

**Buddhist Studies Program**

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

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Of the stages of the path of the three types of persons we're in "The stages of the path for persons of great capacity," which is divided into three parts:

1. Showing that the mind of enlightenment is the only entrance to the Mahayana
2. How to develop the mind of enlightenment
3. How to learn the bodhisattva deeds after developing the mind of enlightenment

We're in this third section, How to learn the bodhisattva deeds after developing the mind of enlightenment.

In this third section there's:

1. The reason why you must learn the trainings after developing the mind of enlightenment
2. Demonstrating that you will not become a buddha by learning either method or wisdom separately
3. An explanation of the process of learning the precepts - an explanation of the stages that you go through in training in these things

Geshela believes that these are quite important and that there's a lot of significance to the way Tsong Khapa has presented this.

From time to time we should just read through the outline itself, and as we do so think about what each section of the outline is getting at. By doing so we develop a good understanding of the 'marrow' that's found within this text by having a better understanding of its structure.

Within this third section there are two parts:

1. How to train in the Mahayana in general
2. How to train specifically in the Vajrayana

In the section on "How to train in the Mahayana in general" there are three parts:

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

In the section on "How to train after taking the vows" there's three parts:

1. What the precepts are based upon
2. How all the precepts are included within the six perfections
3. The process of learning the perfections

Notice how the first two sections of this part of the outline read "What the precepts are based upon" and "How all the precepts are included within the six perfections" - it's talking about the six perfections. Now essentially what the author is saying is that all of the different bodhisattva deeds can be included within these six. Therefore, within "How all the precepts are included within the six perfections" there is a division into two:

1. A discussion of the main topic (which demonstrates why the number of perfections is fixed at six)
2. An ancillary discussion of the fixed order of the perfections

There are a number of different points put forward in the first section. It talks about how the perfections are fixed in number at six based on higher status for instance, and many other things. In the latter section, this ancillary section, they talk about things like the order in which these perfections arise. They talk about some differences between superiority and inferiority, differences in terms of some being more coarse and others being more subtle. When you look at the order here you're looking at this presentation of how first comes generosity, then ethics, then patience, then joyous effort, then meditative stabilisation and finally wisdom. So this second section demonstrates their order, the order in which they arise, of superiority and so forth.

Then in the third section there's "The process of learning the perfections" which deals with:

1. How to train in the bodhisattva deeds in general
2. In particular, how to train in the last two perfections

The first section talks about:

1. Training in the perfections that mature the qualities that you will have when you become a buddha (generally this is phrased – training in the six perfections which act to bring your own continuum to maturity)
2. Training in the four means of gathering disciples through which you are able to bring the continuum of others to maturity

Generally speaking the six perfections like generosity are techniques or methods by which we accomplish the welfare of others. But the six perfections are mainly about achieving our own welfare, achieving our own well being you might say, because they're techniques primarily used to achieve enlightenment for ourselves. Remember how Santideva says in his text *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* that the Muni taught the others as branches or supports for the last, wisdom. The main thing that we're striving for is the dharmakaya – in other words consummate abandonment and consummate realisation, but in order to achieve the dharmakaya and these consummate abandonments and realisations, we must have a type of wisdom that has a very special potency. The way to develop that is through this last perfection of wisdom. The earlier five are taught as supports to help us develop this special type of wisdom through which we achieve the dharmakaya. So we must gather merit in order to have the necessary support for the achievement of such wisdom, without which we will not be able to achieve our goal of the dharmakaya, and hence this is why Santideva mentions that the Muni taught the others as branches for wisdom.

Think about the mind of enlightenment which has two aspirations, one of which is an aspiration that is intent on enlightenment. So the enlightenment that one is striving to achieve with this aspiration comes down to basically two kayas or two bodies – the form body and the dharma body, or the rupakaya and the dharmakaya. You could actually talk about four kayas but here our emphasis is on the two bodies, form and dharma bodies.

The two dharmakayas are essentially our consummate abandonments and consummate realisations which we develop when we become buddhas – these are for one's own sake or well-being we might say. Whereas the two form bodies - the nirmanakaya and the samboghakaya - are for achieving the well-being of others. If you didn't need to achieve the well being of others you wouldn't need the form bodies, would you?

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Why do we need to achieve buddhahood? Well to accomplish the well-being of others, and we need these form bodies so that we can achieve the welfare of others without obstruction, without resistance. We achieve the samboghakaya so that we can benefit bodhisattvas abiding on high grounds and we need the nirmanakaya so we can send forth all sorts of different emanations to assist a variety of sentient beings.

We've covered all of this including the section on "Training in the four means of gathering disciples through which you are able to bring the continuum of others to maturity."

Moving on to the next section, "In particular, how to train in the last two perfections," there are six parts:

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 need to give an answer for each and every one of these, don't we?

This is the point of question and answer, of asking each other back and forth what the material's about. Anyone who has a book and is capable of understanding the material can come up with some type of response when asked what this is about or what that is about, but what we want is to be able to respond of our own accord that this section is about that, to give an answer to each and every one of these. This is quite important.

We're in the last of these six sections, *How to train in each*. This is divided into three:

1. How to train in calm abiding
2. How to train in insight
3. How to unite them

In the section on How to train in calm abiding there are 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 are many important points covered in this section, aren't there? For instance we talk about some of the different faults we must overcome, like laxity and excitement.

This section includes:

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

These are quite important for our practice of meditation in general. Although here it's presented specifically in the context of cultivating the concentration known as calm abiding, these are important things to know for any type of meditation.

There's a section on 'the stages in which the mental states develop' and there are three parts to that:

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

That brings us to section (c') 'The measure of successful cultivation of calm abiding.' There are three parts to this:

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
3. A specific presentation of the way to proceed along the mundane path

There are two parts to this third section:

1. The need to achieve calm abiding before proceeding on the path bearing the aspects of calmness and coarseness
2. On the basis of calm abiding, the way to freedom from attachment to the desire realm

Here we are quite near to the end of one of these major divisions within the outline.

Last week we were talking about different types of attention and we saw that when a person achieves calm abiding that person becomes what's called 'a beginner with attention.' Then a person becomes 'a beginner at purifying afflictions.' Actually the beginner at purifying afflictions begins with 'the attention of discerning the characteristics,' and then you have this 'attention that is arisen from belief.' Let's look at this once more. You achieve calm abiding and become 'a beginner with attention' and then you develop an attention which is known as 'discerning characteristics' in which you emphasise hearing and reflection, or study and reflection. If you have at this point an access to the first actual meditative stabilisation then your efforts at study and reflection are going to be directed towards the path with the aspect of coarseness and calmness. This mundane path in other words. In any case through emphasising study and reflection in the state of 'the attention of discerning the characteristics,' when you develop a mind arisen from meditation and have firm certainty about the object which you've been discerning you develop the 'attention that is arisen from belief.'

The beginner with attention is a one-pointed attention – you might say bare calm abiding, or calm abiding alone. In the next attention, the attention of discerning the characteristics, analysis is introduced. We're talking about mundane paths here.

You then achieve a mundane insight with the attention that is arisen from belief. The next type of attention is called isolated attention and it's at that time that you develop a direct antidote to the great level of manifest afflictions of the desire realm. Then in the attention of delight or withdrawal, you abandon the middle level of desire realm afflictions through applying the direct antidote to that. At that point, since you've abandoned the great and middling levels of desire realm afflictions you have the impression that you perhaps don't have any more desire realm afflictions in your continuum. So you question that – "Is it that I am utterly without the afflictions of the desire realm, or is it that there are some extremely subtle ones remaining which are simply not manifest?" So their subtlety and lack of being manifest leads you to analyse to detect whether or not any desire realm afflictions remain, and this checking or analysis is known as the attention of analysis.

The Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa mentions pride in this context. Essentially we're dealing with an attention that analyses to determine whether or not there are any desire realm afflictions remaining. Having understood that there are certain desire realm afflictions remaining you then work to abandon those, and that brings us to the next attention – the attention of final application.

These are all access states. When you have the seventh attention, which is the result of final application, you achieve the actual first meditative stabilisation. You achieve this first actual meditative

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stabilisation through abandoning those manifest afflictions of the desire realm. In this way you can also begin to view the first actual meditative stabilisation as being coarse and the second actual meditative stabilisation as being calm, and proceed to the second actual meditative stabilisation. Even when you reach that point you might begin to regard the second meditative stabilisation as coarse and the third as calm. Similarly with the third and fourth, until you begin to regard the fourth actual meditative stabilisation as coarse and formless realm absorptions as calm. In this way you can proceed through different levels all the way up to the peak of existence.

That brings us to where we left last time on page 100 of the English translation. We actually got into p.101 but just to read through a bit of it, it says:

*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.*

The point here is that there are many different things that you can achieve in dependence upon meditative stabilisation, for instance for the sake of sentient beings you could achieve types of superknowledges and so forth.

Here we have some new material:

*Nowadays there is no one who uses these methods to accomplish the actual meditative stabilizations and so on, so there is no one to lead you astray. Nevertheless, if you generate an understanding that is not confined to a mere general verbal description of them, it is very helpful for avoiding the pitfalls of concentrations other than these.*

Even if there isn't anyone overtly achieving the first, second, third and fourth actual meditative stabilisations, developing a good understanding of this material can be very beneficial, because we need to cultivate concentration, we need to achieve calm abiding, don't we? Understanding this material can be very helpful for our practice of meditation and making progress in this regard.

How is it that a person proceeds through the different levels of meditative stabilisation? Well they consider what the advantages of one state and the disadvantages of another state are. So they look to the advantages of the higher state and the disadvantages of the lower state and work to stop or abandon the lower to achieve the higher. By following this type of approach, you can indeed abandon the manifest afflictions, you can develop to a point where the afflictions can no longer become manifest within your continuum. But at that point you haven't completely eradicated or abandoned them because you haven't abandoned the seeds for them.

If you're unable to abandon them completely in the sense of abandoning their seeds, then what do you require? Well, you need something uncontaminated, you need emptiness, in particular you need to realise and cultivate that realisation of emptiness.

We do need to understand this presentation of mundane and supramundane paths. We need to know which paths help us to abandon the seeds of afflictions and afflictions altogether, and which paths help us to abandon the manifest forms of the afflictions.

Such concentrations of the four meditative stabilizations of the form realm and the four meditative absorptions of the formless realm, as well as the five kinds of superknowledge, are shared with non-

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Buddhists. So, even if you achieve such extraordinary concentrations, not only will you not be liberated from the cycle of existence by these alone, they even bind you to the cycle of existence. Therefore, seek discerning insight and the view of selflessness, and do not be satisfied with calm abiding alone.

That's it there, isn't it?

After all that work - you've gone and cultivated and finally achieved calm abiding and then you go along and cultivate a mundane path with the aspects of calmness and coarseness and what does it do – it binds you to cyclic existence!

Do we understand what it means to be something that binds us to cyclic existence?

The point is that you're still attached to the pleasures of cyclic existence, because you were attached to the pleasures of the first meditative stabilisation and that's what drove you to abandon the desire realm afflictions and achieve the pleasures of the first meditative stabilisation. Then you become attached to the pleasures of the second meditative stabilisation and go on to abandon the afflictions of the first meditative stabilisation – in this way going from one to two, from two to three, three to four. Then once you achieve meditative stabilisation you're not actually attached to the pleasures of the formless realm, that's not what happens, rather at this point you're trying to separate yourself even from pleasures – the reason being that you're so intent on developing a particular type of peace, a very very subtle type of peace or pacified state that you become disillusioned with pleasure or bliss even. At that point, recognising that the presence of bliss or pleasure is not conducive to this extremely subtle peace that you seek, you focus entirely on equanimous feelings. You no longer want these pleasurable or blissful feelings, so in that way you go from the fourth meditative stabilisation into the formless realm states. In this way, you're still intent on states within cyclic existence so it's your attachment to cyclic existence as you go along these mundane paths that is binding you.

In fact it's even in the actual fourth meditative stabilisation that you repudiate bliss - here the feeling that's present is that of equanimity. So in order to reach that point you must give up certain things like delight and bliss and so forth.

Since even these states can bind us to cyclic existence we should *seek discerning insight and the view of selflessness, and not be satisfied with calm abiding alone*. So seek the view of selflessness – we need to develop insight!

As the Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa says in his text *The Three Principle Aspects*, no matter how much you familiarise yourself with the determination to be free and the mind of enlightenment, through those alone you will not be able to cut the root of conditioned existence, therefore by all means seek to realise interdependence.

*Even if you lack extensive knowledge of the means of accomplishing the actual first stabilization and so on, you should certainly look carefully into the heart of the following discussions and come to know at least something of the teachings themselves, free of your own fabrications: (1) the discussion given above concerning the nine ways of focusing your mind, set forth in the previously cited middle way Stages of Meditation, that are the means of accomplishing the aforementioned "calm abiding," or "attention" that comes from the profound Perfection of Wisdom sutras, etc.; (2) their intended meaning as expounded in Maitreya's Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras; (3) the noble Asanga's summary discussions of them in his Bodhisattva Levels, Compendium of Knowledge, and Compendium of Determinations, and extensive explanation of them in his Sravaka Levels in accordance with the indication in his Compendium of Bases (Vastu-samgraha)<sup>31</sup> that both calm abiding and insight are discussed in the Sravaka Levels; (4) the discussions of their meaning in the middle way Stages of Meditation and Ratnakarasanti's Instructions for the Perfection of Wisdom; and also (5) the way to*

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*accomplish calm abiding through the eight antidotes and the ways to eliminate the five faults, in Maitreya's Separation of the Middle from the Extremes. [562]*

*Some practitioners of meditative stabilization are not even familiar with the mere names of the meditations. Some become familiar with just the words when they study the classics, but they do not properly understand the meaning. When they then get around to practice they see no need for those treatises, discard them as being of no account, and sustain their meditation. Consequently, when they achieve a state of concentration that is fit to be included in the category of calm abiding, they maintain that it is concentration on emptiness, which is an indication that they have not discerned the point of the practice with careful understanding.*

Lama Tsong Khapa gave some advice earlier in the text as well, didn't he? He talked about how some people will emphasise wisdom over all else but in doing so they fail to actually tame their minds and purify their disturbing emotions. Other people will emphasise meditation and not study at all and in the process not be able to make progress. Some people do indeed study but when they go to practice they don't hold the treatises they've studied to be of any account, or importance, and therefore prevent themselves from progressing in this way. The point that Lama Tsong Khapa is making here, as earlier, is that we need study, reflection and meditation. You cannot have just one and not the others.

*When they achieve merely the ninth mental state, which is a concentration common to both Buddhists and non-Buddhists, they claim to have experienced the completion stage of highest yoga tantra with its complete characteristics. Many of these persons, after they have mingled meditative equipoise with the post-meditation state, mistakenly assert that this experience is uninterrupted, non-discursive wisdom.*

*When you gain proper certainty concerning the previous explanations, you will not be deceived by the mere designation of such enticing terms as meditation on the objectless, the signless, and the definitive meaning. By knowing the extent of the meanings of these concentrations, you will recognise what are and are not deviations from the path. Therefore, become skilled in the stages of accomplishing concentration taught in those authoritative treatises.*

At this point it would seem that we're just about finished with the presentation on calm abiding, the way to train in it.

Here I say; [Lama Tsong Khapa says]

*Profound are the descriptions of the stages for achieving concentration  
Well taught in the sutras and the great commentaries.  
Those of little intelligence do not precisely comprehend them,  
Projecting the faults of their own minds upon others.*

*Thinking, "There are no instructions there for sustaining non-discursive awareness,"  
They do not look for them in texts that have them,  
And they think they have found them  
After diligently seeking them where they do not exist.*

*Such people fail to distinguish between  
Even the concentrations of Buddhists and non-Buddhists.  
What need, then, is there to mention  
Their precisely distinguishing the differences*

*Between concentrations of the Mahayana and Hinayana [563]  
And of the Vajrayana and Paramitayana!  
Seeing this situation, I have explained in simple words*

Lama Tsong Khapa is talking about how things were before his time. When Lama Tsong Khapa came along there was a need to make the proper distinctions between these things. Seeing the situation Lama Tsong Khapa explained in simple words the way to sustain concentration as taught in the classics.

*O friends who have trained for many years in the classics,  
Do not discard your precious gem  
In favour of others' costume jewellery,  
But recognise you have something of great value!*

*There is nothing apart from the meaning of the instructions  
In the treatises you have studied.  
Knowing this, The Master of the Sages said, "There is bliss in the forest  
For those of great learning." Analyse these words.*

*May even those meditators who place their hopes in sheer determination,  
Though they have not first acquired a proper discernment  
Of how to practice and the measure of success  
For the path of a fully non-discursive, focused calm abiding,*

*Come to know precisely the way to sustain  
Meditation in reliance on the learned.  
Otherwise, there is less harm if they take for awhile  
A refreshing break from the teachings of the Conqueror.*

*This explanation of the way to achieve calm abiding  
Using the treatises of Maitreya and Asanga  
Is for the sake of preserving for a long time  
The teachings of the Conqueror.*

*Among the stages of the path of a person of great capacity, this concludes the explanation of how those who are training in the deeds of bodhisattvas train in calm abiding, which is meditative stabilization.*

## **(ii) How to train in insight**

[564] As I have explained,<sup>232</sup> calm abiding has the features of (1) non-discursiveness — i.e., when your attention is intentionally set on a single object of meditation, it stays there; (2) clarity — i.e., it is free from laxity; and (3) benefit — i.e., delight and bliss. However, you should not be satisfied with just this. Rather, developing the wisdom that properly determines the meaning of reality, you must cultivate insight.

Here we have both delight and bliss being mentioned. Generally speaking delight is necessarily bliss but bliss is not necessarily delight. When delight and bliss are distinguished from one another, then the bliss that accompanies sensory consciousnesses would be bliss, and the blisses that accompany mental consciousnesses would be delight — that's when delight and bliss are distinguished. So delight refers to a mental bliss and hence delight is necessarily bliss, but the blisses that are associated with or accompany sensory consciousnesses, though they may be blisses, they are not called delight.

*Otherwise, since mere concentration is something Buddhists have in common even with non-Buddhists,<sup>233</sup> its cultivation — as with non-Buddhist paths — will not get rid of the seeds of the afflictions. Hence it will not free you from cyclic existence. As Kamalasila's first Stages of Meditation says:*



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*After you have thus stabilized your mind on an object of meditation, you should analyse it with wisdom — it is the dawn of knowledge that obliterates the seeds of confusion. If you do not do this, you cannot abandon the afflictions with concentration alone, just as non-Buddhists cannot.*

*[The King of Concentrations] Sutra says:*<sup>235</sup>

*Although worldly persons cultivate concentration,  
They do not destroy the notion of self. [565]  
Afflictions return and disturb them,  
As they did Udraka,<sup>236</sup> who cultivated concentration in this way.*

Here selflessness, this lack of a self, becomes quite important. In previous times in India there were many non-Buddhists who cultivated these states that we've been discussing – people who achieved calm abiding, who achieved the actual meditative stabilisations and so forth - but they adhered to what's called an established self. They clung to a notion of a self unilaterally, so that they didn't acknowledge this selflessness or lack of a self that Buddhists talk about, but rather unequivocally adhered to the notion of self and thus they were bound to cyclic existence. The reason that they were bound to cyclic existence even though they cultivated these high states of concentration is because of their adherence to the notion of self.

Many non-Buddhists also seem to have practiced mantra. That is to say that they meditated on the channels, the winds and what we might call drops and so forth. Since they engaged in these different practices we must ask "Where's the distinction? What determines whether the practice of this person acts as a remedy for cyclic existence or not?" The difference must be drawn on the basis of whether or not they have a view of selflessness. So whether someone has a view of selflessness or rather adheres to a view of an established self determines how their practice either perpetuates cyclic existence or helps them become free of it.

Actually if you think about it, if you don't have an understanding of selflessness you can't gain an understanding of liberation, can you? Sure you can use the name liberation, but you're just simply talking about it. After all liberation is an abandonment of grasping at self. Honestly speaking if you don't know what grasping at self is, how can you know what liberation is, how can you know what it means to abandon it!

If we don't study at all then we might find ourselves striving for liberation even if we don't know what liberation is! Thus in striving for liberation we must first understand what liberation is, then your striving can turn out well.

But these types of discussions are quite difficult – there's a lot of problems that arise.

*The phrase "Although worldly persons cultivate concentration" means that worldly persons cultivate a concentration with features such as non-discursiveness and clarity, as explained above. Here Lama Tsong Khapa is commenting on the sutra he just quoted. The line "They do not destroy the notion of self" means that despite cultivating that concentration, they cannot eliminate the conception of self. "Afflictions return and disturb them" indicates that worldly persons will still produce afflictions because they have not eliminated the conception of self.*

*What kind of meditation leads to liberation? As cited earlier,<sup>237</sup> the very next [verse of the King of Concentrations Sutra] says:*

*If you analytically discern the lack of self in phenomena  
And if you cultivate that analysis in meditation  
This will cause the result, attainment of nirvana;*

*The first line sets out the condition — if, after you have analytically discerned phenomena which are selfless, you develop the wisdom that understands the meaning of selflessness. The second line, "And if you cultivate that analysis in meditation" refers to sustaining and cultivating in meditation the philosophical view of selflessness that you have gained. The third line, "This will cause the result, attainment of nirvana," means that this is the cause of attaining the goal — nirvana, or liberation. Liberation is attained through cultivating that wisdom.*

So first we start off with Kamalasila's first *Stages of Meditation* which itself quotes the sutra and Lama Tsong Khapa comments on that, quotes the sutra again and gives a commentary on its meaning.

In short to achieve nirvana we must have the specific cause, namely the wisdom that realises selflessness. If we don't have the cause [the wisdom that realises selflessness] we will not achieve the result [nirvana or liberation].

*Can you also attain liberation without that wisdom, by cultivating some other path? The fourth line of this passage says, "There is no peace through any other means," meaning that even were you to cultivate another path, you would not quell suffering and the afflictions without that wisdom.*

*This scripture very clearly teaches that only the wisdom of selflessness severs the root of cyclic existence; Kamalasila quotes it in his second Stages of Meditation in order to discredit the assertions of the Chinese abbot Ha-shang. Therefore, you must have certain knowledge of this.*

*For even non-Buddhist sages have many good qualities — such as concentration and the super-knowledges — but since they do not have the view of selflessness, they cannot escape cyclic existence at all.*

*In this way the Scriptural Collection of the Bodhisattvas, cited earlier, says:<sup>239</sup> [566]*

*One who is satisfied with mere concentration, not understanding the reality explained in the scriptures, might develop an inflated sense of pride, mistaking mere concentration for the path of meditation on the profound meaning. Consequently, such a person will not become free from cyclic existence. It was with this in mind that I said, "One who listens to others will be free from aging and death."*

*The Teacher himself explains clearly what he meant: "listening to others" means to hear the explanation of selflessness from another person. Therefore, it is unquestionable that the Buddha spoke of listening to others in order to refute the idea that you can develop the view of selflessness from within yourself, without the study and reflection that go along with listening to an excellent external spiritual guide explain the meaning of selflessness.*

*Generally, among all the Conqueror's scriptures there are some that explicitly teach about reality, and even those that do not explicitly teach it nonetheless indirectly point toward it. The darkness of confusion is not overcome until the knowledge of reality dawns, but it is overcome when that knowledge arises.*

*Therefore, calm abiding — one-pointedness of mind — does not in itself become pure sublime wisdom, nor does it overcome the darkness of confusion. Here Tsong Khapa is saying that there are some scriptures of Buddha Shakyamuni that explicitly teach the meaning of reality. Not all of them do, yet even those that do not explicitly teach the meaning of reality will indirectly provide us with the methods for linking up with that. So the scriptures that don't teach reality directly, indirectly act as a means for us to join with the meaning of reality.*

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*Hence there is no doubt that you must seek wisdom; you should think, "I will seek the wisdom that discerns the meaning of selflessness — reality." Kamalasila's second Stages of Meditation says:*<sup>240</sup>

*Then, having achieved calm abiding, you should cultivate insight. You should think, "All the sayings of the Bhagavan were spoken well; directly or indirectly, they all elucidate and point to reality. If I know reality, I will escape all of the entanglements of dogmatic views, just as darkness is cleared away by the dawn. Calm abiding alone does not lead to pure, sublime wisdom; nor will it clear away the darkness of the obscurations. However, if I use wisdom to meditate well on reality, I will reach pure, sublime wisdom and know reality. Only through wisdom can I really get rid of the obscurations. [567] Therefore, I will remain in calm abiding and use wisdom to pursue reality. I will not be satisfied with calm abiding alone." What is this reality? Ultimately all things are empty of the two selves — the self of persons and the self of phenomena.*

*Of all the perfections, it is the perfection of wisdom that realises reality. Since you cannot know it by means of meditative stabilization or the other perfections, you should develop wisdom without mistaking mere meditative stabilization for the perfection of wisdom.*

*The Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning says:*<sup>241</sup>

*"Bhagavan, through what perfection should bodhisattvas apprehend the absence of an essence in phenomena?"*

*"Avalokitesvara, they should apprehend it through the perfection of wisdom."*

*As quoted earlier, the Sutra of Cultivating Faith in the Mahayana also makes the same point: "I do not say that those who have faith in the Mahayana of bodhisattvas, unless they have wisdom, are delivered — no matter what Mahayana practices they may do."*

That brings us to the section on ‘How to train in insight.’ There’s a section on ‘How to train in them individually’ where you look at how to train in calm abiding, how to train in insight, how to cultivate both. So here we are in the section on ‘How to train in insight’ which has four parts:

- 1. Fulfilling the prerequisites for insight (Chapters 8-24)*
- 2. Classifications of insight (Chapter 25)*
- 3. How to cultivate insight in meditation (Chapters 25-26)*
- 4. The measure of achieving insight through meditation (Chapter 26)*

This text is meant to help us to eliminate doubt. We study, we hear teachings, we reflect on those teachings and as we do so we develop a great number of doubts about many different things. Lama Tsong Khapa has given us a very extensive presentation here quoting from the first, second and third *Stages of Meditation* by Kamalasila and many other texts so that we may have a resource to consult and eliminate the doubts that we have. So it would be good to read through this text again and again, looking over the points to eliminate the doubts that arise as we study and reflect.

Any questions, any doubts?

Student: When is insight properly developed? Is it when you have the attention of discerning characteristics or after?

Geshela: That’s a real Palden question! (laughter). Geshela’s taught on these topics. What’s the definition of insight?

Student: It’s a wisdom that’s imbued with the bliss of physical and mental pliancy that arises through the force of having analysed one’s object from within calm abiding.

Geshela: So you achieve it at that point (laughter). He gave the definition very well, so why bother asking when do you achieve it – you achieve it at that point!

So you achieve calm abiding and from within calm abiding you analyse your object. When from the force of that analysis you induce the bliss of physical and mental pliancy you achieve insight.

Student: Do you need to have insight in order to have the attention of discerning characteristics?

Geshela: Geshela was just saying it's not a big deal – there's no-one meditating on this anyway! (laughter). Certainly you don't need it before you achieve the discernment of characteristics, and I (LZ) was saying "by the looks of things it seems as if Lama Tsong Khapa's saying that it arises during the period of arisen from belief, or it arises with arisen with belief." Anyway, Geshela says it's no big deal, we're not meditating on this anyway.

Here when we talk about cultivating the discernment of characteristics we talk about cultivating mundane paths. Whereas if you were going to cultivate supramundane paths then once you've achieved calm abiding then you would cultivate a path which views the true sufferings and origins as coarse and true cessations and true paths as calm. This is different. You must engage in the adopting of and the abandoning of different aspects of the four truths.

When you view the desire realm as coarse and the form or formless realms as calm then you are cultivating a mundane path, correct? And Lama Tsong Khapa said a great deal about this including the fact that there are Buddhists who achieve this. So that of the people who are cultivating mundane paths there are Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike.

So we'll leave it there. We really have yet to begin talking about insight.

**Buddhist Studies Programme**

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

**Teacher : Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter : Ven Lozang Zopa**

**Number of the teaching: 30**

**Date of the teaching: 8<sup>th</sup> December 2004**

In the section on the text that teaches calm abiding and insight separately we've covered the section on calm abiding and are now in the section on insight. There are six prerequisites or preconditions for calm abiding given. Though there not mentioned explicitly here in the section on insight we can assume that they're also preconditions for insight, given that they are preconditions for calm abiding. Even if it's not specifically counted in the prerequisites for insight we can take those to be necessary here also.

This section has *four parts*:

1. *Fulfilling the prerequisites for insight (Chapters 8-24)*
2. *Classifications of insight (Chapter 25)*
3. *How to cultivate insight in meditation (Chapters 25-26)*
4. *The measure of achieving insight through meditation (Chapter 26)*

On page 111 it reads ...

*You should listen to the stainless textual systems, relying on a scholar who accurately understands the key points of the scriptures. An indispensable prerequisite for insight is to use the wisdom gained through study and reflection to develop knowledge of reality.*

Here in the next sentence it says how things exist which is another way of saying their mode of being. *For without a decisive view of how things exist, you cannot develop insight that knows the real nature, emptiness.* That is to say knows things as they are. The reality as opposed to the diversity. Here real nature should be understood as emptiness and it says here that without this decisive view of how things exist it's impossible for you to develop the insight that knows how things exist, the real nature.

According to the middle way consequence School, middle way autonomists and Mind Only proponents do not realise emptiness at all. Because if you realise emptiness it means that you must realise how phenomena lack inherent existence. Due to the tenets that they hold that hold things inherently exist they are prevented from realising emptiness because they cannot realise how things lack inherent existence.

According to the middle way consequence school how far could someone progress in dependence upon either Mind Only or middle way autonomist tenets? Probably not even to the great level of the path of accumulation unless of course they were to discard their tenets because you have to realise emptiness don't you. Since the view of the real nature is required the view of emptiness is required. It says that ...

*Also, in seeking such a view you must rely not on that which has provisional meaning, but rather on that which is definitive. Therefore, you should differentiate between the provisional and the definitive, and you should then internalise the meaning of the definitive scriptures.*

There are what are known as the four reliances: Rely not on the person but on the dharma, that is the teaching so you're not meant to consider what the person is like thinking "is it a good person, is it a bad person" but rather look at the teachings that they are giving. And then within the teachings rely not on the words but on the meaning. So there are the words that express the teachings and the teaching that is being expressed. Rely not on the words but on the meaning. And the meaning then can be either provisional or definitive. So rely not on the provisional but on the definitive. And the last one is rely

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not on the mistaken sensory consciousnesses but rely on unmistakable mental consciousnesses. So you have the four reliances, which are related to the statements you find on the bottom of p 111 which reads ... *Also, in seeking such a view you must rely not on that which has provisional meaning, but rather on that which is definitive.*

Moreover, if you do not rely upon the treatises by authoritative trailblazers commenting on the Buddha's thought, you are like a blind person headed toward danger without a guide.

We talk about two trailblazers. In mentions here *treatises by authoritative trailblazers*. There was a period in which the Mahayana teachings went into decline and Buddha Shakyamuni, made a prophesy about the coming of people who would reopen the way to his Mahayana teachings. He said after the teachings of the Mahayana have gone into decline then such and such a person will come to reopen the way to the Mahayana teachings. There are two of them in particular, Protector Nagarjuna and the Noble Being Asanga. These are known as the two great trailblazers for the Mahayana.

The Protector Nagarjuna received the pith instructions off Manjushri so the lineage of the profound view was transmitted from Buddha Shakyamuni to Manjushri, from Manjushri to the Protector Nagarjuna. And then from the Protector Nagarjuna the lineage of the profound view passed down to masters like Buddhapalita, and Chandrakirti. The Protector Nagarjuna came to this world didn't he? Whereas the venerable Manjushri did not. So the Protector Nagarjuna is therefore known as the trailblazer or pioneer who opened the way of the middle way .

The Noble Being Asanga then travelled to Tushita whereas he received a teaching and audience with the Venerable Maitreya and then returned to this world to open the way for the Mind Only and hence the Noble Being Asanga is known as the trailblazer of the Mind Only School. Asanga himself was not a proponent of Mind Only but he did open the way, he was the pioneer that did open the way for the Mind Only.

*Hence, you must rely on accurate commentaries on the Buddha's thought. On what sort of commentator should you depend? You should rely on the one whom the Bhagavan Buddha himself very clearly prophesied in many sutras and tantras as a commentator on the heart of the teaching, the profound reality beyond all extremes of existence and non-existence. So this one that the Bhagavan Buddha prophesied in many sutras and tantras. He is the Noble Nagarjuna, renowned in this world and in those beyond. Therefore, rely upon his texts as you seek the view that is the knowledge of emptiness.*

We must determine what the philosophical view of reality is, that is the view of emptiness. Whose commentary, explanation should we follow in doing so? There are after all two pioneers within the Mahayana. Here we should follow the Noble Nagarjuna who is the pioneer for the middle way system. Understand? Clear, isn't it? This is the second time that Geshe-la is teaching on it so it's really just a matter of clarifying things.

*With regard to these prerequisites for insight, there are three parts:*

- 1. Identifying scriptures of provisional and definitive meaning*
- 2. The history of commentary on Nagarjuna's intended meaning*
- 3. How to determine the philosophical view of emptiness (Chapters 9-24)*

### ***(1') Identifying scriptures of provisional meaning and definitive meaning***

*Those who wish to know reality must rely on the Conqueror's scriptures. However, due to the diversity of ideas among the Buddha's disciples, the scriptures vary. Hence you might wonder what sort of scripture you should rely upon in seeking the meaning of the profound reality. You must know reality in reliance upon scriptures of definitive meaning.*

*What sort of scripture is definitive and what sort is provisional? This is determined by way of the subjects that they discuss. Those that teach the ultimate are considered scriptures of definitive meaning and those that teach conventionalities are considered scriptures of provisional meaning.*

Generally speaking there are two ways to distinguish between the provisional and definitive: in terms of the words, and in terms of the meaning. In terms of the words that are used to express and in terms of the meaning or the thing that is expressed. This division is done according to the scriptures, that is to say according to the words that are used to express the subject matter. It says here that *those that teach the ultimate are considered scriptures of definitive meaning and those that teach conventionalities are considered scriptures of provisional meaning.*

*In that vein, the Teachings of Aksayamati Sutra (Aksayamati-nirdeśa-sūtra) says:<sup>244</sup>*

*What are sutras of definitive meaning? What are sutras of provisional meaning? Those sutras that teach so as to establish conventionalities are called provisional. Those sutras that teach so as to establish the ultimate are called definitive. [569] Those sutras that teach by way of various words and letters are called provisional. Those sutras that teach the profound reality, which is difficult to understand and difficult to know, are called definitive.*

This sutra is quoted as support for Lama Tsong Khapa's assertion.

Geshela points out that normally sutras of provisional meaning are described as those sutras whose main and explicit teachings are on conventionalities or conventional truths.

Giving a definition for a sutra of definitive meaning it is a sutra whose main and explicit teaching is emptiness.

And the definition for a sutra for provisional would be a sutra either whose main and explicit teaching is on conventional truth or whose teaching on emptiness cannot be taken literally. The definition for a sutra of provisional is actually a sutra whose explicit and main teaching is conventional truth or whose teachings cannot be taken literally. There is nothing about emptiness in there - whose teachings cannot be taken literally.

So take for instance a sutra in which the Buddha said that mother and father are objects that need to be killed. This is not taken to be sutra whose main and explicit teaching is on conventionality or conventional truth. Rather this is a sutra whose teachings cannot be taken literally. So there was a story about a prince who imprisoned his father and while his father was in prison his father died. So at that point he felt a very great regret about what he had done and he met with the Buddha. He went to the Buddha and he was very distraught and the Buddha told him: "no it's alright, mother and father are objects that ought to be killed".

The Buddha's intention in making this remark was that karma and disturbing emotions are objects or things that should be killed. Not that mother and father are. So the Buddha made this statement that could not be taken literally and so as to pacify this king who was extremely distraught. There are also sutras that are said to teach the existence of self and person which are taken to be sutras whose teachings cannot be taken literally. It's not appropriate to take their teachings literally and hence they are provisional meaning.

Geshela didn't get an opportunity to look at the tenets text but later when we study this material properly we'll get the tenets texts out and consider what the middle way consequence School actually had to say on this topic literally.

So here Lama Tsong Khapa just puts it as: *those that teach the ultimate are considered scriptures of definitive meaning and those that teach conventionalities are considered scriptures of provisional*

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*meaning. Quite simple.*

*Question: How does a sutra teach conventionalities so as to be classified as provisional? And how does a sutra teach the ultimate so as to be classified as definitive?*

*Reply: This also is indicated very clearly in the [Teachings of Aksayamati] Sutra. It says:<sup>243</sup>*

*Sutras called provisional are those that teach as though there were an owner where there is none, using various expressions—self, sentient being, living being, nourished being, creature, person, humankind, human, agent, experiencer.*

*Sutras called definitive are those that teach the doors of liberation—emptiness, signlessness, wishlessness, no composition, no production, no creation, no sentient beings, no living beings, no persons, and no owners.*

*This means that the definitive are those that teach selflessness, no production, and such by eliminating elaborations, while the provisional are those that teach self and so forth. So those that teach selflessness, no production etc and such by eliminating elaborations are definitive while the provisional are those that teach self. Therefore, you should understand that no self, no production, and such are the ultimate, while production and so forth are the conventional. That's clear, isn't it? The King of Concentrations Sutra also says:<sup>246</sup>*

*Understand as instances of definitive sutras those that teach In accordance with the emptiness explained by the Sugata. Understand as of provisional meaning all those teachings That posit a "sentient being," "person," or "living being."*

*Also, Kamalasila's Illumination of the middle way (Madhyamakaloka) says:<sup>247</sup>*

*Therefore, you should understand that only those that discuss the ultimate are of definitive meaning; the others are of provisional meaning. Also, the Ornament/or the Light of Wisdom that Introduces the Object of All Buddhas (Sarva-buddha-uisayavatara-jnanalokalamkara) says, "The definitive object is the ultimate." [570] And also the Teachings of Aksayamati Sutra teaches that the absence of production and so forth "are definitive." Consequently, it is certain that only the absence of production and so forth are called "ultimates."*

When the definitive and provisional are distinguished according to the words that are used to express certain things you have this presentation right here. In other words the presentation we have here is done according to the divisions of provisional and definitive according to words, you might say texts. There's another division of provisional and definitive that Geshela mentioned, that which is done to meaning in which case emptiness is taken to be definitive whereas conventional is taken to be provisional.

*Therefore, the collections of Madhyamaka arguments<sup>248</sup> as well as the commentaries on them are considered texts that precisely teach the definitive because they demonstrate at length the meaning of the ultimate that is free from all the masses of elaborations, such as production and cessation.*

*Why are teachings called "provisional" or "definitive"? A text is called definitive, or of definitive meaning, because it cannot be interpreted to mean something else. Its meaning is the end-point of the process of making determinations insofar as it is the meaning of reality itself. No one else can interpret it as having some further or different meaning because it is backed up by valid proofs.*

Emptiness is all phenomena's final mode of being, it is final in the sense it is the end, you don't need to be led any further than that. So it is final and therefore not provisional in the sense of requiring anything for you to be led any further. Nothing more need be indicated. Lama Tsong Khapa adds that



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no one else can interpret it as having some further or different meaning because it is backed up by solid proof.

*Thus Kamalasila's Illumination of the middle way says:*<sup>249</sup>

*What is a text of definitive meaning? It is one that gives an explanation in terms of the ultimate and is supported by valid cognition, for it cannot be interpreted by someone else as having any other contrary meaning.*

*Implicitly, this statement allows you to understand the provisional. The provisional, or that which requires interpretation, is a text that cannot be taken to mean exactly what it says; rather, you must explain what it intends, interpreting it as having some other meaning. Or, it is a text that can be taken literally, but in which this literal meaning is not the final reality, and you must still seek that reality as something other than the conventional phenomena to which the text refers.*

This is very clear. Geshela was just giving you a definition for the sutra of provisional meaning correct. Are the elements of that definition found in here? As it says here: *a text that cannot be taken to mean exactly what it says; rather, you must explain what it intends.*

This is not taken literally. Or it is a text that can be taken literally so even if it can be taken literally the literal meaning which it is teaching is not the final reality, not emptiness and you must still seek that reality as something other than the conventional phenomena to which the text refers. So it can be taken literally but here as it's saying conventional phenomena to which the text refers.

There were two elements to the definition that Geshela gave before. One which mentions that the main and explicit teaching is on conventional truths or one in which whose teachings cannot be taken literally so either/or, a particular sutra does not have to fulfil both these features. It can fulfil either one.

Is that clear? We're not confused are we? Are we clear about sutras of provisional and definitive meaning? If not, take the opportunity to ask a question. Kamalasila's Illumination of the middle way explicitly talks about texts of definitive meaning but implicit in that presentation is the explanation of texts of provisional meaning. Implicitly.

*Qualm: Since sutras of definitive meaning are literal, when statements such as "production does not exist" and "persons do not exist" appear in those sutras, one must conclude that production and persons do not exist at all; otherwise those sutras would not be literal, and it would absurdly follow that they are provisional.*

The person is basically calling our attention to what Lama Tsong Khapa has described as characteristics of sutra of definitive meaning. And also what that means for sutras of provisional meaning so sutras of provisional meaning are sutras that cannot be taken literally for instance, that's one feature isn't it? But then you find certain sutras that are considered to be of definitive meaning that have statements such as person do not exist or as it says here "production does not exist" etc. You cannot just take that literally in the sense you cannot take that to mean that persons and production do not exist at all. After all just above you were giving a list of certain types of sutras of provisional meaning where you say that a provisional meaning is for all those teachings that posit a sentient being, person or living being or that mention production, humankind, human, agent, experience and so forth. Then take these sutras that say the persons do not exist and that production that does not exist it follow that they are sutras of provisional meaning. Why? Because they cannot be taken literally. This is the debate right? There are some more statements found in the Heart of Wisdom Sutra, aren't there? "No eyes, no ears, no nose ..." Take that it follows that it is a sutra of ... ?

After all within the wording of the sutra itself it talks about "no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue etc" so it is a sutra of provisional meaning because it is not suitable to be taken literally. It is suitable to

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take that literally? Are the statements in the Heart of Wisdom sutra “no eyes, no ears, no nose” suitable to be taken literally?

In the Heart of Wisdom it says “no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue” such statement in the Heart of Wisdom sutra who says that they are suitable to be taken literally? Who says that they are not to be taken literally? What reasons are there to say that it is suitable to be taken literally?

So those of you who say that it’s suitable to take these statements literally, what reason do you have to support your argument?

Student: Because ‘inherently’ is implied?

Geshela: Is that everyone who subscribes to this argument, is that your position?

Student: Is not implied it is actually explicit within the text in that context.

Geshela: Does it explicitly teach lack of inherent existence or not?

Student: Within that context.

Geshela: Does that phrase explicitly teach lack of inherent existence.

Student: Not that phrase.

Geshela: If it doesn’t teach it explicitly then it teaches it implicitly. You’re saying the same thing as Leo. There’s only two ways you can go in there.

Everyone else, are you ... anyone have something other than that to add.

We’re looking at the phrases in the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* “no eyes, no ear, no nose, no tongue”. Leo was saying that these phrases implicitly teach lack of inherent existence so that they should be taken as ear does not inherently exist, eye does not inherently exist etc. Tsapel then was saying that when it comes down to it she was saying the same thing as Leo. So what are you guys going to say? Are you going to say that those phrases teach lack of inherent existence explicitly or not?

Student: .... Context ....

Geshela: There’s that word again?

Same thing. Basically what you’re saying is those very words do not teach it explicitly. These phrases “no eyes, no ears, no noses, no tongue”, you have said that these phrases themselves do not explicitly teach the lack of inherent existence. Yeh? So no more qualifications? You have said that it does not explicitly teach that.

Ok. Those of you who say that these statements are not suitable to be taken literally, what reasons would you state to say this? Oh you probably don’t need reasons, you’ve already lost.

If you say that these phrases cannot be taken literally then the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* becomes a sutra of provisional meaning. So is it a sutra of provisional meaning? It follows that it is because it’s a sutra whose teachings are not suitable to be taken literally.

No debate about that, right? The *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* is uniquely according to the middle way consequence school a sutra of definitive meaning. The real emptiness is taught in this *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*.

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Ok. We're back to the people who claim these words do not teach the lack of inherent existence explicitly. The *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* has specific disciples for who this teaching was explicitly, directly taught. Those specific disciples would have to be consequentialist s. Whereas in general the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* has disciples from both middle way schools, autonomist and consequence alike. The disciples for this sutra are middle way but the specific disciples for who it was taught are consequentialist s. So those people who say that these phrases do not specifically teach lack of inherent existence Geshela would like to draw your attention to a number of little passages which say things like no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue, no form, no feelings, no karmic formations etc all the way down through 12 links, to different aspects of existence and four noble truths, no suffering, no cessation of suffering. Yes? Now Geshela says it follows that the sutra explicitly teaches that those do not exist. Explicitly teaches that they do not exist. It follows that they do.

Student: Why?

Geshela: It follows that they explicitly teach that.

Student: Why?

Geshela: It follows that it does not explicitly teach that.

Student: Why?

Geshela: It follows that it explicitly teaches that. Why? It follows that it does not explicitly teach it. Why? What do you do then?

When you look at those phrases our ears hear the explicit expressions “no eyes, no ears, no nose,” don't they? We hear the explicit expression so it teaches no eyes, no ears, right? Explicitly he's talking about. Tsapel says yes. So if it explicitly teaches that it follows that there are disciples for whom it needs to explicitly taught that there are no eyes, no nose, no tongue. Who are you going to teach that to? There are no eyes, no ears ... where is the disciple for who needs to be explicitly taught that? Who is the disciple for who needs to be explicitly taught this, somebody in the case who doesn't accept the existence of eyes, or ears or nose ... you know. Somebody with a nose who insists there are no noses. Where is such a person? So you do not need to teach that there are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue because there are no disciples that need to hear that.

So then in the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* it follows that it does not explicitly teach that there are no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue.

Student: It does.

Geshela: It follows that you are the disciple. You do not need to explicitly teach no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue because there are no disciples who need to be taught no eyes, no ears, no nose, tongue. If such an explicit teaching was given then there much be a disciple for who that was intended. Why are there no disciples? Because there is nobody who really doubts whether ... mmmm let's see is there a nose, if there such things as eyes. Because there is no one who has doubt about whether eyes, noses etc exist.

So you would have to say then that the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* does not explicitly teach no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue. You would have to say reason is not established. It doesn't explicitly teach that. You would have to insist that it explicitly teaches lack of inherent existence. So if someone says Oh it follows that it explicitly expresses that. You say no pervasion. In fact it says that you should look at it like this, analysing the five aggregates, which are empty of inherent existence, and then immediately after that it goes on to talk about how these things lack of eye, lack of ear, lack of nose

Buddhist Studies Programme – Lam Rim Chen Mo 2004 lightly edited transcripts for use of course participants only etc. So those statements are teaching that there is no inherently existent eye, no inherently existent nose etc. Or better yet they do not inherently exist.

There is a difference then between being expressed and being taught. Here the word expression refers to being expressed in words and being taught by words. You must make a distinction. Can you weigh in with you own experience between expressing something and teaching something. Using words to express something and teaching something. Sure of course Geshela can think to say Leo's name but when he says Leo's name he says Tsapel. So what has been expressed? Tsapel, even though he was thinking to say Leo. In this case you would say what was expressed, Tsapel. What was indicated which is another look at the word teach, what was indicated? Leo was.

Or sometimes you think to say it does not exist inherently but when you end up actually saying it you say it does exist inherently. It happens doesn't it? So what was expressed? Exists inherently. You wouldn't say exists inherently wasn't expressed, it was expressed but what was indicated by that expression? Lack of inherent existence.

So in these examples, Geshela is trying to show us the difference between what is explicitly expressed in words and what is explicitly indicated by words. Understand? So the phrases in the Heart of Wisdom sutra, no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue etc you would have to say they explicitly teach the lack of inherent existence, that is to say eyes do not exist inherently etc.

In fact because the middle way autonomists agree that these phrases explicitly teach that eyes do not exist inherently, ears do not exist inherently and so forth they insist that the Heart of Wisdom sutra is a sutra of provisional meaning. They say it is a sutra of provisional meaning because it's not suitable to take those statements literally.

So those of you who said that those statements in the Heart of Wisdom sutra are of provisional meaning are wearing the middle way autonomist hat. So you need to put on your middle way consequence hat you must first take off your middle way autonomist hat. Understand? When you're talking about these things you must first put on the right hat. So put on the consequence hat. Those of you who said that it is not suitable to be taken literally and thus by extension is by a sutra of provisional meaning.

*Reply: This does not seem tenable because there are many definitive sutras in which the Buddha, the teacher who makes these statements, adds the qualification "ultimately" when refuting production and so forth. If he adds such a qualification once, then we must add it even where it does not occur because it is a common attribute of all such refutations. Since the absence of ultimate existence is the reality of phenomena, how could a sutra teaching this not be definitive?*

*Otherwise, if these sutras did refute production in a general sense, then, as far as particulars, they would also refute words, and hence even the definitive sutras that teach this could not make their presentations.*

*Therefore, you should understand that a sutra or a treatise may still be definitive even if what it teaches in a few isolated phrases cannot be read literally when stripped from the context of the general system surrounding it in that scripture. You also should understand that even when the teaching of the very words of a text can be taken literally, the text may still be provisional.*

Therefore we must distinguish between being expressed and taught, or indicated. You have these things that are qualified by words, by certain terms that are used, so you must distinguish between something that is expressed through the medium of words and something that is indicated by them. Now when we look at these phrases in the *Heart of Wisdom* sutra, we would have to say they explicitly indicate, or teach lack of inherent existence. After all, the disciples for whom this is specifically taught are consequentialists. But when you look at the wording in those particular phrases, the lack of

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inherent existence is not explicitly expressed. So you must therefore draw a distinction between the two.

The middle way autonomists look at these phrases; ‘no eyes, no ears’ and say that that indicates or teaches that the eyes don’t inherently exist, ears don’t inherently exist. They do not say that those teach, or indicate that eyes don’t exist, ears don’t exist and leave it at that.

When the middle way autonomists say the *Heart of Wisdom* sutra is a sutra of provisional meaning, he or she would not back that assertion up by saying; ‘because it teaches that eyes don’t exist’. Doesn’t say that. It would say; ‘Take the *Heart of Wisdom* sutra. It is a sutra of provisional meaning because it teaches that eyes do not inherently exist.

Student: I just wanted to defend the people who said that you couldn’t take it literally. Lama Tsong Khapa says that; ‘...a sutra or treatise may still be definitive even if what it teaches in a few isolated phrases cannot be read literally when stripped from the context...’ I know that brings up context again, but it seems to me that you can say something (rest of question/comment inaudible)

Without me identifying what section of the text you’re talking you’re talking about, Geshela quoted that very section and said they’re talking about the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra*. So first of all, of course if its teachings are not suitable to be taken literally, it’s going to be a sutra of provisional meaning. So how does this support them?

Student: It says that; ‘a few isolated phrases cannot be read literally...’ (rest of comment inaudible)

Lozang Zopa: Maybe it’s a translation thing, because when it says that it *cannot be read literally when stripped from the context*, that means that its expression cannot be taken literally, as opposed to its indication.

Geshela: It’s probably easy if we look at the *Heart of Wisdom Sutra* because earlier in the piece it says you must analyse the five aggregates and see how they do not exist inherently. Then later it’s got a number of different phrases, including; ‘no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue’ and so forth. Which might, for our purposes be better translated as; ‘eyes do not exist, ears do not exist’ and so forth. We must consider what’s expressed by these phrases.

*Therefore, you should understand that a sutra or a treatise may still be definitive even if what it teaches in a few isolated phrases cannot be read literally when stripped from the context of the general system surrounding it in that scripture.* So Geshela would like to relate this back to the *Heart of Wisdom* sutra, where we can say that the general system surrounding the phrases; ‘no eyes, no ears, no tongue’ are teaching lack of inherent existence.

So when it says that, *even if what it teaches in a few isolated phrases cannot be read literally*, it’s talking about, even if what’s expressed cannot be taken literally. That does not mean that such a sutra cannot be a sutra of definitive meaning. That doesn’t make it a sutra of provisional meaning just because some of the things that it expresses cannot be taken literally. So Geshela says this phrase which you’ve highlighted is actually a support for Geshela’s assertion and not yours.

So that’s what it comes down to. When it says *even what it teaches*, what it’s referring to is what it expresses.

So the point is that we must distinguish between the way things are expressed and the way they are indicated.

First of all, in the Heart Sutra, if we say that it teaches, or indicates; ‘no eyes, no ears, no nose, no tongue’ there must be a disciple for whom that is taught.

You need a specific disciple for whom that was intended.

Who is the disciple?

Who needs to be taught that eyes don't exist, ears don't exist, etcetera.

Now, second of all, we need to distinguish between something being indicated and something being expressed.

Student: In the definition for a sutra of definitive meaning Geshela gave, it only says that its explicit and main teaching must be emptiness. It doesn't say anything about being taken literally.

That's correct. It doesn't contain that phrase. It only mentions that whose explicit and main teaching is emptiness. And it's not required in that definition because it's already covered by the statement in the definition for the sutra for provisional meaning.

Jetsunpa actually includes it in his definition. And this is one of the reasons why Geshela says we ought to look at tenets.

So Jetsunpa includes it in his definition, but strictly speaking it's not necessary, because that is already covered by the definition of a sutra of provisional meaning, which says, 'whose teaching cannot be taken literally'.

Yeah, anyway, it's not necessary. There probably are no sutras whose explicit and main teaching are on emptiness, and whose teachings cannot be taken literally.

In the section on calm abiding, Lama Tsong Khapa quoted quite a lot from the *Sutra Unravelling the Intended Meaning*, didn't he? Which is taken to be a sutra of provisional meaning. The specific disciples for whom this sutra was taught were Mind Only proponents.

Mind Only proponents are proponents of true existence.

Essentialists. They accept true existence.

So how can they teach emptiness?

With the first turning of the wheel, the four truths are taught. And it would seem that those teachings could be taken literally. But whether or not they can be taken literally or not, the middle way consequence School takes those sutras to be sutras of provisional meaning. They also take those sutras found in the last turning of the wheel, the final turning of the wheel to be of provisional meaning. While the sutras of the middle turning of the wheel are taken to be definitive. middle way consequentialist s.

These disciples for whom the last turning of the wheel was specifically given are mind only.

The specific disciples for whom the middle turning of the wheel were given are middle way .

The middle way is made up of two, isn't it? consequentialists and autonomists. So the disciples for whom these are specifically and explicitly given are middle way consequentialists.

Though middle way autonomists are disciples for whom the middle turning of the wheel was given.

There are many instances in the sutras where they say that things do not exist inherently. Of course in

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things like the *Heart of Wisdom* sutra they also say things like, ‘no eyes, no ears,’ etcetera. But there are many cases in these sutras where it states that things do not exist inherently.

middle way autonomists insist that the qualification ‘ultimate’ must be added to this, so that when a sutra says that things do not exist inherently, they should be taken to read; things do not ultimately exist inherently.

When the consequentialists look at a sutra like the *Heart of Wisdom*, they point out at the beginning it says that things don’t exist inherently. So even if, in the middle they only say ‘don’t exist’, you would have to still apply the convention stated earlier, ‘inherently’, to the later statements so that the later statements are taken to indicate that eyes don’t exist inherently, ears don’t exist inherently, etcetera.

On the top of page 115, it says **(2') The history of commentary on Nagarjuna's intended meaning**  
Tsong Khapa’s already made it clear that in determining the final view of reality we are going to be following the explanation of Nagarjuna, so we want to work out what Nagarjuna’s intended meaning was, so this is where we’ll pick up tomorrow.

In this insight section we’re trying to determine, or resolve what the final view of reality is. In order to do so, we must follow sutras of definitive meaning, which means that we have to know how to distinguish between sutras of provisional and definitive meaning. This is quite important.

Are there any questions?

Student: Last night we were talking about truths for a concealer, in which case a concealer was said to be a consciousness, in particular one that grasps at true existence. I wondered if an eye consciousness was a concealing consciousness in this sense.

Geshela: No, an eye consciousness would not be posited as this.

The concealer in the phrase; ‘truths for a concealer’ is different from the word ‘concealed’ or ‘conventional’ as it’s used in general. Geshela meant to make a point of that last night. Was that not apparent?

So you have a single word, *kun.dzog* which, as we looked at, can be translated in different ways. Which in some sense is good, because there’s a difference between the concealer and truths for a concealer and ‘relative’ as in relative truth, or just relative as in conventionalities, even though there’s a single Tibetan word to indicate that. This single word has different implications. So we must know that there’s a difference between the concealer that’s used in the phrase ‘truths for a concealer’ and the term that appears in other contexts as ‘relative truths’ or better yet, ‘conventionalities’.

The point is this. Just because something is a conventionality, according to this translation system, doesn’t necessarily mean that it’s a concealer from the phrase ‘truths for a concealer’.

So, how many possibilities are there between something being a conventionality and a concealer in the phrase, ‘truths for a concealer’

Three.

Which of the possibilities does not exist?

If something is a concealer from the phrase, ‘truths for a concealer’, it’s necessarily a conventionality.

Something which is both? Grasping at true existence.

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As for something which is a conventionality but not a concealer from the phrase, ‘truths for a concealer’, you could say any conventionality other than grasping at true existence.

Student: I would of thought that there were concealer consciousnesses and ultimate consciousness, but according to this there are also consciousness that are neither of those two.

Your assumption that consciousnesses could be divided between the consciousnesses that are referred to in the phrase, ‘truths for the ultimate’, and consciousnesses that are referred to in the phrase, ‘truths for a concealer’, is an exhaustive list is mistaken. That’s not the case. The way you put it – ultimate consciousnesses and concealer consciousnesses is quite misleading. Geshela went on to say that consciousnesses are necessarily conventionalities. Anyway, your assumption that they break down into those two is incorrect.

What’s more is the ultimate in the phrase, ‘truths for the ultimate’ or from the perspective of the ultimate doesn’t refer to all wisdom’s that realise emptiness. You couldn’t say that all wisdom’s that realise emptiness are the ultimate from the phrase, ‘truth for the ultimate.’

Like for instance, the wisdom realising emptiness found on Mahayana paths of accumulation and preparation for a person who has entered Mahayana paths from the very outset. Such beings do have one pointed meditative equipoise upon emptiness in which they realise emptiness, but those are not the ultimate from the phrase, ‘truths for the ultimate’.

Although these beings do remain in meditative equipoise one pointedly focused on emptiness, there are still relative appearances, conventional appearances.  
There are, aren’t there?

After all, these are conceptual consciousnesses, aren’t they? At this level, though they might be engaged in meditative equipoise, still they are conceptual consciousness. And therefore the generic image of emptiness appears to them, doesn’t it?

Whereas Aryas have perceptually realised emptiness. So for them when they engage in meditative equipoise on emptiness, there are no relative or conventional appearances. Hence, the Aryas sublime wisdom of meditative equipoise.

If there are relative appearances, then there is an aspect of mistakenness. Remember how we were talking about one of the unique features of the middle way consequence school is that they say that the only unmistaken consciousness in the continuum of a sentient being is in the Aryas sublime wisdom of meditative equipoise focused on emptiness.



**Buddhist Studies Programme**

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

**Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa**

**Number of the teaching: 31**

**Date of the teaching: 9th December 2004**

In the section of the text entitled; '*In particular, how to train in the last two perfections*', there are sections on how to train individually in calm abiding and in insight. Having covered the section on '*how to train in calm abiding*' we are now on the section on '*how to train in insight*'.

That section has four parts:

1. Fulfilling the prerequisites for insight,
2. Classifications of insight,
3. How to cultivate insight in meditation, and
4. The measure of having achieved insight through meditation

The first of these; *the prerequisites for insight* has three parts:

1. Identifying scriptures of provisional and definitive meaning,
2. The history of commentary on Nagarjuna's intended meaning, and
3. How to determine the philosophical view of emptiness.

The main point being made here is that as we need to develop insight that's focused upon emptiness, we must first identify what emptiness is. In order to do that, we must follow the 'sutras of definitive meaning'; those scriptures in which emptiness is taught. For this reason we must know how to properly distinguish between sutras which are of provisional meaning and those of definitive meaning.

In general, 'provisional meaning' and 'definitive meaning' may be distinguished in different ways. For instance, you can they can be distinguished in accordance with the words used to express subject matter, or you can distinguish them in accordance with the object or the meanings that are being expressed. The Precious Lord Lama Tsong Khapa gives a general presentation of how they are distinguished in accordance with the words; that is the subject matter expressed. He mentions that in general the definitive meaning refers to those scriptures whose main and explicit teachings are emptiness, whereas the provisional meanings would be those scriptures whose main and explicit teachings are on conventional truths.

If you were to look for more pervasive definitions then you could say:

- ❖ A sutra of definitive meaning is one in which its principal and explicit teachings are on emptiness, and whose teachings are suitable to be taken literally.
- ❖ A sutra of provisional meaning in one in which either its main and explicit teachings are on conventional truths, or whose teachings are not suitable to be taken literally.

The other way to distinguish provisional meanings from definitive meanings is in accordance with the object of the meaning expressed. In this case, ultimate truths are called definitive meanings, whereas conventional or relative truths are called provisional meanings. These are the names given to them.

Generally speaking we say that if something is suitable to be taken literally it's definitive, and if something is not suitable to be taken literally it's provisional. There is this way of speaking, isn't there? Related to that point, Lama Tsong Khapa raises and addresses an issue which concludes on the bottom of page 114 where he says:

*You also should understand that even when the teaching of the very words of a text can be taken literally, the text may still be provisional.*

## ***(2') The history of commentary on Nagarjuna's intended meaning***

There are two pioneers who opened the way for the Mahayana; the Protector Nagarjuna, and the Noble Being Asanga. In this context however, we're trying to determine what the view of the Middle way is concerning emptiness, and therefore it is the Protector Nagarjuna that we follow. It is Nagarjuna that we must follow in trying to unravel the intention behind the Middle way.

*Nagarjuna gave flawless commentary on scriptures - e.g., the Perfection of Wisdom sutras - that teach that all phenomena are without any intrinsically [inherently] existent production, cessation, and so forth. What is the history of commentary on Nagarjuna's thought? Both the father [Nagarjuna] and his spiritual son [Aryadeva] are sources for the other Madhyamikas such as the masters Buddhapalita, Bhavaviveka, Candrakirti, and Santaraksita took Aryadeva to be as authoritative as the master [Nagarjuna]. Therefore, earlier Tibetan Scholars used the term "Madhyamikas of the fundamental texts" for those two, and the term "partisan Madhyamikas" for the others.*

[‘Madhyamika’ may be translated throughout this section as ‘proponent of the middle way’]

*In the past there were some Tibetan teachers who said that when Madhyamikas are described in terms of how they posit conventionalities, there are two types: Sautrantika-Madhyamikas [Sutra Middle way], who assert that external objects exist conventionally, and Yogacara-Madhyamikas [Yogic Middle way], who assert that that external objects do not exist conventionally. Madhyamikas are also of two types when described in terms of how they assert the ultimate: the Proponents of Rationally Established Illusion assert that a composite of appearance and emptiness is an ultimate truth, and the Proponents of Thorough Non-Abiding assert that the mere elimination of elaborations with regard to appearances is an ultimate truth. These earlier teachers asserted that within this second typology, the first type includes masters such as Santaraksita and Kamalasila. There were also some Indian masters who used the terms "illusion-like" and "thoroughly non-abiding" to refer to different types of Madhyamikas.*

This is just a brief explanation of some of the positions that earlier Indian masters held on how to divide the Middle way.

*Broadly speaking, there were some Indian and Tibetan masters who claimed to be Madhyamikas who used this kind of terminology for dividing Madhyamikas. However, here I aim to establish only the systems of the great Madhyamikas who are followers of the master Nagarjuna. Who could explain every subtle distinction? Moreover, the great translator Lo-den-shay-rap (Blo-Idan-shes-rab) makes an excellent point when he says that this presentation of two types of Madhyamikas, distinguished according to how they assert the ultimate, is simply something to impress fools.*

In the preceding paragraph, Lama Tsong Khapa mentioned that some divided middle way proponents in terms of their positions on ultimate truth. Here he says this doesn't make sense - it doesn't hold.

*For, those who make such a distinction seem be claiming that for Proponents of Rationally Established Illusion such as Santaraksita and Kamalasila the mere object that is understood by an inferential reasoning consciousness is an ultimate truth, whereas both Santaraksita's Ornament for the middle way (Madhyamakalamkara) and Kamalasila's Illumination of the middle way say that the object understood by a reasoning consciousness is designated "ultimate" due to its being concordant with an ultimate truth.*

Their idea is not logical.

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You will find terms such as ‘ultimate’, ‘concordant ultimate truths’ and so forth, in classic texts. In fact we touched on the issue of something being called ‘ultimate’ even if it’s not ‘the ultimate’, and hence is a ‘concordant ultimate’ but we don’t need to dwell much on this issue.

We’ve discussed the history of commentary on Nagarjuna’s intended meaning before [on Tuesday evenings]. Within the Mahayana tenet systems there are both middle way and the mind only systems. Therefore we can talk of pioneers who opened the way for the middle way and other pioneers who opened the way for the mind only. Here we’re concerned with the pioneers who open the way for the middle way. That pioneer in particular is the Protector Nagarjuna. Nagarjuna had a student known as the Master Aryadeva who is considered to be quite similar to the Nagarjuna himself, so they are taken to be ‘*equally authoritative*’, as it says in the text.

After Aryadeva, many years past before the next master, Buddhapalita came along. The master Buddhapalita explained well Nagarjuna’s text, *The Root of Wisdom*, in that in his works, he commented on what Nagarjuna’s intended meaning in that text was. Then later the master Bhavaviveka came along. Bhavaviveka was unable to find the intention of this text; *The Root of Wisdom* in accordance with what we know as the middle way consequence view. Being unable to understand it in accordance with that view, he found fault with Buddhapalita’s explanation of Nagarjuna’s great work, and in his own work expressed a number of points where he felt Buddhapalita had erred.

After Bhavaviveka came the Glorious Candrakirti. Now Candrakirti looked at Nagarjuna’s great text; *The Root of Wisdom*, together with Buddhapalita’s commentary, and Bhavaviveka’s critiques of Buddhapalita’s commentary, and concluded that it was Buddhapalita who was correct from the beginning; that he had properly explained Nagarjuna’s intention in *The Root of Wisdom*. On that basis, Candrakirti refuted Bhavaviveka’s critiques of Buddhapalita and established that Buddhapalita had accurately ascertained what you might call Nagarjuna’s true intention. It is for this reason that the Glorious Candrakirti is said to be the pioneer who opened the way for the middle way consequence school.

Translator: I initially neglected to translate that the Glorious Candrakirti is considered to be the pioneer who opened the way for the middle way consequence school. Geshela turned to me and said “That’s Jetsunpa’s position! You, Lozang Zopa, probably didn’t want to say that, did you!” Implying that I hold a position of some other tradition. “He’s already had an audience with the abbot of Sera-je and been accepted but now he’s trying to wiggle his way out - trying to keep his foot in some other camp!” (laughs)

There is actually a lot of discussion about this issue within the tradition. Some say the master Buddhapalita should be considered the pioneer who opened the way for the middle way consequence school, supporting their assertion by arguing that it was the master Buddhapalita who was the first to come along and explain the intention of Nagarjuna’s *Root of Wisdom* in accord with the middle way consequence view. Of course, the master Aryadeva had already done that long before but he’s generally considered to be quite the same as his Protector Nagarjuna and so in general is not considered to be that. Then Buddhapalita came along and since he was the first in this later period to correctly explain the intended meaning of Nagarjuna’s *Root of Wisdom*, some argue that he should be considered the pioneer who opened the tradition of the middle way consequence school, rather than Candrakirti who came after him.

They say that since Candrakirti came after Buddhapalita, and was essentially saying the same thing, it’s not right to consider Candrakirti the pioneer, but should say that is Buddhapalita. There is certainly something to that. What they say is accurate in so far as Buddhapalita was the first to accurately explain the intended meaning of Nagarjuna’s *Root of Wisdom* according to the middle way consequence school. Yet, this master Buddhapalita did not assert that this understanding that we associate with the middle way consequence school is logical and correct, and that this other

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understanding that we associate with middle way autonomists is not correct. He didn't talk about one being correct and the other being incorrect.

Bhavaviveka is considered a middle way autonomist, isn't he? Therefore when he looked at Buddhapalita's works, he was looking at them from the perspective of a middle way autonomist; taking that system as his basis. In that way he looked at Buddhapalita's works, found fault with them and tried to refute them, thereby establishing what we know as the middle way autonomist system. For this reason he is considered the pioneer who opened the way for the autonomists.

Later the glorious Candrakirti looked at Bhavaviveka's works and refuted those. He said that this view known as the middle way autonomist view is not correct, and that Buddhapalita had accurately explained the intended meaning of Nagarjuna's text. He is therefore in effect saying that the middle way consequence approach or tradition is the correct or accurate one. In this way it was really Candrakirti who was the first to speak about the inaccuracy of what we know as the middle way autonomist, and the accuracy of what we know as the middle way consequentialist.

This is the basis for those who say that Candrakirti should be considered the pioneer who opened the way for the middle way consequentialists. The criteria for determining who is the pioneer who opened the way for the middle way consequence school is based on the reason that one person clearly differentiated between what is known as the middle way autonomists and what is known as the middle way consequentialists, saying that the first is inaccurate, the second is accurate. Similarly, as Bhavaviveka said that what we know as the middle way autonomist is accurate, and others are inaccurate, that allows us to say that he is the pioneer who opened the way for the middle way autonomists.

*Also, the other great Madhyamikas do not accept as an ultimate truth the mere object that is arrived at when reason eliminates elaborations with regard to an appearance. Therefore, this division is not a good approach.*

*As to the history of commentary on Nagarjuna's thought, the master Ye-shay-day explains that the masters—the protector [Nagarjuna] and his spiritual son [Aryadeva]—did not make clear in their Madhyamaka treatises whether external objects exist; later, the master Bhavaviveka refuted the system of Vijnaptimatra and presented a system in which external objects exist conventionally.*

[consultation with Gen Jampa on how to render the term *Vijnaptimatra* (*rnam par rig pa tsam*) in English. Jampa suggests simply 'mind only']

Here then it says Bhavaviveka 'refuted the mind only system'. Many of you will know that the master Bhavaviveka is considered a middle way sutra autonomist.

*Then the master Santaraksita set forth a different Madhyamaka system that teaches, based on Yogacara texts, that external objects do not exist conventionally; it also teaches that the mind ultimately lacks intrinsic [inherent] existence. Thus, two forms of Madhyamaka arose; the former is called Sautrantika-Madhyamaka [Sutra middle way] and the latter Yogacara-Madhyamaka [Yogic middle way].*

In short, the master Bhavaviveka is a proponent of the middle way sutra autonomists whereas Santaraksita is a proponent of the middle way yogic autonomists.

Why might Bhavaviveka be called a proponent of the middle way sutra autonomists? It has to do with the fact that he explained his system in a way that was compatible with, or conforms to aspects of Sutra school tenets - with the way that they present the basis. When opening the way for the middle way autonomists, his presentation conformed to or was compatible with the Sutra school in terms of the basis, and hence he is known as a middle way sutra autonomist. Santaraksita, on the other hand,

Buddhist Studies Programme – Lam Rim Chen Mo 2004 lightly edited transcripts for use of course participants only resolves the view in a way that is compatible with the mind only system of tenets, and thus he is known as a middle way yogic autonomist. Therefore due to the similarities or compatibilities that these masters have with these tenet systems, they are known as different types of middle way autonomist; either Sutra autonomist, or Yogic autonomist.

*It is evident that this sequence of events as explained by Ye-shay-day is correct. However, while the master Candrakirti does assert that external objects exist conventionally, he does not do so in a manner congruent with the claims of other tenet systems. Thus it is unsuitable to call him a "Sautrantika-Madhyamika." [proponent of the Sutra middle way]. Similarly, the claim that he is in accord with the Vaibhasikas is also very unreasonable.*

*Scholars of the later dissemination of Buddhist teachings to the snowy land of Tibet use the terms "Prasangika" and "Svatantrika" for different types of Madhyamikas. Since this agrees with Candrakirti's Clear Words (Prasanna-pada), you should not suppose that it is their own fabrication.*

The distinction between middle way autonomists and middle way consequentialists isn't just a fabrication by Tibetan scholars, rather it is based upon and is compatible with the presentation found in Candrakirti's text; *Clear Words*.

*Therefore, all Madhyamikas are included within two types— those who do and those who do not assert external objects in conventional terms. If they are distinguished in terms of how they develop within their mind-streams the view that is certain knowledge of emptiness, the ultimate, then again they are all included within two types—Prasangikas [consequentialists] and Svatantrikas [autonomists].*

*Following whom did those masters seek to understand what the noble Nagarjuna and his spiritual son Aryadeva intended? The Great Elder [Atisha] considered the system of the master Candrakirti to be the main Madhyamaka [middle way] system. Seeing this, the great gurus of the past who followed Atisha in giving personal instructions on these stages of the path also took Candrakirti's system as the main system.*

As does Lama Tsong Khapa, the precious lord!

*The master Candrakirti saw that among the commentators on Nagarjuna's Fundamental Treatise on the middle way [The Root of Wisdom] (Mula-madhyamaka-karika) it was the master Buddhapalita who had fully elucidated what the noble Nagarjuna intended. So he commented on the noble Nagarjuna's intended meaning using his system as a basis; he also took many good explanations from the master Bhavaviveka, while refuting those that seemed a little inaccurate.*

The glorious Candrakirti saw the texts of Bhavaviveka. He also saw the texts of Buddhapalita, and he saw that Buddhapalita had accurately explained the intended meaning of Nagarjuna's text; *The Root of Wisdom*. Therefore he refuted those positions held by Bhavaviveka that were not at all correct or logical, and left those positions that were accurate or acceptable. In this way he distinguished between the way Buddhapalita and Bhavaviveka explained the intended meaning of Nagarjuna's great work; *The Root of Wisdom*, and using Buddhapalita's work as his basis, composed his own commentaries. In addition he refuted certain things Bhavaviveka said while retaining others.

As it says, Candrakirti 'took many good explanations from the master Bhavaviveka while refuting those that seemed a little inaccurate'. On that basis he then composed his own commentaries to Nagarjuna's text; *The Root of Wisdom*.

*Inasmuch as the commentaries of master Buddhapalita and the glorious Candrakirti are seen to be excellent explanations of the texts of the noble Nagarjuna and his spiritual son Aryadeva, I will follow them in making determinations about what the noble Nagarjuna intended.*

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We have seen that the glorious Candrakirti accepts the existence of external objects, as does the master Bhavaviveka, while Santaraksita does not accept the existence of external objects. As the mind only school does not accept the existence of external objects, Santaraksita explains his system in a manner that's congruent or compatible with theirs. Though the same terminology; 'external objects' is being used here, when stating that these masters do or do not posit such things, you'll find that there are many differences in the way they explain them. For instance, the Great Exposition school also accepts that external objects exist but when you look at the way that they and the middle way consequence school presents external objects, you will find that even though both of them can be said to 'accept the existence of external objects', the way they do this is not at all the same. There are quite a few differences..

Let's consider what it means to say that external objects exist. The debate here is not about whether mountains, houses, trees, and plants and so forth exist. I mean these are external objects that we see, aren't they. These masters are not debating about this! It's not as if you have one side saying 'No! there are no mountains!' and the other side saying 'Yes! there are mountains!'. Look at the mind only system for instance; the mind only system does not accept the existence of external objects. They say that things are not established as external objects but what do they mean? The things we were talking about; mountains, houses and so forth would all be external things and such things are effects, aren't they? As effects such things must have substantial causes. The mind only school says that the substantial cause for such a thing must be found within the potencies of mind within a mental continuum. They say that otherwise, if the substantial causes for such things were not located in the potencies (*nus pa*) or seeds of a mind stream, you would have to accept the existence of partless particles. They say it would mean that coarse objects arise through the aggregation or collection of many partless particles, and since they say that partless particles are impossible then they deny the existence of external objects.

The middle way consequentialists say that things can be established as external objects - that things can exist as external objects, but that that doesn't mean that there have to be partless particles. So the consequence position is that things can exist as external objects even without partless particles coming together to form those things. For the middle way consequence school, external objects are established merely through being affixed by name and conception. For the middle way consequence school, the fact that we can make use of external objects that are merely imputed or affixed by name and conception is enough to say that external objects exist.

The issue then revolves around whether or not things exist as external objects. Consider these external phenomena. When we talk about the external phenomena, we can still say that they arise from karma, as was said by Vasubandhu. Vasubandhu said in his text on Abhidharma that 'the various worlds arise from karma'. We can accept that statement but not in the way that the mind only school understands it. For the mind only school, it means that external things arise in dependence upon a potency or seed within the mind of beings. Then when you pursue this position you find that the mind only school also say that you can have many sentient beings looking in the same place but you actually have many different things right there. Because these external things that they're seeing are established from the potency or seed that exists within their own minds. There's actually a whole lot to go into when you look at the mind only view. It's very difficult to even gain an exhaustive understanding of it.

The point is that this issue is quite detailed and it's not that people who do not accept the existence of external objects are simply denying them. They do have a basis and a reason for their assertions, and that basis can be traced back to their denial of partless particles. Since they say such things are impossible then things being established as external objects is also impossible.

That marks the end of the section entitled 'The history of commentary on Nagarjuna's intended meaning'. Do you understand?

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In brief, what are the different traditions we have of commentary on Nagarjuna's intended meaning? Well there's one way of explaining his teachings which accords with the middle way autonomists, and another which accords with middle way consequentialists. That's it in short.

That brings us to section three:

### ***(3') How to determine the philosophical view of emptiness***

This is the real prerequisite for insight, isn't it! It has two parts:

1. *The stages of entry into reality*
2. *The actual determination of reality*

#### ***(a'') The stages of entry into reality***

*Question: Nirvana is the reality one seeks to attain, but what is nirvana? If "entry into reality" means a method for attaining it, then how do you enter?*

*Reply: The reality that you seek to attain—the embodiment of truth [dharmakaya]—is the total extinction of conceptions of both the self and that which belongs to the self, specifically by stopping all the various internal and external phenomena from appearing as though they were reality itself—which they are not—along with the latent predispositions [or imprints] for such false appearances.*

This is something we often talk about - that conventional phenomena appear to our conventional consciousnesses as if they existed inherently. It says here that they '*appear as though they were reality itself*' which means that they appear as though they existed inherently even though they do not. Furthermore, there are some consciousnesses which not only have the impression that things exist inherently but which actually grasp at, or apprehend them to exist inherently, aren't there! And it is these that we must overcome. Here also it says that we must get rid of the 'latent predispositions, or the imprints for such false appearances'. We need to eliminate not only these grasping consciousnesses but also these imprints that they leave behind.

There is one distinction we should make however, and that is that not all consciousnesses to which things appear as truly existent are objects to be abandoned. Instead, the emphasis is on those consciousnesses that grasp or apprehend things to exist inherently. It is those together with the imprints and so forth that are the object that we need to abandon.

Those of you who studied tenets will remember or ought to remember that there are two dharmakayas: a sublime wisdom dharmakaya, and what we call a 'nature dharmakaya'. The nature dharmakaya is a true cessation; it's an emptiness, isn't it! According to the middle way consequence school, cessations are emptinesses, aren't they?

Geshela often says that if we are able to establish the two aspirations, our very mind that we have right now will become the mind of enlightenment. That's what he says! If we are able to develop the two aspirations, our mind becomes the mind of enlightenment. Similarly, if we are able to gradually purify the two obscurations, eventually our mind will become a sublime wisdom dharmakaya.

There's a similar process that happens with the essential nature of mind; what you might loosely call 'the emptiness of mind', that happens in accord with the development of mind itself. For instance, when you achieve a liberated path of the path of seeing, you achieve a true cessation. Actually, the essential nature of mind itself becomes that true cessation in which you have abandoned seeing abandonments. You then continue this process of mental development whereupon more and more obscurations are abandoned until eventually the essential nature of mind becomes the nature

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dharmakaya; the extinction, or the abandonment, or the true cessation of both obscurations; all  
obscurations whatsoever. The essential nature of mind.

This is just a reminder. You all know this already, don't you!

This essential nature of mind is quite an important point. We talk of how all beings have buddha nature, or buddha potential, don't we? That relates back to this essential nature of mind, nothing more. 'Essential nature' here is a translation of *cho-nyi* (*chos nyid*).

Although in some ways this 'essential nature of mind' is quite simple, you still have to work hard. You can't just slack off thinking 'Oh, I've got buddha nature, buddha potential', and not do anything. You've got to actually work hard.

You may think "I probably won't achieve buddhahood before the rest of sentient beings, but since all sentient beings will achieve buddhahood, when they do so, they probably won't leave me behind." So thought a particular [unnamed] monk who then proceeded to lie on his back and rub his toes against the wall. Geshela has explained the story before, right? (laughs)

So don't just lie around!

Translator: there's an interesting thing that doesn't really come through in the translation. In the first line of the 'reply' it says; *'the reality that you seek to attain - the embodiment of truth'*. In the Tibetan, 'the reality' is set right next to 'dharmakaya' or 'embodiment of truth'. It could therefore be read as 'the reality dharmakaya'. Here then, it's talking of the nature dharmakaya.

*The stages by which you enter that reality are as follows: First, having contemplated in dismay the faults, the disadvantages of cyclic existence, you should develop a wish to be done with it...*

This is the determination to be free, isn't it! What are the stages by which you enter reality? Well first you must reflect on the faults and drawbacks of cyclic existence. Then, having reflected on them, you recognize what they are and develop some dismay or disillusionment with them. When you see what the shortcomings of cyclic existence are, you want to be finished with it. You don't want to experience the sufferings of cyclic existence. So what then is the root of this whole process? It's the grasping at self. Recognizing that grasping at self lies at the root of these things that you don't want - the things that you want to get rid of, you recognize that you must get rid of the root; grasping at the self.

*..Then, understanding that you will not overcome it unless you overcome its cause, you research its roots, considering what might be the root cause of cyclic existence.*

Is that clear? You will not overcome the effect if you do not overcome the cause. The reason being because the effect arises in dependence upon the cause.

If the sufferings or shortcomings of cyclic existence are effects, then what is their cause? What is the root that they can be traced back to? If we do not overcome that, we will not overcome the suffering and the shortcomings which are its effects. So the root of this is known as the root of cyclic existence which is sometimes referred to as 'the reifying view' (*jig lta*), and at other times as 'ignorance'....

*You will thereby become certain from the depths of your heart that the reifying view of the perishing aggregates, or ignorance, acts as the root of cyclic existence. You then need to develop a sincere wish to eliminate that.*

It's just as when looking at the stages of the path shared with a person of medium capacity. You think about the sufferings of cyclic existence in terms of true sufferings, then thinking about the way in which suffering arises, you reflect on cyclic existence in terms of its origins also. It's exactly the same



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thing here: The drawbacks of cyclic existence in terms of its suffering, and the way in which it arises in terms of its origins.

All the sufferings and drawbacks of cyclic existence arise in dependence on karma. Though they do arise in dependence upon the origins that are karma, the origins that are karma in turn arise in dependence upon the origins that are afflictions, or disturbing emotions. So you can indeed say that this all can be traced back to the reifying view of the perishing aggregates, or ignorance.

*Next, see that overcoming the reifying view of the perishing aggregates depends upon developing the wisdom that knows that the self, as thus conceived, does not exist. You will then see that you have to refute that self. Be certain in that refutation, relying upon scriptures and lines of reasoning that contradict its existence and prove its nonexistence. This is an indispensable technique for anyone who seeks liberation.*

Geshela: What is the meaning of reifying view? What is the reifying view?

Student: Grasping at a self of persons

Geshela: This ‘reifying view’ seems to come up all the time. The reifying view is a consciousness, and as a consciousness it has a focus and a subjective aspect. What then are the focus and aspect of the reifying view?

Student: The focus is the self in one's own continuum, and the aspect is to grasp or to hold that as to exist inherently.

Geshela: Is that the case? That's it isn't it! So how many possibilities are there between the reifying view and grasping at a self of persons?

Student: Three

Geshela: Which possibility doesn't exist? Sangye Khadro says three. Usually we talk about four possibilities, so here if there are only three possibilities, obviously we must dismiss one possibility. So which possibility do we throw out?

Student 2: Something that is the reifying view but is not a case of grasping at a self of persons

Geshela: There isn't something that is a reifying view that is not a case of grasping at self of persons is there! There is not because? What reason can you give?

Student: Because the reifying view is necessarily a case of grasping at a self of persons.

Geshela: Well this sort of begs another explanation. The reifying view is necessarily a grasping at a self of persons because the reifying view focuses on a self of persons in someone's continuum, such as ours or someone else's, and holds that to exist inherently. This relates to the middle way consequence assertion that grasping at a self of persons and grasping at self of phenomena are distinguished in accordance with the thing that they focus upon, not in accordance with the way they hold that to exist. So the reifying view is focused on a self of persons of some type and therefore must be a grasping at a self of persons.

That's correct. Now, the reifying view can be either intellectually acquired or innate, can't it? Which of these two is the root of cyclic existence?

Student: The innate

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Geshela: The root of cyclic existence is not the intellectually acquired reifying view because?

Student: Because mice don't have it.

Geshela: Mice don't have it because? Good reason but...

Student: Because they haven't been taught that the self exists inherently.

Geshela: That second reason wasn't so good but the first; that mice don't have it was pretty good.  
(laughs)

The intellectually acquired reifying view is something that you hold to in dependence upon reasons. There's a particular reason that you rely upon and that supports this conception. This is of course quite a coarse reason, but a reason none the less.

If you look at the mind only school, then the mind only school would accept that the 'I' in one's own continuum exists inherently. The reason for this assertion is because the Buddha said that. So they look at the Buddha's scripture and they say 'Well, the Buddha said that it exists inherently, and that phenomena exist inherently, and I exist inherently, therefore I do exist inherently'. This is the type of reason that they might use: 'because it says so in scripture', 'because my lama says so', and so forth. Based on these types of reasons they might hold that the self exists inherently and hence have an intellectually acquired reifying view.

If a person has the innate reifying view in which they are observing the self in their own continuum, then they accept that. That is to say, they would agree that the self exists inherently. They 'subscribe' to that view.

Wild animals in the forest, or as Palden brought up, mice, can't use this type of reasoning, so they do not have an intellectually acquired reifying view.

Geshela: What is something which is both the reifying view and the grasping at self of persons?

Student: The reifying view that I have.

Geshela: You could just posit 'the reifying view' because we've just said that reifying view is necessarily grasping at a self of persons. So you posit the reifying view itself as something which is both. Is that the case? Is it both?

Student: I thought I couldn't simply say 'the reifying view' but that I would have to give a particular instance of that

Geshela: Where's the fault in positing 'the reifying view'? For instance, if it's the reifying view is it necessarily grasping at self of persons?

Student: Yes

Geshela: It is. And it's also a reifying view. Yes? Then it's both and so you could posit that.

What would you give as something that is a grasping at a self of persons but not a reifying view?

Student: Grasping at a self of persons focused on the 'I' in another person's continuum.

Geshela: According to the middle way consequence school you would have to add,, 'and holding that to exist inherently'. So you would say 'focused on the self in another person's continuum and holding that to exist inherently'.

If you want to posit an instance of ‘reifying view’ as you were doing before, you could always posit the instance related to your neighbour. For instance, the reifying view in Jampa Dekyi’s continuum - assuming that she’s got the reifying view. Let’s assume that she does, right! So the reifying view in Jampa Dekyi’s continuum, or the reifying view in Ani Marg’s continuum. It’s possible however, that if they don’t have the reifying view they’re going to fight with you. (laughs)

Student: It might be insulting a bodhisattva!

Geshela : That’s right. Now the reifying view is an instance of grasping at a self of persons but is the reifying view ignorance? It says here ‘the reifying view of the perishing aggregates, or ignorance’. Is the reifying view ignorance?

Student: Yes!

Geshela : Why? Take the reifying view. It is ignorance because?

Student: Because it grasps at its object as truly existent

Geshela : (laughs)... Generally what is ignorance? It’s like darkness, isn’t it! If it’s dark in the gumpa, you can’t see can you? What obscures or prevents you from seeing? The darkness! In this sense, darkness is like ignorance.

While in general these misapprehensions in which we hold things to exist inherently obscure us, the reifying view also does that. In particular, the reifying view obscures or prevents us from seeing the nature of the ‘I’ -the way in which the ‘I’ exists.

When we looked at ‘conventional truth’, we saw that it could also be translated as ‘truth for a concealer’. We also saw that the ‘concealer’ in the phrase ‘truth for a concealer’ is said to be grasping at true existence. As a concealer it is something that veils or prevents us from seeing. It is an ‘obscurer’ - something which obscures. This is related to ignorance. In so far as the reifying view prevents us or obscures us from seeing the final nature of phenomena, it is ignorance. Hence you can say that the reifying view itself is ignorance.

Furthermore, although ‘ignorance’ can be used much more broadly in the sense of ‘not knowing’, that ignorance which is the root of cyclic existence is the reifying view.

The reifying view in our own continuum acts as a root for our accumulation of karma. From time to time we accumulate virtue. From time to time we accumulate non-virtue. If you accumulate virtue you take rebirth in the happy realm, if you accumulate non-virtue, you take rebirth in the miserable realms, but both are the same in the end in that they lead to suffering.

To understand how this innate reifying view actually contributes to the accumulation of karma, we can draw upon our own experience. It contributes to the sense of self where you think; ‘I am being helped’, or ‘I am being harmed’. In this way, when our sense of self is influenced by this innate reifying view, we develop afflictions and accumulate karma. This innate reifying view lies at the root of this process.

It would seem that most probably until we perceptually realize emptiness, we will remain under the control, or sway, of this innate reifying view. Probably until that point. So if you’re annoyed with this innate reifying view, then you ought to vent your frustration by trying to perceptually realize emptiness. Then you will be able to kill the innate reifying view. But until that point, this innate reifying view can run amok doing as it pleases.

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There's a quote from scripture that Geshela has mentioned before; 'those whose merit is meagre do not even have doubts, yet simply through developing factually concordant doubt, conditioned existence is torn to shreds'. This is talking of the benefits of reflecting on emptiness. Just by developing a factually concordant doubt with respect to emptiness, you begin to tear cyclic existence to shreds. So there are some great benefits. It's very, very important!

Geshela gave his loose tooth as an analogy for this [tearing of cyclic existence], the other day

Geshela also wanted to mention something concerning a question asked by Vanessa in yesterday's general teaching concerning whether this practice of doing the four sessions each day is limited to the practice of tantra or whether this was also practiced more broadly. That was the question, wasn't it?

Student: whether it is limited to Highest Yoga Tantra

Geshela: In fact, it's not even limited to tantra in general because it's also espoused in sutra. We've forgotten but it actually says quite clearly in the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* that that's the case. Lama Tsong Khapa mentions it towards the end of the section on the perfection of wisdom in the second volume, just before '*the divisions of wisdom*':

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

So you can check it up there.

As Geshela has said, although the primary place of application of the four session practice is in the context of the mantra teachings, it's not necessarily limited to that. What's more, it's good to practice this as much as possible. In particular, it is very good to try and observe the predawn session because of all the blessings and special things associated with that session.

**Buddhist Studies Programme**

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

**Teacher: Geshe Tashi Tsering**

**Interpreter: Ven Lozang Zopa**

**Number of the teaching: 32**

**Date of the teaching: Friday 10 December 2004**

In the section on how to train in insight, there are four parts:

1. fulfilling the prerequisites for insight,
2. classifications of insight,
3. how to cultivate insight in meditation and
4. the measure of having achieved insight through meditation.

With regard to these prerequisites for insight, there are three parts:

1. Identifying the scriptures of provisional and definitive meaning
2. The history of commentary on Nagarjuna's intended meaning and
3. How to determine the philosophical view of emptiness

We covered all of this in the previous few days. We've talked about this division between provisional and definitive meaning that here we mainly must follow the presentation of the middle way consequence school in determining the differences.

We also covered the second section on the history of commentary on Nagarjuna's intended meaning yesterday.

Nagarjuna wrote texts like the six *Collections on Reason*, foremost amongst which was his text known as the *Root of Wisdom*. We talked about the other masters that came along, attempting to explain the intended meaning of those texts, masters like Aryadeva and later Master Buddhapalita and the Glorious Chandrakirti. Nagarjuna is known as the pioneer who opened the way for the middle way system and there emerged two main systems for trying to explain the intended meaning behind what he opened up. There is of course the tradition that we know as the middle way consequence and the tradition we know as the middle way autonomist. We follow mainly the tradition of the middle way consequentialists which traces back to the Protector Nagarjuna through masters like Buddhapalita and Chandrakirti etc. There are many authors who wrote commentaries to Nagarjuna's works but we follow these masters just mentioned who are associated with the middle way consequence school. The main ones that we follow in trying to determine what the philosophical view of emptiness is, are the Protector Nagarjuna and the Master Chandrakirti.

That brings us to the third section, *How to determine the philosophical view of emptiness* and there are two parts to this:

1. *The stages of entry into reality* and
2. *The actual determination of reality*.

The main things to consider in this regard are to work out what the final reality we're trying to enter is and to determine the techniques we must use to enter into that final reality. We must be sure what things act as adverse circumstances for us entering into such a reality. We must know the cause of both happiness and suffering within cyclic existence. We must know what the root of cyclic existence is. We must develop certainty about these points from the outset, and then we can enter into reality.

It's similar to what we discussed in the stages of the path shared with persons of medium capacity. What is the root of suffering? What is the root of cyclic existence? What is the main thing that hinders our attainment of liberation, the main obstacle? It is of course, the reifying view of the perishing aggregates, also known as ignorance.

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We talked about this quite a bit the other day. We know that the reifying view is a grasping at self of persons but there are three possibilities between something being a reifying view and being grasping at self of person. Grasping at self of person is not necessarily a reifying view - this is what we concluded the other day.

When we talk about resolving the view of emptiness, we're talking about the view of selflessness, and there are two types of selflessness. There is the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena. In order to determine this view of selflessness, we must understand what the non-existent self that is being negated is. That is very important! Once we have identified that, we can go on to refute the non-existent self. And as it says on page 120,

*Be certain in that refutation, relying upon scriptures and lines of reasoning that contradict its existence and prove its nonexistence. This is an indispensable technique for anyone who seeks liberation. After you have thus arrived at the philosophical view that discerns that the self and that which belongs to the self lack even a shred of inherent nature, you should accustom yourself to that; this will lead to the attainment of the dharmakaya.*

*Chandrakirti's Clear Words says:*

*Question: You say that all of these afflictions, karma, bodies agents and effects are not reality. Still, thought they are not reality, they appear to the childish in the guise of reality—like a phantom city and so forth. If this is so, then what is reality and how to you enter that reality?*

Do you know what a phantom city is?

The word for phantom in Tibetan is a word which means smell-eater, and I think in Sanskrit it's *gandarva*. They seem to be sentient beings with quite subtle bodies and apparently, wherever a group of them gathers, then a city of phantoms or smell-eaters forms. But these congregations come together and split up quite easily so there doesn't seem to be much stability to this phantom city. This is the point.

Sometimes beings in the intermediate state are called smell-eaters too, but in this case it seems to refer to this other type, these *gandarvas*.

In any case, here when they talk about the childish to whom things appear in the guise of reality, they're talking about ordinary sentient beings, who have not realised emptiness.

*Reply: Reality is the total extinction of the total conceptions of the both the self and that which belongs to the self in regard to the internal and the external, this being a result of the non-apprehension of internal and external things.*

“Conceptions of the self” refers to grasping at self; and “that which belongs to the self” [refers to] grasping at “my”. We've talked about this distinction before, grasping at “I” and “my” or “mine”.

*As for entry into reality, look in the Commentary on the “middle way”, which says:*

*In their minds, yogis perceive that all afflictions  
And all faults arise from the reifying view of the perishing aggregates,  
And, knowing that the self is the object of that view,  
They refute the self.*

*Chandrakirti's Clear Words also says:*

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*Yogis who wish to enter reality and who wish to eliminate all afflictions and faults examine the question, “What does this cyclic existence have as its root?”. When they thoroughly investigate this, they see that cyclic existence has as its root the reifying view of the perishing aggregates, and they see that the self is the object observed by that reifying view of the perishing aggregates. They see that not observing the self leads to eliminating the reifying view of the perishing aggregates, and that through eliminating that, all afflictions and faults are overcome. Hence, at the very beginning they examine only the self, asking “What is the ‘self’ that is the object of the conception of self”?*

This is a point of some importance. Yesterday we were talking about how there are two types of self, the self that exists and the self that doesn’t exist, the existent and the non-existent selves.

What is Chandrakirti saying here? Well he talks about afflictions. We know afflictions: that’s no problem. Then he also talks about faults. Faults come from afflictions don’t they. All the faults of cyclic existence can be traced back to the afflictions. The afflictions and the faults of cyclic existence in turn can be traced back to the reifying view of the perishing aggregates. We need to know what is responsible for all of these faults and afflictions: the reifying view.

The afflictions and the faults associated with them arise in dependence upon the reifying view.

What is the object observed by this reifying view? It is the self. As the text says: *they see that the self is the object observed by that reifying view of the perishing aggregates.*

Please look at the text. It says on the bottom of page 120 *they see that the self is the object observed by that reifying view of the perishing aggregates.* The self mentioned in this sentence is being posited as the focal object for the reifying view. That’s the self that exists, the existent self.

And then he goes on to say, *They see that not observing the self leads to eliminating the reifying view of the perishing aggregates.* Here, the self that is not observed is the non-existent self, the self that does not exist.

So the self that is the focal object of the reifying view is the existent self. The self that leads to eliminating the reifying view—when not observed—is the non-existent self, the self that does not exist. This non-existent self is the self that needs to be negated - the self that is the object of refutation. This self is the inherently existent self. The self that needs to be negated is the inherently existent self.

*Scripture sets forth many arguments refuting the inherent existence of a limitless number of individual things. However, when yogis initially engage in practice, they meditate in an abridged way, determining that both the self and that which belongs to the self lack inherent nature. The Master Buddhapalita says that this is the meaning of the 18th chapter of Nagarjuna’s Fundamental Treatise (the Root of Wisdom). The master Chandrakirti bases his own commentary on this statement by Buddhapalita. Also, the teachings on the selflessness of the person in Chandrakirti’s Commentary on the “middle way” are just extended explanations of this 18th chapter.*

Now we have an issue being raised. It says:

*Qualm: Are you not teaching how to enter the reality of the Mahayana? In that case, the reality that one seeks to attain cannot be the mere extinction of the conceptions of both the self and that which belongs to it.*

*Also, since a simple determination that both the self and that which belongs to it lack inherent nature does not entail a determination that objects, as distinct from persons, lack self, it is wrong to posit it as the path for entering into reality.*

*Reply: There is no problem here, for there are two types of total extinction of the conceptions of both the self and that which belongs to it. Even Hinayanists may have the first type, the utter elimination of the afflictions so that those afflictions will never recur; abandoning here, this utter elimination so that afflictions will never occur is abandoning the afflictions and their seeds. However, the second is a buddha's embodiment of truth that is dharmakaya. It is the elimination—through utter non-apprehension—of all signs which are elaborations of external and internal phenomena. This second involves the abandoning of imprints as well.*

We're talking about the middle way consequence perspective here. According to the middle way consequence tradition, as long as a person does not abandon the grasping that holds the self of persons to inherently exist, and the grasping that holds the self of phenomena to inherently exist, it would be impossible for that person to achieve even liberation. So even if a person is a hinayanist, he or she must necessarily abandon these two graspings, the graspings which hold the self of persons and phenomena to exist inherently. And therefore, hearer and solitary realiser aryas necessarily perceptually realise emptiness. Without perceptually realising emptiness, you cannot achieve the fruit or state of an arhat and according to the middle way consequence school, to realise emptiness, you must realise the lack of inherent existence.

Therefore, when hearer and solitary realiser aryas go on to achieve arhatship, they abandon the grasping at the self of persons and grasping at true existence, together with their seeds.

Even though such persons have realised emptiness and abandoned the afflictions and their seeds, they are still subject to the appearance of true existence. Things still appear to exist inherently. They have not abandoned these appearances.

Things appear to exist inherently to the conventional consciousnesses of solitary realiser and hearer arhats. You might ask, well why is that? What is it that creates these appearances? After all, they have abandoned grasping at true existence and its seeds! But it's the imprints left behind by such things that lead to those appearances, the imprints which they have not abandoned.

Geshela would point out something that might trip us up. Consider these hearer and solitary realiser arhats or bodhisattvas who are ordinary beings (on the paths of preparation, for instance). Now these beings have a conceptual realisation of emptiness, a realisation that takes place through the medium of a generic image. Now you might say, "Well it follows that the conceptual realisation of emptiness is an object to be abandoned, because there is still an appearance of true existence to this conceptual consciousness." There is, isn't there.

You might go on to argue that it is an object to be abandoned but that's not the case. That conceptual consciousness is a valid cognition. It is not an object to be abandoned, but rather, the appearances that appear to it are objects to be abandoned. The appearance of true existence is an object to be abandoned, but that conceptual consciousness, which is a valid cognition, is not an object to be abandoned. Please be careful and don't make this error.

The appearance of true existence is a cognitive obscuration. In the past when we've talked about cognitive obscurations we've talked almost solely about imprints. Now we're adding something new to that. In addition to imprints, the appearances of true existence are also classed as cognitive obscurations.

Therefore valid cognitions that realise conventionalities can have true existence appearing to them. Things can appear to exist truly to them but in cases like that the appearances are objects to be abandoned while the valid cognitions themselves are not.

In abandoning those appearances, you abandon the imprints and thus you achieve the dharmakaya, as is mentioned here: the embodiment of truth.



As it says here, on page 121, *the elimination—through utter non-apprehension—of all signs which are elaborations of external and internal phenomena* is a buddha's dharmakaya, that is embodiment of truth.

*Also when you know that the self does not exist inherently, you also overcome the conception that the aggregates which are its components exist inherently*

To talk about emptiness, we talk about selflessness - the two types of selflessness: selflessness of persons and selflessness of phenomena. We don't need to go into the selflessness of persons, because we know that you focus on the self (of person) and that its lack of inherent existence is the selflessness of persons.

Let's look at the selflessness of phenomena - any phenomena other than persons. The lack of inherent existence of those phenomena is the selflessness of phenomena.

Of all the different selflessnesses of phenomena, there is one in particular that receives special emphasis. Yogis focus upon one in particular. Yogis strive to overcome grasping at a self and in doing so they focus on developing a realisation of the selflessness of the person included within their own continuum. Overcoming the grasping at the self in their own continuum, then they work to develop a realisation of the selflessness of the aggregates that are included within their own continuum.

In this way then they overcome the grasping at the self of phenomena, in particular in relation to their own aggregates. Generally speaking, the lack of inherent existence of a gumpa, or of a car, are instances of selflessness of phenomena, but when a yogi tries to stop this grasping at self, then his or her emphasis is on the self in one's own continuum and the aggregates that belong to it - the "I" and "mine".

With that in mind, let's look at this sentence again: *Also when you know that the self does not exist inherently, you also will overcome the conception that the aggregates which are its components exist inherently.*

There's an important point here that should be emphasised. Actually the word for overcome is a future tense verb in the Tibetan, so it should be translated as "will overcome". What that means is that first you realise the selflessness of persons and then you realise the selflessness of phenomena -- phenomena in this case referring to selflessness of the aggregates. This is the order followed by yogis.

There are certain reasons for this. It is generally held that it's easier to realise the person's lack of inherent existence than it is to realise the aggregates' lack of inherent existence. Thus it is easier to realise the selflessness of persons, more difficult to realise the selflessness of the aggregates.

So, according to the middle way consequence school, this is the order in which the two selflessnesses are realised: the selflessness of person first, the selflessness of phenomena second, with phenomena, in this case, referring to aggregates. Why is it that it's easier to realise the person's lack of inherent existence than it is that of the aggregates? Because it's easier to realise how the person is an imputed existent, than it is to realise that the aggregates are imputed existents.

Now according to the middle way autonomist school, the person is an imputed existent, whereas the aggregates are held to be substantial existents, so it would be even more difficult according to their system. But for consequentialists, both the person and the aggregates are imputedly existent and it's easier to realise that the person is imputedly existent in part because of the definition. It's actually described as that which is imputed onto the aggregates, and this itself lends itself very easily to a recognition that it is an imputedly existent thing - more easily than the aggregates in any case.

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Hence it's easier to realise that the person is imputedly existent than it is the aggregates, and therefore it is easier to realise selflessness of persons than that of the aggregates.

So this is explained through an analogy. As it says:

*—just as when a chariot is burned, the wheels and such that are its parts are also burned.  
Chandrakirti's Clear Words says:*

*The self is imputed dependently; it is what those who have the error of ignorance cling to fiercely; it is regarded as the appropriator of the five aggregates. Those who seek liberation analyse whether this self has the character of the aggregates.*

Do we understand this analogy? When a chariot is burned, then the wheels and other things that are its parts are also burned. If you no longer have a chariot, then you no longer have the chariot's parts. A similar thing could be said of the self and that which belongs to the self - that if you've realised that the self does not exist then you would naturally and easily realise that that which belongs to that type of self would not exist. Maybe for the sake of clarity we should say, 'you would go on to realise it'.

*When those who seek liberation have analysed it in every way, they do not observe a self, and thus [Nagarjuna's Fundamental Treatise] says:*

*If the self does not exist  
How could that which belongs to the self exist?*

*Because they do not observe the self, they also do not at all observe the aggregates which belong to the self—the basis on which the self is designated. When a chariot is burned, its parts also are burned and thus are not observed; similarly, when yogis know that the self does not exist, they will know that what belongs to the self, the things that are the aggregates, are also devoid of self.*

*Thus Chandrakirti says that when you know that the self lacks inherent nature, you will also know that the self's aggregates lack self—that is to say, they lack inherent nature.*

In this case, to know, or realise, is once again a future tense verb.

*Also, Chandrakirti's Explanation of the “ middle way ” commentary says:*

*Sravakas and pratyekabuddhas (that is, hearers and solitary realisers) following Hinayana tenets are inaccurate because they apprehend an essence in things such as form. Therefore, they do not know even the selflessness of persons. This is because they hold conceptions of the aggregates, the basis that is designated as the self. [Nagarjuna's Precious Garland says:]*

*As long as you conceive of the aggregates,  
You will conceive of them as “I”.*

*Thus, he says that if you do not know that the aggregates lack inherent nature, you do not know the selflessness of the person.*

What did he just say? Are you confused now? If we're not confused, then perhaps you haven't understood.

It says here *As long as you conceive of the aggregates, you will conceive of them as “I”*. What did we just say? That first you realise the selflessness of the person and then you realise the selflessness of the aggregates later. But what do they say here? It says that *if you do not know that the aggregates lack inherent nature, you do not know the selflessness of the person* - if you don't realise that the aggregates

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lack inherent nature, you do not realise the selflessness of person ie the person's lack of inherent existence. Why does this not confuse you? [Geshela laughs]

We just got through saying that you realise selflessness of persons and then you go on to realise selflessness of phenomena but here it says that if you haven't realised selflessness of phenomena then you can't realise selflessness of person. OK, so please explain why you've not confused. Perhaps you do understand?

Student: Because when it says *as you conceive of the aggregates*, it's referring to the intellectually acquired grasping.

Geshela: OK, and then? Can you continue with your explanation?

Student: As long as you have an intellectually acquired view that the aggregates exist inherently, you will not be able to realise that the selflessness of persons lacks inherent existence.

Excellent answer! Do you all remember the different types of self-grasping we have talked about? There are both the intellectually acquired, or imputed, self-grasping and the innate self-grasping. So you have the intellectually acquired grasping and innate grasping in relation to both persons and aggregates. Two for each.

If a person has an intellectually acquired grasping at self of aggregates then they really think that the aggregates exist inherently. That's their idea. An intellectually acquired grasping is something that you arrive at based on reasons etc, by thinking about these things. Intellectually acquired grasping, whether it's directed toward persons or the aggregates, phenomena, is actually thinking that such things exist inherently, thinking, "Yes, these exist inherently - because it says so in the text, because it says so in scripture." Based on some reason like this, they believe that these things exist inherently.

And that's why when Nagarjuna says:  
*as long as you conceive of the aggregates, you will conceive of them as "I"*.

As long as you have this intellectually acquired conception that the aggregates exist inherently, you will still conceive of a self of persons. In other words – for as long as you have this intellectually acquired grasping - you will not be able to realise selflessness of persons. The point is that when you realise the selflessness of person, its lack of inherent existence, that intellectually acquired grasping that holds the aggregates to inherently exist cannot remain.

And therefore, this intellectually acquired grasping is naturally destroyed. So look at this wording, it says *as long as you conceive of the aggregates, you will conceive of them as "I"*.

Earlier Geshela was saying that in Lama Tsong Khapa's statements he uses a future tense verb. Lama Tsong Khapa points out that when you realise that the self does not exist inherently, you also will overcome the conception that the aggregates which are its components, exist inherently. Similarly here, just below the quote from Nagarjuna, he says in his explanation of that,  
*if you do not realise that the aggregates lack inherent nature, you do not know the selflessness of the person*.

In the classic texts, when they discuss this issue they seem to say that if you realise the selflessness of persons then you realise the selflessness of aggregates. And if you look at the Lam Rim, then it also seems to adopt a similar manner of speaking.

So the classic texts, and Tsong Khapa as well, seem to be saying that if you realise selflessness of person then you realise the selflessness of the aggregates, so what is the point of all this?

take the person	it does not inherently exist	why?	because it is interdependent	like for instance, an illusion or a reflection.
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Once you've used that type of reasoning to establish that the person lacks inherent existence, then you can turn your attention to the aggregates and, without needing to posit any more extensive reasoning, realise that the aggregates also lack inherent existence. Once again, you can easily realise the aggregates lack inherent existence once you've already That is the significance of those statements in the classic texts and Lama Tsong Khapa.

Therefore when you realise the person lacks inherent existence, the intellectually acquired grasping at aggregates is naturally stopped. If the intellectually acquired grasping at the aggregates does not stop, then you are not capable of realising the selflessness of persons. So, the intellectually acquired grasping related to aggregates is naturally or automatically stopped by this realisation related to person.

Student: In Nagarjuna's text when he says, *as long as you conceive of the aggregates*, why must this refer to intellectually acquired grasping? It seems that you could also apply it to the innate grasping.

Geshela: Actually "conceive" here cannot be understood as innate conception.

What the master is saying is that as long as you intellectually conceive of the aggregates as existing inherently then you will not be able to realise that the "I" does not exist inherently.

This explanation is saying, in effect, that if you realise that the person lacks inherent existence, you will realise the aggregates lack inherent existence. That leads to the following issue, explained in the qualm.

*Qualm: If the same awareness that knows that the person lacks inherent existence also knows that the aggregates lack inherent existence, then there is a fallacy—the two awarenesses that know the two types of selflessness would be the same. However, since objects and persons are distinct, the awarenesses that know that they lack inherent existence are also distinct, as in the case of the awarenesses that know the impermanence of a pot and that of a pillar. If the awareness that knows that the person lacks inherent existence does not know that the aggregates lack inherent existence, then how can Chandrakirti claim that one will know that the aggregates lack inherent existence when one knows the selflessness of the person?*

Now the following response says, in effect, that he doesn't agree with the first assertion anyway, so he's going to answer the second one.

What does it mean to say, "since I don't accept your first assertion, I'm going to answer the second?" What Lama Tsong Khapa is saying is that he doesn't assert that the awareness that realises selflessness of persons itself realises the selflessness of aggregates. He doesn't say that the same awareness realises both of them.

In fact we would agree with what this person is saying: that just as the pillar and pot are distinct, then the awarenesses that know their impermanence must be distinct. Similarly, the awarenesses that know the selflessness of the person and aggregates or phenomena must be distinct since the person and the aggregates are distinct. So Lama Tsong Khapa says that he does not assert any different - he does not say that the same awareness that realises selflessness of persons also realises selflessness of aggregates.

*The awareness that knows that the person lacks inherent existence does not think, "The aggregates do not inherently exist". However, without relying on anything else, that very awareness can induce certain knowledge that the aggregates lack inherent existence, thereby eliminating the reification of inherent existence that has been superimposed upon the aggregates.*

That's very clear, isn't it. Once you've realised that the person lacks inherent existence, then you can go on to think that just as the person lacks inherent existence, the same applies to the aggregates. For instance, when a chariot is burned, its parts are burned. So this realisation that the person lacks inherent existence is capable of inducing the later thought, "oh the aggregates don't exist inherently either".

It says, *without relying on anything else* - that means, without relying on any other extensive proof -- *that very awareness can induce* - here "can induce" implies future tense doesn't it, so you could say: *can go on to induce certain knowledge that the aggregates lack inherent existence. Therefore, Chandrakirti says that when you know that the person lacks inherent existence, you will also know that the aggregates lack inherent existence.*

It's quite clear. Lama Tsong Khapa is explaining what Chandrakirti means ie that once you've realised the person lacks inherent existence, then you can go on to realise that the aggregates lack inherent existence without needing to refer to, or posit, any extensive other proof.

*Also Buddhapalita's Commentary on Nagarjuna's Root of Wisdom says:*

*What the so-called self possesses is called "that which belongs to the self". That self does not exist; if it does not exist, how can it be right to speak of what belongs to it?*

*This is how you should understand it. For example, when reflecting that the son of a barren woman does not exist, that very awareness does not think, "his ears and such do not exist". However, that awareness can eliminate any reifying thought that might imagine that his ears exist. Similarly, when you know that the self does not exist in reality, you stop any notion that its eyes and such exist in reality.*

This is quite clear, together with a nice analogy. But once again, the tense doesn't come through so well in our translation. It says "*you stop any notion*". In Tibetan, it says very clearly, "*you will stop any notion...*"

*Objection: There are Buddhist essentialists who hold that the person exists as an imputation; they do not assert that the person exists ultimately. Therefore, even they would know that eyes and such lack inherent existence.*

*Reply: You are arguing that since they assert that gross objects such as eyes and seedlings exist as imputations, they would know that those objects lack inherent existence. If you accept that this is so, then you contradict your own assertion that these are essentialists, proponents of true existence. If essentialists did know the absence of inherent existence, then it would not be necessary for proponents of the middle way to prove to them that seedlings lack true existence. Further, the process of completing a virtuous or non-virtuous action is a continuum, and if essentialists accepted that a continuum lacks inherent existence, then why would they challenge the middle way position that a continuum, like a dream, lacks true existence? Yet this is what we find in Haribhadra's Little Commentary on the "Ornament for Clear Knowledge":*

*[The essentialists say to us proponents of the middle way:] If all phenomena are like dreams, then the 10 non-virtues, giving, and so forth would not exist. Hence even when you are not asleep, it would be as though you were.*

*Therefore, there is a huge disparity between an essentialist system and a middle way system with respect to whether things exist, either ultimately or conventionally.*

The point made in this objection is that anyone who asserts that the person is an imputed existent would then realise that phenomena lack inherent existence. But that's not really a conclusion we can

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justify, is it? Just because they assert that the person is an imputed existent, that doesn't mean that they are going to realise that phenomena lack inherent existence. After all, that would mean that since they assert that gross objects such as eyes and seedlings exist as imputations, they would go on to recognise or realise that they lack inherent existence. But that's clearly not the case, because it is well documented that there have been times when masters have had to prove to essentialists that things are like dreams, that seeds and sprouts are like dreams and that they lack true existence. If they realised that things lacked inherent existence just because they asserted that the person was imputedly existent, then there would be no need to prove that those things are like dreams. Anyway, it's probably not a major point.

*Therefore, there is a huge disparity between an essentialist system and a middle way system with respect to whether things exist, either ultimately or conventionally.*

*What they consider conventional existence amounts to ultimate existence from a middle way perspective and what they consider ultimately existent exists only conventionally according to the middle way. There is nothing contradictory about this. Hence, you need to draw distinctions.*

The point here is that proponents of the mind only would argue that conventionalities (relative truths) like vase and pillar, exist by way of their own character, that they exist inherently - that's their position. But if that were then applied to the middle way consequence school, that would mean that they are ultimately existent, that they are established ultimately. Their position on how conventional things exist would mean, for us, that things exist ultimately. This is because for the mind only conventionalities are said to exist inherently, which for the middle way consequence system would mean that they exist ultimately.

And then we have this other issue, that the mind only say that these things are not ultimately established. In other words, they talk about emptiness. But the mind only have their own way of positing the ultimate. When you look at their presentation however, you conclude that for the middle way consequence school, that is established as a conventionality, a conventional existent.

The mind only talks about the three natures - thoroughly established, other-powered and imputed (just to use the traditional terms). And they say that the thoroughly established and the other-powered truly exist while the imputed do not truly exist.

However, from the consequence perspective, that means that they do not realise the subtle lack of true existence, and thus, according to the consequence view mind only proponents do not realise subtle ultimate truth or subtle relative truth.

It says it here, *there is a huge disparity between an essentialist system and a middle way system with respect to whether things exist, either ultimately or conventionally.*

So we say that they do not realise the subtle two truths.

For the consequentialists, the subtle relative truth would be for instance, that although a vase does not exist inherently, it exists conventionally. Or, although a person does not exist inherently, it exists conventionally. That, for a consequentialist, is subtle relative truth. In order to realise the subtle relative truth however, you must first realise that the vase or the person does not inherently exist. And therefore it's more difficult to realise subtle relative truth than it is even to realise subtle ultimate truth.

So continuing on, the text reads:

*There is nothing contradictory about this. Hence, you need to draw distinctions.*

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*Furthermore, although the imputedly existent person of these Buddhist essentialists and the imputedly existent person of the master Chandrakirti are similar in name, their meanings are not the same. For, Chandrakirti maintains that these Buddhist essentialists do not have the view which is the realisation of the selflessness of the person. This is because he asserts that if you have not known the selflessness of objects, then you have not known the selflessness of the persons.*

There's no reason that this word "know" or "realise" has to be read in the past tense. It can be read as present tense as well.

*Therefore, Chandrakirti asserts that they will continue to apprehend the person as substantially existent as long as they do not give up the tenet that the aggregates are substantially existent. Hence essentialists do not know that the person does not ultimately exist.*

The consequentialist then says that the mind only proponent might maintain that a person is an imputed existent, while the aggregates are substantially existent, but in actuality they will still apprehend the person as substantially existent. This is something that the consequentialist asserts in relation to the view of the mind only person. Even if they maintain that the person is an imputed existent, due to their views, they will still be apprehending it as substantially existent.

The actual determining of reality has three parts. Next is:

*Identifying object to be negated by reason.*

But time is up, so we'll leave it there.

In this Lam Rim Chen Mo BSP, we've gotten all the way up to the Insight Section, in particular to the section where we actually determine reality, we resolve the philosophical view of reality. We've been incredibly fortunate to have such a good amount of time to go over this text. It's really been excellent.

Actually when you look at how much we've studied of the Lam Rim Chen Mo, you see that we have covered the main body of the stages of the path. It's true we haven't been able to look at some of the later sections in Insight but we have actually gone a good 40 pages into the section on Insight on Tuesday nights although we haven't covered all of it. Of course we haven't looked at the teachings on mantra either, but we have basically covered the entire body of the Lam Rim haven't we.

It's important that we return to this material, reading over it again and again. In particular, we start with the section on the proper way to rely upon a spiritual teacher. There are many important things covered at the very beginning of the text, but when it comes down to it, the stages of the path really begins with how to rely upon a spiritual teacher. There's quite a lot of material in this section. It covers many pages and a whole lot is said, but what does it come down to? Training in the root – that is faith, recollecting the kindness and developing a sense of devotion or respect. Therefore for everything that is said in the section on how to rely upon a spiritual teacher, it all comes down to developing faith and increasing the degree to which we are aware of the teacher's kindness. When we are meditating, that's what all that material must be tied into, these two points.

We've looked at the way to sustain the meditation in brief – that's found together with this section on how to rely upon a spiritual teacher. You can think about it in that context.

That then brings us to the difficulty of finding the pleasures and opportunities and how meaningful they are. In that section, we're basically looking at the good features that we have and trying to recognise or identify these positive features that we possess. By reflecting on how meaningful they are and how difficult they are to find, we start to ask ourselves, "what can I do so that I achieve these again in the future?" By reflecting on the qualities that we ourselves now possess, we begin to think about what we can do to ensure that we have this opportunity again.

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Then there are the stages of the path shared with persons of small capacity. What are the most important aspects of the stages of the path shared with persons of small capacity? Refuge and karma and its effects: those two. For all that is said in the teachings on the stages of the path shared with persons of small capacity, most important is that we become certain about the good qualities of the three jewels and the functioning of karma and its effects.

If we don't have a good certainty about karma and its effects and going for refuge, then it's quite questionable whether meditating on the other aspects of the stages of the path of small capacity is beneficial at all. Is it actually of any benefit if you don't understand karma and refuge? In this section on persons of small capacity, the explanation of karma is really very extensive isn't it and those are the most important bits.

And then we go on to the stages of the path shared with persons of medium capacity, and most importantly we must think about the shortcomings of cyclic existence. There are two aspects - thinking about the shortcomings of cyclic existence by reflecting on true sufferings and thinking about the way cyclic existence occurs by thinking about true origins.

In short, we need to recognise what cyclic existence and liberation are, and we need to know the way in which we cycle through samsara. So it's in the stages of the path shared with persons of medium capacity that we must recognise how the reifying view is the root of cyclic existence, whether you reflect on it in terms of the four noble truths or the 12 links of dependent arising. In both cases, this is complete.

Then in the stages of the path shared with persons of great capacity, the emphasis is on great compassion. The Precious Lord talks about how compassion is important in the beginning, the middle and the end. Of course, in this context, we can talk about the seven-fold instructions on cause and effect. Some are causes for great compassion, others are the effects of great compassion. After all, the main practice for us mahayanists is great loving-kindness and great compassion. Understand? If you meditate on these topics as they are described in the seven-fold instructions on cause and effect then the highest intention, or whole-hearted resolve – the mind of enlightenment – will automatically arise. The Precious Lord explains very clearly the ways to cultivate loving-kindness and compassion. It's especially clear in this text, isn't it?

Having developed that mind of enlightenment, then what's left is to train in the deeds, like generosity. Of the six, such as generosity, the main one is wisdom - insight.

That then leads us into this question, what is the reality that is the dharmakaya? How do we achieve this reality that is the dharmakaya?

We need to be able to think about the material in this way: boiling it down to its core points.

There are three volumes to the Lam Rim Chen Mo translation. We should not read it as we would a novel. When we read through the Lam Rim Chen Mo, we should always be aware of the significance or the purpose of a particular section. For instance, when you're reading through the section on the way to rely upon a spiritual teacher, know that the reason for this section is so that we may develop faith, and keep that in mind as you read.

You have the basis, developing the mind of enlightenment and then the bodhisattva deeds: the basis and the deeds. These are important because we're practising the mahayana dharma and for this, we strive to develop the basis or support – the mind of enlightenment – and then to engage in the bodhisattva deeds, for instance generosity.



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Within the deeds of a conqueror's child or bodhisattva, the emphasis is on the six, like generosity. Geshela has talked a bit about these - generosity and ethics and patience etc, all of which have been covered.

Let's talk a little about the practice of these six, like generosity. In essence generosity is a generous attitude, while ethics is in essence ...

If we could really try to go over this material before it 'gets cold', to go over it again and again, to try to incorporate it, that would be very good. Otherwise, if a long period of time elapses before we're able to read through this text again, it's entirely possible that it will be as if we never studied it in the first place.

It's not essential that everyone must do the Lam Rim retreat here. You have to consider your own situation. If for instance, due to reasons of health or the lack of certain conditions, you cannot come, that's it. If you can do it, that is cause for rejoicing.

In particular for newer students who haven't had the chance to do so much study, the group retreat is good because there is of course the risk that in meditating they might go wrong, that they might develop certain misunderstandings and go wrong in the meditation. In that respect, coming together and doing the retreat here would help to avoid this. We have put together a brief outline for the text which will be used as the basis for the meditations during the retreat and this could be quite helpful, especially for newer people.