

**Buddhist Studies Program**

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

**Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter: Ven. Lozang Zopa**

**Number of the teachings: 25**

**Date of the teaching: 30/11/04**

We are dealing with the section: ***In particular, how to train in the last two perfections.***

There are six parts to this:

1. *The benefits of cultivating calm abiding and insight*
2. *Showing that these two include all states of meditative 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*

We are dealing with the last one - how to train in each of them. In brief calm abiding is what stops distraction. We must see distraction as an enemy and recognize its faults, to see how it creates the opportunity for all sorts of non-virtuous activities, and how it leads to any number of disturbing emotions.

The section on ***How to train in calm abiding*** has three parts:

1. *Relying on the preconditions for calm abiding*
2. *How to cultivate calm abiding on that basis*
3. *The measure of successful cultivation of calm abiding*

There's nothing particularly difficult in the section on **relying on the preconditions for calm abiding**. It's quite easy to understand what the author is getting at there. **How to cultivate serenity on that basis** has two parts:

- (1) *preparation*
- (2) *actual practice*

The section on ***actual practice*** has two parts:

- (1) *meditative posture*
- (2) *the meditative process itself*

In ***the meditative process*** there's:

1. *How to develop flawless concentration*
2. *The stages in which the mental states are thereby developed*

In ***How to develop flawless concentration*** there are sections on:

1. *What to do prior to focusing the attention on an object of meditation*
2. *What to do while focusing on an object of meditation*
3. *What to do after you focus on an object of meditation*

In this section we find the actual methods for cultivating flawless concentration.

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The section on ***What to do prior to focusing the attention on an object of meditation*** deals with the five faults and the eight applications, which are remedies to the five faults.

In the second section, ***What to do while focusing on an object of meditation***, there are two important parts:

1. *Identifying the object of meditation upon which your attention is set*
2. *How to focus your mind on the object of meditation*

***Identifying the object of meditation upon which your attention is set*** has :

1. *A general presentation of objects of meditation*
2. *Identifying objects of meditation for this context (in this specific case)*

***A general presentation of objects of meditation*** has three parts:

1. *The objects of meditation themselves*
2. *Who should meditate on which objects*
3. *Synonyms of the object of meditation*

There are a number of points made in that section but the most important one to remember is how the author says it's best to focus on an image of the Tathagata, that is to say Buddha. Of the different objects that you could focus on, that's the best.

Going back to the third section, in *How to develop flawless concentration* we look at ***What to do after you focus on an object of meditation***. There are two parts:

1. *What to do when laxity and excitement occur*
2. *What to do when laxity and excitement are absent*

There are two parts to the first section:

1. *Using the remedy for failing to recognize laxity and excitement*
2. *Using the remedy for failing to try to eliminate them even when they are recognized*

***Using the remedy for failing to recognize laxity and excitement*** has two parts to it:

- (1) *the defining characteristics of laxity and excitement, and*
- (2) *the method for developing vigilance that recognizes them during meditation.*

*What to do when laxity and excitement occur* discusses using the remedy for failing to try to eliminate them even when they are recognized. So there you look at two sections:

- (1) *intention and the way that it stops laxity and excitement, and*
- (2) *the underlying causes of laxity and excitement*

There's a great deal of material in this section, it covers quite a lot so it's very important that we read over it again and again. We'll read a bit from page 69, just above where we left off last week:

*What do you do to develop such concentration? [528] It develops as a result of using the eight antidotes in order to eliminate the five faults. These are the five faults: at the time of preparation, laziness is a fault because you do not apply yourself at concentration. When you are working at concentration, forgetting the instructions is a fault because when you forget the object upon which you were instructed to meditate, your mind is not set in equipoise upon the object of meditation. When it is set in meditative equipoise, laxity and excitement are faults because they make your mind*

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*unserviceable. When laxity and excitement occur, lack of effort [non-application] is a fault because it does not quell those two. When laxity and excitement are absent, the fault is the intention of application. Kamalasila's three Stages of Meditation point out that there are five faults if laxity and excitement are treated as one, six if they are listed separately.*

*Among the remedies for those faults, the eight antidotes, there are four remedies for laziness — confidence [or faith], yearning [that is aspiration], effort, and pliancy. Then the remedies for forgetfulness, laxity and excitement, non-application, and application are, respectively, mindfulness, vigilance that recognizes laxity and excitement, the intention of application, and naturally resting equanimity. I explained these extensively above.<sup>154</sup>*

So the remedy for forgetfulness is mindfulness, the remedy for laxity and excitement is a vigilance that recognises laxity and excitement, the remedy for non-application is the intention to apply the remedy and the remedy for over-application is naturally resting equanimity.

In fact this section is quite extensive – we could trace it back to the section entitled *the meditative process itself*. There you have *how to develop flawless concentration and the stages in which the mental stages develop*. When Lama Tsong Khapa says he has explained these extensively above, we have to refer all the way back to the section starting with the meditative process. It's from that point onwards that he explains how to abandon the five faults and how to rely on the eight applications.

*These are the most excellent instructions for achieving concentration. They are set forth in the great master Kamalasila's three Stages of Meditation, as well as many expositions on achieving concentration by other great Indian scholars. They are also explained in the discussion on achieving calm abiding in Atisha's commentary on his own Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment. Earlier gurus of the stages of the path have conveyed a rough idea of these points, yet those wishing to cultivate meditative stabilization have not understood how to proceed. Thus, I have set this forth at length.*

*That mindfulness and vigilance remove laxity and excitement from your mind's one-pointed concentration is a common theme to all personal instructions on this practice. [529] So do not think, "This is a teaching particular to the vehicle of dialectics,"<sup>155</sup> but it is not necessary in the mantra vehicle." For it is common to the mantra vehicle as well, since this is also stated in the class of the highest yoga tantras.*

The reason that calm abiding, one-pointed attention, can be considered common to both the vehicle of dialectics and mantra is that it is *stated in the class of the highest yoga tantras* as well. Those of you who received Geshela's teachings on mantra might remember this point. In mantra, meditating on the deity is emphasised from the very outset, and in doing so you train in the development stage without making a special point of cultivating calm abiding as an aside. Rather calm abiding will be achieved as a by-product of your efforts in training in the generation or development stage. In fact there are different divisions, you have subtle and coarse generation stage and so forth. The point is this: in the context of mantra, calm abiding is not taught as a special practice off to the side, so there is no need to train in it apart from your training in the mantra practices themselves.

*The second chapter of the first section of the glorious Integration Tantra (Samputi) states:<sup>156</sup>*

*The concentration of aspiration, the foundation of the supernormal abilities associated with remedial application, is based in solitude; it is based in freedom from attachment; and it is based in cessation. There is thorough transformation by means of correct elimination. With this aspiration you meditate without being very slack or elated....*

*It also describes the three concentrations of enthusiasm, of analysis, and of the mind in the same way.*

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The quote says ‘*the concentration of aspiration, the foundation of the supernormal abilities associated with remedial application.*’ It says *the foundation of the supernormal abilities*, which is also known as the miraculous legs, which you might remember from the fourth chapter of Maitreya’s *Ornament of Clear Realisation*.

*Serviceable concentration, as explained above, is the basis for attaining qualities such as supernormal abilities. Therefore, since it is like a foundation, it is called the foundation of supernormal abilities or the miraculous legs. Texts such as Sthiramati's Explanation of the "Separation of the Middle from the Extremes" explain that there are four avenues to accomplish this: (1) achieving it through a fierce yearning or aspiration, (2) achieving it through prolonged joyous perseverance, (3) achieving concentration by discriminating examination of the object of meditation - these first three are called, respectively, aspiring concentration, enthusiastic concentration, and analytical concentration and (4) achieving one-pointedness of mind based on having in your mind seeds of earlier concentration; this is called mental concentration. "Very slack" refers to excessive relaxation, and "very elated" refers to excessive tightness. The point is that you should sustain a meditation which lacks these two*

It’s important that we are neither too slack [that is relaxed] nor too tight, rather we want a balance. There are many quotes stated earlier that spoke about how extremely difficult it is to strike this balance, yet that is very important for achieving concentration. Now moving on to the next chapter:

## **(2”) The stages in which the mental states develop**

*In this section there are three parts:*

- 1. The actual stages in which the mental states develop*
- 2. The process of achieving them with the six forces*
- 3. How the four attentions are involved in this*

Do we know where this fits in to the overall outline? This is the second section coming after *how to develop flawless concentration* - how to develop flawless concentration and the stages in which the mental states develop.

### **(a)) The actual stages in which the mental states develop**

*These are the nine mental states:*

These nine mental states are: mental placement, continuous placement, patched placement, close placement, taming, pacification, thorough pacification, one-pointedness and balanced placement. Let’s deal with the first one:

1. Mental placement: [530] This entails thoroughly withdrawing your attention from all outside objects and directing it inwardly to the object of meditation.

Lama Tsong Khapa gave us some advice about this stage – let’s say for instance that you’ve chosen to focus on an image of buddha. Once you’re able to conjure up a coarse image of buddha in your mind, then you work on the aspect of stability. After you’ve identified the object of meditation that you’re going to focus on you direct your mind to it – so mental placement.

*Maitreya's Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras states: After you have directed your attention to the object of meditation....*

2. *Continuous placement: Your attention that was initially directed to the object of meditation does not stray elsewhere, but is continuously set upon the object of meditation. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras: "Its continuity is not distracted."*

3. *Patched placement: If your attention is drawn away by forgetfulness and distracted outward, you recognize this and again fix it upon the object of meditation. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras: "Swiftly recognizing distraction, it is patched up again."*

4. *Close placement: Kamalasila's first Stages of Meditation comments that with the previous mental state you recognize distraction and eliminate it; with this mental state you have eliminated distraction and with effort place your attention upon the object of meditation.<sup>158</sup> Ratnakarasanti's Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom asserts that your attention, which is by nature expansive, is repeatedly drawn in and refined, establishing ever greater stability.<sup>159</sup> This is in accord with the statement [from the Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras]: "The wise withdraw their attention inward to ever greater levels."*

This latter explanation accords with what's found in the root verses.

In short you're developing more subtle attention so that if you were focused on an image of buddha, then at this point you would narrow your attention to for instance the face, and then even further to the eyes, even further to the black and the white of the eyes. In this way you're withdrawing from the broad to a more narrow or subtle focus.

*Asanga's Sravaka Levels explains that first mindfulness is applied, and your attention does not stray outside.<sup>160</sup> As the force of mindfulness develops, forgetfulness does not create outward distraction.*

So the point here is that you are bringing to completion the force of mindfulness, and thus Asanga's explanation in the *Sravaka Levels* explains what's happening in this stage. Mindfulness is preventing you from forgetting the object of meditation. In the fourth stage of mental abiding the force of mindfulness is being brought to completion. Therefore it's at about this point that forgetfulness can no longer act as an impediment, it's no longer an obstacle.

5. *Taming: Reflecting upon the advantages of concentration, you take delight in concentration. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras: "Then, because you see the advantages, your mind is tamed in concentration."*

With the fifth stage of mental abiding, taming, you delight in cultivating concentration.

*The Sravaka levels comments that if your mind is distracted by the signs of any of the five sensory objects of visual form and so on, of the three mental poisons [attachment, hostility, and ignorance], or of a man or a woman, you regard these ten signs as disadvantageous from the outset and do not let them scatter your mind.*

You're not allowing your mind to wander or scatter to any of these ten signs - the five sensory objects (visible form, sounds, smells, tastes, tactile objects), any of the three poisons (attachment hostility, delusion) or a man or woman. So you regard this as disadvantageous from the outset and stop your mind from scattering to them. It would seem that Asanga taught these ten signs in his text *Sravaka Levels*.

6. *Pacification: Regarding distraction as a fault, you quell any dislike for concentration. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras: "Because you see the faults of distraction, you quell dislike for the meditation." [531] The Sravaka levels asserts that if your attention is disturbed by thoughts such as those concerning sensory objects and by secondary afflictions such as obstructions involving*

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attraction to the sensory, you regard these from the beginning as disadvantageous, and do not allow your attention to be drawn to your thoughts and secondary afflictions.

The fifth stage of mental abiding which is called “taming” involves your seeing the good qualities of concentration – so since you have faith in and appreciate the good qualities of concentration then you take delight in its cultivation. In the sixth stage of “pacification” you see the drawbacks of distraction, you understand its faults and so you thereby pacify any remaining dislike for the cultivation of concentration. There’s a slight distinction, can you see that?

We need to reflect again and again on the good qualities of concentration that have been described and as we recollect these we develop this delight in cultivating concentration. Then you have the drawbacks of distraction – in fact you can probably say that all of our problems, our suffering, our difficulties arise in dependence upon distraction. So recognising that, we do not allow the mind to be controlled by distractions. Asanga’s *Sravaka Levels* makes a similar point in that you notice how your attention is disturbed by thoughts and therefore you regard such things as disadvantageous and do not allow your attention to be drawn to thoughts and secondary afflictions. Here when he talks about thoughts [in other words discursiveness] it’s essentially the same thing as distraction.

*7. Complete pacification: This entails the fine pacification of the occurrence of attachment, melancholy, lethargy, sleepiness, etc. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras: "As soon as attachment, melancholy, etc arise, they are pacified." The Sravaka Levels says that if the thoughts and secondary afflictions mentioned earlier arise as a result of forgetfulness, you do not submit to all that appear, but eliminate them.*

You do not assent or submit to such things but rather try to get rid of them as soon as they occur. We’re dealing with “taming, pacification and complete pacification.” At a quick glance they all seem to run in to one another due to their similarity but actually, as we go along the differences should become more and more clear.

With the first of these three you see the good qualities of concentration, so you delight in cultivating it. With the second you see the drawbacks and the faults of things like discursive thought and distraction so that you do not allow your mind to be drawn or controlled by them. Then with the third you recognise the occurrence of such things immediately and do not submit to them. Basically that’s the distinction.

Similar advice is found in many places, like the texts on mind training, where they say that it’s very important that we do not submit to afflictions etc. when they occur but rather try to abandon them straight away.

*8. One-pointed attention: This entails exerting effort so that you engage the object of meditation effortlessly. The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras: "Then one endowed with restraint and enthusiasm applies remedies for the obstacles to his or her mind and naturally achieves the ninth mental state."*

This stage of one-pointed attention occurs when you are able to place your attention on an object for a long time in whichever way you please, so long as you make effort. You continue to work at this so that you can eventually do the same thing without requiring any effort, so that your mind naturally stays with the object.

*This is to be understood from the statement in the Sravaka Levels: "By means of application you have no hindrance, and, since you continuously establish a flow of concentration, you make a single channel."*

Interpreter: This word ‘channel’ I think is better translated as flow, or you could say continuum or continuity.

This explanation of one-pointed attention comes from the *Sravaka Levels* and it seems that there’s an implication that the name “one-pointed attention” is linked to Asanga’s explanation of there being a single channel or flow or continuity. So why one-pointed? Because there is a single or one-pointed flow. There’s a single flow because at this point laxity and excitement are no longer able to interrupt your attention. So in earlier stages laxity and excitement can interrupt the flow, here they no longer interrupt the flow so you have a single flow or single channel.

It says in fact in the *Sravaka Levels*: "By means of application you have no hindrance [that is no interruptions] and, since you continuously establish a flow of concentration, you make a single channel." Hence the name “one-pointed attention.”

*Another term applied to the eighth mental state is "single channelling," or the single continuum the meaning of which is easily understood.*

*9. Balanced placement: According to Kamalasila's Stages of Meditation, this refers to the equanimity that occurs when your mind becomes balanced; Ratnakarasanti's Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom says this refers to spontaneous, natural attention and the attainment of independence as a result of familiarity with single channeling.<sup>161</sup>*

As it states in the *Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom* we’re dealing with a spontaneous and natural attention in which you have achieved independence or self-control as a result of familiarity with this single continuity. Here in the ninth stage you are able to place your attention in whichever way you please without effort.

*The Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras states: "There is non-application due to familiarity with that." The Sravaka Levels says your mind is "concentrated," and the meaning of this is clearly stated in the same text.<sup>62</sup>*

*As a consequence of dedication, familiarization, and frequent practice, you reach the path of both spontaneous and natural attention. [532] With no application and with spontaneity, your mind enters into a flow of concentration that is without distraction. In this way it is concentrated.*

Hence the meaning of saying that your mind is concentrated is quite clear.

*The names of the nine mental states are in accord with the lines in Kamalasila's first Stages of Meditation: "This path of calm abiding is explained in the Perfection of Wisdom sutras and so on...."*

This ninth stage is the most subtle desire realm mind – there is no desire realm mind more subtle than this one. After this you go on to achieve calm abiding. Calm abiding is a mind that belongs to the higher realms.

Having looked at what the nine stages of mental abiding are we ask “well how do we achieve them?” The nine stages of mental abiding are achieved through the six forces and that’s the topic of the next section:

### ***(b)) The process of achieving them with the six forces***

*There are six forces: the force of hearing, the force of reflection, the force of mindfulness, the force of vigilance, the force of enthusiasm [that is joyous effort], and the force of thorough acquaintance.*

*1. With the force of hearing, you accomplish mental placement. The reason for this is that due to following the instructions that you have merely heard from someone else about focusing on the object of meditation, at first you simply fix your attention upon the object. But this is not a case of familiarity due to your own repeated reflection.*

The first stage of mental abiding is achieved through the force of hearing (also translated as study).

*2. With the force of reflection, you accomplish the mental state of continual placement; for, as a consequence of the practice of repeatedly reflecting on the continuation of the initial fixation of attention upon the object of meditation, for the first time you achieve the ability to maintain a little continuity.*

The second stage of continuous placement is achieved through or with the force of reflection.

*3. With the force of mindfulness, you accomplish the mental states of patched placement and of close placement; for, in the case of patched placement, when your attention is distracted away from the object of meditation, you are mindful of the previous object of meditation and your attention is drawn back in; and in the case of close placement, you generate the power of mindfulness from the beginning, and this prevents your attention from being distracted away from the object of meditation.*

Patched placement and close placement are the third and fourth stages of mental abiding respectively and are achieved with the force of mindfulness. In patched placement your attention wanders, it becomes distracted so you take it and fix it to the object again, thus “patched” placement, or as it’s sometimes translated replacement. In close placement your attention is refined and made more subtle. *With close placement, you generate the power of mindfulness from the beginning, and this prevents your attention from being distracted away from the object of meditation.*

*4. With the force of vigilance, you accomplish the mental states of taming and of pacification; for, with vigilance you recognize the faults of being scattered toward thoughts and the signs of the secondary afflictions, and by regarding them as faults, you do not let scattering toward these two occur. [533]*

With taming you see the good qualities of concentration and so you delight in concentration. With pacification you see the shortcomings of distraction and so you stop yourself from being controlled by that.

*5. With the force of enthusiasm, you accomplish the mental states of complete pacification and of one-pointed attention; for, by striving to eliminate even subtle thoughts and secondary afflictions, you do not submit to them; and by so doing, laxity, excitement, etc. are unable to interfere with your concentration, and you achieve continuous concentration.*

The stage we’re looking at here is complete pacification and earlier it said that this entails the fine pacification of things like attachment, melancholy, lethargy etc. Why is this? – well it’s through the force of effort, enthusiasm – we are applying this joyous effort. In this stage you are very strongly stopping things like attachment and laxity, excitement and so forth. Gradually these are unable to interrupt your attention which is why this stage leads into one-pointed attention, through the force of enthusiasm.

It says that in the mental state of complete pacification you strive to eliminate thoughts and secondary afflictions. You make effort to eliminate these, so that you do not submit to them. Through doing that you render laxity, excitement etc. unable to interfere with your concentration and thus you achieve the continuous concentration of the eighth mental state.



What's the difference between the seventh and eighth stages of mental abiding? – whether or not laxity and excitement can interrupt you and be an obstacle. In the seventh stage, laxity and excitement can still occur hence the need to exert yourself to stop them. In the eighth stage of one-pointed attention laxity and excitement cannot occur so they are no longer a danger to you. The Precious Lord has very clearly stated that during the seventh stage you make effort to eliminate even subtle thoughts and secondary afflictions and do not submit to them. Therefore during the eighth stage of mental abiding laxity and excitement are unable to interfere with your concentration so you achieve continuous concentration.

*6. With the force of acquaintance, you accomplish the mental state of balanced placement [that's the ninth stage isn't it?]; for, with the force of great familiarity with the above, you develop effortless, natural concentration.*

Acquaintance is quite the same as familiarity.

*These accord exactly with the intended meaning of Asanga's Sravaka levels; so, although there are alternative explanations, do not rely on them.*

What's the difference between the eighth and ninth stages of mental abiding? – whether or not there's effort. In one effort's required and in the other it's not. In the ninth stage of concentration your mind is placed in equipoise without any effort, whereas in the eighth stage it's placed in equipoise with effort.

*The achievement of the ninth mental state can be understood in terms of an analogy: In the case of those who are extremely familiar with reciting scriptures and so on, if the initial motivation to recite arises and they begin, even though their mind is occasionally distracted elsewhere, the recitation continues effortlessly, without interruption. In a similar fashion, once your mind is settled with mindfulness fixed upon the object of meditation, even if you do not continually cultivate mindfulness and vigilance, your concentration is able to focus continually, for long periods of time, without being interrupted by scattering. Since effort is not needed to maintain a continuous stream of mindfulness and vigilance, this is said to be without application, or effort.*

*For that to arise, in an earlier phase of practice you continually and energetically cultivate mindfulness and vigilance. During that phase, it is necessary to produce a concentration that can be sustained throughout long meditation sessions, without its being able to be disturbed by such hindrances as laxity and excitement. This is the eighth mental state. So here we have the explanation that Geshela was just giving. This and the ninth state are similar in that they cannot be hindered by factors such as laxity and excitement that are incompatible with concentration. However, in this eighth state, you must uninterruptedly cultivate mindfulness and vigilance, so it is said to be associated with application, or effort. [534]*

We say that equipoise happens with effort or is associated with effort because in this eighth state you must uninterruptedly cultivate or sustain mindfulness and vigilance. In the eighth stage laxity and excitement cannot interrupt the attention due to the fact that you are cultivating or relying upon application or effort. The text then says:

*For this to arise you must stop even subtle laxity, excitement, etc. as soon as they occur, without submitting to them; so the seventh mental state is necessary.*

In the seventh stage you do not submit to such things but, *for this to arise, you must recognize that the distraction of thoughts and the secondary afflictions is a disadvantage, and you must have intense vigilance that monitors your attention so that it does not disperse to them. So the fifth and sixth mental states are necessary, for those two are accomplished with the strengthening of vigilance.*

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Which stages of mental abiding are these, the fifth and sixth – they are taming and pacification.  
Taming and pacification are achieved through the force of vigilance.

*Furthermore, for such mental states [like the fifth and sixth] to arise, you must have mindfulness that swiftly recalls the object of meditation when you are distracted from it, and mindfulness that prevents distraction from the object of meditation from the very outset. So the third and fourth mental states are necessary, for you accomplish these two with those two kinds of mindfulness.*

The third and fourth stages of mental abiding are achieved through the force of mindfulness. As it says, *'the third and fourth mental states are necessary, for you accomplish these two with those two kinds of mindfulness.'* The third and fourth stages are patched placement and close placement.

*For this to arise, your attention must first of all be fixed upon the object of meditation, and you must have an undistracted continuity of this fixation. So the first two mental states arise before the others.*

*Therefore, in summary, first of all follow the personal instructions that you have heard, and correctly apply the method for setting your attention in a balanced fashion. Then repeatedly reflect on the way of setting your attention, and as you are able to bring together a little continuity, sustain a continuous stream of attention. Then if your mindfulness declines and you become distracted, swiftly draw your attention back in and quickly become mindful that you have forgotten the object of meditation.*

*Then generate powerful mindfulness and bring forth the force of mindfulness that prevents distraction away from the object of meditation from the outset. By accomplishing forceful mindfulness and by seeing the faults of laxity, excitement, etc., which distract the attention away from the object of meditation, develop intense vigilance to monitor your attention. Then when you are distracted by even subtle forgetfulness, recognize this immediately and stop it short; and upon eliminating it, generate the power of effort to lengthen the flow of attention that is uninterrupted by hindrances. Once that has arisen, you master familiarity by meditating with effort, and you accomplish the ninth mental state, in which your concentration becomes effortless. [535]*

*Therefore, until yogis attain the ninth mental state, they must exert effort to apply their minds to concentration; but upon attaining the ninth mental state, even if they expend no effort for the purpose of settling the mind in meditative equipoise, their minds automatically become concentrated.*

*Even in the case that this ninth mental state is attained, if pliancy is not achieved, then – as will be explained later<sup>164</sup> – if you are not even defined as attaining meditative serenity, how much less are you defined as achieving insight. It's a little bit awkward in English but basically what they're saying is that in this ninth mental state you haven't achieved pliancy yet, so you couldn't say that you've achieved calm abiding. If at this stage you can't say that you've achieved calm abiding, then how could you possibly say that you've achieved insight.*

*Nevertheless, there are those who assert that when you achieve such concentration that is adorned with bliss, clarity, and non-discursive awareness, you have brought forth a non-discursive, sublime wisdom that integrates meditative equipoise and the post-equipoise state. Further, as will be discussed later on, there are a great many people who specifically confuse this ninth mental state described in Asanga's *Sravaka Levels* with the culmination of the stage of completion in highest yoga tantra. So there are those types of wrong ideas.*

After this section on how the nine stages of mental abiding are achieved with the six forces there's a section on ***How the four attentions are involved in this.***

The four attentions are simply tight focus, intermittent focus, uninterrupted focus and spontaneous focus, no more than that. The first two stages of mental abiding - mental placement and continuous placement - require tight focus, a tight placement is required in these two. Then you have patched

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placement, close placement, taming, pacification and thorough pacification – five stages of mental abiding. Here you have what's called intermittent focus because in these stages your attention can be interrupted by things like laxity and excitement. In the eighth stage you have what's called uninterrupted focus for obvious reasons – the flow of attention is uninterrupted. Then in the ninth stage of mental abiding you have what's called spontaneous or effortless focus.

These are the four attentions – quite easy. Lama Tsong Khapa probably explains this later in the text very clearly, but as time has run out we'll leave it there and pick up tomorrow.

Do we have any questions?

Student: Geshela mentioned that there's an age limit in achieving calm abiding. Does that apply to achieving calm abiding within the generation stage?

Geshela: It's the same actually. After all, when we're younger that's when our wisdom is most fully present and as you get older then you reach a time when your wisdom is in decline. It certainly would be easier when you're younger.

They say that the generation stage can be divided in to a coarse and a subtle period or stage. Calm abiding is achieved in that subtle stage

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The second part of the meditative process involves; (2'')*the stages in which the mental states develop* in dependence upon having developed flawless concentration. There are three parts to that.

(a))*The actual stages in which the mental states develop.*

(b))*The process of achieving them with the six forces.* And

(c)) *How the four attentions are involved in this*

We've covered the section on *The process of achieving them with the six forces*, so today we'll pick up with (c)) ***How the four attentions are involved in this.***

On page 78 it reads; *How the four attentions are involved in this.*

*The Sravaka Levels states:*<sup>165</sup>

*With respect to these nine mental states, know that there are four types of attention: (1) tight focus, (2) intermittent focus, (3) uninterrupted focus, and (4) spontaneous focus.*

*Now in the first two mental states of mental placement and correct mental placement, there is the attention of tight focus.*

Of the nine stages of mental abiding, tight focus relates to the first two; mental placement and continuous placement.

*In the next five mental states of withdrawn mental placement, close placement, taming, pacification, and complete pacification, there is the attention of intermittent focus.*

In the first two stages, mental placement and continuous placement, you must have tight focus. They don't give reasons to support this, they're just laying it out. We'll deal with the reasons that make this point later. And then in the third, fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh stages of mental abiding, you have what's called intermittent focus.

It ought to be explained later - here it's just stated briefly. You have intermittent focus during these five stages because laxity and excitement can interrupt the flow of attention.

*In the eighth mental state of single channeling (which we also call one-pointed attention), there is the attention of uninterrupted focus.*

*Earlier in the text the eighth stage of mental abiding was referred to as one-pointed attention. Now we see here from this quote it's referred to as single channeling. So you find that different names are used to refer to the same thing.*

Now for the ninth mental state.

*In the ninth state of concentrated awareness, there is the attention of effortless focus.*

*During the first two mental states the attention must be strenuously tight, so this is tight focus.*

*Then during the phases of the next five mental states there is interference by laxity and excitement and you are unable to maintain long meditation sessions; so this is intermittent focus.* This is the reason for the name, 'intermittent focus' associated with these five stages.

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[536] *Then since in the eighth mental state you are able to sustain long meditation sessions without interference by laxity and excitement, there is uninterrupted focus.*

*Then since in the ninth mental state there are no interruptions and no need for continuous exertion, you apply the attention of effortless focus.*

It's stated clearly here and we also discussed it this morning.

And yesterday we were talking about the nine stages of mental abiding and the six forces. So are we clear about the material from yesterday? So it's not entirely new, some of this stuff. Now we have a qualm, a question;

*Qualm: In this case, during the first two mental states there is interrupted focus, and during the intermediate five mental states there is a need for tight focus; so why does one not speak of the attention of interrupted focus for the first two, and of the attention of tight focus for the intermediate five mental states? Amazing. Here, Lama Tsong Khapa's stating the question so clearly.*

This question arises for us, doesn't it? Surely there's intermittent focus in the first two stages of mental abiding. If there's intermittent focus in three, four, five, six and seven, then it's obvious there would be intermittent focus in one and two. Similarly, the stages three through seven require tight focus, so why are they not referred to as tight focus? Well the reply is: *In the first two mental states there are occasions when your mind is and is not concentrated, with considerably longer periods in the latter state; whereas in the intermediate five states the duration of concentration is much longer, so the designation of "interruption to concentration" is used for the latter and not for the former.*

In the reply it's mentioned that there are occasions when your mind is and is not concentrated during these two mental states, and the states in which your mind is not concentrated are considerably longer than the states in which it is.

We need to retain the differences in terms that we find in Tibetan when we translate them into English. So here, we have two different phrases; *ting.nge.dzin. du.dro.wa* (*ting nge 'dzin du 'gro ba*) which is translated as; 'mind is concentrated', and *tse.chig.du.nay.pa* (*rtse gcig du 'gro ba*) which is translated as; 'your attention remaining one pointedly.' There's a difference in Tibetan so there ought to be a difference in the English translation. Whereas that's not necessarily the case when you place your attention one-pointedly upon an object. It's not necessarily the case that you one-pointedly remain on a virtuous object. So it's important that this distinction carries over through the translation. There is a slight difference, isn't there?

It should be clear then that although there are times in which the mind is concentrated during the first two states, for the majority of the time, it is not concentrated. Now *whereas in the intermediate five states the duration of concentration is much longer, so the designation of "interruption to concentration" is used for the latter and not for the former.* So the term 'intermittent focus' is more related to three, four, five, six and seven, because it is then that you have the more significant concentration being interrupted. Longer lasting concentrations being interrupted.

*Therefore, although those two sets of mental states, two sets of mental states refer to the first two, on the one hand, and the middle five on the other hand. So although those two sets of mental states are similar in terms of the presence of tight focus, they are dissimilar in terms of the presence and absence of interrupted focus; so the five mental states are not included in the attention of tight focus.*

So the first two and the middle five are alike in that they both have tight focus. However they're dissimilar in the fact that intermittent focus is only found in the latter five, so that term is used.

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*Thus, after you have established yourself in the preconditions explained earlier,<sup>166</sup> you will achieve calm abiding if you cultivate continual joyous perseverance for accomplishing concentration. But if after you practice this only a few times you discard the practice again, it is said that you will not accomplish calm abiding. The preconditions for calm abiding that were mentioned earlier - how many of them are there?*

Student: six.

Although it's quite clear and there's probably no need to read through it again, by means of summary this paragraph says; if you establish the different prerequisites for calm abiding, then continually exert joyous effort to achieve it, then you will come to achieve it. If however, you only apply yourself from time to time and are not continual, you will not.

When we talk about joyous effort we must mention the importance of having continual joyous effort. In fact in the section on joyous effort from this text, that point is made. We talk about the power of relinquishment within joyous effort. And the significance of this is we must make a moderate amount of effort. Maybe moderate isn't a good word, actually. Maybe appropriate. We must have an appropriate level of exertion that we are able to sustain continually over a long period of time.

*Aryasura's Compendium of the Perfections states:<sup>167</sup>*

*With constant yoga  
Strive to accomplish meditative stabilization.  
If you repeatedly slack off,  
Fire will not arise from friction.  
Likewise, do not stop striving at the method of yoga,  
Until you reach a special state.*

That brings us to the next heading in the outline;

**(c') The measure of successful cultivation of calm abiding**

That is, to say, the measure or criteria for having achieved it.

*Here there are three sections:*

- 1. A presentation of the dividing line between accomplishing and not accomplishing calm abiding*
- 2. A general presentation of the way to proceed along the path on the basis of calm abiding, and*
- 3. A specific presentation of the way to proceed along the mundane path*

**(1') A presentation of the dividing line between accomplishing and not accomplishing calm abiding**

*This has two sections: (1) a presentation of the actual meaning and (2) the marks associated with attention, and the elimination of qualms.*

**(a'') A presentation of the actual meaning**

*Qualm: Once you have properly understood the means of cultivating concentration as explained previously<sup>168</sup> and then sustained them in meditation, the nine mental states arise in sequence; and in the ninth state you are able to meditate for long sessions free of subtle laxity and excitement. Given that you have then achieved a concentration that becomes focused spontaneously without resorting to the effort of continual cultivation of mindfulness and vigilance, have you achieved calm abiding or not?*

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They're referring to the ninth mental state. The question is, is the ninth mental state calm abiding or not?

The ninth stage of mental abiding is a concentration that spontaneously remains on its object in whichever way you wish without requiring any effort.

Have you achieved calm abiding at that point, or not?

*Reply: I shall explain. In the achievement of this concentration there are those who do and those who do not achieve pliancy. So if pliancy is not achieved, this would be an approximation of calm abiding, but would not be genuine calm abiding. Thus it is called an attention that approximates calm abiding.*

If you've achieved the ninth mental state, but have not yet achieved pliancy, then you have an approximation of calm abiding, not calm abiding proper.

That is to say, you don't have actual calm abiding.

*This is clearly stated in the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning:*

*Bhagavan, when bodhisattvas direct their attention inward and focus it upon their minds, what is this attention called for as long as physical pliancy and mental pliancy are not achieved?  
Maitreya, this is not calm abiding. You should say that it is associated with an aspiration that approximates calm abiding.*

*Maitreya's Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras also states:*

*As a consequence of familiarity, there is non-application.  
Then upon achieving great pliancy  
Of the body and mind,  
You are said to have attention.*

*In this instance, attention refers to calm abiding, according to Lama Tsong Khapa.*

What reason is there to say that here attention refers to calm abiding? Well the reasons for that will be explained later in a citation from Asanga's *Sravaka Levels*. As it says; *attention refers to calm abiding as will be explained below in a citation from Asanga's Sravaka Levels.*

*Furthermore, Kamalasila's second Stages of Meditation states that you must achieve both pliancy and the freedom to stabilize on the object of meditation.<sup>172</sup>*

*For you who have cultivated calm abiding in this way, when your body and mind become pliant and you have mastery over your mind in directing it as you wish, at that time know that you have accomplished calm abiding. [538]*

*Thus Kamalasila's first Stages of Meditation states:<sup>173</sup>*

*When your attention is focused on the object of meditation for as long as you wish, without resort to an antidote, know that you have perfected calm abiding.*

*The second Stages of Meditation clearly indicates that the above citation also refers to the presence of pliancy. Even though pliancy isn't mentioned, is it?*

The fact that it's so clearly mentioned in the *second Stages of Meditation* allows us to say it was Kamalasila's intention to include that in the first.

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*Furthermore, the equanimity explained in Maitreya's Separation of the Middle from the Extremes among the eight antidotes has the same meaning as the ninth mental state referred to here. It states that this alone does not suffice and you need pliancy as well.*

*Ratnakarasanti's Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom very clearly states:*<sup>174</sup>

*The bodhisattvas, dwelling alone in solitary places, direct their attention to their intended object. Freeing themselves of mental conversation, they frequently direct their attention to the mental image. Until physical and mental pliancy arise, this is an attention that approximates calm abiding; but when they do arise, it is calm abiding.*

*All these citations also establish the meaning of the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning.* Here we have a number of different quotes that Lama Tsong Khapa cites to illustrate how calm abiding must have pliancy.

That is to say, how there must be pliancy present in calm abiding. Now, *All these citations also establish the meaning of the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning.*

Question: Well then, which of the nine levels incorporates the concentration in which pliancy has not yet arisen?

*Reply: This concentration is included in the level of the desire realm. This is because it is included in one of the nine levels of the three realms,<sup>175</sup> and it is not at or above access to the first meditative stabilization. To achieve this access, it is certainly necessary to achieve calm abiding.*

This text mentions three realms, the desire realm, the form realm and the formless realm.

It also mentions these nine levels or nine grounds. The nine grounds would be; four grounds related to the meditative stabilizations of the form realm, another four grounds related to the formless state, like for instance limitless consciousness, limitless space, nothing at all and the peak of existence. And then one ground related to the desire realm. So nine altogether. Four for the form realm, four for the formless realm, one for the desire realm.

These are called 'levels' or 'grounds'. That's the name that they're given. There's nine of them.

We are desire realm beings. We're desire realm beings but if we were to achieve calm abiding, then that calm abiding would exist in the continuum of a desire realm being, even though it itself is included within the higher realm grounds, the higher realm levels. It is, after all a mind of the higher realm, isn't it?

There are eight states, beginning with the first actual meditative stabilization going all the way up to the actual peak of existence. Now, these are referred to as the eight meditative stabilizations and formless realm states. It's possible for a desire realm being to achieve all eight of these.

To achieve each of these you must separate from your attachment to the lower state. So for instance, to achieve the first actual meditative stabilization you must separate from your attachment to the desire realm, which is to say you must abandon the manifest afflictions related to that.

Each of these higher realms then are posited in terms of having separated from your attachment to the pleasures of the lower realm – the realm below it.

When you think about it in these terms, you conclude that it would be quite difficult to achieve calm abiding if you did not separate from your attachment to pleasures of the desire realm.



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Therefore failure to achieve calm abiding is nothing to be amazed by. Given that we need our desire realm pleasures. We need our attachment as well, it seems. So when some of Geshela's acquaintances express some dissatisfaction about not having achieved it, saying; 'oh but they say you can achieve calm abiding in six months. I didn't. What's wrong?' Geshela reckons it's a case where the person has failed to gather the prerequisites for calm abiding. These types of things are in there. So certain texts talk about how you can achieve calm abiding in six months, but if you don't have the prerequisites and so forth, no surprise that you wouldn't achieve it.

In any case, this is a state of affairs that you can analyse with reason and logic. This question is about the ninth stage of mental abiding, and which of the grounds it is included in. And Lama Tsong Khapa says that it's *included in one of the nine levels of the three realms*,<sup>17</sup> but *it is not at or above access to the first meditative stabilization*. So it's going to be included within the grounds of the desire realm, because you haven't yet achieved this access to the first concentration.

If you achieve the access, you necessarily have achieved calm abiding. That is to say, in order to achieve the access, you must achieve calm abiding. Access means 'preparation for.'

*Although there is such concentration without pliancy in the level of the desire realm, it is a concentration that is a level without meditative equipoise. The reason why it is not presented as a level of equipoise is that it is not accomplished with lack of regret, supreme delight and bliss, and with pliancy.*

We have two types of grounds that are being presented here; grounds of meditative equipoise and grounds in which you are not placed in meditative equipoise. Just a moment ago we were looking at some other new terms; the three realms and the nine grounds. Now we're looking at how there's different types of grounds. Those that are in meditative equipoise and those that are not in meditative equipoise.

Think about the nine mental states. The ninth mental state is a ground when you're not in meditative equipoise, whereas the latter eight belonging to the form and formless realm are grounds of meditative equipoise.

This term, 'the ground (or level) of meditative equipoise' can also be referred to as; 'an awareness arisen from meditation'. Alternatively it might be called; 'an awareness of a higher realm mind.' So there you have three terms. Once again; 'the level of meditative equipoise', that is to say, 'ground'; 'awareness arisen from meditation'; and 'a consciousness of a higher realm mind.'

In the four root vows that a person approaching virtue, or an ordained person takes, there is one about lying which is actually making a pretence of possessing qualities higher than a human. To make a pretence of possessing qualities higher than a human is to pretend to have good qualities of a higher realm. If you were to try and give others the impression that you possess these qualities belonging to a higher realm, you would be, assuming you don't have them, etcetera, you would have made a pretence of possessing qualities higher than a human, which is one of the four root infractions.

In the vows of a person approaching virtue, there are four fundamental or root actions that you must give up, one of which is lying.

If you were to make a pretence of possessing qualities higher than a human, your vow would degenerate. Whereas if you were to make a lie other than that, your vow would not degenerate, but you would have to purify it through confession, etcetera.

So making a pretence of having qualities higher than a human is a reference to pretending to have the qualities of higher realms – higher realms that surpass that of a human.

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Even if we're not aware of these higher realm minds, we still must be careful about trying to give others the impression that we have superknowledges, like clairvoyance for instance. After all, superknowledges are not necessarily higher realm minds. For instance, there are instances where gaining a superknowledge is achieved through particular rebirth. So certain animals have superknowledges that were attained through rebirth. But in other cases, in order to develop a super knowledge that arises from application or through practice, then you must first achieve calm abiding, that is a higher realm mind, and only then can it develop. Therefore, if we were to go around giving others the impression that we have achieved superknowledges like clairvoyance, knowing that we had not done so, we would run the risk of incurring the fault of making a pretence of possessing qualities higher than that of a human.

If you were confused, and you went around telling people that you had these superknowledges when in fact you didn't, but you actually believed that you did, this would not be considered a lie, because you really think that you have this. This would be a case of what we might call inflated pride, but it's not a case of making a pretence of possessing qualities higher than that of a human, because you're mistaken and you actually believe you have it when you do not.

It's not a lie, is it? Think about if you had a chunk of copper, for instance, and you thought it was gold, and you told people; 'oh! I have gold.' It's not gold, is it? It's copper. But what if you told somebody; 'I have gold.' Would that be a lie?

Is that a lie? It's not a lie, is it?

It's not a lie, because in order to be a lie you must try and misrepresent your discrimination, so to speak. That is to say you must misrepresent something you actually know to be the case. So you know that you don't have gold, for instance, you know that it's copper but you want to misrepresent what you know and try to convince somebody that you do actually have gold. That's a lie, because you're misrepresenting what you have understood.

A lie necessarily has this misrepresentation, this part of it – misrepresenting what you know, particularly.

We say any number of different things, even though we just think 'hmmm perhaps that's the case.' These are not all lies.

*This is stated in Asanga's Levels of Yogic Deeds:<sup>177</sup>*

*Why is it that this concentration alone is called the level of meditative equipoise, and one-pointedness of the desire realm is not? [539] Here is the reason: this concentration is accomplished with lack of regret, supreme delight, pliancy, and bliss. The concentration which functions in the desire realm is not like the concentration that does not function there, but it is not the case that in the desire realm there is no concentration on a correct phenomenon.*

*It says here in the quote that just because the concentration which functions in the desire realm is not like the concentration that does not function there doesn't mean that we can say that there is no concentration on a correct phenomenon in the desire realm.*

*Thus, without having achieved pliancy, even when mindfulness is not continually maintained, your mind can automatically become non-discursive, and you can integrate this with all activities of moving, walking, lying down, and sitting. This approximation of concentration is called a one-pointed mind of the desire realm, but understand that it is not fit to be presented as genuine or actual calm abiding. Rather, it's called a one-pointed mind of the desire realm.*

*Question: Well then, what are the means of achieving pliancy, and upon achieving it, how does it lead to calm abiding?*

*Reply: Pliancy is to be understood in accordance with the explanation in Asanga's Compendium of Knowledge.<sup>179</sup>*

*What is pliancy? It is a serviceability of the body and mind due to the cessation of the continuum of physical and mental dysfunctions, and it has the function of dispelling all obstructions. Or obscurations*

*Earlier, Lama Tsong Khapa described physical and mental dysfunctions --negative habitual tendencies, is being mainly imprints, that is to say things occurring through the force of habit. Habit, imprints, this type of thing. Here pliancy is a serviceability of the body and mind due to the cessation of the continuum of such things. So it's a serviceability.*

What sort of function of serviceability of body and mind play? Well it dispels all obscurations. That's the function or role that it has.

Now Lama Tsong Khapa makes another comment, another explanation of what these negative habitual tendencies are, right here. He says;

*Physical and mental dysfunctions are the unfitness of your body and mind for being employed to cultivate virtue at will. Their remedies, physical and mental pliancy, entail great serviceability in terms of applying your body and mind to wholesome actions, for you are free of dysfunctions of both the body and the mind. So slightly different presentation.*

Very clear explanation here. *Physical and mental dysfunctions are the unfitness of your body and mind for being employed to cultivate virtue at will.* Due to the presence of these negative habitual tendencies we are not able to direct the mind, for instance to whatever virtuous object that we please. For instance, there is a certain inability to direct the mind toward loving kindness in the way that one pleases, due to ones familiarity with anger. We've become so accustomed to anger in the past, that habit in that direction makes it difficult for us to direct the mind toward loving kindness as we might wish. So earlier, Lama Tsong Khapa was describing these negative habitual tendencies as imprints. Here we see that he's talking about an unfitness of the body or mind being employed to cultivate virtue at will. So due to habit, due to conditioning toward non-virtue it's difficult for us to direct the mind towards virtue in the way that we please.

For instance the mind is left to run amok so we get conditioned to distraction. We get used to being distracted so that you have difficulty when you try to place the mind and cause it to remain one pointedly.

So we're talking about this unserviceability of body and mind.

In particular, these physical and mental negative habitual tendencies are the unserviceability which makes it unable to direct the mind towards virtue in the way you please. The remedies lie in physical and mental pliancy, which *entails a great serviceability in terms of applying your body and mind to wholesome actions, for you are free of these dysfunctions.*

There's a bit more, so pay attention.

*Moreover, physical dysfunction, which is included in the category of afflictions, interferes with your delight in eliminating afflictions. When you try to eliminate your afflictions, your body becomes unserviceable with a sense of heaviness and so on. Once you are free of this, your body becomes buoyant and light; this is a serviceable body.*

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Likewise, mental dysfunction, which is included in the category of afflictions, interferes with your delight in eliminating afflictions. [540] When you try to eliminate your afflictions, you cannot experience pleasure in focusing on a virtuous object. Once you are free of this, your mind focuses on the object of meditation without resistance; this is a serviceable mind.

*Thus the master Sthiramati states in his Explanation of the "Thirty Stanzas";*

*The serviceability of the body is that from which lightness and buoyancy arise in your physical actions. The serviceability of the mind is the cause of the cheerfulness and lightness of the mind in engaging in perfect attention. If you are endowed with this transformed quality that arises from your mind, you focus on the object of meditation without resistance. Therefore, this is called the serviceability of the mind.*

Student: (partly inaudible) (How can it be) that physical dysfunction is included in the category of afflictions?

Geshela: The text mentions that these physical dysfunctions interfere with your delight in eliminating afflictions. From time to time we would enjoy eliminating or abandoning afflictions. But these physical dysfunctions can be an obstacle to that, first of all. When it says ‘included in the category of afflictions’ its more referring to this type of thing. Lets say that when you could otherwise engage in virtue like for instance prostrating, then you maybe don’t really feel like it. There’s a certain heaviness of body that comes along with the practice of certain virtues. Or as it mentioned earlier in the text, that we shouldn’t oversleep. We should make an effort not to sleep in the first and last parts of the evening but rather make effort in practising the yogas. There’s a certain physical resistance to doing such a thing.

Or there are certain difficulties that we might have sitting in the seven-point posture of Vairocana for instance. Like the knees hurting and so forth. These different difficulties that relate to the physical aspect would be in the category of afflictions. These physical difficulties that you encounter in virtue, like those just mentioned.

They resemble afflictions but they’re not actually afflictions because if something is an affliction it’s necessarily a consciousness. Yet they are under the control of afflictions and therefore classed in the category of afflictions.

As it says in the text, ‘your body becomes unserviceable with a sense of heaviness and so on.’

Then when you look at the mental dysfunction it mentions that it interferes with your delight in eliminating afflictions so that when you try to eliminate your afflictions you cannot experience pleasure in focusing on a virtuous object. You have this resistance.

So it would seem that there are two features for both physical and mental dysfunctions. On the one hand physical dysfunction interferes with your delight in eliminating afflictions. So due to the influence of such things you are prevented from joyfully engaging in efforts to abandon the afflictions. And then the second feature related to physical dysfunctions would be that its included in the category of afflictions which Geshela was just describing as this physical resistance to some of the things that are required as part of that process. Like the heaviness when you go to meditate.

There are certain efforts that you might make in order to abandon afflictions, correct? So the heaviness of body that comes when you are required to physically exert yourself in the name of abandoning afflictions – that resistance or those difficulties.

Then you have a similar two features posited for mental dysfunction. First of all there is once again an interference with your delight in eliminating afflictions. And then when you try to eliminate your

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afflictions you cannot experience pleasure in focusing on a virtuous object. So the second feature with mental dysfunction is that it is an obstacle to your feeling joyful or enjoying the effort that's required in abandoning those afflictions.

For instance when we get tired we tend to forget about the joy in abandoning the afflictions. That happens, doesn't it? Or when we're told that we ought to do prostrations we think, 'Oh maybe I'll have a lie down first.' You're troubled by the prospect of doing prostrations and you'd really rather not. If we were to talk from our own experience these are the types of examples that we would come up with right.

Student: How does that differ from lethargy?

Geshela: Lethargy is a derivative of delusion, that is ignorance. It mentioned that earlier, didn't it? When we talk about dysfunction we're talking about natural occurrences that are due to this conditioning or the habit that we form from the past. You become so accustomed to these disturbing emotions et cetera and so this heaviness of body for instance naturally arises. Remember Geshela said that Lama Tsong Khapa was describing them earlier as imprints. Imprints – emphasising the conditioning; things that happen due to conditioning.

Physical dysfunction does not have to be heaviness of body for instance. That's an example. Rather there are certain physical behaviours, good physical behaviours, that we're meant to engage in. The resistance to engaging in those positive physical behaviours that occurs through conditioning could be considered a physical dysfunction. So for instance in the Vinaya they talk about jumping when it's inappropriate and all sorts of different things. So the resistance to behaving yourself in the positive or good way due to conditioning is physical dysfunction.

There are also verbal dysfunctions. Negative habitual tendencies of speech. So the example they give in the text is like calling someone a moron for instance. Like the Tibetan insult is calling someone a beggar, right. So saying these types of things. People talk like this due to the negative habitual tendencies of speech. Due to conditioning.

Western people calling each other stupid. That's a negative habitual tendency of speech.

Yet here we're talking about the physical and mental negative habitual tendencies which are obstacles to developing physical and mental pliancy. So there's no need to talk about negative habitual tendencies of speech.

At the bottom of page 82 it reads:

*In short, due to the unserviceability of the body and mind, even when you want to strive to eliminate afflictions, you do so arduously and with distaste, like someone unable to engage in work. When pliancy is achieved, this tendency stops, and your body and mind become very easy to employ. It's very clear isn't it, right here? Such complete physical and mental serviceability arises to a slight degree from the time that you start to cultivate concentration. This gradually increases until it finally turns into pliancy and one-pointed calm abiding. At first this is difficult to recognize due to its subtlety, but later on it becomes easy to recognize. Asanga's Sravaka Levels states:*<sup>180</sup>

*At the very beginning when you begin the correct training, the occurrence of mental and physical pliancy and mental and physical serviceability is subtle and difficult to discern.*

*And:*<sup>181</sup>

*As that one-pointed mind and mental and physical pliancy increase, in the manner of a chain reaction, they lead to a one-pointed mind and mental and physical pliancy that are obvious and easy to discern.*

*The portent of the occurrence of easily discernible, perfected pliancy is this: [541] persons who are striving to cultivate concentration experience a sense of heaviness and numbness of the brain, but it is not an unpleasant heaviness.<sup>182</sup> They say that this heaviness and numbness of the brain is actually a portent of the pliancy that it to come. As soon as this occurs, they are freed of the mental dysfunction that obstructs their delight in eliminating afflictions, and mental pliancy, which is the remedy for this dysfunction, arises for the first time. The Sravaka Levels states.<sup>183</sup>*

*The portent of the proximate occurrence of obvious, easily discernible one-pointedness of mind and mental and physical pliancy is a sensation of the brain becoming heavy; but this is not a harmful characteristic. [Lozang Zopa: Proximate occurrence means the thing that is just about to come, the thing that is yet to come] As soon as this happens, you eliminate the mental dysfunction that belongs to the category of afflictions and that obstructs your delight in eliminating afflictions; and the mental serviceability and mental pliancy which are the remedy for this dysfunction arise.*

Here we have a description of the portents for the arising of physical and mental pliancy. And according to the text, mental pliancy arises first. So this is the way in which mental pliancy arises, as described here.

*Then due to the power of the arising of the pliancy that makes your mind serviceable, an energy that is a cause for physical pliancy courses through your body. Once this energy has pervasively coursed throughout the parts of your body, you are freed of physical dysfunction, and physical pliancy, which is the remedy for physical dysfunction, arises. Once this saturates the entire body, there is an experience of being as if filled with the power of this serviceable energy. The Sravaka Levels states.<sup>184</sup>*

*Due to its [pliancy's] occurrence, energy-wind<sup>185</sup>—included among the great elements—that is conducive to the arising of physical pliancy courses through the body. When it flows, you are freed of the physical dysfunction that belongs to the category of afflictions and that obstructs your delight in eliminating afflictions; and physical pliancy, the remedy for this affliction, saturates the entire body, so that it seems as if you are filled with this energy.*

Are we clear about these two? First mental pliancy arises. Then, after that, physical pliancy arises.

*Now, physical pliancy is a very pleasant sensation within the body, not a mental process.*

That is, when it says mental process it means mental factor.

*[542] As the master Sthiramati states, citing sutra.<sup>186</sup>*

*If a distinctive physical sensation is qualified by delight, recognize this to be physical pliancy. If your mind is delighted, your body becomes pliant.*

*Thus, when physical pliancy initially occurs, due to the power of energy there arises a great sense of well-being in your body, and on this basis there also arises in your mind a most exceptional experience of that pleasure.*

Now things have been turned on their head haven't they? Because it says when physical pliancy initially occurs, due to the power of energy there arises a great sense of well being in your body, and on this basis there also arises in your mind a most exceptional experience of that pleasure. So although mental pliancy arises before physical pliancy, the bliss of physical pliancy arises before the bliss of mental pliancy. The bliss of mental pliancy arises in dependence upon the bliss of physical pliancy.

Of physical and mental pliancy, which arises first? According to this mental pliancy arises first. Then in dependence upon that comes physical pliancy. Then, due to the power of the energy that arises with physical pliancy comes a great sense of well-being within your body. So the bliss of physical pliancy. Then in dependence upon that comes this most exceptional experience of that pleasure in your mind.

*Thereafter, the force of this initial occurrence of pliancy gradually subsides, but this is not a case of pliancy becoming exhausted. Rather, this pliancy is coarse and excessively agitates your mind; so with its disappearance, there occurs a pliancy, tenuous like a shadow, that is compatible with steady concentration. This coarse form can agitate the mind. So that once that stops there arises a type of pliancy that is as it says tenuous like a shadow, a shadow of the body, that is compatible with unwavering concentration. Once the rapturous delight of your mind has disappeared, your mind stabilizes firmly upon the object of meditation, and you achieve calm abiding, which is free of the turbulence caused by great delight.*

It says here that you have this sense that this great bliss, which you initially experience, will gradually subside, and then after that this rapturous delight of the mind also subsides, so that the mind then begins to abide stably upon its focal object. Here you have a state of affairs that Lama Tsong Khapa is explaining from his own experience.

*The Sravaka Levels states:*<sup>187</sup>

*When this first arises, you experience delight, a great sense of bliss, attention to unsurpassed delight, and manifest delight. Following this, the force of pliancy that first arose slowly becomes very refined, and your body becomes endowed with shadow-like pliancy. You eliminate delight, your mind becomes stabilized with calm abiding, and you focus on the object of meditation with exceptional calm. This accords with the statements above. They're essentially the same, aren't they?*

*Once such things happen, "You are said to have attention,"<sup>188</sup> you achieve calm abiding and you are included among the ranks of "those who have achieved attention." [543]*

So remember earlier Lama Tsong Khapa stated that attention refers to calm abiding as explained in Asanga's Sravaka Levels? Here's the quote that it refers to.

*For, by achieving calm abiding which is included in the access to the first stabilization, you achieve the smallest type of attention on the level of meditative equipoise.*<sup>189</sup>

You are included among the ranks of those who have achieved attention because by achieving calm abiding which is included in the access to the first stabilisation you achieve this smallest type of attention on the level of meditative equipoise. So you have a reason stated.

*This accords with the statement in the Sravaka Levels:*

*Thereafter, the beginning yogi is endowed with attention and is included in the ranks of those who are called "attentive." Why? Because this person has achieved the small type of attention on the level of meditative equipoise that first experiences the form realm. Therefore, this person is called "attentive."*

*The level or ground of meditative equipoise is a synonym for the level of the two higher realms [the form and formless realms].*

Here it is. It's exactly what Geshela was saying about the ground of meditative equipoise.

### ***(b'') The marks associated with attention, and the elimination of qualms***

*These are the marks and signs to be known by yourself and others as "the criteria for having achieved attention." You who have achieved such attention have these marks;*

- 1. The achievement in small measure of these four: your mind belongs to the level of form, physical pliancy, mental pliancy, and one-pointedness of mind.*
- 2. The ability to purify afflictions either by means of the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness, or the path bearing the aspects of the truths.*

3. *Once your mind is established inwardly, meditative equipoise and physical and mental pliancy arise ever so swiftly.*

4. *For the most part, the five obstructions,<sup>19</sup> such as sensual desire, do not occur.*

5. *When you rise from meditative equipoise, you still possess physical and mental pliancy to some extent.*

Here it mentions the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness, doesn't it? Earlier we were talking in terms of mundane paths. Those are the paths bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness. In this case you would be viewing the desire realm as coarse and the higher realms as calm. Or perhaps you would look at the first meditative stabilisation as coarse and the second meditative stabilisation as calm, etc. Alternatively you might follow a path bearing the aspects of the truths, which refer to the noble truths. In this case you would view the first two truths as coarse and the second two truths as calm.

Perhaps we will leave it there with what are known as the six types of attention. They are probably mentioned in here but maybe best to leave it at that.

Student: Earlier we said that the measure of having developed calm abiding was the arising of the bliss of physical and mental pliancy but when you look at the explanation in this text it would seem that calm abiding actually arises after that bliss subsides, once the mind has sort of settled into a stable concentration on its object. Does this explanation here change the measure for having developed calm abiding or how should we understand it?

Geshela: Generally speaking by cultivating a non-discursive and stable concentration you can experience a great deal of bliss. Although bliss occurs - for instance in the ninth stage of mental abiding where you are able to effortlessly and spontaneously place your attention on the object of meditation in which ever way you please - you still would not say that that is the bliss of physical and mental pliancy that arises in dependence upon that ninth stage of mental abiding.

We can accept that there are concentrations that have bliss – even that ninth stage – that are not calm abiding for instance. You understand? So although there is bliss present prior to this point, that's not the bliss of physical and mental pliancy that's being referred to. Perhaps you could say it like this – although there is pliancy, and although there is bliss, that's not the bliss of physical and mental pliancy that arises in dependence upon having abided one-pointedly. So there is a special type of bliss of physical and mental pliancy associated with calm abiding, and that early stage is not it.

You probably have to say it like this.

There are other points that you could make. For instance texts will use the term pliancy without there being any pleasure associated with that pliancy, or any particular pleasure that's mentioned. So they use the term pliancy here and there. That's not the pliancy that's referred to in the development of calm abiding. So it's a similar principle.

It doesn't mean that every time you have this pliancy that you're talking about the pliancy that you achieve through calm abiding. Or there's another point here. It says on page 84 that once such things happen you are said to have attention. But actually attention is something that's mentioned in other contexts as well. It's one of the mental factors, isn't it? So just because you have attention doesn't mean that you have the attention that you're talking about here.

Because we have all achieved attention.

Because we all have feeling, discrimination, intention, contact and attention don't we!

So it follows that we've achieved calm abiding.

Because you've achieved attention.

Because it says that you've achieved attention once you've achieved calm abiding.



So Geshela thinks that although you might have similar names, you have different things that those names refer to. But let's not come to conclusions so easily. Let's continue to analyse and investigate.

Student: On page 81 we have a quote from Asanga's Sravaka Levels which mentions this lack of regret that's achieved in calm abiding. How are the concentrations achieved in the desire realm different in the sense of not having regret?

Geshela: Your reasoning is essentially that it's not that it doesn't have regret because it has regret, right. But here the regret that they're talking about is probably the regret that is one of the four variable factors in the 51 mental factors.

Student: What is an access state? Is it something that comes after calm abiding yet before the first meditative stabilisation?

Geshela: The access state happens when you achieve calm abiding and lasts until you achieve the first meditative stabilisation. First actual meditative stabilisation. That will probably be discussed later when we deal with these attentions. Geshela stopped off, saying Lama Tsong Khapa will probably talk about the different types of attentions. Those topics are quite linked, so we'll probably cover that in a bit.

Student: When you achieve calm abiding do the breath and the five sense consciousnesses cease?

Geshela: They say there are cases in which they do. In fact they even say there are cases in which the passage of breath through the nose stops when you develop subtle laxity. And I said 'yeah but there's still movement in the lower abdomen, so does it completely stop?' And he said 'passage of breath stops through the nose so you could say it completely stops.'

When you develop subtle laxity then the passage of breath through the nose can stop. But the slight movements in the lower abdomen do not. Which is an indication that you have subtle laxity. When the passage of the breath through the nose stops through the power of having achieved actual calm abiding, then the movement in the lower abdomen also stops.

Student: (Do the five sense consciousnesses stop?)

Geshela: They wouldn't be functioning at that time. They're not manifest because you're completely in this meditative equipoise.

Student: If you achieve any of the nine states of mental abiding or calm abiding, is there a guarantee that the next time you go to meditate you pick up from where you left off, or is it possible that you have to start from the beginning again?  
For instance you can only get up to level three, last time you got up to level eight.

Geshela: What are you talking about? I mean stopping meditation and not coming back for another ten or fifteen days, or stopping meditation and starting again in an hour? What kind of time period are we talking about?

If you were to stop for a period of months, then it's certainly possible that your previous ability would have declined and it would be difficult for you to reach the states that you were at before. Whereas if you just stop for an hour for a meal or whatever and you come back, then you would think that you could pick up from where you left off in the previous session. Earlier when I asked the question Geshela was saying that you stop and then you come back to it and you can easily achieve up to where you left off.

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But Geshela reckons that once you reach the ninth stage of mental abiding then it's difficult to decline from there given that you have achieved this ability to remain effortlessly. Effortless focus.

But these are issues that are really best talked about from one's own experience. So why don't you start by getting some experience of it and that would probably be best. Then we can talk.

**Buddhist Studies Programme**

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

**Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa**

**Number of the teaching: 27**

**Date of the teaching: 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2004**

We left off yesterday on the section of the text which falls under the heading:

*‘The marks associated with attention, and the elimination of qualms’.*

This can be traced back to the section of the outline that reads:

*‘The measure of a successful cultivation of calm abiding’.*

There are three parts to that section:

1. *A presentation of the dividing line between accomplishing and not accomplishing calm abiding.*
2. *A general presentation of the way to proceed along the path on the basis of calm abiding, and*
3. *A specific presentation of the way to proceed along the mundane path.*

The first section has two parts:

1. *A presentation of the actual meaning, and*
2. *The marks associated with intention, and the elimination of qualms.*

It is in this second section that we left off yesterday.

Yesterday Ben asked what it means to be ‘without regret’. This was stated to be one of the characteristics for having achieved calm abiding, along with supreme bliss, and supreme joy. Yesterday Geshela explained ‘regret’ in ‘lack of regret’ as referring to one of the four variable factors found within the fifty-one mental factors.

The section being referred to is on page 81 and is a quote from Arya Asanga’s *Level of Yogic Deeds*. This quote centers around a specific point; namely that the ninth stage of mental abiding is not considered a ‘ground of meditative equipoise’. We’re looking for the reasons why that might be so. Arya Asanga says that this ninth stage of mental abiding is not considered a ground of meditative equipoise because it does not have a ‘lack of regret, supreme delight, pliancy, and bliss’. This ninth level of mental abiding is a desire realm mind, not a ground of meditative equipoise.

Yangchen Gawe Lodro wrote a supplement to the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* in which he explains the antiquated terms found within it. In this text he explains ‘lack of regret’ as meaning ‘not having physical fatigue or discouragement of mind’. Judging by this explanation, it would seem then, that the ninth stage of mental abiding which is subsumed by desire realm minds can have an aspect of physical fatigue and mental discouragement. In fact Yangchen Gawe Lodro goes on to comment that in the ninth stage of mental abiding, since you do not have the special pliancy of serviceability of body and mind, if your period of meditation is extremely long, there can be physical fatigue and mental discouragement.

In the texts dealing specifically with these eight meditative stabilizations and formless realm states, it says that in the ninth stage of mental abiding you can effortlessly place your attention whichever way you want. Perhaps then, if you wanted to place your attention on an object for an extremely long time, you could do so, but eventually you would encounter some physical fatigue and mental discouragement. For instance, perhaps the person on the ninth stage wants to place their attention on an object for a period of years. Perhaps that’s the way it’s to be understood.

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That then is the meaning of this phrase; ‘lack of regret’. It refers to not having the physical fatigue or mental discouragement. Yesterday when we talked about it as one of the fifty-one mental factors we were incorrect.

Now picking up from page 85:

***(b'') The marks associated with attention, and the elimination of qualms***

*These are the marks and signs to be known by yourself and others as "the criteria for having achieved attention." You who have achieved such attention have these marks;*

- 1. The achievement in small measure of these four: your mind belongs to the level of form, physical pliancy, mental pliancy, and one-pointedness of mind.*
- 2. The ability to purify afflictions either by means of the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness, or the path bearing the aspects of the truths.*
- 3. Once your mind is established inwardly, meditative equipoise and physical and mental pliancy arise ever so swiftly.*
- 4. For the most part, the five obstructions, such as sensual desire, do not occur.*
- 5. When you rise from meditative equipoise, you still possess physical and mental pliancy to some extent.*

There are five marks or signs listed here. These are signs that will occur when you initially achieve calm abiding, or, as it's referred to here, ‘attention’.

Look at number four. It says; ‘*for the most part, the five obstructions, such as sensual desire, do not occur*’. So what are these five obstructions? They are [as it says in the endnotes on page 401, note 191] sensual desire, malice, lethargy and sleepiness, excitement and regret, and doubt. Lethargy and sleepiness are counted as one, as are excitement and regret, thus making a total of five. So ‘for the most part’ these don’t occur when you achieve calm abiding.

*Thus the Sravaka Levels says:*

*These are the marks of a novice [beginner] who is endowed with attention:*

So when you first achieve calm abiding, you are known as a beginner; ‘an attentive beginner’, or ‘a beginner endowed with attention’. This is the name given to you.

The quote from *Sravaka Levels* continues:

*You achieve the small degree of a mind that experiences the form realm, physical pliancy, mental pliancy, and the small degree of one-pointedness of mind. You have the opportunity and ability to practice with objects of meditation that purify afflictions. Your mind-stream becomes smooth, and you are enveloped by calm abiding.*

*And:*

*When your mind is perfectly drawn inward, settled and focused, mental and physical pliancy occur ever so swiftly; you are not afflicted by physical dysfunction, and for the most part the obstructions do not operate.*

*And:*

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*Even when you rise from meditation and move about, you still have a certain degree of physical and mental pliancy. Recognize such experiences to be purified characteristics and signs of possessing attention.*

These quotes give exactly the same meaning as the explanation Lama Tsong Khapa provided above, don't they? It's very clear.

*After you have achieved attention bearing such characteristics, it is very easy for the path of calm abiding to be thoroughly purified as follows: After you have achieved equipoise in calm abiding, in which your mind is one-pointed, you are swiftly able to induce physical and mental pliancy so that pliancy increases. Commensurate with the increase of pliancy, one-pointed calm abiding increases, so that they mutually enhance each other.*

There are many instances where two things 'mutually enhance' one another. We talk of method and wisdom, for instance; the mind of enlightenment and the wisdom realizing emptiness. When you meditate on the mind of enlightenment, the wisdom realizing emptiness is enhanced, and when you meditate on the wisdom realizing emptiness, the mind of enlightenment is enhanced. We talk of one consciousness 'imbuing' another consciousness, don't we. This is the same principle where two things mutually enhance one another.

*The Sravaka Levels:*

*Just as your physical and mental pliancy increase, so does your mental one-pointedness upon the object of meditation increase; and just as your mental one-pointedness increases, so does your physical and mental pliancy increase. These two phenomena— mental one-pointedness and pliancy—are based upon each other and are dependent upon each other.*

*In summary, when your mind is serviceable, energy and mind focus as one, so the energy becomes serviceable. At that time, an extraordinary physical pliancy occurs, and when this happens, exceptional concentration arises in your mind. This, in turn, brings forth an exceptionally serviceable energy. Therefore, the process of physical and mental pliancy is as explained above.*

We talked about the order in which mental and physical pliancy occur, and the order in which the bliss of the different pliancies occur yesterday. They are explained above, starting on page 83.

These are 'the marks associated with attention' which is to say they are the signs of having achieved calm abiding. Next we have the section where different doubts, or, as they are called here, 'qualms', are addressed:

***The elimination of qualms.***

*Qualm: Accordingly, it is said of the non-discursive ninth mental state that even without continual effort at mindfulness and vigilance, your mind becomes concentrated. Moreover, you are endowed with an intensity of clarity that prevents even subtle laxity. And, as in the earlier presentation of physical pliancy, there is concentration that yields outstanding well-being in your body and mind due to the power of serviceable energy. As explained in the above section on the marks associated with attention, for the most part there is no movement of the secondary afflictions of sensual desire and so on; and even when you rise from meditative equipoise, you have the quality of not being parted from pliancy. In terms of the five paths, where does this occur?*

It would seem that the 'five paths' mentioned here are the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation, and no-more learning although it doesn't say that explicitly. It just says; '*in terms of the*

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*five paths*’ but probably the five paths which are the subject of this question are those five. The reply reads:

*Reply: In the past as well as the present there have been a great number of people who assert that when such concentration arises it is generally to be placed on the Mahayana path.*

This assertion would seem to belong to others who are not of our tradition.

*Specifically, they assert this as a contemplation in which the characteristics of the completion stage of the highest yoga tantra are perfected. They draw this conclusion upon noting the occurrence of a great experience of bliss in the body and mind, based on a feeling as if one's entire body were filled with ecstasy due to the energy corresponding to the arising of pliancy, ...*

We talked yesterday of how the body is saturated with this feeling or perhaps ‘sensation’ of bliss. ‘ecstasy’ here, is just another translation of the word translated elsewhere as ‘bliss’

*.....as well the attributes of non-discursive awareness and great clarity.*

Lama Tsong Khapa is saying that there were people in the past as well as in the present who noticing this great experience of bliss arising in the body and mind, believe that this places the person on a mahayana path. In particular, that it places them as having attained a particular level of accomplishment of the highest yoga tantra’s completion stage.

*However, when this is analyzed on the basis of the classic texts of the venerable Maitreya, the noble Asanga, and so on, and the authoritative texts, such as the Madhyamaka Stages of Meditation that clearly set forth the stages of concentration, it is not possible to place this kind of concentration even on the Hinayana path, let alone the Mahayana.*

What do you need in order for something to become a mahayana path?

Students: an uncontrived mind of enlightenment.

That’s correct. You need an uncontrived mind of enlightenment in order for a consciousness of yours to become a mahayana path. Now in general terms, what do you need in order for a consciousness to become a ‘path’?

Students: an uncontrived determination to be free - an uncontrived renunciation

That’s correct. In order to develop a path, you must have an uncontrived determination to be free. So if you do not have a mind of enlightenment, yet develop an uncontrived determination to be free, you develop a hinayana path. The determination to be free is an awareness which is intent on liberation. If you’re intent on a liberation of a hearer, you develop a hearer path, whereas if you’re intent on a liberation of a solitary realizer, you develop a solitary realizer path.

*For the Sravaka Levels states that even the mundane paths which look to the aspects of calmness and coarseness for accomplishing the actual first stabilization are accomplished on the basis of this concentration.*

Yesterday it was mentioned that a person might come to view the desire realm as coarse, and the higher realms as peaceful, wasn’t it? In fact when a person reflects on the shortcomings of the desire realm and works to attain the first meditative stabilization because they feel that to be a peaceful state, we call that a ‘mundane path’ don’t we. This type of mundane path is also, as it states here, ‘*a mundane path which looks to the aspects of calmness and coarseness*’. Now, the desire realm is cyclic existence, and

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the form and formless realms are also cyclic existence, yet when a person seeks to separate from their attachment to the desire realm, and achieve the peace of the higher realms that, for instance meditative stabilization offers, they have ‘a path which has the aspects of coarseness and calmness’. This is so called because the desire realm is relatively coarse in comparison to the form and formless realms.

Let’s say that a person views the desire realm as disadvantageous and reflects upon its shortcomings, and that they have an awareness that is intent on achieving a higher realm state. Can this be considered a determination to be free? They are, after all, seeing the shortcomings of the desire realm, and wanting to be separated from that. Is this then a determination to be free?

Students: [some say no]

Good! In the context of a person of small capacity, we talk about that person reflecting on the shortcomings of the miserable realms and, wanting to be free of those, striving to achieve higher status. Does a person who, seeing the shortcomings of the miserable realms, wants to be free of them and achieve higher status, have a determination to be free? Is this a determination to be free?

Student: no

You could probably say that it’s not a determination to be free. You could certainly say that it’s not a pure determination to be free. Consider however, that when a person has a path that views the aspects of calmness and coarseness, they do have something that they want to ‘become free of’ or to ‘emerge from’; namely the desire realm, and they want to attain higher realm states. Similarly, a person of small capacity sees the shortcomings of the miserable realms and wants to emerge or become free of those, and they have an awareness that is intent on achieving a happy realm, don’t they? So in these cases, you might say that they have a determination to be free in the sense that they are determined to become free of a particular thing, but they are not actual determinations to be free because that must necessarily be an awareness intent on liberation.

We can therefore determine conclusively that those things would not be pure determinations to be free, because a pure determination to be free necessarily is an awareness intent on becoming free from all of cyclic existence.

So here today we have a new term coming up; ‘a mundane path which looks to the aspects of calmness and coarseness’, or in short; ‘a path with the aspects of calmness and coarseness’. Continuing on Lama Tsong Khapa says:

*Therefore, non-Buddhist sages, who, by means of mundane paths, free themselves from attachment to the level of Nothingness and lower levels, must proceed to higher paths on the basis of this concentration. So this is a concentration common to both non-Buddhists and Buddhists.*

*Furthermore, if this concentration is imbued with the view that correctly knows [realizes] selflessness and with the attitude of the determination to be free which properly ascertains the faults of the whole of cyclic existence, is repelled by the cycle of existence, and diligently strives for liberation, it turns into the path to liberation. If it is imbued with the precious spirit of enlightenment, it turns into the Mahayana path.*

*For example, if the generosity of giving a single morsel of food to an animal and observing even one type of ethical discipline are imbued with these attitudes, they turn into the collection of merit on the paths to liberation and omniscience respectively.*

The point here is that any virtue we perform, if imbued with the determination to be free will become a cause for liberation; an accumulation for the path to liberation, whereas if it is imbued with the mind of

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enlightenment, it will become a cause for buddhahood, or as it says here; ‘a collection for the paths of liberation or omniscience’.

*Nevertheless, in the case of this question you do not investigate whether it becomes a path of liberation and omniscience in terms of its being imbued with other paths; rather you investigate which path it becomes by the very nature of the concentration itself.*

Although there is a point about the paths of liberation and omniscience, here that is not our concern. That’s another issue.

*Although there are inconsistencies [incompatibilities] between the Madhyamaka and Cittamatrā ways of establishing the object of the view of insight, in general there are no inconsistencies in their identifications of calm abiding and insight or in the way they develop knowledge of these in their mind-streams [i.e. realizations of these in their continuums].*

*Therefore, the noble Asanga states in his Bodhisattva Levels, Compendium of Determinations, Compendium of Knowledge, and Sravaka Levels that within the context of the individual practices of calm abiding and insight, when calm abiding is accomplished, it is accomplished through the stages of the nine mental states. Moreover, since this is elaborately set forth in the Sravaka Levels, these nine concentrations are not asserted as the means for accomplishing insight...*

These are not posited as the way to accomplish insight because....

*...in those treatises insight is explained separately from the nine mental states, and the means of accomplishing it are also explained separately in Asanga's Sravaka Levels.*

*Similarly, the Madhyamaka Stages of Meditation texts and Ratnakarasanti's Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom also separately discuss the path of calm abiding consisting of nine mental states and the path of insight. There are also no discrepancies between the statements in the teachings of Maitreya and the commentaries by Asanga, so all the great trailblazers are of one mind in this regard.*

That’s quite clear. It doesn’t require any more commentary. Next we have a doubt or qualm being raised:

*Qualm: Although bliss and clarity are present in the concentration which is explained in the Sravaka Levels, it is mere calm abiding since there is no profound non-discursiveness awareness. But if non-discursive awareness is present, it becomes concentration on emptiness.*

*Reply: By "concentration on emptiness" are you referring to investigating the meaning of "profound" in the phrase "profound non-discursive awareness" by using your discerning wisdom to establish this definitively in theory and then focusing on this without discursiveness? Or are you referring simply to settling in non-discursive awareness and not analyzing anything? In the first case I also assert such a practice to be concentration on emptiness.*

It’s quite clear isn’t it? We’re talking about bliss, clarity, and non-discursiveness. In fact about a state which has these three features. You will hear references to ‘blissful, clear, and non-discursive concentrations’. This is actually quite a powerful concentration.

Lama Tsong Khapa is saying ‘What do you mean by this term ‘non-discursive’? Are you talking about a case in which a person has analysed the profound - that is, emptiness, and established it definitively, thereby developing a realization of that emptiness, and then, based upon that realization, placing their mind upon it non-discursively? If that is the case, I would also consider such a blissful, clear, non-discursive concentration focused upon emptiness to be a concentration on emptiness’.



*If you assert likewise, there is a distinction between those who have and those who do not have an understanding of the view of the way things are. Those individuals who have the view and sustain a non-discursive awareness upon settling in this view are practicing the profound concentration on emptiness. The meditation of those who lack an understanding of this view and meditate by not thinking about anything is not profound meditation on emptiness. It is valid to claim this distinction.*

We must distinguish between these two types, mustn't we! The question is; is a blissful, clear, non-discursive concentration, a concentration on emptiness? To answer that question, you must know whether the concentration in question belongs to a person who has a realization of emptiness or not. That will determine the answer. Whether or not they are concentrations on emptiness is determined by whether or not the person has a realization of emptiness. The point is that for such a thing to be a concentration on emptiness, the person must have realized emptiness.

*Do not declare that all types of meditation in which you do not think about anything are meditative stabilization on the objectless, or on the signless, or on emptiness.*

So don't go around saying that just because in your meditation you do not think of anything at all means that you are meditating on emptiness! Here we have a list of some of the synonyms for emptiness, 'objectless' and 'signless'.

*Qualm: Regardless of whether or not you have the view that comprehends emptiness, all meditation in which your mind is focused on not thinking about anything and on not analyzing anything is concentration on emptiness.*

*Reply: In that case you would be forced to assert that even the concentrations along the way to calm abiding, mentioned previously in passages from Asanga's Sravaka Levels are concentrations on emptiness. For in those, too, when settled in concentration—apart from a few occasions of monitoring and so on when the strength of mindfulness and vigilance has decreased—you sustain the meditation without the slightest discursive thought of "this is this" or "this is not this." Therefore, the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning says that the concentrations for achieving calm abiding attend to an image that is without discursive thought.*

So the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning says that the concentrations used for achieving calm abiding 'attend to an image that is without discursive thought'.

*Furthermore, within the context of calm abiding and insight, Asanga's Sravaka Levels refers to calm abiding in this way;*

*At that time, this [concentration] attends to an image without discursive thought, and it exclusively focuses mindfulness one-pointedly upon the object. It does not examine it, nor classify it, nor investigate it, nor ponder it, nor analyze it.*

*And the same text states:*

*When you achieve the mind of calm abiding in this way, signs, thoughts, or secondary afflictions may appear, manifest, or become the object, because of forgetfulness or the fault of lack of habituation. Do not fall immediately under the influence of the faults that you have previously observed; neither recall them nor pay attention to them. In this way, because you are neither being mindful of this object nor attending to it, it dissolves; and when it is dispelled, you will settle in the absence of the appearance of these obstructions.*

*This is stated in a passage concerning the practice of calm abiding alone. In passages concerning the practice of calm abiding, the authoritative treatises speak only of meditation that is focused without*

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*analytical activity. So, to knowledgeable people the contention that all meditation without any discursive thought at all constitutes the practice of meditation on emptiness is laughable. In particular, this citation from Asanga's Sravaka Levels also perfectly refutes the assertion that all references to meditation with no mindfulness or attention is meditation on emptiness.*

The quote from Asanga's *Sravaka Levels* refutes those positions.

Furthermore, Kamalasila's *first Stages of Meditation* says:

*The nature of calm abiding is nothing more than a one-pointed mind.  
This is the general characteristic of all calm abiding.*

*Ranakarasanti's Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom also states: "Focusing on the mind which is perceiving various things, reject mental conversation and cultivate calm abiding." Mental conversation is the discursive thought, "This is this."*

'Perceiving' could be translated as 'appearing'. Where it says 'reject mental conversation', it's saying reject discursive thoughts such as thinking 'this is this'.

*Moreover, after earlier citing numerous sutras and treatises by the great trailblazers, including the discussion in the Cloud of Jewels Sutra concerning calm abiding as mental one-pointedness, I have already explained numerous times that calm abiding entails no discursive thought whatsoever.*

*Therefore, there is a non-discursive awareness that meditates on emptiness as well as a non-discursive awareness that lacks even the slightest cognition [realization] of emptiness. So do not regard every occurrence of bliss, clarity, and non-discursive awareness as meditation on emptiness. These comments disclose only a portion of this subject; so strive diligently and understand the ways of accomplishing calm abiding and insight as elucidated by Maitreya, Asanga, and so on. If you fail to do so, you will mistake certain concentrations that are focused non-discursively—but without even reaching calm abiding—for the insight which cuts the root of cyclic existence. And, after you have arrogantly held this to be an awareness without a truly existent object, as time goes by you will certainly deceive yourself and others.*

*The treatises of authoritative scholars and adepts assert that when you newly practice calm abiding, you exclusively focus your attention non-discursively in stabilizing meditation; and when you first practice insight, you meditate by means of analysis with discerning wisdom. Once you hold that all thought consists of grasping to true existence and discard it altogether, your understanding is turned directly away from the authoritative treatises, and you do not reach an errorless view of selflessness. Nevertheless, the notion that the absence of thought constitutes meditation on the profound object of insight is simply the unadulterated system of the Chinese master Ha-shang. Take a careful look at Kamalasila's three Stages of Meditation, and you will understand.*

Is that all right for this section? There's quite a bit of material of course, but in short what we have here are; first the marks of having attention, then an elimination of certain doubts that arise in relation to calm abiding. Since Lama Tsong Khapa cites a number of scriptures as support for his points, and uses reasons to establish them, there are a great number of words, a lot of material, but when you condense that down to the points he's making and their meanings, there's not actually a great deal there.

'Scripture and reasoning'. Lama Tsong Khapa refers to scripture and reasons so that it's easier for us to develop wisdom. From time to time we will develop certain doubts and in order to cut these; we need to refer to scripture and reason. It's very difficult to address our doubts and develop wisdom unless we refer to such things as scripture and reasons. Lama Tsong Khapa makes a point of quoting the scriptures that support his position and using reasons to help establish that, so that we can develop the wisdom that overcomes those doubts.

Generally speaking, it would be very good to develop a blissful, clear, and non-discursive concentration, wouldn't it? That would be great! But if you haven't realized emptiness and take that type of concentration to be a concentration on emptiness, well you're mistaken. Even though the concentration you have developed is good, you're still mistaken in thinking that it is a concentration on emptiness when in fact, you haven't even realized emptiness.

Lama Tsong Khapa gives a lot of advice here and there's nothing that surpasses his advice that we could possibly say, so that is sufficient.

That brings us to:

***(2') A general presentation of the way to proceed along the path on the basis of calm abiding***

This is the second of three parts under the heading: '*The measure of successfully cultivating calm abiding*'.

1. First we had, '*a presentation of the dividing line between accomplishing and non accomplishing calm abiding*'.
2. Now we have this section: '*A general presentation of the way to proceed along the path on the basis of that calm abiding*'.
3. Later we'll look at '*a specific presentation of how to proceed along mundane paths*'.

What's the purpose of achieving calm abiding? Well it's to proceed or make progress on the path, isn't it? We try to achieve calm abiding so that we may progress along the path.

What does it mean to 'proceed along a path'? Well paths are the antidotes or remedies to the disturbing emotions that we want to abandon. We want to abandon the disturbing emotions; therefore we must have paths.

*Question: Should you simply sustain a non-discursive awareness characterized by clarity, non-discursiveness, etc., by achieving attention entailing non-discursive concentration as explained previously?*

*Reply: Producing such concentration in your mind-stream is for the purpose of generating insight that overcomes afflictions. Hence, if you do not generate insight on the basis of this concentration, you will be unable to eliminate even the afflictions of the desire realm, no matter how much you grow accustomed to that concentration. In that case, what need is there even to mention eliminating all afflictions? Therefore, cultivate insight.*

It's said that the afflictions of the desire realm are somewhat more coarse than the afflictions of the higher realms and so it's easier to abandon those than the others. Therefore, if you're not even able to abandon the easier ones, how are you going to abandon all of them including the hard ones?

*Furthermore, there are two kinds of insight: the insight proceeding by the mundane path, which eliminates manifest afflictions, and the insight proceeding by the supramundane path, which eradicates the seeds of afflictions. There is no means of proceeding on a higher path other than these two.*

We discussed this a little previously. Do you remember?

When you achieve a first actual meditative stabilization, you abandon the manifest afflictions of the desire realm. When you achieve a second actual meditative stabilization, you abandon the manifest afflictions of the first meditative stabilization. When you achieve a formless realm state, or formless absorption, you abandon the manifest afflictions of the form realm. In this way one can progress on up until you achieve an actual peak of existence where you abandon all of the manifest afflictions up to

© Buddhist Studies Programme – Lam Rim Chen Mo 2004 lightly edited transcripts for use of course participants only and including the state of ‘nothingness’, or ‘nothing at all’. You can’t, however, abandon any manifest afflictions beyond that along those mundane paths. The point is that the manifest afflictions of the ‘peak of existence’ cannot be abandoned by mundane paths because there is no higher mundane path.

The other day we were talking of how alternatively you might regard true sufferings and true origins as coarse, and true cessations and true paths as calming or peaceful. In that case you cultivate an insight that is focused upon the four truths and you follow along the supramundane paths which are able to eradicate the seeds of the afflictions. As it says right above: *‘insight proceeding by the supramundane path, which eradicates the seeds of afflictions’*.

As support for that we have:

*Asanga's Sravaka Levels states:*

*Thus, the yogi who has achieved attention and has entered the small delight of elimination of afflictions has two ways to progress, and no others. What are these two? They are the mundane and the supramundane.*

*Therefore, one who has achieved calm abiding, or attention, may cultivate either the insight of the mundane path or the insight that proceeds by the supramundane path. Whichever you wish to cultivate, you must frequently cultivate the calm abiding achieved previously; and when you practice in this way, pliancy and mental one-pointedness greatly increase, and calm abiding also becomes much more stable. Moreover, you become knowledgeable about the signs of calm abiding and insight, and thereafter you strive at whichever of the two paths you want. The Sravaka Levels:*

*In regard to this, the novice [beginner] yogis who are endowed with attention reflect, "I shall proceed by either the mundane or the supramundane path," and they frequently apply themselves to this attention. Commensurate with how much they pass the days and nights in frequent practice, their pliancy and mental one-pointedness increase, expand, and are broadened. When their attention becomes firm, stable, and solid, when it engages pure objects at will, and when it is imbued with the signs associated with calm abiding and insight, at that time they strive at their practice along the mundane path or the supramundane path, whichever they wish to follow.*

So the above explanation by Lama Tsong Khapa matches this quote from *Sravaka Levels*.

We’re talking about how to cultivate insight, aren’t we. Once you’ve developed stable calm abiding, you go on to try and cultivate insight. If you’re going to cultivate mundane paths, then ...

*Mundane insight consists of meditation bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness, in which you observe the coarseness of the lower levels and the calmness of the higher levels.*

In this case, you would have to have a good understanding of the drawbacks of the miserable realms as described in the stages of the path that are shared with a person of small capacity. You would also have to know the sufferings of humans, and of the desire realm in general, as were described in the stages of the path that are shared with a person of medium capacity. In other words, you have to know what the shortcomings of the desire realm are, recognize them as shortcomings of the desire realm, and wish to be free of them, and develop an awareness that is intent on achieving a higher state.

*Supramundane insight, as stated in the Sravaka Levels, consists of meditation which observes the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths, including impermanence, and so on. Principally you cultivate the view which is the knowledge of the selflessness of the person.*

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The four noble truths are true sufferings, true origins, true cessations, and true paths, aren't they? Each of these has four aspects associated with it, making a total of sixteen. These are *'the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths, such as impermanence and so on'*.

Let's consider the four aspects of the first of the four noble truths. They are:

- ❖ impermanence,
- ❖ in the nature of suffering,
- ❖ empty, and
- ❖ selfless,

The text mentions 'impermanence' here doesn't it. It also mentions 'selfless'. It says *'Principally you cultivate the view which is the knowledge of the selflessness of the person'*. Since this is a root of the afflictions, you must abandon that.

*Question: What kind of person achieves the attention of calm abiding explained previously and does not proceed by the supramundane path in that lifetime, but proceeds by the mundane path?*

*Reply: The Sravaka Levels states:*

*What persons proceed in this life solely by the mundane path and not by the supramundane path? There are the following four types of persons:*

- (1) all those who are not Buddhists;*
- (2) those who adhere to this [Buddhist] teaching but, while they have practiced calm abiding well, are of dull faculties;*
- (3) similarly, those who are of sharp faculties, but whose roots of virtue have not matured; and*
- (4) Bodhisattvas who wish to achieve enlightenment in the future, but not in this life.*

That's how it's described in the *Sravaka Levels*, isn't it. It should become clear in the following explanation.

Let's consider the first type of person; all those who are not buddhists:

*In that regard, all non-Buddhist yogis who have achieved the calm abiding explained earlier do not use discerning wisdom to sustain an analysis of the selflessness of the person, for they are not drawn to selflessness. Therefore, they either sustain non-discursive calm abiding alone, or they cultivate just the insight bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness. In this way, they proceed solely by the mundane path.*

*If you are a practitioner of this teaching, a Buddhist, but have dull faculties and have previously been deeply habituated to the stabilizing meditation of calm abiding alone, you will not be interested in meditation which investigates the meaning of selflessness with discerning wisdom. Or, even if you are interested, due to an inability to understand the meaning of selflessness, you will proceed in this life solely by the mundane path. This is because you either sustain the stability of calm abiding alone, or you cultivate just the insight bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness .....*

That's an explanation of the buddhists of dull faculties. Notice that it says *'you will proceed in this life solely by the mundane path'*. That's clear isn't it.

Now let's look at those of sharp faculties:

*Even if you are a Buddhist of sharp faculties who has comprehended the meaning of selflessness, if your roots of virtue for perceptually knowing [realizing] the truth have not matured, in this life you will still be unable to generate the supramundane, undefiled, noble path. In this case, it is said that you will*

Here when the text says '*supramundane, undefiled, noble path*', it's referring to a proper uncontaminated path. So such a person can indeed realize emptiness but they are not capable in that lifetime of actually 'seeing' emptiness, which is to say actually 'perceptually realizing' emptiness, and therefore will not achieve an arya path; this proper '*supramundane uncontaminated path*'. They could proceed along the supramundane path with the aspects of coarseness and calmness that we discussed earlier in the context of having calm abiding following the supramundane path with the aspects of coarseness and calmness, as opposed to that with the arya path, but they can only proceed along the paths of accumulation and paths of preparation, they couldn't reach the path of seeing which is an arya path.

It says; '*if your roots of virtue for perceptually realizing the truth have not matured, in this life you will still be unable to generate the supramundane, undefiled, noble [arya] path*'. By saying 'your roots of virtue have not matured', it means your roots of virtue for seeing the truth have not matured, which is to say that your roots of virtue for achieving the path of seeing have not matured. After all, the definition of the path of seeing includes seeing, or realizing the truth doesn't it?

Is this clear? In this case, could you say that the person proceeds along the mundane paths? That person is unable to develop the supramundane arya path yet they have already realized emptiness. They've realized selflessness, haven't they! Furthermore, that person has already achieved calm abiding, and so can also achieve insight focused on selflessness. After all, when you achieve the path of preparation, you must have achieved insight focused on emptiness because in achieving the path of preparation you have achieved the integration of calm abiding and insight focused on emptiness.

Do those of you who have already studied these topics remember this?

Except for the person who has already achieved the fruit of arhatship and only subsequently entered the mahayana paths, those who are on the mahayana paths of accumulation and preparation are necessarily ordinary beings, aren't they. So here, when it talks of how your roots of virtue for perceptually realizing the truth have not matured, it can only be talking about ordinary beings [who are entering the mahayana from the beginning].

So even if you proceed by the mundane path alone, that doesn't mean you're unable to cultivate insight focused on selflessness. You can indeed do so.

Are we clear about these three persons? Notice that Geshela made a distinction between the supramundane path with the aspect of calmness and coarseness and the supramundane path which is an arya path.

The second person is a Buddhist with dull faculties whereas the third person is a Buddhist with sharp faculties. This Buddhist with dull faculties, because of having only dull faculties, is not interested in meditating on selflessness, or even if interested, is incapable of comprehending it, which is why they proceed along mundane paths.

Let's look at this fourth type of person. It should be pointed out that the following expresses the views of lower tenet schools, not those of our own, 'our own' in this case meaning the 'mahayana':

*Consider bodhisattvas who are bound to one more birth before buddhahood and who during their next lifetime, their final rebirth in cyclic existence, will produce in their mind-streams the four paths, beginning with the path of preparation. While they are still bound to one more birth, they are unable to generate the noble path. So it is said that in this lifetime they "proceed by the mundane path," but not that they fail to know the meaning of selflessness.*

This paragraph centers around a bodhisattva who is said to be ‘obstructed from buddhahood by one life’ in the sense that they are bound to one more rebirth before they will achieve buddhahood. Those of you who have studied tenets might remember the Great Exposition assertion that a person on the basis of a single support goes from the paths of preparation right through to the path of no-more learning in a single lifetime. In light of this, it’s said that when a person initially achieves a path; that being a path of accumulation, they are unable to achieve buddhahood in that lifetime but can only go on to achieve buddhahood in their next life.

These are the tenets of the great exposition school, so if you would like to look at it further, read through tenets. There again, if you don’t want to look and are not interested then forget about it. [laughter]

*Vasubandhu's Treasury of Knowledge (Abhidharma-kosa) states:*

*For Our Teacher and the rhinoceros-like pratyekabuddhas  
All paths, from preparation to enlightenment,  
Are on the one last meditative stabilization.  
Prior to that are the aids to liberation [the path of accumulation].*

*This accords with the way of achieving buddhahood taught in the Hinayana treatises, but it is not the Mahayana interpretation of the noble master Asanga....*

....this is just what Geshela just explained....

*..Therefore, non-Buddhists who eliminate manifest afflictions by meditating on the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness, as well as Buddhists who radically eliminate afflictions [eliminate afflictions from the root] by meditating on the meaning of selflessness, must first of all achieve the concentration of calm abiding explained earlier. So the calm abiding explained above is needed by non-Buddhist and Buddhist yogis as the basis for eliminating afflictions. Furthermore, yogis of either the Mahayana or the Hinayana must also achieve this concentration; and even among the Mahayana practitioners, all yogis of both the mantra and perfection vehicles must also achieve calm abiding. So this calm abiding is extremely important as the basis for proceeding along the paths of all yogis.*

So we’ll leave it there for today.

What did we discuss today? Well, following the outline;

1. We talked first about the marks of having achieved attention.
2. Then we dealt with particular qualms or doubts. In particular, where if anywhere on the five paths are you if you achieve calm abiding.
3. Also Lama Tsong Khapa had a lot to say about this blissful, clear, and non-discursive concentration.
4. Then, we’ve just been talking of the way you proceed through the paths in dependence upon having achieved calm abiding.

There’s still a bit left of this last subject we haven’t finished that. This is found in the general presentation; the second of the three subdivisions.

Once again, what is the purpose for achieving calm abiding? It is so that you can then achieve insight, because it’s only through insight that we abandon the afflictions. Furthermore when achieving insight, there are two paths that a person might proceed along; mundane and supramundane paths.

**Buddhist Studies Programme**

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

**Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa**

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We left off yesterday at section 2,

*(2') A general presentation of the way to proceed along the path on the basis of meditative serenity*

A person works to achieve calm abiding and applies the different techniques to go through these nine mental states, nine stages of mental abiding. Then they achieve calm abiding.

Although this point will be made in the text, we ought to ask, what is the purpose of achieving calm abiding anyway? The purpose of achieving calm abiding is to achieve insight. And the purpose of achieving insight is so that we may abandon afflictions. Since we need to abandon afflictions, we must achieve insight and this also gives us the reason for calm abiding.

The achievement of calm abiding is not limited to the perfection vehicle alone. Also within mantra (or tantra) a person needs to achieve calm abiding. We have talked about how calm abiding is common to both Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike, and within Buddhism, it's common to the sutra and the mantra vehicle. So this is where we left off, on page 94.

*It reads: Moreover, the calm abiding explained in the tantric texts contains certain differences in methods for generating concentration and in objects of meditation, such as focusing on a divine form, on hand implements of the chosen deity, or on syllables. But apart from those, they are entirely alike in terms of the need to eliminate the five faults of concentration, including laziness and so on; in terms of the means of cultivating their antidotes, such as mindfulness and vigilance, and so on; and in terms of the achievement of the nine mental states and the ensuing occurrence of pliancy, etc. So this concentration is very widespread. With this in mind, the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning states that all Mahayana and hinayana concentrations are included within the concentrations of calm abiding and insight. Thus, you who wish to be skilled in concentration should become skilled in calm abiding and insight.*

*Although there are many purposes for developing this concentration, the chief purpose is for the sake of developing the knowledge of insight. [554] Moreover, in terms of insight there are two kinds: (1) that which bears the aspects of calmness and coarseness, which eliminates only manifest afflictions, and which is common to Buddhists and non-Buddhists; and (2) that which is common to Buddhists, both Mahayana practitioners and hinayana practitioners; that is, insight bearing the aspect of the reality of selflessness, which utterly eliminates the seeds of the afflictions. This last is a unique quality of Buddhists.*

We spoke a little bit yesterday about the manner in which insight abandons afflictions during our discussion about people who proceed along a mundane path. We talked about four types of persons who proceed on a mundane path - you must recollect those here.

That relates to the first type of insight mentioned here and then we have the second type of insight, an insight bearing the aspect of the [four] truths, which utterly eliminates the afflictions and their seeds. But this is limited to Buddhists.

*This last is a unique quality of Buddhists while the former is a luxury, not something indispensable; while the latter is an indispensable element. So those aspiring for freedom should produce the insight that comprehends the reality of selflessness.*

That's clear, isn't it?



The first, second, third and fourth actual meditative stabilisations are luxuries. They are excellent branch supports, but they are not indispensable. The other type of insight, however, that focused on the reality of selflessness, is indispensable because it's the thing that actually cuts the root of cyclic existence.

*Furthermore, even if you do not achieve the higher meditative stabilizations of the form realm or the meditative absorptions of the formless realm, but do achieve the calm abiding explained previously, which is included in the level of access to the first meditative stabilization, then you can achieve liberation—freedom from all the fetters of cyclic existence—by cultivating insight based on that calm abiding. By means of mundane insight developed on the basis of the calm abiding explained earlier, you can achieve the "mind of the Peak of Cyclic Existence," which has eliminated all of the manifest afflictions of the formless level of Nothingness and below.<sup>214</sup> But if you do not know the reality of selflessness and meditate upon it, you will not be liberated from cyclic existence. We probably covered this stuff in the past week, haven't we.*

A person achieves the nine states of mental abiding and then achieves calm abiding. At that point, they can cultivate mundane or supramundane paths. That was mentioned yesterday, wasn't it. How is it that a person cultivates mundane paths? Well, they look at the higher states as being calm in comparison to the lower state which is viewed as coarse. Thus they cultivate a path which has the aspects of coarseness and calmness. Why do they do that? So that they may achieve an actual meditative stabilisation.

This will be explained later, but just to make a small comment – this type of person must then abandon the manifest afflictions of the desire realm. So to do so, they reflect or focus on the shortcomings of the desire realm and think about achieving the higher realm. Through this process, they abandon the manifest afflictions of the desire realm and achieve the first actual meditative stabilisation. But they do not abandon the seeds of the afflictions.

Alternatively, a person might not adopt this path with the aspect of coarseness and calmness but rather focus on the four truths, viewing true suffering and true origins as being coarse in a sense, and thinking about true cessations and true paths as being calm. In doing so they are able to abandon even the seeds of the afflictions (which is what it says here). In this case that person is cultivating a supramundane path. In fact it says that right here in the text – that *by cultivating insight based on that calm abiding ... you can achieve liberation—freedom from all the fetters of cyclic existence*. This would seem to be mainly a hinayana presentation (not mahayana), given the fact that it seems to be linking this attainment to the first actual meditative stabilisation with the path of preparation, where according to the mahayana, that can happen as early as the great stage of the path of accumulation.

The focus here is on achieving liberation. *By means of mundane insight* we just read through this – *by means of mundane insight--developed on the basis of the calm abiding explained earlier, you can achieve the "mind of the Peak of Cyclic Existence," which has eliminated all of the manifest afflictions of the formless level of Nothingness and below.<sup>214</sup> But if you do not know the reality of selflessness and meditate upon it, you will not be liberated from cyclic existence.*

*Thus, Matrceta's "Praise that Falls Short," in the first chapter of his Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honor (Vamaha-vama-sutra) says:<sup>215</sup>*

*Those opposed to your teaching  
Are blinded by delusion.  
Even after venturing to the peak of cyclic existence,  
Suffering occurs again, and cyclic existence is maintained.  
Those who follow your teaching—  
Even if they do not achieve actual meditative stabilization—  
Turn away from cyclic existence,*

There are four fruits or results of the hinayana. Perhaps you might remember them. They were briefly referred to earlier in the text. These four results are the stream-enterers, the once-returners, the never-returners and arhats. When a person achieves the liberated path of the hinayana path of seeing, that person becomes a stream-enterer.

*Therefore, the calm abiding that serves as the basis for the insight that achieves the noble paths of all stream-enterers and once-returners is the calm abiding explained earlier, which is included in the access to the first meditative stabilization. [555] Similarly, know that all arhats who simultaneously eliminate the afflictions become arhats by cultivating insight on the basis of the calm abiding explained earlier.*

These hinayanists achieve an arya path, a path of a noble being, which is to say that they perceptually realise emptiness. They do so in dependence upon this access state - the access to the first meditative stabilisation. This access state is also referred to as “unrestricted access”, because it is capable of supporting a particular type of mind, namely the mind that is an arya path. Thus, on the basis of this access state you can achieve an arya path in the sense that it actually can become an arya path. Hence it is given the name, “unrestricted access”.

It is sometimes referred to as the “beginner of the unrestricted access”, which would be when a person has the path with the aspect of coarseness and calmness, but it is a mind which is fit to become an arya path. There are a variety of names given to this access state, (unrestricted access etc) and these are all related to the fact that it can become an arya path for a person ie such a person is able to develop a perceptual realisation of emptiness in dependence upon it.

The text talks of arhats who simultaneously eliminate the afflictions. This type of arhat is known as an 'instantaneous' arhat and there are also what are called 'gradual' arhats. The distinction between the instantaneous and gradual is the way in which they abandon the afflictions, ie whether the abandonment of the afflictions all happens instantaneously (simultaneously) or gradually, in stages. This is not a vital point here, but maybe some of you even remember it from grounds and paths.

Generally speaking there are nine types of afflictions associated with the desire realm, nine associated with the form realm and nine associated with the formless realm. And so there are different sets and when counted all up, you get nine sets [sic] for the first, nine for the second and nine for the third. So of these nine, some that are more coarse than others. So that a person would begin by abandoning the more ... a gradual person would begin by abandoning the more coarse afflictions associated with the desire realm and only later, abandon the coarse afflictions associated with the form and formless realms. The gradual person would abandon the coarse afflictions associated with the form and formless realms together, but they would not abandon the afflictions of the desire realm at the same time as they abandon the afflictions of the form and formless realm. An instantaneous or simultaneous person however, abandons three sets of three, making nine manifest afflictions related to the desire, form and formless realm all at the same time.

In any case, that's what's being referred to in the text when it reads *know that all arhats who simultaneously eliminate the afflictions become arhats by cultivating insight on the basis of the calm abiding explained earlier.*

*If you do not first establish in your mind-stream the concentration of calm abiding explained previously, it is not possible for the actual knowledge of insight which is focused on either the real nature or the diversity of all phenomena to arise. This will be discussed later on.*<sup>217</sup>

*Therefore, while yogis in the highest yoga tantra tradition may not develop the insight bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness which focuses on the diversity of all phenomena, or the calm*

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abiding *generated by this insight, they must develop calm abiding. Moreover, the point at which calm abiding first arises, in terms of the generation stage and the completion stage, is during the first of these two.* So it's also important in tantra.

Although a mantra practitioner might not make a special point of achieving calm abiding, it is achieved incidentally, along the way, in the generation stage. The generation stage has two levels, a coarse and a subtle stage. Those of you who studied The Grounds and Paths of Mantra might remember this. Calm abiding is achieved in the subtle level of the generation stage.

In fact this said that in the text - that it's at that point that calm abiding is achieved and that no separate method for achieving calm abiding, other the practice of that generation stage, is required.

It says quite clearly here, that of the two -- generation and completion stage -- calm abiding is achieved in the first: generation stage.

*In summary, you must first develop calm abiding and then on this basis you may proceed on a graduated path up to the Peak of Cyclic Existence by means of insight bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness; or you may proceed along the five paths of liberation or omniscience by means of insight bearing the aspect of the reality of selflessness. This constitutes the general seal of the Conqueror's teachings, so no yogi can depart from it.*

*The preceding is a general presentation of the way to proceed from high to higher paths on the basis of calm abiding.*

*A specific presentation of the way to proceed along the mundane path has two sections: (1) the need to achieve calm abiding before proceeding on the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness, and (2) on the basis of calm abiding, the way to freedom from attachment to the desire realm.*

*One who cultivates the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness by way of discernment of characteristics<sup>218</sup> must first achieve the calm abiding explained earlier.*

This 'discernment of characteristics' is one of the seven attentions which will be discussed later in the text in relation to the cultivation of insight. A person who is cultivating the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness must analyse the state of affairs related to the desire realm -- that is to say, what the desire realm is like -- and also must consider the situation found in the higher realms. In this way, they cultivate that path which bears the aspects of calmness (relating to the one) and coarseness (relating to the other). This occurs by way of the discernment of characteristics.

But in order to do that, you must first achieve calm abiding, *for the Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras says:*<sup>219</sup>

*Upon increasing this concentration,  
And by increasing it further,  
The yogi achieves actual meditative stabilization. [556]*

The purpose of this is to achieve an actual meditative stabilisation. A person who is cultivating this path with the aspects of coarseness and calmness does so to achieve that actual meditative stabilisation and in order to do so, that person must first achieve calm abiding.

*This states that one who has achieved the previously explained ninth mental state, together with pliancy, increases this concentration and thereby achieves actual meditative stabilization.*

*Moreover, from the time of the ninth mental state up until you achieve the attention of the discernment of characteristics, you are said to attain a "beginner at attention." Once you have achieved the attention of the discernment of characteristics, and you cultivate it out of a desire to purify afflictions,*

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*you are said to attain a "beginner at purifying afflictions." So one who cultivates the discernment of characteristics first achieves attention.*

Once again, *one who cultivates the discernment of characteristics first achieves attention. The Sravaka Levels states:*<sup>220</sup>

*A "beginner at attention" is a beginner while not attaining attention with respect to one-pointedness and until reaching one-pointedness. A "beginner at purifying afflictions" occurs after attaining this attention and begins with the attainment of the attention of the discernment of characteristics*

This section distinguishes two different types: a beginner at attention and a beginner at purifying afflictions. These relate to the access state, but we have two distinctions: a beginner at attention vs a beginner at purifying afflictions.

Look at Lama Tsong Khapa's statement just above the quote. He says that "from the ninth mental state up until you achieve the attention you are said to attain a "beginner at attention." Once you have achieved the attention of the discernment of characteristics, and you cultivate it out of a desire to purify afflictions, you are said to attain the level of a "beginner at purifying afflictions."

*So the Sravaka Levels once again states:*<sup>220</sup>

*A "beginner at attention" is a beginner while not attaining attention with respect to one-pointedness and until reaching one-pointedness. A "beginner at purifying afflictions" occurs after attaining this attention and begins with the attainment of the attention of the discernment of characteristics—an attention which desires to purify the mind from the afflictions and is a familiarization with this practice.*

*Also at the beginning of the fourth section it is said that you cultivate the mundane and supramundane paths of detachment (that is, separating from attachment) after you have achieved attention.*

Remember that here, supramundane paths do not refer to arya paths. Here, we distinguish between mundane and supramundane paths by the following criteria: that mundane paths are those that have the aspect of coarseness and calmness focused towards the different states within cyclic existence, whereas the supramundane paths view true sufferings and true origins as coarse and true cessations and true paths as calm. Here in the paragraph at the top of page 97 when it says "you cultivate the mundane and supramundane paths of separating from attachment," they're talking about these two respectively, not arya paths and non-arya paths.

*This very extensive explanation in the Sravaka Levels of the process of eliminating afflictions by first accomplishing calm abiding explained above and then achieving mundane and supramundane insight does not clearly appear in other treatises on knowledge or Abidharma. Former scholars who were learned in the earlier higher and lower texts on knowledge<sup>221</sup> also have not clearly articulated this process of eliminating afflictions on the basis of first accomplishing one-pointed calm abiding.*

*Therefore, if you have not understood well this explanation in the Sravaka Levels, you might have the following mistaken idea: "The lowest stage on the path of the meditative stabilizations of the form realm and the meditative absorptions of the formless realm is the access to the first stabilization. [557] And the first of the six types of attention explained with respect to this is the discernment of characteristics. Therefore, the discernment of characteristics is a state of mind at the beginning of the access." It is very incorrect to hold such a view, for the following reasons:*

When a person achieves the discernment of characteristics, they are given the name, "a beginner at purifying afflictions". That's what was being said at the bottom of page 96. That is not the first instance of the access stage. It's the first instance of the access state of a beginner purifying afflictions, but not

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the initial starting point for the access state in general, because as was said before, there is also a “beginner at attention”.

Therefore at the very outset of the access state, a person is a beginner at attention and then becomes a beginner at purifying afflictions.

Now it says here that people make a mistake thinking that the discernment of characteristics is found at the outset of the access. That is a mistake because:

*(1) without achieving calm abiding you have no way to produce access to the first meditative stabilization; (2) if you do not achieve this access you will not achieve calm abiding; and (3) since discernment of characteristics consists of analytical meditation, by cultivating it you will not be able to newly accomplish the calm abiding that you have not achieved earlier. According to the quotation from the Levels of Yogic Deeds cited earlier,<sup>222</sup> there is no pliancy in one-pointedness within the desire realm; and the Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning and so on state that if you do not achieve pliancy, you will not achieve calm abiding.<sup>223</sup> Thus, if you do not achieve the first access state, you will not achieve calm abiding.*

*Therefore, the first of the six types of attention of the first access state is the entrance to cultivating the insight included in the access state, but it is not right at the beginning of the first access state, for it must be preceded by this calm abiding that is included in the access state.*

So the six (or seven) attentions will be discussed later but they are:

- discernment of characteristics,
- arisaal from belief,
- isolation,
- delight or withdrawal,
- analysis and
- final application.

The attention of a discernment of characteristics is the first of the six attentions. It is not found at the very outset of calm abiding, which is to say, it's not found at the very outset of the access state because there is a period of that access state where you only have calm abiding, not this attention of the discernment of characteristics.

Lama Tsong Khapa is clarifying this point because prior to his time there was a lot of confusion and people thought that the attention of the discernment of characteristics was found at the very outset of the access state. Lama Tsong Khapa is saying that is not the case.

Take the attention of the discernment of characteristics. It is not at the outset of calm abiding because? What reason does Lama Tsong Khapa give?

The attention of discernment of characteristics is an analytical meditation - it's a form of insight. Calm abiding must precede that. Earlier we were talking about how you must cultivate both calm abiding and insight and how these must be integrated and we also talked about how calm abiding must precede insight.

The attention of the discernment of characteristics is included within insight and therefore, the attainment of calm abiding must come before its attainment. The order in which calm abiding and insight arise is fixed and certain. When you're initially achieving these things, it would be impossible for you to achieve insight first and calm abiding later. The initial achievement of calm abiding must precede the achievement of insight.

So we'll just read over that bit again: *According to the quotation from the Levels of Yogic Deeds cited earlier,<sup>222</sup> there is no pliancy in one-pointedness within the desire realm; and the Sutra Unravelling the*

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*Intended Meaning and so on state that if you do not achieve pliancy, you will not achieve calm abiding.*<sup>223</sup> *Thus, if you do not achieve the first access state, you will not achieve calm abiding.*

It says here that if you do not achieve the first access state you will not have not achieved calm abiding. In other words, what Tsong Khapa is saying that the achievement of the first access state and the achievement of calm abiding occur at the same time.

*Therefore, the first of the six types of attention of the first access state is the entrance or the beginning to cultivating the insight included in the access state, but it is not right at the beginning of the first access state. It is not right at the beginning of the first access state because it must be preceded by this calm abiding that is included in the access state.*

*All states of concentration prior to the achievement of the concentrations included in the first access state are solely mental one-pointedness in the desire realm. So if you adhere to the explanations in the classic texts, there are very few who achieve even calm abiding, let alone insight.*

Mental one-pointedness of the desire realm: the initial achievement of calm abiding: the beginner at purifying afflictions in the access state. These three need to be distinguished from one another, and Lama Tsong Khapa is pointing out that they have not been distinguished in the past. People have confused and muddled them.

***On the basis of calm abiding, the way to freedom from attachment to the desire realm***

*Once you have become familiar with just the calm abiding explained earlier, which bears the many attributes of clarity, non-discursive awareness, etc., if you do not cultivate either of the two kinds of insight, you will not be able to suspend even the manifest afflictions of the desire realm. In that case, what need is there to mention eliminating the seeds of afflictions and cognitive obscurations? [558]*

There is bliss, clarity and non-discursiveness associated with calm abiding. But if you were to cultivate just that, without cultivating insight, whether it be mundane or supramundane, you would not be able to abandon even the manifest afflictions, let alone the seeds of the afflictions and cognitive obscurations. The text says that very clearly doesn't it? Do we understand that?

Student: One of the marks associated with having achieved calm abiding, is that for the most part, the five obstructions, such as sensual desire do not occur. But here it says that the manifest afflictions are not abandoned until you achieve insight – an actual meditative stabilisation. So is there some conflict here?

Geshela: In the marks of attention (referring in that case to calm abiding), it says that these obstructions do not arise for the most part. So they do not arise for the most part when you're cultivating calm abiding. Here, later in the text, in the part we dealt with today, it says that if you achieve the first meditative stabilisation then you abandon the manifest afflictions, of the desire realm for instance. Now as long as that meditative stabilisation does not degenerate, it will not be possible manifest afflictions to arise. As long as that meditative stabilisation does not decline then you will not have manifest afflictions.

When you achieve calm abiding, it suppresses things like sensual desire. This means that it is unlikely for these things to occur, but that's different from abandoning the manifest afflictions or abandoning manifest forms.

When you have achieved calm abiding, one of the marks is that these different things do not arise for the most part, or perhaps do not arise strongly, but you have not intentionally applied an antidote or a remedy to abandon them. With the attention of the discernment of characteristics then, you actually apply an antidote. Even if you're cultivating a mundane path, you still apply an antidote although in this case you might call it a mundane antidote. So the two instances are not similar.

This mark that you referred to states that the five obstructions such as sensual desire do not arise for the most part. To say this means that although, for the most part, they do not arise, it is still possible that they do, which is a sign that you have not abandoned them. Whereas if you were to achieve an actual meditative stabilisation, then as long as that meditative stabilisation did not decline, it would be impossible for them to arise. So they are different. That was a very good question.

So let's read over this paragraph again. Page 98: *Once you have become familiar with just the calm abiding explained earlier, which bears the many attributes of clarity, non-discursive awareness, etc., if you do not cultivate either of the two kinds of insight, you will not be able to suspend [stop] even the manifest afflictions of the desire realm. In that case, what need is there to mention eliminating the seeds of afflictions and cognitive obscurations? [558] Therefore, if you wish to achieve the first stabilization, which is free of attachment to the desire realm, cultivate insight on the basis of that calm abiding.*

*Qualm: Well, why does this not contradict the earlier statement that if you become accustomed to calm abiding alone, you will suppress manifest afflictions?*<sup>224</sup>

*Reply: There is no problem, for the earlier explanation subsumed mundane insight under the category of calm abiding; but this explanation refers to the calm abiding that is included in the first access state and that precedes both types of insight.* But this explanation refers to the calm abiding that is included in the first access state and that precedes both types of insight. That's also a good point. Is that clear?

Earlier statements in the text stated that if you achieve calm abiding then manifest afflictions would be suppressed but that explanation was given from the perspective that mundane insights for instance were included within the calm abiding discussed at that point. In other words, they're saying that in dependence on having achieved calm abiding that type of suppression can be gained.

*Moreover, with respect to the insight that accomplishes freedom from attachment, there are the two ways of freeing yourself, one by means of insight bearing the aspect of the truths and the other by the insight that bears the aspects of calmness and coarseness. This present discussion is a presentation of the way to accomplish freedom from attachment by way of the latter of these two paths.*

*With regard to this, the persons who cultivate it*<sup>225</sup> *are both non-Buddhists, who utterly lack the view of selflessness, and followers of this teaching who have the view of selflessness. The type of path they cultivate in order to eliminate the afflictions accords with the teachings of the Sravaka Levels* So the source for this is in the Sravaka Levels, which states:<sup>226</sup>

*For the sake of freedom from the desire realm, diligent yogis use the seven types of attention and subsequently achieve their freedom. The seven types of attention are: the attention of the discernment of characteristics, arising from belief, isolation, delight or withdrawal, analysis, final application, and the result of final application.*

When you're cultivating this type of path, then you reflect on the faults of the desire realm, because in cultivating this, you are separating yourself from attachment to the desire realm. You reflect on the shortcomings of the desire realm and do not become attached to the pleasures or desirable aspects of the desire realm. Rather, thinking solely of the shortcomings and faults found there, you reverse or overcome your attachment to the desire realm and you are able to get rid of the other faults associated with that desire realm.

This is the way you separate from your attachment to the desire realm and abandon the manifest afflictions related to it. This type of process differs from the abandonment that takes place along supramundane paths where abandonment is done by presenting an antithesis to the way of

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apprehending things. In this case, it is by focusing on the faults and separating from attachment that abandonment takes place.

It says, that *for the sake of freedom from the desire realm, diligent yogis use the seven types of attention and subsequently achieve their freedom.*

Actually it should say that *for the sake of freedom from their attachment to the desire realm, diligent yogis use the seven types of attention and subsequently achieve their freedom.*

After all, in cultivating this mundane path, you must become free from your attachment to the desire realm and in order to do that, you must see the faults of the desire realm and you must not be attached to the pleasant aspects of the desire realm. After all, the pleasant aspects are mixed together with the faults of the desire realm. You might even say that the pleasant aspects of the desire realm bring about the faults of the desire realm. These kinds of pleasures are very coarse and problematic. So in seeing their faults and not being attached to their appealing aspects, you can separate from your attachment to such things.

Please make that addition in the first line of this quote: it should read *for the sake of freedom from the attachment to the desire realm.*

Then it goes on to give the seven types of attention. They are:

*the attention of the discernment of characteristics,  
arising from belief,  
isolation,  
delight or withdrawal,  
analysis,  
final application, and  
the result of final application.*

This last one, number seven, the result of final application, is an actual meditative stabilisation. The others are the six attentions in the access state.

As it says, *among those, the final one is the attention at the time of entering the actual state of meditative stabilization upon being freed from attachment to the desire realm; so this is what is to be accomplished, while the former six are what accomplishes it.*

The seventh and last is accomplished in dependence upon the earlier six.

*Question: If in this case you are not eliminating the afflictions through meditation on the meaning of selflessness, then what kind of thing are you establishing and then meditating on to eliminate the afflictions? [559]*

*Reply: Although other manifest afflictions of the desire realm are eliminated with this path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness, the phrase "to free yourself from attachment to the desire realm" refers chiefly to eliminating attachment by way of its antidote. Is that clear? Freeing yourself from attachment to the desire realm refers chiefly to eliminating attachment by way of its antidote.*

*Moreover, attachment refers here to the yearning for -- that's aspiration -- and attachment to the five sensory objects of the desire realm. The antidote to this is to regard sensory objects as disadvantageous in a multitude of ways. By thus adhering to the opposite of the mode of apprehension of attachment and then accustoming yourself to it, you become free from attachment to the desire realm.*

*Furthermore, you may have the firm certainty of the discernment of characteristics, an unmistakable discernment of the faults of the desire realm and the good qualities of the first meditative stabilization. Nevertheless, if you have not already accomplished calm abiding, you will not be able to eliminate*



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*afflictions no matter how familiar you become with distinguishing between those faults and good qualities.* This is another special point to note.

In this attention of the discernment of characteristics, you must be reflecting on the shortcomings of the desire realm and the good qualities of the first actual meditative stabilisation. You need to discern the characteristics of these two and you must have certainty about them, a firm certainty. But is it enough just to have a stable certainty about the faults of the desire realm and the good qualities of the first actual meditative stabilisation? No, it's not enough. In addition, you need calm abiding, because otherwise, with that certainty alone, you will not be able to abandon the afflictions. In achieving the first actual meditative stabilisation, you must abandon the afflictions of the desire realm.

Some people say that you abandon the manifest afflictions, by which they mean, you don't abandon the seeds of the afflictions. Maybe it's better not to use the word 'abandon', or maybe to talk about abandoning manifest afflictions. In any case, whichever way you wish to state it, you do not abandon the seeds of afflictions. This is because you're cultivating a mundane path.

Now it continues, saying: *moreover, even if you have achieved calm abiding, if you do not analyze with discernment, however much you cultivate calm abiding, you will not be able to eliminate afflictions. Thus, you must eliminate them by way of cultivating both calm abiding and insight. This is the procedure for every elimination of afflictions.*

*In that case, the seven types of attention are described as follows:*

1. *The knowledge of characteristics in which one distinguishes between the faults and advantages of the lower and higher levels entails the integration of study and reflection by means of mental states arisen from study on some occasions and those arisen from reflection on other occasions.*

- 2.

This is referring to the discernment of characteristics, which is said to involve a mingling of study and reflection.

*By familiarizing yourself in this way, you will exclusively believe in the objects of calmness and coarseness by way of meditation that transcends study and reflection; and this is the attention arisen from belief.*

That's the second of the attentions. The point being made is that whenever this awareness that mingles study and reflection becomes an awareness arisen from meditation through the force of that meditation, you have the second attention, the attention arisen from belief.

*In this regard the Sravaka Levels states,<sup>227</sup> "Focusing on that very sign, you cultivate calm abiding and insight"; and even in the passage concerning the sixth attention there is reference to cultivating calm abiding and insight. The passage on the first attention speaks of focusing on the six elements, including the meaning,<sup>228</sup> and in other passages this focusing is frequently referred to as insight. Hence, even though this does not entail cultivating the view of selflessness, it is insight. [560]*

There is no contradiction in saying that something is insight, even though it does not involve cultivating the view of selflessness.

Usually we talk about insight in terms of insight focused on emptiness, but that doesn't necessarily mean that insight has to be focused on emptiness. Of course not. In fact there are many types of insight, all the types of mundane insight.

*Thus, in the context of these types of attention you eliminate afflictions after you have meditated by way of both calm abiding and insight. Here is how you cultivate the two: you cultivate insight by repeatedly analyzing the distinct objects of calmness and coarseness, and at the conclusion of this analysis you*

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*cultivate calm abiding by one-pointedly focusing on these objects of calmness and coarseness. The second and first types of attention in such meditation are the antidote of disillusionment or repudiation.*

*When on the basis of familiarizing yourself with the alternating cultivation of calm abiding and insight in that way, you give rise to the antidote to the great afflictions of the desire realm, this is called isolated attention.*

Isolated attention being the antidote to the great afflictions of the desire realm.

3. *Further, the attention of delight or withdrawal is when you are able to eliminate middling afflictions by means of the alternating cultivation of calm abiding and insight.*

So here you have the antidote to the middle level of the desire realm afflictions.

*Then, when you see that the desire realm's afflictions that obstruct your endeavors in virtue are not activated either while abiding in concentration or when you have risen from it, do not have the coarse thought, "Now I have eliminated the afflictions." Rather, analyze, "Is the attachment of sensual attraction not being activated while I am not freed of it? Or, is it not activated after I have been freed of it?" Then in order to test this, watch attachment arise when you focus on a very beautiful object of attachment. Thereafter, your interest in meditation for the sake of eliminating this attachment is analytical attention. This gets rid of the conceit of thinking that you have eliminated that which has not been eliminated.*

The fifth attention, analytical attention.

This attention is not an antidote to the afflictions of the desire realm. Rather, at this point you have the thought, "Oh, perhaps I've abandoned the afflictions of the desire realm". This type of idea arises because there aren't any manifest afflictions, but rather than just go along with that thought, you need to analyse and determine whether or not you actually have abandoned all the manifest afflictions of the desire realm. When you find that this is not the case, then you develop an interest in meditation for the sake of eliminating these attachments and that is called analytical attention.

As it says, this gets rid of the conceit or pride of thinking that you have eliminated that which has not been eliminated.

*Then again you both analytically discriminate the objects of calmness and coarseness as before and focus one-pointedly at the conclusion of the analysis. The attention of final application is when by meditating in this way you give rise to the antidote to the small afflictions of the desire realm. The third, fourth and sixth types of attention are antidotes that eliminate afflictions.*

*Thus, when you have eliminated the small afflictions, you have overcome all the manifest afflictions of the desire realm, and for the time being they are not activated in the slightest degree. But you have not completely destroyed the seeds of those afflictions. [561]*

*By this means you are freed from attachment to states up to Nothingness, but since you are unable to stop even the manifest afflictions of the Peak of Cyclic Existence, you cannot transcend the cycle of existence. However, on the basis of meditative stabilization you also achieve the five kinds of superknowledge,<sup>229</sup> but I shall not discuss them due to fear of verbosity. Since this is elaborated upon in Asanga's Sravaka Levels, look there.*

So time is up, maybe this is a good place to stop. We'll pick up next time from page 101 where it says, *Nowadays there is no one who uses these methods to accomplish the actual meditative stabilizations.*

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When we look at other subjects, we often find mention of cultivating mundane paths versus cultivating supramundane paths, don't we. So it would be very helpful to read over this section here, since Lama Tsong Khapa has explained it so clearly. So please, read over it again and again. You know, often it seems that many people have the impression that the lam rim is quite easy. They think that you can just read through the lam rim. You don't really need to study hard. This type of idea does arise, doesn't it. But now, having gone through a lot of this material, we can speak from our own experience - we know that the lam rim is actually not all that easy.