: I told Geshela that in the discussion yesterday, a question arose with regard to where equipoise begins. We were wondering where the boundaries for equipoise are - at what point does it start, for instance. I then asked whether calm abiding could be considered equipoise and Geshela said that yes, calm abiding is equipoise, and that in fact, concentration is like equipoise. I asked if any concentration would be equipoise and he said, yes basically because the word ‘equipoise’ implies placing your mind evenly. It means to place the mind one-pointedly upon a virtuous object for instance. So you could say that, in general, concentration is like equipoise.

We don’t need to state a definition for equipoise. And as for the boundaries, we can say that equipoise can be found in the continuum of people who have not yet achieved a path. There are people who haven’t achieved a path, but who do have equipoise.

Question 2 Can one have meditative stabilisation before attaining calm abiding, such as a single-pointed virtuous mind without distraction to other things present during an act of generosity.

Geshela: Perhaps we could call it meditative stabilisation. *Sam-ten (bsam gtan)* is the word for meditative stabilisation. It could be translated as something not quite but similar to ‘stable mind’, or ‘stable intention’. So then, yes, you could say that you have meditative stabilisation. Where would be the fault in that? You could have a meditative stabilisation before you have calm abiding. You do not necessarily have to achieve calm abiding in order to have meditative stabilisation.

Interpreter: Why is the act of mental generosity offering to all buddhas not considered an equipoise state?

Geshela: let’s say it’s not an equipoise state, what then would be the issue? We have mentally emanated offerings, don’t we? For instance those we make with the mandala offering: the four continents, the four sub-continents, the sun and moon and so forth, but mentally emanated offerings are not called equipoise. That is because thinking of all these different things is an activity of a state of post-attainment. It’s a post-equipoise activity, isn’t it.

Let’s continue to think about these points. Think about the sublime wisdom of equipoise, and the sublime wisdom of post-attainment. These are difficult issues, so let’s continue to think about them. It’s not a big issue if we can’t resolve them today. We’ll continue to think about them and leave it there for today