

FPMT BASIC PROGRAM ONLINE  
**STAGES OF THE PATH**  
*Middle Length Lam-Rim*

Commentary by Venerable Dagri Rinpche  
at  
Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa

*Notes*  
*up to the*  
*Special Insight Section*

Indicating the Outlines of the *Middle Length Lam-rim* (2009 edition)  
Including the Relevant Charts as Appendices

Summery notes of the teachings by Basic Program student Shahar Tene  
Edited for Basic Program Online by Olga Planken, FPMT Education Services

## Homage

Homage: “venerable saints” - LTK's gurus, he had 52 gurus of which the main one was Manjushri.

### (1A)

“Field of Fortitude” - Jambudvipa (our world system) and also called the field of the fearless as 1000 Buddhas will appear here in this fortunate eon (which equals a great eon). In some world systems and during dark ages no Buddhas appear, and so sentient beings are without a protector and have much to fear. However, because many Buddhas will appear in this world system in this fortunate eon we have nothing to fear.

“Bhagavan” - refers to the fourth of the 1000 Buddhas: Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, who is unequalled by any of the other Buddhas due to his extensive and profound teachings, especially on dependent-origination.

“The Jina's regent, Jamgon, Lord of the Dharma” - Maitreya Buddha, who Guru Shakyamuni Buddha installed on the throne of Tushita after leaving to return to our world system.

“Manjughosa” - Manjushri, father of all the Buddhas because he was the guru of all Buddhas. Also mother of all Buddhas as he gives rise to wisdom, “gives birth” to Buddhas (like Prajnaparamita).

“Foretold by the Jina” - foretold by Guru Shakyamuni Buddha in the Root Tantra of Manjushri that 400 years after his parinirvana Nagarjuna will revive the view/doctrine of Mahayana, specifically Madhyamika view; and 600 years after Asanga will do the same but for the Cittamatra view.

### (1B)

“Vow to compose the text” or promise for composition.

“Once more” - due to having already composed the lam-rim chenmo, thus this Middle lam-rim is “here in a summary fashion”.

“Path of of profound view and vast conduct” - refers to the explicit and implicit meanings of the Prajnaparamita sutras, respectively, taught in Rajagriha.

### (1C)

“Trail-Blazers” - as they revived the Mahayana. Nagarjuna (Profound View) was taught by Manjushri and expounded the Madhyamika view in his 6 Treatises of Reasoning. Asanga (Profound Conduct) was taught by Maitreya and, while being a Madhyamika, expounded the Cittamatra view in the 5 Treatises of Maitreya. While this view has contradictions (as it isn't the highest view), they are important texts treating the implicit meaning of Prajnaparamita, i.e. practice of six perfections, five paths and ten bhumis etc.

“Dharma System” - refers to the teachings of Nagarjuna and Asanga which include not only the Hinayana and Mahayana but also Vajrayana and so lead supreme beings to omniscience / enlightenment.

## Preliminaries necessary to commence the explanation of texts

### (2A)

Scholars of glorious Vikramaśīla Monastery considered it vital to start off with three preliminaries:

1. **the greatness of the author of the teachings,**
2. **the greatness of the teachings, and**
3. **the way to explain and listen to them.**

Vikramasila Monastery was a contemporary of Nalanda but started later, and was also home to Lama Atisha at some point. They started the tradition of explaining these 3 preliminaries at the beginning of all texts, and so it became known as the Vikramasila tradition.

**(2B1) Showing the greatness of the author** in order to show that the teachings have a reliable source means one identifies the author and the root text to establish they and the lineage are a valid and pure one that can be traced back to Shakyamuni Buddha. Additionally due to knowing the author's life, qualities and achievements one can be inspired to follow their example.

**(2B1A):**

“Author” - since *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* is the root text for *Middle Lam-Rim* it could be said that they have the same author, or that LTK is merely clarifying what Lama Atisha wrote, but also could be understood as LTK being an emanation of Lama Atisha.

Thus to show the greatness of the author, Lama Atisha, we examine 2B1B-1 – 3.

As we would do for any object of great value we find, we would like to know more about it: who made it? When? Etc. in order to gain a greater appreciation for its value. So we have already examined the greatness of the author, now we examine the greatness of the teaching itself.

**(2B2) The greatness of the teachings** for the sake of generating respect towards the instructions has three points:

1. **Identifying the teachings:** “As for the teachings, the source text of the present instructions is *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*.”
2. **Presenting this text as possessing the three:**
  1. **Being fully complete:** “As it indicates all the points of both sūtra and tantra in summary fashion, it is complete in terms of content.”
  2. **Easily applicable:** “As it makes the gradual taming of the mind its main topic, it is easy to put into practice.”
  3. **A particularly noble system:** “As it is ornamented with the instructions of the two masters [Nagarjuna and Asanga] who were skilled in the systems of the two trail-blazers, it is a particularly noble system compared to others.”
3. **Presenting this text as possessing the four greatneses:**
  1. **The greatness of recognizing all the teachings as being non-contradictory:**
    - A. **Identifying the teachings:** All the Buddha's teachings.
    - B. **How all the teachings are recognized to not be contradictory:** “They all come to be understood as a single person's path to buddhahood.” Example: a doctor may prescribe that a certain sick person not eat meat, then that person gets better but instead develops *lung*, so then the doctor tells him to eat meat and drink alcohol – so these instructions seem contradictory, but both cure the person of his ailment at the appropriate time. Also, in Hinayana the seven non-virtues of body and speech are forbidden, while in Mahayana a bodhisattva is permitted to perform these actions if it would benefit sentient beings. Thus, some teachings may appear contradictory, but the different teachings should be understood as having been taught for the different dispositions of disciples or for different stages of the path. Also, it avoids the faults of sectarianism.
    - C. **How it is demonstrated through scripture and logic that it would be contradictory not to accept this:** As a bodhisattva one must know and train in each and every path so as to be able to train disciples of all different dispositions, i.e. Hearers, Solitary Realisers, Bodhisattvas and Tantrikas. “This is because Venerable Maitreya explained that a knower of paths of the three vehicles is the method for realizing the bodhisattvas' goals.”
    - D. **Establishing that the teachings are not contradictory:** There are practices which are common to both Hinayana and Mahayana and those practiced only by Hinayana, i.e. the wish for liberation from samsara for oneself alone, the instruction not to engage in many activities – which should not be practiced by Mahayanists (in fact, not engaging in many activities for the sake of sentient beings would be in breach of bodhisattva's precepts!). “Apart from that [the uncommon practices] it is not that

faults are partially ceased and qualities are partially completed in perfectly complete buddhahood, but rather all kinds of faults have been eliminated and all types of positive qualities have been completed. Consequently, since the Mahāyāna that achieves this also brings about the cessation of all faults and the development of all positive qualities, the path of the Mahāyāna comprises all the various aspects of qualities of abandonment and realization of all other vehicles. That is why the sections of the Mahāyāna path, which brings about buddhahood, comprise all the Buddha's teachings, for there is no utterance of the Sage that does not cause the cessation of a few faults and the development of a few positive qualities, and because it is not the case that all of this is not brought about by the Mahāyāna."

- E. **Clearing up doubts:** "That may be true for the Pāramitāyāna, but not for those entering the Vajrayāna." Tantrikas must practice both the bodhisattva and tantric vows. "as though in a square" - refers to a square piece of cloth, which if picked up by all four corners can pick up what is on it, while picked up by just one corner would cause everything to fall out.
- 2. **The greatness of all the Buddha's teachings occurring to you as instructions:** This has three points:
  - A. **The distinction of pure and impure manners of comprehension:** It's a mistake to think that the great texts are there merely for study while practice instructions lie elsewhere. It is ok to seek shorter practice orientated texts or instructions if one isn't inclined towards study or finds it difficult to understand the great texts. The main thing to avoid is the idea that some texts are to be practiced while others are not.
  - B. **How all the Buddha's teachings come into view as useful instructions:** "In the words of the precious Dromtönpa:  
 If after studying the Dharma a lot you feel the need to search elsewhere for a way of applying the Dharma, you are mistaken.  
 Likewise those who study the Dharma a lot over a long period and, completely ignorant as to how to set about it, develop the wish to practice Dharma, do not understand and therefore err in the manner described above. As it says in Treasury of Manifest Knowledge (Abhidharmakośa):  
 The Buddha's teachings have two aspects:  
 Their nature is scripture and realization.  
 In accordance with this statement, there is no teaching apart from the scriptural teaching and the realized teaching. The scriptural teaching is how the Dharma should be practiced and establishes the manner of accomplishment, while the realized teaching is what is thus established. Since you practice in accordance with what is to be established, these two act as cause and effect. To give an analogy: it is like when racing a horse, you first show the horse the course, and after showing it the course, it races there. Just as it would be ridiculous to show it a course and then have the race elsewhere, similarly when it comes to attainments, how could it be appropriate to accomplish something after having determined something else through listening and reflecting?"  
 So whatever we have studied, that we must practice!
  - C. **Indication of analytical meditation as a means of making all teachings appear as instructions:** "Thus, through summarizing all the topics of the paths set forth in the scriptures and their commentaries—starting from how to rely on a spiritual teacher up to calm abiding and special insight—they are all condensed into stages of practical application in terms of performing stabilizing meditation where stabilizing meditation is required and analysing with the wisdom of individual investigation where analytical meditation is required. Thereby these instructions guide you so that all the scriptures appear to you as instructions. Then the certainty develops that they should be understood as supreme advice, and the misconception that they should be

understood as mere background knowledge for the Dharma rather than as actual instructions is completely averted.”

3. **The greatness of allowing you to easily discover the Victor’s intentions:** “Although the great texts, the scriptures along with their commentaries, are the best advice, completely uneducated beginners cannot find their intention—even though they delve into them—without relying on excellent oral instructions, or, even if they find it, they spend a lot of time and enormous effort. If they rely on a guru's oral instructions and the like, it becomes easy to understand.”
4. **The greatness of a great misdeed stopping by itself:** “it amounts to abandoning the Dharma if you hold that some of the Buddha's utterances are means of attaining buddhahood while others are obstacles to buddhahood, dividing them into good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate, or Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, and thereupon holding that a bodhisattva needs to train in some and not in others. This is because you fail to understand that all the Buddha's words, either directly or indirectly, teach the means of attaining buddhahood.” Rinpoche: one should think of this as about a doctor prescribing and dispensing medicine to the sick. It is impossible to say one medicine is better or worse than another as they all cure the respective ailments they are meant to cure.

**(2B3) how teachings possessing those two greatnesses should be listened to and explained.** When studying or teaching it is important to be clear and follow the outlines / divisions and sub-divisions. Also it is important not to be like an old person eating his food: leaving all the hard/difficult bits and only taking the easy bits. And it's important to teach based on a thorough understanding of the text, otherwise it would be like the blind leading the blind – even if the blind person leading has a stick, if he does not know the way it is mere guesswork and they will get themselves and others lost.

A. **How to listen:** This has three points:

1. **Thinking about the advantages of listening to the Dharma:** “In *Garland of Birth Stories (Jātakamālā)* it says:

He who through listening fills his mind with faith, *(for qualities of 3 Jewels)*  
Grows firm rejoicing in that which is excellent. *(karma, 4NTs)*  
Wisdom is born and stupidity vanishes;  
This is well worth paying for with one's own flesh. *(no amount of money would suffice)*

Listening is the lamp against stupidity, *(most intelligent cannot see in dark room)*  
The greatest wealth no robber can carry away, *(unlike material possessions)*  
The weapon destroying the enemy, mental darkness,  
The best of friends giving guidance with skillful means. *(always there, guide for conduct)*  
Near and dear, if you are poor or not, *(unlike worldly friends, dharma dependable)*  
Inoffensive cure 'gainst sorrow's ills, *(unlike regular medicine which can also harm)*  
The foremost army destroying an army of faults,  
It is the best fame and treasure and splendor as well.  
If you meet noble beings, the best of gifts, *(highest offering to all seeking liberation)*  
And in assemblies it is the delight of the wise.”

2. **Developing respect for the dharma and those who teach it:** “The *Sūtra of Kṣitigarbha (Kṣitigarbhasūtra)* says:

Listen filled with one-sided faith and respect,  
Without any mockery nor disrespect for them,  
Worship the exponents of the Dharma,  
Producing the notion of them as resembling buddhas.”

“And in *Garland of Birth Stories* it says:

Sit on a seat that is very low,  
Fully develop the glory of discipline,

See with eyes imbued with joy  
While drinking the nectar of the words.

Bow down in respect single pointedly,  
With a mind that is stainless and pure;  
As patients heed a doctor's words,  
Respectfully listen to the Dharma.”

3. **The actual way to listen:** This has three points:

A. **Indication of how to listen in general:**

1. **Giving up the three faults of a vessel:** the obstacles to proper listening:

- A. **Vessel is turned upside down:** so no liquid can go in. Similarly, “there is no great need to hear the Dharma if you sit in a place where it is being explained but do not listen well.”
- B. **Vessel is held facing upwards but is unclean:** so the liquid becomes polluted. Similarly, it is unwise to listen with negative motivation or bias, such as listening in order to find faults with the teachings, criticise the teachings, or merely trying to find points for debate, also in a Mahayana context listening with the wish only for one's own liberation. One should always try to listen with as high a motivation as possible, ideally bodhicitta.
- C. **Vessel is clean but with the bottom leaking:** so liquid poured in will not stay but leak out. Even if one can avoid listening with faults 1 and 2, if one is not mindful / is forgetful, what one has heard will get lost.  
Therefore: “Listen well – intently – and keep it in mind!”

2. **Relying on the six discriminations:** the supports for proper listening:

A. **Contemplating the discrimination of oneself as a patient:** In *Bodhicaryāvatāra* it says:

Even when stricken with ordinary illness,  
One has to follow the words of a doctor;  
How much more so if a hundred  
Ills like lust afflict you perpetually!

This is most important discrimination, as if we are able to generate this one properly then the others will naturally follow. We are sick/afflicted by the delusions. In daily life we should check our mind: attachment – when we see a pleasant object we uncontrollably develop the wish to possess it, then if we do get it we are never satisfied; aversion – at the mere sight of an unpleasant object we uncontrollably wish to be separated from it, get angry or develop ill-will towards it, think of ways to harm it etc.; similarly with pride and other delusions. All of these afflict our mind and cause unwanted suffering, so it is very important to generate the realisation that we are afflicted in this way.

- B. **Contemplating the discrimination of the one expounding the Dharma as a doctor:** Once we understand (A) we will be very motivated to find a doctor and rejoice when we have found one, we will also aptly listen to what he has to say, have great respect for him and be very happy with whatever medicine he gives us.
- C. **Generating the discrimination of the instructions as medicine:** “Just as a patient greatly appreciates the medicine put together by the doctor, you should regard the instructions and precepts taught by someone expounding the Dharma as the most important thing, and then make an effort to hold them in respect rather than wasting them through forgetfulness and the like.”
- D. **Generating the discrimination of persistent practice as the cure:** This has three points:
  - 1. **The contempt of striving for words without practicing them:** merely

receiving the medicine from the doctor or just reading the label without actually taking the medicine will not cure the sickness, neither will taking only part of the prescribed dosage.

2. **The importance of the discrimination of oneself as someone ill:** amounts to reminding oneself discrimination (A), thus averting the notion that one has been cured after taking the medicine just once if at all. Thus, still wishing to be free from the illness, one persists in taking the medicine.
3. **The instruction to act accordingly, having identified the meaning of “persistence”:** If the patient does not take the medicine, or does not persist in taking all the medicine prescribed, then it cannot be said to be the fault of the doctor or the medicine if the sickness is not cured. So having ascertained the meaning of persistence: “Now, to put them into practice you need to know them and for that you need to hear them. Again, after hearing and knowing them, you need to practice them and therefore it is crucial for you to engage in the meaning of what you have heard to the best of your abilities.”

“In *Exhortation to the Extraordinary Attitude (Adhyāśayasamcodanasūtra)* it says:

Like someone amid the crowd observing a play,  
Discussing the virtues of another hero,  
But failing with regard to his own persistence;  
Note that these are the faults of delighting in words.

And:

In the bark of sugar cane there is no essence,  
The delightful flavour is inside.  
Someone eating the bark is unable to find  
The delicious flavour of molasses.

Similarly, words are like the bark;  
Like the taste, the meaning is inside.  
Consequently abandon delighting in words;  
Always be conscientious, reflect on their meaning!”

- E. **Contemplating the discrimination of the tathāgatas as exalted beings:**

Thus we can develop appreciation for Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, who was the doctor of all sentient beings, teaching only methods that benefited. Reflecting on his qualities, the rarity and preciousness of our present opportunity to listen to his teachings we should develop great respect.

- F. **Generating the wish for the Dharma tradition to last long:** Think: “How nice it would be if, based on listening to such a Dharma, the Victor's teachings were to remain in the world for a long time.” Specifically the wish for the Mahayana teachings to abide for a long time, since they are a great treasure for all sentient beings. So should reflect again and again their qualities for benefiting all sentient beings and how sad it would be if they were to decline/disappear.

Geshe Sonam said on this point: All dharma started with the words spoken by Buddha Shakyamuni. The fact that we are now able to hear the dharma is due to the many great beings who heard the dharma and then transmitted it to others in an unbroken lineage until today – this is the way the dharma is preserved. By the very act of listening and practicing, we become a part of this tradition/lineage and help to preserve and spread it so that does not decline or vanish. In this way future generations will also be able to benefit

from hearing the dharma, just as others in the past have ensured we are able to.

- B. **The way in which, having related this to your mind, it is necessary to listen:** “Apart from that, if you keep your own mind to one side while explaining or listening to the Dharma, the Dharma remaining separate from it, then this will result in whatever is being explained missing the point. Therefore it is necessary to listen in order for your own continuum to reach certainty. To illustrate this: when you want to examine whether or not there is dirt or some other impurity on your face, you look at yourself in a mirror and, understanding that there is, remove it. Likewise, when you hear the Dharma, your faulty behaviour appears in the mirror of the Dharma, whereupon you feel anguish thinking: “This is what my mind has come to.” Then, as you engage in eliminating faults and attaining qualities, you necessarily train in accordance with the Dharma.”

Dharma has to be applied to one's own mind by looking into the mirror of the dharma. Then the mind and the dharma must be joined/mixed together. If dharma is listened to / taken as something totally separate from our own mind then no benefit will be derived. Many people listen to a lot of dharma teachings without applying it to their own minds, without mixing it in, and so become hardened to the dharma. Example: in Tibet, butter used to rub into leather in order to make it soft would be kept in a satchel also made of leather – while application of butter to leather would soften it, the satchel itself would become rock hard.

- C. **How to keep in mind the purpose of attainments:** In short, thinking “I shall attain buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. To attain that, I need to train in its causes. Since, apparently, it is necessary to listen to the Dharma for that, I shall listen to the Dharma,” you should generate the mind of enlightenment, consider the benefits of listening, and listen with joy, abandoning the faults of a vessel.

- B. **How to explain:** This has four points:

1. **Considering the benefits of explaining the Dharma:** “In *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* it says:

Giving Dharma, free of mental afflictions,  
Teach according to sūtra and other true texts.”

It is very important to have the motivation of benefiting others when teaching, and to be free of the wish for gain or fame or wanting offerings (worldly dharmas), as this comes down to selling the dharma or doing dharma business. Putting a price on dharma should be avoided, as the dharma should be seen as far more valuable than any amount of material possessions or money, thus by engaging in dharma business you are effectively devaluing the dharma in your own mind as well as others' minds.

2. **Generating respect for the teacher and the teachings:** “When uttering the *Prajnaparamita* the Teacher himself arranged the seat and so on.” In order to venerate the dharma there are all the conduct / rituals we perform around dharma teachings, such as the high thrones, prostrations, prayers etc. Even the Buddha himself when teaching the dharma would sit on a high throne, not to venerate himself, but with respect for the dharma. “Accordingly, since the Dharma is a field of veneration even for buddhas, one should bring to mind the positive qualities and kindness of the Dharma and its Teacher, and generate respect.”

3. **The attitude and activities to explain with:**

- A. **Attitude:** “The *Sūtra Requested by Sāgaramati (Sāgaramatiparipṛcchā)* puts forward five discriminations:

1. generating the discrimination of oneself as a doctor,
2. of the Dharma as medicine,
3. of the one listening to the Dharma as a patient,
4. of the Tathāgata as a holy being, and



5. of the mode of the Dharma as abiding for a long time—  
as well as the development of loving kindness toward the people around.

The envy born from anxiety that others are superior, the laziness of putting things off, the discouragement of fatigue due to explaining things over and over again, praising oneself and chit-chatting about other people's faults, the reluctance to lend out texts, as well as concern for material things such as food and clothing should be abandoned, thinking: “Those very merits from teaching for the sake of my own and others' enlightenment are the provisions of my happiness.””

“anxiety that others are superior” - fear/jealousy that by teaching others dharma they will become superior to oneself in knowledge/attainments.

“reluctance to lend out texts” - should be understood more in terms of reluctance to share the meaning/explanation of texts/dharma one has learnt.

- B. **Activities:** “Having washed and dressed in immaculately clean clothes, in a clean and pleasant place you should sit on a cushion on a Dharma throne. If you then chant a mantra for subjugating demons, the demons and gods of the demonic category will not come closer to you than a perimeter of 100 yojanas and even if they do come, they will not be able to create any obstacles, as it says in the *Sūtra Requested by Sāgaramati*. Therefore you should chant that mantra and, with an extremely radiant facial complexion, give your explanations conjoined with the conditions for ascertaining their meaning—examples, proofs, and quotations.”

“mantra for subjugating demons” - in order to keep harmful spirits away and to create an environment conducive for the teachings, usually reciting Heart Sutra and Dispelling Obstacles at the start.

“extremely radiant facial expression” - means to smile! Just as the Buddha did whenever he taught, we should also have a smile on our face whenever we teach, we should avoid looking bored, tired or frustrated etc.

“examples, proofs and quotations” - means using different examples, stories in order to illustrate points better. Sometimes there is the need for laughter, sometimes the need for tears.

4. **The distinction between whom the explanations should and should not be given to:**

“In Guṇaprabha's *Sūtra on the Discipline (Vinayasūtra)* it says: “Do not act without being asked to.” Accordingly, you should not teach without having been asked, and even when someone asks, you should examine the vessel. However, knowing someone to be a suitable vessel, it is acceptable to teach even without having been asked, as it says in the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra*. Further modes of conduct are set forth in the *Sūtra on the Discipline*.”

“further modes of conduct” - include teaching someone who is sat higher than oneself, who is riding a horse while you are walking, wearing a hat or covering their head in some way (unless sick), carrying a weapon etc.

- C. **How to proceed at the end:** “The roots of virtue of teaching and listening in this way should be sealed by means of pure aspirational prayers such as the *Prayer of Good Conduct (Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna)*.” Dedication gives the merits accumulated a direction and protect them from being destroyed by anger etc. “Prayer of Good Conduct” is another name for the King of Prayers.

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.

## Relying on a spiritual teacher

“As all goodness, starting from the development of a single positive quality and the decrease of a single fault in the mind of the disciple, has its root in the sublime friend, right from the beginning the way to rely on him is important.”

### Characteristics of a guru:

1. **Highest Characteristics:** This has two points:

A. **Positive qualities that the guru himself needs:** “In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* (*Mahāyānasūtrālaṅkāra*) it says that students need to rely on a spiritual teacher endowed with ten properties:

A spiritual teacher with discipline, calm, complete peace,  
More qualities, with effort, rich in scriptures  
Who has thoroughly realized suchness, is eloquent,  
Loving, and never disheartened—on that one rely!

1. “**discipline**” - training in ethics. “A spiritual master disciplining others has to be someone who has first disciplined his own mind.”
2. “**calm**” - meditative stabilisation (training in concentration)
3. “**complete peace**” - wisdom, in this case referring to selflessness of person from Cittamatra perspective.
4. “**rich in scriptures**” - including the three pitakas, the five major texts, being an expert in sutra and tantra, and having experiential knowledge. A Mahayana guru should be able to teach on whatever topic he is asked to teach – thus the tradition of completing the geshe degree then proceeding to tantric college, but takes very long time.
5. “**having realised suchness**” - wisdom, in this case selflessness of phenomena, ideally a direct realisation, else a conceptual realisation, otherwise must be someone with great knowledge on the topic and who is about to attain the conceptual realisation.
6. “**more qualities**” - the teacher should have more good qualities than the disciple, since if one relies on someone with less qualities their own qualities will decline, while if they rely on someone with the same amount of good qualities they will not progress.

B. **Positive qualities necessary for others' welfare:** “The remaining ones are qualities for taking care of others. As they say:

The Sages do not wash away evil with water,  
They do not remove the suffering of beings by hand,  
They do not graft their realizations onto others;  
They liberate, teaching the truth of reality's nature.”

“evil” - refers to delusions.

“suffering of beings by hand” - since they are the result of karma

7. “**eloquent**” - skilled at teaching, and able to teach according to the students' scope and ability.
8. “**loving**” - teachings with pure motivation: the wish for the disciple to attain enlightenment.
9. “**with effort**” - one who has joy and perseverance in what is virtuous, specifically teaching.
10. “**never disheartened**” - sometimes the teacher will be asked to give the same teaching over and over again, sometimes the students will react badly to the teachings – being rude or lazy and won't practice, sometimes there may be a lot of hard work involved in studying and teaching the requested texts. A good teacher should never become disheartened by any of these: they should never tire of teaching the same teachings, never shy away from hard work for the benefit of their students,

and always remember that their students may not listen, make effort to practice, or show any progress, they may be difficult or rude – all due to being under the sway of delusions. So a good teacher must have love and patience towards all of this.

Love is generally considered the most important quality since it generates the others.

2. **Middling Characteristics:** As Potowa said: “The three trainings, realization of suchness, and a loving heart—these five are the main thing.” Therefore:
  1. “**discipline**” - training in ethics. “A spiritual master disciplining others has to be someone who has first disciplined his own mind.”
  2. “**calm**” - meditative stabilisation (training in concentration)
  3. “**complete peace**” - wisdom, in this case referring to selflessness of person from Cittamatra perspective.
  4. “**having realised suchness**” - wisdom, in this case selflessness of phenomena, ideally a direct realisation, else a conceptual realisation, otherwise must be someone with great knowledge on the topic and who is about to attain the conceptual realisation.
  5. “**loving**” - teachings with pure motivation: the wish for the disciple to attain enlightenment.
3. **Minimum Characteristics:** “It is said that you should not rely on anyone whose faults are greater or whose faults and positive qualities are equal but on someone whose positive qualities exceed his faults.” Also [*from the meditation outlines and I've heard of these before, but I'm unsure of the source*], there are the Three Minimum Characteristics: 1) More good qualities than faults; 2) More concern for others than for himself/herself; 3) More concern for future lives than this life

**Characteristics of a disciple:** “*Four Hundred Stanzas (Catuḥśataka)* says:

Impartial, intelligent, full of endeavour—

Thus is explained a vessel for teachings.

Otherwise qualities of the teacher,

Have no effect—there’s no change in the listener.”

1. “**impartial**” - unbiased attitude towards one's own and others' views. Basically needs to be open minded and honest, being like a white cloth ready to be dyed any colour or a blank canvas. Need an open mind: not discarding in advance any hypothetical conclusion thus blocking oneself from arriving at truths, and also being ready to face the resistance generated in one's mind to the difficult truths one may find via valid cognitions, not rejecting them simply because they are difficult.
2. “**intelligent**” - capacity to engage in analysis, discriminative intelligence.
3. “**full of endeavour**” - having enthusiasm and a strong wish to engage in the practices.  
Extra two derived from commentaries:
4. **Respect for the dharma and the person teaching it.**
5. **An attentive mind.**

“If all three are complete, the positive qualities of the one expounding the Dharma appear as positive qualities and do not appear as faults. Not only that, the positive qualities of the listeners also appear as positive qualities to that person and do not appear as faults. If the characteristics of a vessel are not complete, the listener, under the power of his faults, will classify even a great, perfectly pure spiritual teacher who expounds the Dharma among those who have faults and perceive an exponent's faults as qualities.”

**“Specifics of achieving the conducive conditions and eliminating the adverse conditions to having the four characteristics:** That being so there are four: great endeavour with regard to the Dharma, a completely attentive mind while listening, great respect for the Dharma and the expounder of Dharma, and holding to good explanations having rejected faulty ones. Intelligence is a conducive circumstance for those four, and impartiality is what eliminates adverse circumstances.”

## The actual manner of relying on someone who has the characteristics:

**Relying in thought:** This has two points: Faith and Respect, which are the root of all positive qualities and allow one to receive the blessings of the guru.

- A. **The root, training in faith:** Faith amounts to reflecting on the guru's qualities and training to see only his qualities and ideally as a Buddha, and training in not focusing / dwelling on his faults. In the *Sūtra of the Ten Dharmas (Daśadharmakasūtra)* it also says:

That which leads to definite emergence,  
Faith, is the foremost of vehicles.  
For that reason the intelligent  
Rely on the pursuit of faith.

In those who are lacking faith,  
Wholesome qualities do not arise;  
Likewise, in seeds that were burnt by fire,  
No green sprout can germinate.

In terms of the forward and reverse pervasions, faith is said to be the foundation of all positive qualities. By reflecting on the advantages of the first attitude (focusing on the guru's qualities) and the disadvantages of the second attitude (focusing on his faults), one can strengthen the mind that see the guru as a Buddha and restrains from conceiving him as having faults.

- B. **Remembering his kindness so as to generate respect:** Correct devotion to a spiritual master is like the roots of a tree: without it the trunk, branches, leaves, fruit etc. would not grow. In same way all the realisations on the path starting from PHR right up to complete enlightenment all arise in dependence on devotion to the guru and would not arise without it. *Array of Stalks Sutra* quote on page 26-27, great practice / praise for the guru.

The main practice to develop guru devotion is to reflect on their kindness. While all the Buddhas are equal in qualities, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha is far superior in kindness as he was a founding/teaching Buddha. Now consider that due to our karma we were not born at the time when Guru Shakyamuni Buddha was living or had the chance to meet him and receive teachings directly from him, similarly for his disciples, and all the great practitioners and lineage holders in India and Tibet. But in this life, finally, we have met with the Mahayana teachings through a perfectly qualified Mahayana guru, and as such were able to receive teachings, take refuge etc. etc. Thus, from the point of view of realisations we don't know whether the guru is equal to the Buddhas, but definitely in terms of kindness he far surpasses all the Buddhas, as he introduces us to the dharma, to our own Buddha-nature, and instructs us on the path.

**Relying in action:** Three means of pleasing the guru:

1. **Offering him material things:** from lam-rim chenmo: one should understand that the guru from his side does not need material offerings, but as a disciple needs to accumulate vast amounts of merit the guru is there for the disciple to make material offerings as this is the best way to accumulate merit.
2. **Serving him and paying respect with body and speech:** Taking care of the guru when he is sick. Offering service to the guru, stories of Atisha's cook and Sakya Pandita's attendant/servant.
3. **Practicing in accordance with his advice:** offering him our practice. This is said to be the best way of pleasing our guru. Milarepa had nothing to offer Marpa apart from his practice, but on this basis achieved the state of union / enlightenment in a single lifetime.

**Benefits of relying:** This has two points:

- A. **Benefits such as approaching the state of a buddha:** “It says in the scriptures that you will approach the state of a buddha, that the Victors will rejoice, that you will not be deprived of virtuous spiritual friends, that you will not fall to the lower realms, and that you will not easily succumb to bad karma and afflictions. Since you will not transgress the conduct of bodhisattvas and will remain mindful of it, your accumulation of positive qualities will grow higher and higher and all your temporary and ultimate goals will be accomplished.”
- B. **Bad karma is exhausted and the benefit exceeds even that of making offerings to numerous buddhas:** “Furthermore, through serving and paying respect to the spiritual teacher, the karma for experiencing the lower realms is exhausted directly in this lifetime through only slight harm to body and mind or else through experiences in dreams. It is said that there are enormous benefits that outshine the roots of virtue of making offerings and the like to innumerable buddhas.”

## **The Six Preparatory Practices**

Everything we do, even cooking or making good tea, requires careful preparation in order to achieve the best result.

1. **Cleaning your dwelling and arranging representations of the exalted body, speech and mind:** If one is able one should have these representations of the Buddhas holy body speech and mind as merely seeing them inspire one to practice and achieve those for oneself. Also from tantric point of view it's useful to have the image of the deity one is practicing to improve visualisation.  
Cleaning the place is mentioned as a preliminary in many practices. One should make the place clean, beautiful and enjoyable as then all the deities will be happy to come give support. It's like when entertaining a guest one wishes to have a clean house etc., but here one wishes to invite all the Buddhas. Story of Arya Small-Path (see Pabongka, page 106 – 112 in blue-cover edition) – stresses the point of sweeping and cleaning!
2. **Laying out offerings:** “Beautifully lay out an arrangement of offerings that were honestly acquired.” “honestly” means not acquired by means of the wrong livelihoods, stealing etc., arranged in a beautiful and inspiring way. If you can only make one offering then think of it as nectar fit for Buddhas and visualise offering it to all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Better to make offerings oneself, but can also be done by proxy as the motivation is still there.
3. **Sitting posture and mental attitude:** “On a comfortable seat straighten up your body. Assume a suitable position in cross-legged or half cross-legged posture, making sure that your mind is suffused with taking refuge and bodhichitta.” Vairochana Posture. Straightening the back will make a great difference in clarity of the mind. Refuge: through fear of the lower realms and understanding all the various sufferings of samsara we turn to the Three Jewels understanding that only they have the power to protect us. Also think as I am suffering in samsara so are all mother sentient beings, so they too should come under the protection of the Three Jewels.
4. **Visualisation of the merit field:** “In the space in front of you imagine that there abide the lineage gurus of vast conduct and profound view and countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, ārya hearers, and solitary realizers along with their attendants. Thus you should visualize the merit field.” Then can make requests, such as requesting the three purposes as in Lama Chopa. Requests to root and lineage gurus will have a profound effect on our mind.
5. **Accumulation of merit and purification of negativities:** This has three parts:
  - A. **The reason why it is necessary to accumulate merit and purify negativities:** “It is exceedingly difficult for paths to arise in your continuum if the favourable conditions for their arising, the collections, have not been accumulated, and their adverse conditions, the obscurations, have not been purified. Therefore you need to purify the mind by

means of the seven-limb practice, which brings together the key points of accumulation and purification.”

B. **Explanation of accumulation and purification in detail:** The Seven-Limb Practice:

1. **Prostration:**

A. **Prostration combining the three doors:** is set out in the *Prayer of Good Conduct* in the single stanza:

To you lions amongst humans,  
Who come in the three times  
To the worlds of ten directions,  
I prostrate with my body, speech, and mind.

B. **Prostration of the three individual doors:**

1. **Physical prostration:** is set out in the single stanza:

With the powerful prayer of good conduct,  
Directly perceiving all the Victors with my mind,  
Bowing deeply with as many bodies as the atoms of the worlds,  
To all you Victors, I completely prostrate.

You focus on all the Victors belonging to the directions and times as the objects of your mind, as though you directly perceive them. Emanating your own body in manifestations as numerous as the tiny atoms, you should prostrate yourself. Furthermore, having generated the power of faith in the good conduct of the objects, you should be motivated by that.

2. **Mental prostration:** is set forth in the single stanza:

On top of each atom are buddhas equalling all the atoms,  
Residing amidst the buddhas' children.  
I visualize the entire sphere of phenomena  
As being completely filled with Victors in this way.

On top of each minute atom, buddhas as innumerable as the tiny atoms reside encircled by bodhisattvas. You should generate the appreciation that recollects their positive qualities.

3. **Verbal prostration:** is set forth in the single stanza:

With oceans of inexhaustible eulogies for you,  
A great roar from oceans of melody-emitting organs,  
I express the marvellous qualities of all the Victors,  
And praise all of you gone to bliss.

From each of the bodies innumerable heads emanate, and from each of the heads again innumerable tongues that sing inexhaustible eulogies of the objects' positive qualities to sweet melodies. Here “melody” is praise and their “organs,” that is, their causes, are the tongues. The word “oceans” refers to a lot.

2. **Offering:** Includes surpassable offerings such as the seven types, and unsurpassable offerings is “everything good emanated by powerful beings such as bodhisattvas”. In addition to actual offerings, can bring to mind all the pleasant objects in the world since it is filled with such things they don't necessarily have to be sitting on your altar. Also offering all that we eat and drink even just mentally, instead of just shovelling it down like an animal. From HYT perspective one should constantly be visualising oneself as the deity, therefore all that one eats, drinks or enjoys should be seen as an offering to the deity. By visualising oneself as a peaceful deity throughout the day, such as Manjushri, we can destroy ordinary appearances and thus accumulate great amounts of merit.

3. **Confession:** The confession of negativities is set forth in the single stanza:

Whatever negativity I have done  
With my body, my speech, and likewise my mind

Overwhelmed by attachment, anger, and ignorance,  
All these I confess one by one before you.

Nagarjuna's 70stanzas/letter [*I didn't catch which one it was*] says: "there is no negative karma which cannot be purified – this is the only positive quality of all negative karmas." Most important power is regret, thinking it was not ok to have engaged in that action. Then consider the object the negative karma was generated towards: either the Three Jewels or sentient beings, and as such develop the support in relation to each: refuge and bodhicitta, respectively. Then practice the virtuous actions, and then practice restraint wishing not to engage in such actions again. Negative karma is like a locked door blocking the development of positive qualities like bodhicitta, so purification is like opening this door.

4. **Rejoicing:** generating joy and eliminating jealousy towards others' virtue. Can start with joy for one's own virtuous activities. Since Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are constantly engaged in accumulating vast amounts of merit, simply by bringing them to mind and rejoicing in their virtuous activities we can also accumulate vast amounts of merit effortlessly. Story of the beggar who rejoiced over the meal offered by a king to the Buddha and his sangha, thus accumulating greater merit than the king.
5. **Requesting:** one should always request one's guru to teach the dharma, whether he teaches or not does not matter. This purifies negative karma accumulated by abandoning the dharma. Also if he does teach then this will be of great benefit for many sentient beings. One should also think of all the limitless buddhas and those that are just attaining buddhahood and request them to emanate many bodies for the benefit of all sentient beings.
6. **Supplication:** from Hinayana perspective, Prince Siddhartha, according to Buddha's life story, saw the sufferings of samsara and thus developed renunciation – as such he attained only nirvana, so when he died he passed into parinirvana. However, from Mahayana perspective the Buddha was already enlightened and was merely manifesting the 12 deeds etc. for the benefit of teaching sentient beings, including merely manifesting passing into parinirvana (in order to develop appreciation for the dharma, teach impermanence etc.). Five certainties of enjoyment body: marks and signs, time, dharma, entourage and abode; and from this body emanation bodies manifest spontaneously according to the needs of disciples until they are able to meet with the supreme emanation body, in this case Siddhartha. All of these emanation bodies do not have a definite lifetime, since they are merely manifested according to and for however long it is beneficial for disciples – as such they could remain endlessly, therefore we should constantly request for the Buddhas and gurus to remain. Since Buddhas manifest as paths and boats etc., it is definite they manifest as teachers of dharma, so it is very important to generate pure view. Also with respect to different spiritual traditions, since Buddhas work for all sentient beings and so could also manifest as the teachers of these traditions as part of their enlightened activities.
7. **Dedication:** The limb of dedication is set forth in the single stanza:  
Whatever slight virtue I have accumulated  
By prostrating, offering, and confessing,  
Rejoicing, exhorting, and supplicating,  
I dedicate all of it to the great enlightenment.

"All the roots of virtue represented by the previous six limbs are made common property of all sentient beings and never come to an end, by dedicating them with strong determination to complete enlightenment." Dedicate the merit to become the cause for buddhahood, as such the merit does not get lost due to anger and the like, until we reach our goal of full enlightenment. Like a drop of water in the ocean,

which will never be lost until the entire ocean dries up.

- C. **Categorisation of the individual elements:** “Accordingly five limbs, prostrating, offering, requesting, supplicating, and rejoicing, constitute the accumulation of the collection of merit. Confessing purifies obscurations. One aspect of rejoicing, the cultivation of joy in one's own virtue, multiplies the virtue. By means of dedicating, the virtues of accumulating, purifying, and multiplying, however small, are multiplied manifold, and what would come to an end after producing a temporary effect is made inexhaustible. In brief, there are the three: accumulation, purification, as well as multiplication and making inexhaustible.”
6. **Mandala offering and request for blessings:** Then, with a clear visualization of the objects, offer a mandala, and with strong aspiration supplicate many times: “I pray that all mistaken attitudes toward the spiritual teacher such as disrespect may cease and that all the non-mistaken attitudes toward him may come about with ease, and I request blessings for a complete pacification of all outer and inner obstacles.” - This prayer constitutes requesting the three great purposes.

### **The actual meditation session:**

Many types of meditation:

Taking on the aspect of the consciousness – i.e. meditating on love, compassion etc.

Taking on the aspect of the meaning – i.e. meditating on impermanence, emptiness etc. - since mind does not become impermanence (it already is impermanent) but insight is gained into the reality / meaning of impermanence.

Using imagination – i.e. visualising taking the skin off someone in order to counteract attachment, or visualising whole space filled with skeletons. Tong-len. Basically meditating on objects which are not real, but for useful ends.

1. **How to sustain meditation in general:** This has three points:
  - A. **Identification of and need for meditation:** Meditation on the path as it will be explained here serves to make you fit to utilize any virtuous object you wish.
  - B. **The faults of bad meditation:** “Moreover, if you attend to this and that observed object with the thought to take merely this number of virtuous observed objects in any order you wish, nothing will come of it, and having gone wrong from the beginning, your spiritual practice will continue to be faulty throughout your life.” Main point is to be clear on the object of meditation.
  - C. **How to sustain good meditation:** Therefore you should first of all ascertain the number and order of the observed objects to be sustained. Then you should unleash a strong driving force that does not allow thoughts to arise other than in accordance with what has been ascertained, and you should sustain with mindfulness and introspection what has been ascertained without addition or omission.
2. **What to do at the end of the meditation session:** This has two points:
  - A. **What should actually be done at the end:** Dedication of merits, by reciting King of Prayers for example.
  - B. **Time and duration of meditation:** This has three points:
    1. **Indication of the time of meditation:** Thus you should meditate in four sessions—at dawn, in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening.
    2. **How to meditate in the beginning:** Moreover, if your sessions are long in the beginning, it is easy to fall under the power of laxity and excitement. Since it is difficult to correct this state of mind once you have got used to it, you should do many short sessions. If you cut the session short when there is still a desire to meditate, you will also really want to enter meditation the next time. They say that otherwise you will be overcome by nausea at the sight of your meditation seat.
    3. **How to sustain the meditation once it has stabilized a bit and advice on how to avoid exhaustion:** When it has stabilized a bit, you should prolong the sessions,



sustaining them all free from the faults of being either excessively tense or excessively relaxed. Thereby small obstacles, over-exhaustion, and drowsiness will be pacified.

3. **What to do during the periods between sessions:** This has two parts:

A. **General practices enhancing the object of meditation:** Generally speaking there are numerous practices enhancing the object such as prostrations, circumambulation, and recitation. However, the main point is that if you make an effort at the essence of the session, and then during the intervals in which you leave the session you let go carelessly without relying on mindfulness and introspection regarding the observed object and aspect which are the causes of sustaining the meditation, the outcome will be very little. Therefore, in between sessions, you should also be concerned with the Dharma texts teaching that object and recall it again and again. By various means you should accumulate the collection of conditions favourable to the arising of positive qualities, and by various means purify the adverse conditions, the obscurations. Your determination with respect to the ethics you have accepted, the basis of everything, should be reaffirmed a lot.

B. **The causes of calm-abiding and special insight:** Apart from that, train in the collection of the four causes for an easy arising of the paths of calm abiding and special insight. In this regard, the four causes are:

1. **Controlling the sense-doors:** “In this regard, when the six consciousnesses arise in dependence upon their objects and sense powers, attachment and aversion end up arising toward the six pleasant and the six unpleasant objects of mental consciousness. Controlling the sense doors guards against their arising.” This is especially important as a beginner. From lam-rim chenmo: if contact does occur it should not become an object of pleasure or pain for the mental consciousness by either engaging or blocking engagement with the object.

2. **Introspective behaviour:** “In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

To examine again and again,  
The situation of mind and body,  
That is the sign, exactly that,  
Of protective introspection.

Following this, whenever the body and so forth engage in such and such an action, you come to understand whether or not it should be done and behave accordingly.” Applies to all six consciousnesses, one should always be checking the behaviour of body, speech and mind and correct it as needed.

3. **Knowing the right measure of food:** “means to give up eating too much or too little and to eat only the amount that does not do damage to one's virtuous activities.” Eating too much will cause laxity, while eating too little causes distraction. One should eat food with a mind free from delusion and avoid harmful foods. One should generate a good motivation for eating: Think about all the sentient beings depending on whose kindness you are now able to enjoy this food. Think that you are engaging in charity of food towards all the micro-organisms in your body, and aspire that in the future you will also help these beings by giving them dharma. Think that by nourishing one's body and thus staying healthy and strong one will be able to prolong this PHR and better be able to take its essence by working on your mind in order to attain enlightenment in order to benefit all sentient beings (bodhicitta).

4. **Exerting yourself in yoga without sleeping, and what to do when lying down to sleep:** this has five points:

1. **The time to lie down:** Sleep only between the last session (evening) and the first session (dawn).

2. **The behaviour of sleep:** “The behaviour of sleep occurs between sessions and

therefore it too should not be wasted meaninglessly. In this regard, during the middle part of the three parts of the night, the conduct of the body consists in lying down on your right side, placing your left leg on top of the right one, and sleeping like a lion.” Lion's posture.

3. **Mindfulness:** “Until you fall asleep you should rely on mindfulness to pursue the predominant virtuous action that you have cultivated during the day. Thereby you will be able to sustain your spiritual practice, such as meditative stabilization, even while asleep, similar to when you are not asleep.” As part of tantric practice, can practice sleep yoga. With elaborations: visualising oneself as the deity, light is emitted in all directions encompassing conventional reality, which then retracts into oneself taking with it all appearances (emanations), leaving one abiding in the dharmakaya (sleep); when you wake up the light emits back out again manifesting one's abode and emanation bodies. Without elaborations: visualising oneself as the deity in one's abode as one falls asleep.
4. **Introspection:** “If any mental affliction arises while you cultivate mindfulness, you should become aware of it and eagerly abandon it rather than accepting it.” Sleep is one of the changeable mental factors and so can be virtuous or non-virtuous, depending on the motivation. As part of tantra we can use sleep to access the very subtle mind of sleep and as such abide in clear light mind – but very advanced practice. For now, can make requests to one's guru before going to sleep, which will make one's sleep virtuous and bring virtuous dreams / prophecies in one's sleep. So important to use introspection before going to sleep in order to abandon negative minds and thus avoid making one's sleep non-virtuous.
5. **The discrimination of getting up:** The discrimination of getting up consists in projecting the thought: “I will get up at this and that time.”

### **The reason why meditation needs to be sustained by means of two modes of sustaining:**

**The reason why both analysis and stabilization are necessary for meditation:** One should engage in listening, contemplation and meditation – and this has to be done on the basis of both analytical and stabilisation meditations. First one gains understanding of the dharma through listening, then one must contemplate by means of analysis – using different logical arguments, checking the object from different viewpoints again and again – until one reaches perfect certainty of the meaning. Then one meditates on this certainty by means of stabilisation meditation, in order to stabilise the certainty in one's mind and create transformations in the mind with regard to the particular object of meditation, then by repeating these steps of meditation again and again one will gain stable realisations. For example, analysis should be used to investigate the mode of existence of the self, and through analysis one reaches the certainty that the apprehended object of the mind conceiving the self doesn't exist at all, but since we have been following the opposite “certainty” since beginningless time we need to stabilise this new certainty in the mind, which through repeated practice will lead to a realisation of selflessness.

**Refutation of the misconception that although there are both analytical and stabilization meditations, one single person does not practice them:** “Although some who do not know this approach claim that if you are a scholar, you should only do analytical meditation while sādhus should only do stabilizing meditation, this is not so because it is necessary to do both one by one, given that the learned also need to achieve calm abiding and sādhus also need to achieve strong faith in the spiritual teacher and the like. Therefore the understanding that repeated analysis with the wisdom of individual investigation belongs to the context of hearing and reflecting, rather than the context of practice, is inadmissible.”

**Refutation of the misconception that asserts that all conceptions apprehend signs:** “The understanding that all conceptions apprehend signs and therefore create obstacles to enlightenment has the fault of not discriminating between improper mental attention, the conception of true existence, and proper mental attention, the conception of reality.”

This view, that all concepts should be avoided – non-virtuous and virtuous – as they are obstacles to enlightenment, was held by a school coming from China. This was prophesied by Shantarakshita, who told the Tibetans that when this happens they should invite Kamalashila to Tibet in order to dispel these wrong views. This was done, and as a result Kamalashila composed Stage of Meditation. Argument: If one should dispel all conceptual thought in order to attain enlightenment, one should also dispel the wisdom realising emptiness. Thus one would dispel that which destroys ignorance – which is the very thing blocking us from attaining enlightenment – and so could not attain enlightenment. Also, without conceptual thought one cannot generate conventional minds such as love and compassion, without which enlightenment is impossible.

**Refutation of the misconception that asserts that if a lot of analytical meditation is done prior to the arising of meditative stabilization it becomes an obstacle:** The idea “It is necessary to achieve a non-conceptual meditative stabilization that allows you to place the mind on a single object in whatever way at will, and if you do a lot of analytical meditation beforehand, it will become an obstacle to the arising of that meditative stabilization,” is not upheld in the present instructions. This is how Ārya Asaṅga also put it:

By way of analogy, when a smith or his skillful apprentice burns gold or silver in a fire and washes it with water a couple of times in order to discard all impurities and slag, it becomes supple and workable for this and that ornament. Their method makes it very vivid. In this regard, through their know-how, that of a smith or a skillful apprentice, any manner of ornament desired is then made with their smith's tools. Likewise, when a yogi does not turn toward impurities and slag such as covetousness, he thereby becomes disenchanted, turns away from unhappy afflicted states of mind, and approaches manifest joy on the virtuous side, thereby becoming manifestly joyful. In that case, that yogi definitely trains his mind in either the side of calm abiding or the side of special insight, such that it is thoroughly applied to this and that, rests in its natural state, is immovable and unwavering, and also moves for the sake of perfectly achieving whatever purpose he contemplates.

Furthermore, the main adverse condition to the mind abiding on an object continuously is twofold: laxity and excitement. If you have a strong and constant awareness that sees the positive qualities of the Three Jewels, and so forth, it is quite easy to overcome laxity, for many valid sources say that its antidote is to uplift the mind by looking at positive qualities. If you have a strong and constant awareness that sees the disadvantages of impermanence, suffering, and so forth, it is quite easy to overcome excitement, because, since excitement is a distracted mind belonging to the category of attachment, many texts praise disillusionment as its antidote.

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.

# Precious Human Rebirth

## Identification of leisure and endowments:

**Leisures:** consist in the freedom to engage in dharma practice, and “in freedom from the eight unfree states”:

- A. **The four unfree states of humans** are freedom from (this is quoted from text and the meditation outlines are in brackets):
  1. living in a rough border land where the four types of followers of the Buddha do not roam (Freedom from being born in a remote country **where there are no Dharma teachings**).
  2. being stupid, being dumb, or **having incomplete faculties** - missing a limb, an ear and so forth (Freedom from being born with impaired mental or physical faculties).
  3. **holding wrong views** that regard past and future lives, actions and their effects, and the Three Jewels as non-existent (Freedom from holding wrong views, such as denying the existence of enlightenment, the Three Jewels, karma, past and future lives, and so on).
  4. being without the word of a Victor, with no buddha having appeared in the world (Freedom from being **born at a time when no buddha has appeared in the world**).
- B. **The four unfree states of non-humans** are freedom from:
  1. being born in the hell-realms
  2. being born in the preta realm
  3. being born in the animal realm
  4. being born as a long-life god, either:
    1. discrimination-less: live in one region of the fourth concentration, Great Result, as if in a solitary place far away from a village.
    2. formless: ordinary beings born in the formless realms.  
However, generally refers to the gods of the desire realm who are constantly distracted by activities of desire.

**Endowments:** are conducive conditions for dharma practice, the ten endowments are:

- A. **The five personal endowments:** (meditation outlines in brackets)
  1. being **born human**. (Being born as a human being)
  2. “birth in the center” is to be born in a place where the four types of followers roam. (Being **born in a central region**: a place where the Dharma teachings are established)
  3. “Unimpaired senses” consist in not being stupid or dumb and having complete limbs, minor body parts, and eyes, ears, and so forth. (Being **born with complete faculties**, one is thus able to listen to Dharma teachings, think about them, and meditate on them)
  4. “No perverted deeds” implies **not having committed or caused to commit an action of immediate retribution**. (Having not committed any of the five extremely heavy negative actions: killing one’s father, killing one’s mother, killing a foe-destroyer, drawing blood from a buddha, or creating a schism in the Sangha)
  5. “Faith in the basis” is **faith in the foundation** from which all the mundane and supramundane wholesome qualities arise—discipline. Here discipline should be applied to all three scriptural collections. (Having faith in the foundation: the three baskets: Vinaya, Sutra, and Abhidharma)

As those five are brought together in one's own mental continuum and constitute circumstances for the accomplishment of the Dharma, they are called “personal endowments.”

- B. **The five endowments conditioned by others:**
  1. “A buddha arrived or emerged” means that after accumulating the collections throughout three countless eons, he has manifestly attained complete buddhahood. (Being born in a time when a **buddha has appeared**)
  2. “**Taught the holy Dharma**” means that the Buddha or his hearers have taught the

Dharma. (That buddha has taught)

3. “The Dharma teachings are abiding” means that—from teaching the Dharma in a buddha field up to not passing into nirvāṇa—the Dharma that is accomplished by means of actualizing the ultimate Dharma has not degenerated. (His teachings remain in the world)
4. “The Dharma teachings are abiding and being followed” means that through that very realization of the Dharma, there are those who see that beings have the power to directly perceive the holy Dharma, and who then follow the teachings in accordance with that realization. That realised beings are abiding in the world and are visible to others, and that by seeing those beings people generate faith to become just like them and engage in dharma practice. (There are practitioners who follow his teachings)
5. “Hearts with loving concern for others” means that there are alms-givers and benefactors who grant monastic robes and the like. Also that there are qualified Mahayana guides teachings the dharma. (There are people who have loving kindness for others, and who are thus willing to take care of and support Dharma practitioners)

As these five are present in the mental continua of others and constitute circumstances for the accomplishment of the Dharma, they are endowments conditioned by others.

We cannot literally say that these endowments are present at the moment, since Buddha Shakyamuni has already manifested passing into parinirvana, and therefore is also not teachings etc. but instead we have replacements as:

1. Presence of the spiritual guides
2. Spiritual guides teachings the dharma
3. The whole doctrine, the teachings on sutra and tantra are abiding in the world and so can be followed. As it is still possible for those wishing to become ordained to take vows, and also for lay practitioners to take lay vows.
4. Since the attainment of Foe-Destroyer isn't stressed so much in Mahayana teachings, can't really say there were any Foe-Destroyers in Tibet. Instead there are highly realised beings, bodhisattvas and buddhas.

**Considering the great value of the leasures and endowments:** This has four points:

1. **Considering the inappropriateness of someone with this special base acting like an animal:** If no practice of the completely pure Dharma for the sake of lasting happiness comes about at all, you would be like an animal despite your birth in a higher realm, since animals also endeavour merely to attain their own temporary happiness and eliminate such sufferings until they die.
2. **How a body of leasures and endowments is the best:** “For the accomplishment of the Mahāyāna path, a basis like the one explained earlier is necessary. Also, inhabitants of the continent of Uttarakuru are unsuitable as a basis for vows, which is why the bases of the other three continents are praised; and among them, especially the inhabitants of Jambudvīpa.” Jambudvīpa is considered the most fortunate of the four continents as we have the shortest lifetime, more sickness and karma is more likely to ripen within one lifetime – all of which are highly conducive for developing paths, especially renunciation, and as such is the best basis for taking vows.
3. **How to train in the wish to take the essence, having brought to mind those two objectives:** “Consequently, why would I act in such a way that an excellent base like the one that I have gained does not have a result? If I do not make it meaningful, could there be a greater self-betrayal and a bigger stupidity? Having passed through many perilous places of unfreedom such as the lower realms, again and again, if I were to go back to those places, forsaking this one-off liberation as meaningless, it would be like turning mindless as though stupefied by a magic spell.” By way of thoughts like these you should meditate again and again. In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Having found this kind of leisure,

Not to cultivate what's virtuous,  
No betrayal could be greater,  
Nothing is more deluded than that.

4. **The inappropriateness of returning empty-handed given that not only ultimate but also temporary objectives are easily accomplished:** “Thus you should also consider the method that allows you to easily accomplish, by means of this basis, the causes—giving, ethics, patience, and so on—of an excellent body of high status, excellent resources, and an excellent retinue, which are greatly meaningful not only from an ultimate but also from a temporary point of view. If you do not apply yourself day and night to the causes of the two objectives, by means of this greatly meaningful basis, it would seem like returning empty-handed from an island filled with precious jewels.”

**Considering the difficulty of finding the pleasures and endowments:** This has six points:

1. **Illustration of the difficulty of finding the pleasures and endowments:** “In *Basis of Scriptural Transmission (Āgamavastu)* it says that beings who die and migrate from the lower realms and the happy realms to the lower realms are like the dust of the great earth, and that the beings who are born from there into the happy realms are like the dust taken up with the tip of a fingernail. Therefore precious human rebirths are difficult to find from both the happy and the lower realms.”
2. **Reasons why it is difficult to find the pleasures and endowments:** “If you wonder just why they are so difficult to find, it says in *Four Hundred Stanzas*:

For the most part people fully  
Embrace the side that is unholy.  
Consequently common beings  
Mostly go to the lower realms.

Accordingly, there are many humans and other beings who mostly hold on to the side of the ten non-virtues and that is also why, consequently, they go to the lower realms. Furthermore, if for each moment of anger and the like toward a bodhisattva you have to spend one eon in the hell Without Respite, the negativities accumulated over many lifetimes which have not come to fruition nor been overcome by antidotes, and which are present in your own continuum, will doubtlessly cause you to spend many eons in the lower realms.”

3. **The rarity of those obtaining the causes of the pleasures and endowments:** “If you thus make sure to clear away and purify the causes of the lower realms accumulated earlier and close the door to new engagement in them, the happy realms should not be hard to reach but in fact they are very hard to reach indeed. If you fail to do so, you go to the lower realms, and once you have gone there, you do not create virtue but always commit negativities and therefore do not even hear the name “happy realms” for many eons, as it says in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*.”
4. **The result of sustaining those objectives:** If you recognize that you have these pleasures and endowments, recognize how fortunate you are. Generate great joy, like a beggar who has found a precious jewel, and focus your mind single-pointedly on that joyful feeling.
5. **The method of meditation with four special features:** “Thus four thoughts regarding the Dharma are necessary for the generation of a fully qualified wish to take the essence of this basis of leisure:
  1. The need to accomplish the Dharma—because all sentient beings only want happiness and do not want suffering, and attaining happiness and eliminating suffering only depends on the holy Dharma.” Sentient beings never attain satisfaction, as we engage only in the pursuit of the pleasures of this life, while the actual cause of our suffering is the ignorance grasping at true existence, which we can overcome only by practicing dharma.
  2. “The ability to accomplish the Dharma—because you have the external condition, a

spiritual teacher, and the internal condition, the leisures and endowments.

3. The need, also, to accomplish the Dharma in this life—because if you do not accomplish it within this life, it will be difficult to find the leisures and endowments in many future lives.
4. The need to accomplish the Dharma right now—because the time of death is uncertain. The third counteracts the laziness of setting it aside, thinking “I will practice the Dharma in later lives”, and the fourth counteracts the laziness of not engaging in it thinking “It needs to be accomplished in this life, but although it was not accomplished in earlier years, months, and days, it is enough to accomplish it much later on.” It is admissible to make them into three, subsuming those two under “The need to accomplish it quickly.” Like that, remembering death can also be linked in here.”
6. **Differentiating the ways of sustaining the meditation:** How to contemplate the leisures and endowments from various points of view:  
“As the mind will be more significantly subdued if you contemplate the leisures and endowments from various points of view, you should contemplate them as explained above. If you cannot do that, you should subsume them under the three”:
  1. **what the essence of the leisures and endowments is,**
  2. **the manner in which they are greatly meaningful from a temporary and ultimate point of view, and**
  3. **how difficult they are to find from the point of view of cause and effect.**
  - A. **from the point of view of their cause:** “Generally speaking, even for the attainment of a mere happy realm it is necessary to perform one of the pure virtues such as ethics. In particular, for the attainment of the complete leisures and endowments, you need many roots of virtue”: practicing pure ethics, reinforced by the practice of the six perfections, especially Generosity, and by “making a connection by means of stainless prayers. In that case it becomes apparent that those who accomplish such causes are very few, which is why you should think that, proportionately, the effect—the general and specific basis of the happy realms—is difficult to find.”
  - B. **from the point of view of their effect:** one can consider the number of beings who actually attain a precious human rebirth, by considering the greater number of those born without it. Amongst humans, there far more who don't have the precious human rebirth than those that do. Then comparing with the animal realm, who are far greater in number than human beings. Thus one can conclude that since those who achieve the result of a precious human rebirth are very rare, according it is very difficult to attain.

## **How to take the essence:**

[I seem to have no notes for this entire section, maybe I was daydreaming! Haha. Anyway: this section discusses how taking the essence of this precious human rebirth is to practice dharma, which means striving to attain enlightenment for the benefit of others. This requires generating bodhicitta, and this being the case discusses how the lam-rim is a graduated process of preparing/leading the practitioner to generate this mind and then practice the perfections in order to attain the final goal of enlightenment. So all parts of the path (all three scopes) are equally important to practice.

I recommend reading through the commentary by Geshe Jampa Gyatso.]

[Then the final subcategory of this section form the explanations of the three scopes over the rest of the text:]

**The actual way of taking its essence:** This has three points:

- A. **Training the mind in the stages of the path common to lesser beings**
- B. **Training the mind in the stages of the path common to intermediate beings**
- C. **Training the mind in the stages of the path of great beings**

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.



## Death & Impermanence

**Being mindful of death: contemplating that one will not stay in this world for long.** This has four points:

A. **The disadvantages of not cultivating mindfulness of death:** This has five points:

1. **Demonstration that the mind's bias towards the idea that one is not going to die is the gateway of harm:** "Although in all of us there is the thought that at the end of our days death will come, every day we think "I will not die today," "Also today I will not die." That way, even right until we are about to die, the mind holds on to the idea that we are not going to die."
2. **How this prevents us from even taking an interest in future lives:** "If you do not take to heart an antidote to this, if you are stupefied by such an idea and think that you will remain in this life, you will keep thinking about ways of achieving happiness and eliminating suffering in this life only, thinking: "I need this and I need that..." A mind investigating meaningful goals such as future lives, liberation, and omniscience will not arise, whereby no allowances are made for engaging in Dharma."
3. **How this results in meaningful endeavours also having little power:** "Even if you engage in hearing, thinking, and meditating for a hundred years, whatever virtue you do will have little power because it is done for the sake of this life alone. Since you will engage in them linked with faulty behaviour, negativities, and downfalls, it will be rare for them not to be mixed with causes of the lower realms."
4. **How this results in long-term goals also being postponed:** "Even if you aim at future worlds and allow for their attainment, you will not be able to cease the laziness of postponement that thinks: "I will do it later." A major effort at practicing properly will not come about, as you while away your time with sleepiness, pointless chatter, and distractions of food, drink, and the like."
5. **How holding to permanence induces attachment, aversion, and so forth and how they induce faulty behaviour:** "Not only that, through putting great effort into the excellences of this life, the mental afflictions and faulty behaviour induced by them increase, and then you turn your back on the nectar of Dharma. Since that leads to the lower realms, what could be more inappropriate than that? From *Four Hundred Stanzas*:

When someone sleeps as though at ease,  
As though the ruler of the three worlds,  
The Lord of Death, does not exist,  
What else could be more awful than that?

And in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Everything has to be abandoned,  
But unaware that this is so,  
I did negativities of all sorts,  
For the sake of friends and foes."

B. **The advantages of cultivating mindfulness of death:** This has three parts:

1. **The great value of being mindful of death:** "Once a genuine awareness mindful of death has developed, for instance if you are convinced you will die tomorrow and have just a little understanding of the Dharma, you will see that henceforth you will be without the company of relatives and friends, and you will stop craving for them. In the majority of people the wish to take the essence of this life by means of giving things away and the like will naturally arise. In that way, seeing that all effort for the sake of worldly goals such as fame and gain are futile, you will turn away from faulty behaviour, accumulate the good karma of taking refuge, ethics, and the like. What could be more meaningful than ascending to sublime states oneself by those means and guiding migrating beings there too?"



2. **Mindfulness of death is the door to all excellence:** “In brief, the time for achieving the goals of beings is only this time that we have gained the special basis.” The term 'being' (tib. *skyes-bu*) means endowed with capacity, and as human beings we are endowed with the greatest capacity to practice the dharma.  
 “We mostly remain in the lower realms and even if we make it to the happy realms just once, they are predominantly places of unfreedom, so that we do not find an opportunity to accomplish the Dharma.” Most of the time we lack this capacity, but now we have it we shouldn't waste it.  
 “If we gain a basis suited to accomplishing the Dharma and still do not accomplish it properly, it is due to the thought “I'm not going to die yet.” Therefore, this mind that holds to the position of not dying is the door to all manner of degeneration, whereas mindfulness of death is the door to all excellence.” If there was no great purpose to be achieved, then perhaps there would be no benefit in dwelling on death – but since we have buddha-nature and have found this precious human rebirth, which puts us in the best position to achieve this potential, we must put our time to good use by the urgency generated through mindfulness of death.  
 Also from HYT perspective, by preparing well for death a practitioner can utilise and even look forward to death as a time when one can take advantage of the naturally manifesting clear-light mind and gain realisations.
3. **How it is necessary to give up misunderstandings and meditate from the bottom of one's heart:** “Therefore you should not think: “This is a practice for those who do not have other profound Dharma to meditate on” and “Although it is something to meditate on, it should be meditated on a bit in the beginning but it is not suitable to be practiced continuously.” Rather you should meditate on it until you gain certainty from the bottom of your heart that it is necessary in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end.”
- C. **What kind of mind that is mindful of death that is generated:** “The fear born from worries about separation from relatives and the like is the kind of fear of death of those who are not trained in the path. So here this is not what is to be generated.” There is good fear and bad fear – the fear over being separated from one's relatives, possessions etc. and which paralyses one from doing anything is the bad fear. The fear we should develop motivates us to practice dharma, as it is the only thing that will be of help at the time of death and beyond. If we fear death now we will engage in practices such that there need be no fear at the actual time of death – but lacking fear now we waste this precious human rebirth to mundane activities and laziness then generate great fear at the time of death!
- D. **How to cultivate mindfulness of death: The nine-point death meditation.** “You should meditate on this by way of:
  1. the three root thoughts,
  2. the nine reasons, and
  3. the three decisions.”
 Thus, each root has three reasons and one decision. The three roots:
  1. **Death is certain:**
    1. **The Lord of Death will certainly come and there are no conditions for warding him off:** “In *Collection of Indicative Verses* it says that whatever body you have taken, whatever country you reside in, and whatever the time, you will be defeated by death. It will come to pass that way and cannot be turned back by fleeing swiftly away or by force, wealth, material substances, mantras, or medicine.” We cannot bargain with or bribe death, and even the best doctor can only delay it for a while. Three causes for death: lifespan runs out, merit runs out or meeting contradictory/adverse conditions (i.e. car accident). Everyone who was ever born has died, cannot think of a single exception, regardless of intelligence, wealth, etc.
    2. **Your lifespan cannot be increased and diminishes incessantly:** “attaining a lifespan of a hundred years seems to be the limit of what is possible. However, even

if you reach that, meanwhile, the years until then waste away with the passage of month after month, day after day, and day and night. As they too waste away with the passage of morning and so on, it seems that the entire lifespan has already been wasted a lot in the past, and the remainder also diminishes incessantly without anything being added.” Time only flows one way, so our lifespan is constantly decreasing, never increasing. When money runs out, you can always earn more, but cannot do this with one's lifespan – when that runs out there is nothing you can do. “It is not just at the end of our lives when death overcomes us that we proceed toward another world, for up until then there is not a moment in which our lifespan is not diminishing. Therefore, ever since we entered the womb, we have been going straight toward a future life without remaining still even for a mere instant.”

3. **You die without having had time to practice the Dharma while alive:** “Even if you may indeed live for so long, it is inappropriate to think you have time. As stated in the *Descent into the Womb Sūtra*, initially, during the first ten years of childhood, it does not occur to you to practice the Dharma, and at the end, during the twenty years of old age, you do not have the power to practice the Dharma. Of the time in between, sleep snatches away one half, illness and the like also waste much time, and no more than a few opportunities remain to accomplish the Dharma.” So can calculate: even if I live to 90, during first ~20years I didn't practice dharma, then for last 20years I won't have the ability to practice dharma due to old age; I sleep about 8 hours a day, that's a third of the remaining time gone, and most of the rest gets wasted on the pleasures of this life, eating, laziness etc. etc. etc.

**Decision:** “Since it is like this, at the time of death all the excellences of this life will only be an object of recollection—like the recollection of a happy experience in a dream after you have woken up.” All pleasures of this life will fade and become just memories, so what is really achieved by merely pursuing the pleasures of this life? “Why delight in being beguiled by this life, if the enemy who is death will certainly come? With this thought in mind you should make the decision that you must definitely practice the Dharma and reiterate this innermost feeling many times. From *Garland of Birth Stories*:

Alas, afflicted worldly beings,  
Your stay is not stable, there is no joy.  
Even this water lily's splendour  
Will soon be but a memory.”

2. **Time of death is uncertain:** “It is certain that death will come between now and 100 years from now and it is not certain on which day in between it will come. Therefore it is not definite on any day like today whether you will die or not. Nonetheless the mind should lean toward the idea of death, and you should generate the awareness that thinks: “I will die today,” for if the mind leans toward the idea of not dying with the thought: “I will not die today,” you will constantly prepare for staying in this life and will not prepare for future lives. Due to this, if in the meantime you are seized by the Lord of Death, you will have to die in anguish. On the other hand, if you prepare to die every day, you will accomplish much that is meaningful for the future, such that even if you do not die, it will be good to have done it, and if you do die, it will have been all the more necessary.”

1. **The contemplation that there is no certainty with regard to the lifespan in Jambudvīpa, which is why the time of death is uncertain:** Our lifespan is not definite – we like to think that we will all reach 90 or 100 etc. but actually there is no guarantee of even reaching tomorrow! “You should take to heart the fact that your gurus or friends and so forth have died through sudden internal or external conditions for death before reaching the end of their lives,” [also can contemplate from the motivation in Vajrasattva practice: “many people my age or younger have died”], “and you should think over and over again: “I too have a similar quality.””

2. **The contemplation that there are many conditions that lead to death and few conditions that promote life:** “There are various harmful influences—animate as well as inanimate—on this life, so you should thoroughly consider how it is threatened by human beings and non-human malevolent influences, how there are types of animals that endanger your body and life through manifold harm, and likewise how both internal illnesses and external elements cause harm. Furthermore, since your body is necessarily formed from the four elements and they also harm each other, if their domains expand or diminish out of balance, they will cause illnesses and ravish your life. Since they exist simultaneous with you, even though your body and life appear to be stable, they cannot be relied on.” If the four elements become imbalanced they will cause sickness or even death. Analogy given of four snakes in a tube, if they all stay calm everything is fine, but if one starts to struggle and fight then all will start fighting.

“In the *Great Final Nirvāṇa Sūtra* it says:

The discrimination of death is that this life, constantly surrounded by hostile enemies, weakens in each moment and that there is nothing that increases it.”

Also, sometimes the very conditions which are meant to support one's life can turn into conditions for harm and death: we think of the earth as supporting all, but can die in an earthquake, can think of a house as your home/refuge but it can collapse on you, medicine can cause bad side-effects, food can be contaminated leading to food-poisoning, the weather can be sometimes pleasant but sometimes dangerous, etc.

“Apart from that, life itself is involved in the reality of death so that many conditions for life are unreliable. From *Precious Garland*:

There are many conditions for death;  
Those for living are only few.  
Even they may well be deadly,  
Therefore always practice the Dharma.”

3. **The contemplation that the body is extremely vulnerable and the time of death therefore uncertain:** “The body is as vulnerable as a water bubble, therefore this and that, such as a thorn piercing it, may be to blame and destroy life without the need for major harm. Hence, it is very easily overcome by conditions for death.” We often feel as though our body is quite strong but actually it is extremely weak and vulnerable – even a small infection from a thorn prick could kill you!

**Decision:** “After thoughts like these, you should reiterate many times the innermost decision to practice the Dharma from this very moment on, for it is uncertain when your body and life will be overcome by the Lord of Death, and you should not assume that there is still time.” Dharma practice is urgent, not to be put off. Also we should make use of this borrowed body while it is still young and in good health – no matter what age we are it will never be as young and healthy as now!

“Among the three root thoughts, the thought about the uncertainty of the time of death is the most important one, which is why you should put effort into it.”

3. **At the time of death nothing but the dharma will be of benefit:**

1. **You cannot take your friends and relatives along:** When we die, we die alone. “Thus when you see that you have to go to another world, even if at that time you are surrounded by loving and very distressed friends or relatives, you cannot take even one of them along.”
2. **You cannot take your possessions along:** “Whatever heaps of attractive riches you have obtained, you cannot take along even a small particle of them.”
3. **You cannot take your body along:** “If you have to give up even the flesh and bones you were born with, what need is there to talk of anything else?”

**Decision:**

1. **The actual decision:** “Then think: “At that time it will certainly come to pass that all

the excellences of this life leave me, just as I leave them, and I will proceed to another world. This will happen today.” You should make the decision many times to practice the Dharma without submitting to conditions of the body, friends, possessions, and so forth.” Only our two collections of merit and wisdom we can take with us from life to life, therefore we should generate the determination to make great progress towards enlightenment: accumulating merit – the creation of conducive conditions, and purification – the removing of obstacles to our progress.

2. **The need to try hard since it is the foundation of the path:** “Although this arises only with difficulty, you should try hard since it is the foundation of the path. In the words of Potowa:

My elimination of appearances consists in this very meditation on impermanence. Eliminating all the phenomena of this life—close relationships, possessions, and the like—and aware that I will go here and there to another life alone without anything I think: “There is nothing to do other than to practice the Dharma,” and non-attachment to this life first arises. As long as this attitude has not arisen in my mind, I will sit with the paths to all the Dharma blocked.

And Dölpa said:

Incidentally, if you accumulate the collections and purify obscurations, make request to the deities and your guru, and contemplate insistently with perseverance, even that which you think will not come about for a hundred years, will come about effortlessly, for compounded phenomena do not remain static as they are.”

3. **How to carry out the practice of all the excellent scriptures:** “Thus, if you understand how to practice reliance on a spiritual teacher, the pleasures and endowments, as well as impermanence in this and that context of the scriptures and their commentaries, and if you then sustain that understanding, you will easily find the intention of the Victor. In this way you will also understand it in other contexts.” That is, by understanding these topics, one's understanding of later topics in the lam-rim will be enhanced.

## Suffering of lower realms:

“That being so, since it is certain that you will die soon, there is no time to relax in this life and, after death, it is not that you become non-existent; you must take rebirth. Since apart from the two realms there is no other place of birth, you will be born in either the happy realms or the lower realms. In addition, since you are not under your own control but under the control of other—karma, you will be reborn according to the wholesome and unwholesome karma that impels you.”

Understanding that suffering arises due to causes and conditions, that death can come at any time, and that at the time of death we will be propelled into the next life by our karma, we first consider the worst of the possible suffering results of our negative karma: rebirth in the lower realms, which arise as a result of the ten non-virtues.

You should think about the suffering of the lower realms considering: “What will become of me if I am reborn in the lower realms?” Nāgārjuna said:

Every day remember the hells  
Which are fiercely hot and cold.  
Also remember the hungry ghosts,  
Emaciated by hunger and thirst.  
Look at animals and remember:  
They are beset with the sufferings of dullness.  
Give up their causes, create causes of happiness.  
Once you have gained what is hard to gain,  
A human body in Jambudvīpa,  
Endeavour to cut the cause of bad births.”

“give up their causes” - the ten non-virtues, we should practice at least one of these so that we create even just a few causes not to be reborn in the lower realms.

“cause of bad births” - here refers to birth in the lower realms, but from point of view of the middle and higher scope practitioner any (uncontrolled) rebirth within samsara is to be abandoned.

“Meditation on the sufferings of cyclic existence in general and of the lower realms in particular is a very vital point, for if you thus consider how you yourself fall into the ocean of suffering, despair will repel pride and arrogance. Having seen that suffering is a result of non-virtue, you will be very careful to avoid negativities and downfalls. Since you do not want suffering but want happiness, once you realize that it is the result of virtue, you will also enjoy accomplishing virtue. In proportion to your own experience, compassion for others will arise, and out of aversion to cyclic existence you will strive for liberation. For fear of suffering you will take refuge forcefully.”

The explanation of the hell-realms is according to Vasubandhu's *Abhidharmakosa*, talking about the geography, distances and exact descriptions etc. all according to the Vaibhashika school. We should not accept these descriptions as being literal, since they have been disproved by modern science, so this exposition should be seen as having interpretive meaning requiring explanation. However it is useful to meditate on these states of existence since we cannot perceive them directly ourselves, like with our own eyes.

[Here Rinpoche gave the transmission for the descriptions of the hell-realms, animal and preta realms.]

We should meditate on these states as if we were reborn there and experiencing all those sufferings ourselves. Generating the conviction of how unbearable that would be, and wishing to avoid such sufferings we develop strong faith in the Three Jewels as our refuge.

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.

## Refuge in Three Jewels

**Buddha Jewel:** one who has eliminated all faults, endowed with all qualities; who has perfected the two objectives:

1. welfare of self: realised by achieving the dharmakaya – nature and wisdom truth bodies – truth bodies automatically achieved when one attains enlightenment, and correspond to the two truths that are one entity (the buddha's mind) different isolates. This is the ultimate Buddha Jewel.
2. welfare of others: realised by achieving the rupakaya:
  1. enjoyment body (sambhogakaya): appearing only to pure sentient beings and displaying the five certainties:
    1. Body: possessing the 32 major marks and 80 minor signs.
    2. Teaching: Mahayana dharma.
    3. Entourage: Arya Bodhisattvas.
    4. Place: Buddha-field of Aganishta.
    5. Time: forever, until samsara ends.
  2. emanation body (nirmanakaya): appears to impure mental continua (ordinary beings). This is the conventional Buddha Jewel.

Through the accomplishment / manifesting these two bodies, there is never a time when Buddha Shakyamuni is not teaching and accomplishing the welfares of sentient beings – it is impossible for him to not be benefiting sentient beings, since if sentient beings have gathered the causes and are suitable to be ripened / led in such a way then automatically the Buddha will guide them and appear to them to show them the path.

**Dharma Jewel:** comprised in the quality of a true cessation or path; a completely pure truth contained in the continuum of an arya being which is either a cessation or a path:

1. truth of cessation: an uninterrupted path which is directly opposed to the object of abandonment. Since a cessation is freedom from object of abandonment it is a permanent phenomena. Then we have the cessation of all delusions: liberation, and the cessation of all obscurations: enlightenment.
2. truth of path: a mind that is a method to abandon the object of abandonment of such and such a path in the mind of an arya being, it is a compounded, impermanent phenomena.

**Sangha Jewel:** a being who possesses the Dharma Jewel in one's continuum, so have to be an arya being, direct realisation of emptiness, divided into:

1. training: still training in the path, those on the Hinayana or Mahayana Paths of Seeing and Meditation.
2. beyond training: those on either the Hinayana or Mahayana Path of No-More-Learning.

Four bikshus or bikshunis, even ordinary (non-arya) beings, are called the assembly of the Sangha since they can perform the different activities that Sangha can perform, but are not the actual Sangha. We refer to them as being labelled as Sangha, and showing respect to such an assembly is the same as showing respect to the actual Sangha Jewel – but they are not the ultimate Sangha Jewel itself.

### The holy gateway for entering the teachings: training in taking refuge

- A. **The causes on which taking refuge depends:** “By thinking thus about how you will fall into the lower realms because the power of wholesome karma is small and the power of unwholesome karma is extremely strong, the two arise:”
  1. **Fear of the lower realms:** thinking of the different sufferings of the lower realms and how unbearable it would be to be reborn there we generate fear. However, in general as a higher scope practitioner, one should develop this fear (renunciation) for the whole of samsara.

2. **Conviction in the Three Jewels:** realising how rare and precious they are, since only they can protect you from such unbearable states.
- B. **Depending on those causes, the objects in which to take refuge:**
  1. **Identifying the objects of refuge:** see Rinpoche's explanation above about the Three Jewels.
  2. **The reasons why they are worthy to be refuges:** This has two points:
    - A. **The actual reasons:** “Someone who is free from all fear, skilled in the means of liberating others from fear, steeped in great compassion toward everyone without closeness and distance, and who works for the welfare of all those who help him or do not help him, such a one is worthy to be a refuge.”
      1. **Fearless:** only someone who is completely out of danger can effectively help us get out of danger also. If we are being carried away by a violent river, or sinking in quicksand, only someone standing on firm ground can help pull us out.
      2. **Skilled at liberating:** due to his omniscience the Buddha knows all the perfect methods appropriate for liberating all sentient beings from their fears, and also become fearless.
      3. **Great compassion:** and equanimity, being completely devoid of bias towards sentient beings, the Buddha's compassion encompasses all without exception.
      4. **Works for the welfare of all:** as the Buddha is constantly manifesting emanation bodies, he is continually and spontaneously working for the welfare of all without discrimination for those who help or harm him.
    - B. **Advice to be persistent in conviction, the principal cause:** “That being so, once you have derived certainty with regard to the objects of refuge set forth in the Compendium, when you are able to rely on them with a single-pointed mind, it is impossible for you not to be protected. Therefore you should generate certainty from the bottom of your heart. Of the two causes for being protected, there is no incompleteness in the external one, since our Teacher has already accomplished it. However, due to the internal cause—taking hold of that refuge trustingly—not having come about, we suffer.” That is, since the external cause of refuge (the Three Jewels) is perfect, it is only due to our internal cause of refuge (the two mentioned above) being incomplete that we suffer.
- C. **The way in which to take refuge as much as one can:**
  1. **Taking refuge understanding their positive qualities:** The need to be mindful of the positive qualities of the refuges has three points:
    - A. **The positive qualities of the Buddha:**
      1. **The actual qualities:**
        - A. **The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted body:** Recollect the 32 major marks, which show the excellence of the buddha, and the 80 minor signs, which illustrate the buddha's internal qualities. See Ornament 8th chapter for full descriptions. The Buddha appears as perfect, a great source of joy for all who behold him, and has various magical powers for taming sentient beings.
        - B. **The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted speech:** “You should think about the very marvellous way in which any number of sentient beings in the world realms ask different questions all at once, yet he still apprehends them with the wisdom that possesses a single instant of mind and answers all the questions with a single utterance understood in their respective languages.”
      - C. **The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted mind:**
        1. **The positive qualities of knowledge:** whatever exists, all objects of knowledge, both ultimate and conventional truths, are directly and simultaneously known by the Buddha's omniscient consciousness – the dharmakaya. Even tenth bhumi bodhisattvas are not able to perceive all objects of knowledge, but the Buddha can as if they were in the palm of

his hand.

2. **The positive qualities of mercy [loving-kindness and compassion]:**

“Just as sentient beings are bound by the afflictions without any control, the Sage is bound by great compassion without control, and therefore great compassion continuously arises in him when he perceives suffering migrating beings.” While our compassion is under the sway of the delusions, and as such can wax and wane, is biased etc., the Buddha's compassion is completely unobstructed by delusions and so there is nothing preventing constant, effortless and unbiased compassion towards all sentient beings.

D. **The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted activities:** “By means of both the spontaneous and the uninterrupted exalted activities of his exalted body, exalted speech, and exalted mind, he benefits all sentient beings. In fact insofar as a disciple is fit for guidance, it is impossible for a Sage not to give that trainee what is excellent and pull him out of his degeneration. That is why it is stated that he definitely performs all the appropriate actions.” In fact, all of our virtuous deeds of body, speech and mind are said to be manifestations of the Buddha's holy activities.

2. **Supplementary points:**

A. **Gaining certainty in your conviction:** the cause of taking refuge purely: Potowa said this: “If you keep contemplating again and again, the firmer your conviction and the purer your mental continuum becomes, the more blessings will arise. Since you gain certain knowledge in this regard, you will take refuge from the bottom of your heart and then, if you merely train in the trainings, everything you do will become an instance of practicing the Buddha's teachings.” This is due to the power of the object, i.e. even just seeing an image of the Buddha becomes a cause for delusions to subside and the cause for meeting him in the future. We can see many holy places on pilgrimage in order to receive blessings of the Buddha due to the power of the holy objects there – the merit we create is due to the combination of the power of the object and our faith due to having contemplated the qualities of the Three Jewels.

B. **Not gaining conviction:** “We do not value the Buddha's exalted knowledge even as much as we would a keen female fortune-teller.” We should consider why we procrastinate with dharma practice, and why we don't feel anxious about not having followed the Buddha's advice. If our refuge was strong, and we realise that only dharma practice leads to happiness – why do we put off our dharma practice? And why do we feel like we sometimes need a holiday from it?

C. **Insistent advice to achieve certainty:** “Therefore think about the Buddha's positive qualities again and again, and strive to achieve as much certainty in them as possible. If it develops, you will have reached the main point of taking refuge because a similar certainty will come concerning the Dharma that you have received from him and the Saṅgha of those who have accomplished that Dharma. Without it, there is no way that taking refuge or taming the mind, let alone other paths, will occur either.”

B. **The positive qualities of the Dharma:** On account of your respect for the Buddha, you should be mindful thinking: “The fact that the Buddha has limitless positive qualities arose from his manifesting and meditating on the Dharma of scriptures and realization, true cessations and true paths, the epitome of the abandonment of faults and the achievement of positive qualities.”



C. **The positive qualities of the Sangha:** “This refers mainly to persons who are āryas. Recalling the positive qualities of the Dharma, you will be mindful of those who accomplish it correctly.”

2. **Taking refuge understanding their distinctions:** Example given of a very sick person: he needs to rely on a good doctor, who prescribes very strong medicine, and is then aided by the nurse in taking the medicine and his recovery. We should understand the difference between the Three Jewels in a similar way: the Dharma Jewel is the actual refuge or medicine, since by taking it (practicing it) we are cured of our suffering; the Buddha Jewel is the perfect doctor or teacher who gives us the Dharma Jewel and due to his qualities we have conviction in the perfection of the Dharma Jewel; then the Sangha Jewel are the practitioners skilled in taking such medicine or practicing the Dharma Jewel and as such can show us how to do likewise or lead by example.
3. **An assertion:** see text.
4. **Taking refuge without advocating other ones:** “Having understood the superiority and inferiority of, respectively, Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers, teachings, and students, consider the Three Jewels alone to be a refuge and do not consider teachers and so forth who are incompatible with them to be a refuge. With respect to the difference between the two sets, the difference between the teachers is that the Buddha is without faults and has completed the positive qualities while other teachers are the opposite to that.” So “having understood” means investigating the qualities of the Three Jewels, to arrive at faith based in reasoning.

Refuge is something present in one's mental continuum, while the recitation of the refuge prayer is merely the expression of this mental state. At first the recitation is useful as a method to remember the meaning of taking refuge, the individual Jewels etc. Refuge is putting one's full trust in the Three Jewels, based in the fear of the sufferings of samsara, and the certainty that the Three Jewels can protect us from these sufferings.

D. **The stages of training after having taken refuge:**

1. **The actual precepts:**
  - A. **Specific precepts for the individual objects of refuge:**
    1. **Precepts of prohibition:**
      - A. **not to take refuge in other gods:** for temporary goals it is permissible to, for example, make tormas offerings for protection or removal of obstacles / interferences to local protectors or spirits etc. But one should not have the thought of taking long-term or ultimate refuge in other gods / religions.
      - B. **to abandon causing harm or difficulty to sentient beings:** and accomplish their welfare as much as one can. One should also abandon attachment or aversion towards sentient beings.
      - C. **not to associate with the Forders:** one should not closely associate with those who constantly criticise sentient beings, engage in non-virtues, follow their delusions, lack belief or criticise the Three Jewels etc. However, one should not abandon such beings, rather one should have compassion for them – understanding that their actions are under the control of their delusions, and are a results of their previous karma. One can try to get such a person to investigate their point of view, but if they're resistant to such analysis better to leave them be and practice generating compassion towards them.
    2. **Precepts of accomplishment:** see text.
  - B. **Common precepts for all three objects of refuge:** see text.
2. **Eliminating inaccuracies with respect to the precepts of taking refuge:** see text.

# Karma and its Effects

## Considering Karma and its effects in general:

The actual way to consider **karma and its effects in general**: This has four points:

- A. **How karma is certain:** The cause has to be in the same nature as the effect. Thus past virtuous actions result in pleasant feelings, while past non-virtuous actions result in unpleasant feelings. There is no way for virtue to result in suffering or for non-virtue to result in happiness. Thus (in combination with point three/C) we should gain certainty that all of our pleasant and unpleasant experiences are the results of our previous virtuous and non-virtuous actions. Example: if one plants a grape seed, then a lemon seed, then a chilli seed, it is certain that you will get trees/plants that produce grapes, which are sweet, lemons, which are sour, and chillies, which are hot, respectively and accordingly. If you plant beans in your field you won't get a rice crop!  
Thus (in combination with point four/D) we are certain to experience the results of our past actions. If we have a seed, and in the first moment all the conditions come together, in the second moment we will have the result – unless something interferes with the seed (like a bird taking it!) even at the second moment. Thus non-virtue will definitely result in suffering unless it is purified, and likewise virtue in happiness unless we destroy it with strong anger.
- B. **The great increase of karma:** One apricot seed will give rise to a tree with many branches, many leaves, many apricots and also many more seeds – these seeds will each produce a tree and many more seeds etc. Likewise, our positive and negative actions will increase over time, so even a small action can generate great and numerous results. Rinpoche told the story of Bikshuni who resembles an Utpala Flower – who experienced all those different sufferings due to “dedicating” one non-virtuous action: “If I’m lying about having killed your son, may my husband die by snake-bite, my son drown and another eaten by wolves, etc. etc. etc.”)
- C. **You do not meet with karma you have not created:** Having created the karma one cannot escape its result. Similarly, if one has not created the karma one could even meet with all the conditions but not experience the result. For example: one person surviving an accident while others die. Alternatively, if you are meeting with a certain karma you can be certain it was you who created it.
- D. **Karma you have created does not dissipate:** from *Basis of Scriptural Transmission*:  
Karmas do not go to waste  
Even in a hundred eons.  
When they find the time and prerequisites,  
They will bring effects for embodied beings.

## Considering the specific divisions:

- A. **Indicating that there are mainly ten paths of action:** this has three points:
  1. **Explanation that there are ten in the sutras and treatises:** Thus, first generate certainty concerning the ways of actions and their effects through realizing that effects, happiness and suffering, are certain to have their individual causes, that karma increases greatly, that you do not meet with anything you have not created, and that karma does not dissipate. Now, what actions should be adopted and rejected? In general, the doors for engaging in good conduct and faulty conduct are determined to be three. Although not all virtues and non-virtues of the three doors are included in the ten paths of action, the Bhagavan, summing up the essential points, has stated the more obvious or coarser virtues and non-virtues, the great foundations of misdeeds, as the ten unwholesome paths of action.
  2. **Explanation of cherishing the adoption and abandonment of the ten paths of action:** from the *Supplement to the “Middle Way” (Madhyamakāvātāra)*:

For high status certain goodness  
 Of ordinary beings, those born from his speech,  
 Those with the nature of self-enlightenment, and  
 Victors' children, the cause is none other than ethics.

3. **Giving up hypocrisy:** In the *Sūtra of Kṣitigarbha* (*Kṣitigarbhasūtra*) it says:

“By means of these ten virtuous paths of actions you become a buddha. On the other hand, if one who does not guard even a single virtuous path of action throughout his life nevertheless says: “I am a Mahāyānist. I seek unsurpassed, perfectly complete enlightenment,” that person is an utter hypocrite and a great liar, deceiving the world before the eyes of all the buddha bhagavans and propounding nihilism. At the time of death, he will be deluded and go to the wrongly fallen.”

B. **Settling actions and their effects:** This has three points:

1. **Negative actions and their effects:** This has three points:

A. **The actual negative paths of action:** This has two points:

1. **The actual paths of action:** See Appendix 1, Four Branches of the Ten Non-Virtuous Paths of Actions.

2. **The distinction between actions and paths of actions:** “Among them, the intentions in the mind are actions but not paths of action. The seven actions of body and speech are actions, yet they are also paths of action since they are also the basis of operation for the intentions. The three, covetousness and so on, are paths of action but not actions.”

[Ok! This one is tough to get your head around, here's my summary (so probably wrong – so investigate!) from looking at a transcript of Geshe Chonyi's teachings on this (they spent a very long time on this and related points, if you want the transcripts let me know): All ten are *paths of actions* because they are “the basis of operation of the intentions” which means engaging in something after having the intention to do it. The seven of body and speech are also *actions* because they include the intention at the time of the motivation, thus the non-virtue of killing includes the *action* that is the intention to kill and the *path of action* which is actually doing the killing. On a practical level, this means that thinking about killing without actually doing it still counts as partially engaging in the non-virtue of killing, but won't be a complete action and depending on the strength and duration of the intention may or may not be definite to be experienced (see further below). On the other hand the three of mind are not *actions*, which is the mental factor of intention, because they are afflictions, which is a different category of mental factors – and nothing can be both an affliction and an intention. With the mental actions there isn't a previous intention: you don't first intend to have angry thoughts towards someone and then get around to having them! So there isn't an *action*, only a *path of action*.]

B. **Differences in weight:**

1. **The weight of the ten paths of action:**

A. **Strong compounding:** Strong compounding is actions motivated by the strong presence or absence of the three poisons.

B. **Familiarity:** Familiarity is to have resorted to virtuous and non-virtuous actions for a long time and to have familiarized yourself with them many times.

C. **Entity:** As for their entity, in the case of the seven actions of body and speech, each preceding one is weightier than the subsequent one, whereas in the case of the three actions of mind, a subsequent one is weightier than the preceding one. Weight is probably based on how much the other sentient being is harmed – as sentient beings hold their lives as the most dear killing is heaviest etc.

- D. **Basis:** The basis is benefit or harm to, for instance, the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṅgha, and the gurus.
- E. **One-sided devotion to the discordant side:** One-sided devotion to the discordant side consists in spending your whole life adopting non-virtuous actions with one-sided determination and not even doing one single virtue.
- F. **Elimination of the discordant side:** To eliminate the discordant side is to give up the side of non-virtue, to become free from attachment, and to train in virtuous actions. In *Friendly Letter* it also says:
  - Persistence, strong adherence, no antidote,
  - A basis with foremost qualities—actions that spring from them
  - Are the five great types of non-virtue and virtue.
  - Among them, endeavour in virtuous behaviour!
 Moreover, there are five because of the division of the basis into two: a basis endowed with positive qualities, such as the Three Jewels, and a basis of benefit, such as one's parents, gurus and ordained monks and nuns.
- 2. **Incidentally, a summarized indication of the gateways of strong karma:**
  - A. **Great strength by way of the field:**
    - 1. **The field of the Three Jewels:** Since the Three Jewels, our gurus, parents etc. are a source of great benefit to us even a small action with weak motivation will have a great effect due to the power of the field.
    - 2. **The field of the Sangha:** Even seemingly insignificant things, such as interfering with offerings made to the sangha etc. will create a great effect, and in this case even if it is purified it must still be experienced in some way.
    - 3. **The field of bodhisattvas:** since bodhisattvas are always working for the benefit of all sentient beings, if one becomes an obstacle for them it creates grave negative karma since in effect you are wronging all sentient beings.
  - B. **Great strength by way of the support:**
    - 1. **The difference between the skillful and the unskillful:** Even a small lump of iron sinks to the bottom whereas a container made from it floats on the surface. It has been set out that, similarly, the negativities committed by the unskillful and skillful are heavy and light. In fact, it is said that for the skillful who regret previous negativities, restrain themselves in the future, do not keep them secret, and apply their virtuous antidotes, they are light, whereas for those who arrogantly assume they are skillful and do not do this but out of contempt deliberately engage in them, they are heavy.
    - 2. **The actual strength of the support:** This refers to holding vows and keeping them purely. Then on the basis of these, the virtuous actions one engages in become very great. In text “left his home” refers to ordination, and makes clear what a difference vows make.
    - 3. **The faults of discipline being adulterated:** On the other hand, by having vows and not keeping them purely or even at all well, one creates far greater negativities than one would without the vows. So one should be skillful to keep one's vows well and purify any negativities one has created.
  - C. **Great strength by way of the thing:** “With regard to giving gifts to sentient beings, giving the Dharma is far more excellent, and with regard to making offerings to the buddhas, offering one's realizations is far more excellent than gifts and offerings of material things. From that example you should also understand the differing strength of other things.”

- D. **Great strength by way of the attitude:** Referring to motivation, the “superior” being bodhicitta and as such the “object to be attained” is omniscience / enlightenment, while “inferior” would be liberation, higher rebirth, etc. which would create far smaller effect. With regards to anger, Rinpoche said that it doesn't completely destroy merit, but rather if the result of an action was going to be great it become small, or if many would become just few etc.

[I seem to remember the question arising in class about the difference between weight and strength, so to reassure everyone, here is what Geshe Chonyi says about this: “I am not sure but I don’t see any big difference between the weight and strength of an action. As for the difference between the basis and recipient, it is the same because the basis also refers to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, the gurus, and the like. In this context, it is the same as the recipients.”]

C. **Indication of their effects:**

1. **The fully ripened effect:** Rebirth in the lower realms, dependent on the strength of the delusion.
2. **The effect in conformity with the cause:** It is not mentioned in the text, but this is further divided into two categories: in experience and in actions: The effects in conformity with the cause are that even when you have left the lower realms and taken rebirth as a human being, respectively:
  - A. your life will be short, habit of killing
  - B. you will be lacking in possessions, habit of stealing
  - C. you will not keep your partner, habit of sexual misconduct
  - D. there will be a lot of slander, habit of lying
  - E. you will be separated from loved ones, habit of divisive speech
  - F. you will hear unpleasant sounds, habit of harsh speech
  - G. others will not listen to your words, habit of idle gossip
  - H. - J. the three, attachment, hatred, and delusion will predominate. Delusions will arise and habit of following them.
3. **The conditioning or empowering effect:** Environmental effects:
  - A. of killing are that in future worlds, food and drink, medicine, harvests, and the like will have little power;
  - B. of stealing are great droughts, rains, poor harvests, and so forth;
  - C. of sexual misconduct are swamps, much filth, unpleasant experiences, and so forth;
  - D. of lying are that field work and work to do with boats will not succeed and the like;
  - E. of divisive speech are that the location where you live will be bumpy and uneven, it will be difficult to travel, and so on;
  - F. of harsh words are that the location where you live will be full of logs, brambles, rocks, pebbles, potsherds, and so forth;
  - G. of idle talk are that fruit trees will not bear fruit, will bear fruit out of season, and so forth;
  - H. of covetousness are that everything excellent will deteriorate year by year, month by month, and day by day, and so forth;
  - I. of harmful intent are a lot of epidemics, injuries, infections, disputes, wars with enemy troops, and so forth; and
  - J. of wrong views are that in the world you live in the best resources will decline and so forth.

2. **Positive actions and their effects:**

A. **Positive actions:** This has two points:

1. **Brief indication by means of scripture:** “They are the actions of the body of correctly abstaining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct due to possessing a virtuous mind having thought about their disadvantages, and of carrying this abstention to its conclusion. Similarly, this is to be applied to the four of speech and the three of mind, the difference being that they are called “actions of speech” and “actions of the mind.” This is how it is stated in *Actuality of the Stages*.”
2. **Extensive explanation:** “They should therefore be related to the basis, attitude, performance, and completion as appropriate. When applied to the path of action of abandoning killing, the basis is another sentient being. The attitude is the wish to give up killing due to having seen its disadvantages. The performance is to put effort into completely abstaining from killing. The completion is the action of body of correct abstention having been completed. The other paths of action should also be understood in this manner.”

Thus, we should understand that merely not doing the negative action is not a positive action. The positive action of refraining requires recognition of the basis against whom the negative action could be performed, then the recognition of the negativity of engaging in such an action based on having reflected on its disadvantages, then the decision/resolution/vow to purposefully avoid such an action [action] and effort in actually avoiding it [path of action].

B. **The effects of positive actions:** These, as explained for the being of small capacity, are the opposites to the effects explained for the ten non-virtues in terms of the three types of result (fully ripened effect, effect in conformity with the cause, and conditioning or empowering effect).

3. **Indication of other divisions of actions:**

A. **Throwing and completing actions:**

1. **The classification of throwing and completing actions:** “Throwing actions for rebirth in the happy realms are virtuous actions and throwing actions for rebirth in the lower realms are non-virtuous actions. The completing ones are uncertain, however, even in the happy realms, incomplete limbs, minor body parts or sense powers, hideous looks, a short lifespan, many illnesses, poverty, and so forth are caused by non-virtue. Also, perfect prosperity in animals and hungry ghosts is caused by virtue.”
2. **The four possible alternatives for virtuous and non-virtuous throwing and completing actions:** “Thus there are four alternatives:
  1. projected by a virtuous throwing action and completed by a virtuous completing action,
  2. projected by a virtuous throwing action and completed by a non-virtuous completing action,
  3. projected by a non-virtuous throwing action and completed by a non-virtuous completing action,
  4. projected by a non-virtuous throwing action and completed by a virtuous completing action.”

B. **What will definitely be experienced and what will not:**

1. **The classification of what will definitely be experienced and what will not:** “With respect to what will definitely be experienced and what will not, what will definitely be experienced is what has been done intentionally and accumulated. What will not definitely be experienced is what has not been done intentionally and has not been accumulated.”

[From Geshe Chonyi's transcript: So we have two categories, which you can think of as 1. definitely experienced and 2. possibly experienced.]

2. **Classification of what has been done and what has been accumulated:** “The difference between what has been done and what has been accumulated is as follows. What has been done is what has been intended or what has manifested itself through the body or speech after having been intended. What has been accumulated are actions apart from the ten, such as those done in a dream. What has not been accumulated are the ten types such as those done in a dream.”

[From Geshe Chonyi's transcript: Here we divide into four: 1. done and accumulated; 2. not done and accumulated; 3. done and not accumulated; 4. not done and not accumulated. Categories 1 and 2 fall under the definitely experienced category, while 3 and 4 fall under the possibly experienced category. Then, taking the example of the action of killing: 1. complete action of killing; 2. having the intention to kill someone but not actually ever doing it; 3. killing someone in a dream; 4. “Sometimes however you may have a fleeting thought of wanting to kill someone. You recognise that thought and you stop it. The thought goes away. You generate regret. That is an action or karma. Perhaps this can be an illustration of the karma that is not done and that is not accumulated.”]

3. **Further classification of that which will definitely be experienced:** “That which will definitely be experienced has three categories in terms of the time when the effect will be experienced:
  1. That which will be experienced as a visible phenomenon is an action whose effect will be experienced in this life.
  2. That which will be experienced after taking rebirth is an action whose effect will be experienced in the following life.
  3. That which will be experienced at another time is that which will be experienced from the next but one life onwards.”

### **Considering Karma and its effects in particular:**

**The way in which it is necessary to achieve a fully qualified basis:** “Through abandoning the ten non-virtues you do indeed obtain a good basis. However, if you achieve a fully qualified basis for accomplishing omniscience, it will be quite unlike others with respect to covering ground in your meditations on the path. Therefore you should attain that basis.”

**Divisions:** This has two points:

- A. **The fully ripened positive qualities and their functions:** See text for precise listing. This has eight points:
  1. Excellent life span
  2. Excellent complexion
  3. Excellent extraction
  4. Excellent power
  5. Respectable words
  6. Renown as being very powerful
  7. Being male
  8. Possessing strength
- B. **The causes of the fully ripened effects:**
  1. Division of the causes in eight: This has eight points:
    1. To not harm any sentient being and to cultivate an attitude of non-harm.
    2. To offer light, such as butter lamps, and new clothing.
    3. To overcome your pride and respect gurus and others like a servant.
    4. To give food, clothing, and so forth to those who ask for it and to also benefit others without being asked, giving to the suffering and to those who are fields of positive qualities but lack necessities.

5. The habit of abandoning the four non-virtues of speech.
6. To make aspirational prayers to accomplish all kinds of positive qualities in the future and to make offerings to the Three Jewels, your parents, hearers and solitary realizers, abbots, masters, and gurus.
7. To rejoice in the positive qualities of men and, with regard to women, to see their disadvantages without rejoicing, to oppose the inclinations of those who wish for a female body, and to liberate those whose male organs are to be cut.
8. To carry out yourself what others cannot do at all, to help them with what they can do together with you, and to give food and drink to others.
2. **Threefold division:** If those eight causes are conjoined with three more causes, their fully ripened effects will be outstanding. The three causes are:
  1. **The first cause: a perfectly pure mind**
    1. In relation to oneself: A perfectly pure mind in relation to oneself is:
      1. to dedicate the virtues of accomplishing those causes to unsurpassed enlightenment without hoping for a fully ripened effect, and
      2. to accomplish the causes intensely from the bottom of one's heart.
    2. In relations to others: A perfectly pure mind in relation to others is:
      1. to give up envy, competitiveness, and scorn at the sight of the highest, intermediate, and least practitioners in agreement with the Dharma and to rejoice;
      2. even if you are not capable of that, to think of it, many times a day, as the way to act.
  2. **The second cause: pure performance**
    1. In relation to oneself: Pure performance in relation to oneself implies a long duration, continuity, and intensity.
    2. In relation to others: Pure performance in relation to others consists in causing someone who has not correctly adopted the rules of ethics to do so, praising those who have adopted them so that they generate delight, making them do so continuously, and preventing them from abandoning them.
  3. **The third cause: a pure field:** Just the two—attitude and performance—produce plenty of good fruit whereby they resemble a field.

**Having considered karma and its effects, how to engage in virtue and counteract non-virtue:** [See text. My notes are limited to the following:]

**p93 General presentation:** “very hidden phenomena”. Phenomena are divided into three: Manifest phenomena – obvious/visible, requiring no proof or reasoning to establish; Hidden phenomena – not obvious, but one can use logic based on a perfect sign/reasoning to ascertain it; Very Hidden phenomena – where one cannot use perfect sign/reasoning. One has to rely on scriptures, inferring either from the validity of the Buddha's other teachings (by having realised them or seeing others have) or through considering the Buddha's omniscience.

**p95 The power of remorse:** Should be used as soon as possible, especially good if you can catch it right after performing the negative action as it will prevent the completion / rejoicing of the action and thus not only will you avoid creating a throwing karma but you will also significantly weaken the karma and its result.

**p96 Aspiration for emptiness:** One should engage in the reality that is selflessness and clear-light and to be convinced about their primordial purity, remember all phenomena are established in dependence on each other and that the dharmakaya is totally pure since beginningless time and that clear-light is totally free of any stains, and all the negative karma and obscurations do not taint the nature of the primordial clear-light. By thinking in this way there is no doubt that in dependence on applying the opponent powers negativities are completely purified.

**p96 Based on recitation:** The signs: “withstanding” means meeting, “black people” means people wearing black.



*Question:* If one goes to the shop to buy meat, if the animal is already killed is there any negative karma accumulated from buying the meat?

*Rinpoche:* If the meat is endowed with the three purities: of not having requested the animal to be killed, not having seen the animal being killed, and not having heard that the animal was killed for oneself, then the meat is considered pure and no negative karma is accumulated.

When one eats meat one can make a special offering prayer for the meal, one can recite particular mantras for the meat, and one should generate love and compassion towards the sentient being. By eating meat one creates a particular connection with the animal and on the basis of doing such practices one can be of benefit to the animal.

Those who engage in practice of love and compassion, sincerely taking refuge in the Three Jewels, engaging in the Mahayana path, and such practices as nyung-na; by the mere sight of them or hearing them, or in any way coming into contact with them, creates positive imprints for those sentient beings, who will not be reborn in lower realms.

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, extracts and summary of transcript of Khenrinpoche Geshe Chonyi's teachings on Middle Lam-Rim, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.

## Intermediate Scope

**Transition:** If we are in prison we would generate the wish to get out. This would be based on the understanding of all the drawbacks of being in prison. Similarly, in order to generate the mind that strives for liberation from samsara one must contemplate the shortcomings of samsara.

Example given of a person who is thirsty: he must first realise that he is thirsty before he will develop the wish to overcome this suffering, then act on the wish by getting something to drink.

This wish to be free from samsara does not come automatically. Therefore we must contemplate the shortcomings of samsara in order to develop the wish to be liberated from it.

In general, everyday life, we think of suffering as merely being the suffering of suffering. So when we are sick we wish to get better, we are cold so we seek warmth, etc. In fact we spend so much time and money doing all sorts of research, developing new ways of overcoming such sufferings, this is what we identify as the pursuit of happiness. And so we spend our life chasing after happiness but are merely chasing after pleasant sensations – which actually are just the suffering of change.

So we need to recognise what happiness really is, and that it doesn't come about just randomly. In fact even from a worldly perspective we recognise that we must work to create the causes and conditions of our pleasant sensations: we have an intention based upon which we engage in certain actions, which result in either pleasant or unpleasant sensations. So first we need the intention to be free from samsara, then engage in virtuous actions, which will then result in liberation.

It is for this reason that the Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths.

## Shortcomings of Cyclic Existence: True Suffering

**Indicating the intention of stating true sufferings as the first of the four truths:** Addresses a doubt, about why true suffering was taught first, since it is the effect and true origins the cause. In Maitreya's Ornament the 4NTs are taught in accord with cause and effect, so origins, suffering, path, cessation. However, Buddha Shakyamuni taught them as suffering, origins, cessation and path – as this presentation has great significance for practice, since this is the order in which they come to be understood.

We must really generate a strong realisation of the shortcomings of samsara, by contemplating the various sufferings, in order to generate the wish to definitely be freed from samsara. At first, the disciple's mind will be attached to samsaric perfections leading them to still hold on to certain sufferings, seeing them as happiness, and so won't generate complete renunciation – therefore a disgust for the whole of samsara must be generated by contemplating NT1. This will also naturally lead the disciple to progress along the path: wishing to know how they have ended up in this situation and how they can overcome it. Thus the disciple will naturally seek NT2. So analysis is then carried out: suffering is caused by contaminated karma, which in turn is caused by the delusions, which in turn are caused by ignorance grasping at the self. This leads the disciple to ask whether we can overcome this ignorance, what are the antidotes, etc. and thus start seeking antidotes.

So then another objection comes: Why is NT2 taught before NT3? Why not teach NT1 then directly NT3? Answer: In order to develop the wish to be free from samsara, first we need to understand that liberation is possible, that one can be free of the contaminated aggregates. We need to know that NT1 has a cause and does not just arise randomly. Also we need to know exactly what that cause is: so as to know what is blocking us from achieving cessation and also in order to know exactly what we need to oppose in order to achieve cessation – we must first diagnose the ailment if we are to cure it.

Then, wishing to overcome suffering, knowing how it arises, and knowing that cessation is possible, we are presented with NT4 and will have a strong determination to engage in the path. Understanding and practicing the 4NTs is important for all scopes as it incorporates all the teachings of the Buddha and is the basis for attaining liberation and enlightenment. Without

practicing the 4NTs our renunciation will be mere words and thus our practice cannot become the cause for liberation – instead it only becomes the cause of further sufferings. Example: if one practices the path without realising that karma and delusion are the root of samsara, it would be like shooting a bow and arrow without being able to see the target. This kind of practice is a waste of time as all the effort and hardships endured on the path will be fruitless.

When Buddha Shakyamuni turned the First Wheel of Dharma, he taught the 4NTs in 12 enumerations, in three repetitions:

1. **Stating the nature:** naming or presenting them: “Bikshus, this is the noble truth of suffering, this is the noble truth of origins, this is the noble truth of cessation, and this is the noble truth of the path.”
2. **Stating the action to be done:** you should know the truth of suffering, abandon the truth of origins, actualise the truth of cessation and meditate on the truth of the path. This is how to practice according to the 4NTs, what to be adopted and discarded. Need to understand the truth of suffering, and here we're not talking about coarser suffering of suffering, since even animals know about this type and they too wish to be free from it, it is obvious suffering. Then also we're not really talking about suffering of change, which is more subtle and is understood through analysis, but also non-Buddhists understand this type. Here we are mainly talking about pervasive compounded suffering: pervasive because it is omnipresent, it exists everywhere from the bottom of the hells to the peak of samsara, and compounded: since it is created by or is the result of karma and delusions, giving rise to the contaminated suffering aggregates, which constitute samsara – this is what we are seeking to be free from. So then comes the question: where does this pervasive compounded suffering come from? Which leads to the truth of origin: karma and delusions, but which is mainly referring to the delusions and specifically ignorance. Thus the Buddha taught that this truth is to be abandoned, in order to reach stable happiness, freedom from samsara, liberation. So this is the goal, liberation, the truth of cessation which is to be accomplished. Then how to accomplish this liberation: by meditating on the truth of the path. So we can see that by teaching the 4NTs in this way, what is to be adopted and discarded is very clearly explained.
3. **Stating the Action together with the Fruit:** know the truth of suffering then it is not to be known, abandon the truth of origins then it is not to be abandoned, accomplish the truth of cessation then it is not to be accomplished, meditate on the truth of the path then it is not to be meditated on. Once one has understood the truth of suffering, this understanding is irreversible, so there is no need to know it again once one has realised it. Once we have abandoned the truth of origins, once we have uprooted the delusions, we cannot again fall into a state of generating delusions, and so we have reached a state where we do not need to abandon delusions again. Once liberation is attained one does not fall back from it, one is completely free from samsara forever so there is nothing left to accomplish. When one has progressed all the way on the path and has completely perfected all the stages of the path, one has reached the highest state of the path and there is no need to meditate on it again.

This teaching, the Turning of the First Wheel of Dharma, has two levels of signification: the interpretive meaning, which is what was discussed above, and the definite meaning. So for the third repetition, the definitive meaning is as follows: When the Buddha says it is not to be known, not to be abandoned etc. these negations are actually indicating that these actions are devoid of true existence. Therefore we say that Buddha taught emptiness in the First Wheel of Dharma.

They are called Noble or Arya Truths, Truths for Arya beings, since Arya beings see those as truths. Thus Arya beings are those who see the truth, while childish/ordinary beings do not. The childish are said to be like having a hair in one's hand as the hand does not feel it, while Arya beings are like a hair in one's eye which is felt instantly.

## **The actual meditation on suffering:**

Happiness is that which we seek to achieve, suffering is that which we seek to avoid. Here we first focus on suffering. **Three types of suffering:**

1. **Suffering of Suffering:** This was mainly explained as part of the path common to the lower scope practitioner, when discussing the sufferings of the lower realms. In the context of the lower scope, samsaric happiness of gods and humans are seen as desirable, as object of attainment, like the existence endowed with 8 fully ripened qualities. But these are contaminated happinesses.
2. **Suffering of Change:** So now, as part of the middling scope, we discuss these contaminated pleasant feelings, in order to see that the happiness of gods and humans is not stable, is bound to decline and become suffering, that they are also in the nature of suffering.
3. **Pervasive Compounded Suffering:** And we go even further, to see that the contaminated aggregates themselves are in the nature of suffering. The mere fact that these aggregates are under power of / compounded by karma and delusion means that they are not beyond suffering. Therefore as long as one isn't rid of these contaminated aggregates there is no stable happiness to be obtained. Thus one develops revulsion for the whole samsaric experience, all the different levels of sufferings included in samsara, and develops renunciation for the whole of samsara.

## **Considering the suffering of cyclic existence in general:**

A. **Considering the eight types of suffering:** See text for full descriptions.

### **1. Considering the suffering of birth:**

1. Refers to the suffering of both the mother and the child.
2. This is the worst one, due to the body having arisen due to karma and delusions, it in itself is a condition for non-virtue to arise, by its mere aptitude. Thus we need to make extremely strong effort to engage in virtuous actions while non-virtues are extremely easy, the body seems to just go along without any kind of resistance.
3. Having been born, we are powerless to resist or avoid the other sufferings like ageing, sickness and death; while without the body these sufferings would have no basis on which to ripen. We can see that these other sufferings are a result of having the basis upon which to ripen, since they are endemic to the body and so we cannot protect ourselves from them like we can from external harms such as from the element.
4. In the same way, the delusions are endemic to the mind. Our undisciplined body and mind are the basis for the arising of the delusions.
5. Having experienced birth, one is guaranteed to experience death.

2. **Considering the suffering of ageing:** Chenngawa said: "The suffering of death is vicious but brief. This ageing process is vicious indeed." Kamawa said: "It's good that old age comes gradually. If it came in a single moment, it would be unbearable."

### **3. Considering the suffering of illness**

### **4. Considering the suffering of death**

### **5. Considering the suffering of meeting with the unpleasant**

### **6. Considering the suffering of separation from the pleasant**

7. **Considering the suffering of seeking what you desire and not getting it:** In fact, most of the time we are just striving to attain the suffering of change, and for people who don't know Dharma this is their ultimate goal. However, since what we attain is in nature suffering and not happiness we are always disappointed again and again, we never get satisfaction.

8. **Considering the meaning of the statement "In brief, the five appropriated aggregates are suffering":** Meaning that the five contaminated aggregates are themselves samsara.

**B. Considering the six types of suffering:**

**1. Summarised presentation of the six sufferings:**

1. **Lack of certainty:** This is with respect to where one will take rebirth in samsara, but also within a lifetime the uncertainty of friends, enemies and strangers, happiness and suffering, wealth and poverty, fame and infamy etc. - from whichever point of view you look at it samsara is ripe with uncertainty.
2. **Insatiability:** As discussed in 7th suffering above, we always seek to accumulate more and more but we are never satisfied since what we accumulate is also in the nature of suffering. So in the end one becomes a slave to one's possessions/wealth/fame/etc. - people can become so obsessed with and strive so hard for money they become its servant, then have no time for anything else, it's ridiculous! And ultimately it must all be left behind at death, then we take another rebirth where we seek to accumulate again!
3. **Discarding one's body again and again:** If we were to put together all the bodies we have left behind it would be unimaginable.
4. **Being reborn again and again:** Having taken rebirth again and again we have had countless mothers. If we were to count them by making pellets the size of juniper berries out of earth, the entire Earth would be exhausted before we could nearly count them all.
5. **Changing from high to low again and again:** It is impossible to maintain one's high status or higher rebirth forever in samsara.
6. **Lacking companions:** We are born alone, we die alone, and in the meantime we go through life suffering alone, since no one can experience our suffering with us or for us.

**2. Presentation of the six types reduced into three:**

1. In cyclic existence there is nothing reliable:
  1. The inappropriateness of relying on the body you have attained – you will discard your body again and again. [3]
  2. The inappropriateness of relying on benefit and harm done to you – there is no certainty as to whether your father will become your son, your mother your wife, an enemy someone very dear to you, and the like. [1]
  3. The inappropriateness of relying on the excellences you have achieved – you fall from high places to low ones. [5]
  4. The inappropriateness of relying on companions – you have to go on without them in the end. [6]
2. No matter how much of its happiness you enjoy, there is no final point of satisfaction. [2]
3. You have been in it since beginningless time. [4]
3. **How there is nothing in contaminated feelings that is of the entity of happiness:**

“Furthermore, at present most of the happy feelings that increase our attachment are minds of happiness that arise with respect to a relief of suffering. Yet there is no happiness by way of its own entity that is unrelated to suffering. For instance, if you suffer because you have walked too much, the mind of happiness that arises due to sitting down appears to be happiness that arises gradually while the great previous suffering gradually ceases. However, it is not happiness by way of its own entity, for if you sit too much, again, that will produce suffering as before. If they were causes of happiness by way of their own entity, just as suffering increases to the same extent as you are subject to the causes of suffering, so too should walking, sitting, lying, eating and drinking, as well as sun and shade, and the like increase your happiness to the same extent that you indulge in them. However, it appears that in the long term only more suffering is produced.”

## Considering the suffering of the individual realms:

- A. **The suffering of the three lower realms:** Explained as part of the lower scope.
- B. **The suffering of humans:** Mainly those discussed in the 8 types of suffering. Also specifically “hunger and thirst, the unpleasant contact with heat and cold, frantic activity, and fatigue.” The first quote indicates that the sufferings experienced in the different realms also seem to manifest within the human realm, some are troubled by extreme suffering (hell realm), some live in poverty (preta realm), some are oppressed by others (animal realm), etc. The second quote indicates that within the human realm, those of high status, the rich and powerful, are tormented more by mental suffering, while those of low status, the poor and underprivileged, are tormented more by physical suffering.
- C. **The suffering of demigods:** they are tormented by envy for the gods, due to that engage in battle with them and thus suffer from harm to their bodies sustained that way.
- D. **The suffering of gods:** The gods of the desire realm experience incredible suffering just before death, due to the appearance of the five signs of death: 1) their beautiful body loses its lustre and begins to decompose; 2) one starts feeling uncomfortable; 3) one's flower garlands die; 4) one's clothes start to smell; 5) they start to sweat. All these also cause them to be disliked by the other gods who will avoid them etc. And it is said that through clairvoyance they are able to see the realm of their next rebirth, which causes incredible fear and suffering. The gods of the Form and Formless Realms, lack any way to affect their situation, so being stuck in those concentrations their karma is spent and they inevitably fall back to bad rebirths. They experience only Compounded Pervasive Suffering, but still possessing contaminated aggregates they have not left samsara and so are bound to experience the other types of sufferings in the future.

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.

# How Cyclic Existence is Entered: True Origins

## How the mental afflictions arise:

1. **How the mental afflictions are chief:** We're being reborn in samsara due to its causes: karma and delusions. Among these the main factors, the root origin, are the delusions, since they motivate the accumulation of karma: delusions push us to accumulate more karma and are therefore the root of samsara. This is since even if hypothetically we were to be free of karma, just by the delusions pushing us to accumulate more karma samsara would continue. Alternatively, if we were free of delusions, then even if we have an incredible amount of negative karma, the karmic seeds would have no power to give rise to anything, they would be impotent to propel one anywhere, so there would be no more cycling in samsara. In *Pramanavartika* it says: "when there is no simultaneous condition present, a seed is powerless to provoke any samsaric existence", like a rice seed which is denied earth, fertiliser, sunlight etc. - even if you have a million seeds nothing will grow. So if we wish to overcome truth of origins we must overcome the delusions.

In *Bodhisattvacaryavatara*, as explained by HH the Dalai Lama, as taught by Khunu Lama Rinpoche, it says:

Tibetan translation: "The delusions are abandoned by the wisdom eye of the delusions" – meaning that the wisdom realising emptiness abandons the delusions by understanding the nature of the delusions, by seeing their nature delusions are abandoned. In Sanskrit version it is different: "The weak are abandoned by the wisdom eye of the delusions" – meaning these delusions are weak, because in order to destroy them we just need to look at them and see their nature, which allows us to destroy them. There is no need to make any big preparation, amassing weapons, soldiers, etc. we just need to see their nature and thus one abandons them.

Now of the delusions, like attachment and anger, their root is the obscured and confused mind of ignorance, which is the basis for them to be generated and grow. If we just leave this ignorance to do what it wants it will continuously push us to accumulate more and more causes for cycling in samsara without ever stopping. But if one comes to understand that this ignorance has no nature and no basis in reality, is confused and mistaken, one develops the wisdom realising selflessness. This stops the ignorance such that the continuous stream of suffering and rebirth is stopped and thereby one attains liberation or freedom, the eternal happiness of nirvana.

2. **Identifying the mental afflictions:** Delusion/Affliction – mental factor which, by its own power, makes the person who generates it in their continuum unpacified, undisciplined or basically unhappy. Tibetan: *nyon-mong*. It has no purpose, function or activity other than to harm the person, unlike the external enemy which could be used to practice patience, equanimity etc.

A. **The actual identification of the mental afflictions:** The first five are delusions which are not views, and last five are delusions which are views.

1. **Attachment:** Conceptual elaboration which mistakenly exaggerates the qualities of its object. Having exaggerated thus, the mind clings to this object, not wanting to let go. It is concomitant with and has as its basis ignorance grasping at self, as it takes for granted the object possessing such qualities without investigating whether this is compatible with reality. Being able to say "this is good, this is bad" can only be done in relation to the mental factors of discrimination and feeling that arise in a continuum, the object itself isn't good or bad from its own side. We should check that our discriminations are based on reality, as most often we would find that our view of objects (and thus our desire for them), due to ignorance and attachment, is totally exaggerated, not concordant with reality. By investigating the object and the way it appears to us, we can see the reality of the object and so our attachment will instantly decrease. Rinpoche told the story of the Arhat who made a man's wife's

skin see-through, and also story of a man so attached to his wife who was made to see the goddesses by comparison. On the other hand, if we check our desire for liberation/omniscience, we would find that this would survive analysis and even be strengthened by this investigation, since it is concordant with reality. This is a beneficial desire, and is not attachment, since it isn't mistaken with respect to the qualities of the object nor does it exaggerate them, as the qualities of buddhahood are unsurpassed.

2. **Anger:** No joy or happiness is to be had when anger is present. Anger is the real enemy who destroys our peace of mind. Anger harms both immediately, as it arises, and in the long term due to destroying incredible amounts of merit. Unlike attachment which gathers to oneself, anger pushes away from oneself.
3. **Pride:** based on view of transitory collection, which is a mistaken wisdom based on wrong reason. So trivial external factors such as being rich or powerful, or inner qualities like thinking one is clever, or preserving ethical discipline very well, knowing many languages, or being brave; or whatever small insignificant reason, leads one to think they are superior. Pride even translates in our behaviour, in a tendency to keep our chin up, and look down on everyone and everything. We exaggerate our qualities and then despise and scorn other people, then these people will not feel comfortable, there will be no harmony and we will wonder why people don't like us. Also, with pride we think we know everything, so no effort is made to learn or improve; pride blocks the door to amassing new qualities. However, pride should not be confused with confidence, this we need. Confidence is the attitude of I can do that, I am able to do that, I can reach enlightenment, I have that capacity.
4. **Ignorance:** absence of knowing, not understanding the final mode of existence of phenomena, that phenomena are relative, dependent on each other, dependent-arising, don't exist by their own nature or intrinsically/inherently. Rather clinging or apprehending phenomena as independent, not related, existing by way of own power, inherently existent etc. This apprehension, acting as a motivation, one engages in aversion and attachment, which induces actions which are totally mistaken. Like a blind person trying to do something but getting it all wrong. Thus ignorance is said to be the root of all other delusions. One should strive to realise that interdependence is the meaning of emptiness and vice versa. All phenomena exist relatively in dependence on each other, by not realising this our mind becomes very narrow, and we generate attachment, aversion, etc. because we don't understand that results come about from causes, and not from just one cause but many causes. By generating the understanding that phenomena arise from the gathering of many causes and conditions we can see how things are relative, then the mind becomes vast and relaxed, we become more open minded.
5. **Doubt:** This refers to deluded doubt, which is a mind taking an existent phenomenon as its object and doubting its existence. This becomes a major obstacle to achieving the path, but should not be confused with positive doubt. One needs positive doubt if one is to engage in investigation and analysis in order to come to a definite conclusion or ascertainment of a topic. One starts by doubting, then engages in investigation: what is the cause of such and such a phenomenon? is this cause valid or not? can we abandon it or not? etc.
6. **View of the transitory collection:** a mistaken wisdom which observes the contaminated appropriated aggregates which are impermanent and apprehends them as a unitary and permanent self or as belonging to such a self. Can be divided into the view apprehending "I" and the view apprehending "mine", and also into the intellectually acquired and innate / spontaneously arising. According to the Prasangika school, this is the same as 4. Ignorance.



7. **View holding to an extreme:** based on view of transitory collection, holding onto either extremes of Eternalism / permanence or Nihilism / annihilation.
  8. **View holding a bad view as best:** Basically, holding that 6, 7 and 10 are supreme views.
  9. **View holding bad ethics or ascetic practice to be best:** Clinging to mistaken extreme paths and ascetic practices as a path to liberation.
  10. **Wrong View:** This is different from the 10th non-virtue of wrong views, as that only included deprecating wrong views, while here superimposing wrong views are also included.
- B. **The stages by which the mental afflictions arise:**
1. **The system of the *Treatise on the Levels* asserts that the view of the transitory collection and ignorance are in opposition to each other:** Thus, if the view of the transitory collection is held to not be equivalent to ignorance, first ignorance obscures the true mode of existence of the aggregates, and this serves as the basis for the arising of self grasping / the view of transitory collection apprehending a self on the aggregates.
  2. **The system of the *Madhyamikas* and *Dharmakirti* assert that the view of the transitory collection itself is ignorance:** In this case, the view of transitory collection both misapprehends the mode of existence of the aggregates and apprehends them as a permanent unitary self or as belonging to such a self.
  3. **How the remaining root mental afflictions arise according to the two systems:** Either way, once there is self grasping due to view of transitory collection an arbitrary distinction is made between self and other, thus one clings to what is I and Mine and has aversion to what is Other.
- C. **The faults of the mental afflictions:** See text. As a short term measure, to keep the delusions from getting out of control we can develop antidotes to the six root delusions, such as meditating on ugliness to overcome attachment, on love to overcome anger, etc. And if one cannot manage this yet, Asanga advises to avoid objects which provoke delusions in us, as this allows us the space to engage in virtue, especially generating wisdom to overcome ignorance and thus all the delusions. This is the reason why there is the instruction to seek isolated places.

## How karma is accumulated by the mental afflictions:

1. **Identifying the karma that is accumulated:**
  - A. **Action that is intention:** are mental actions, which are the mental factor of intention.
  - B. **Intended actions:**
    1. **The actions that have actually been intended:** are only actions of body and speech, motivated by intentions.  
[My summary of Geshe Chonyi's transcript (so again: check up!): So differentiating these two definitions is according to the Vaibhashika school. Thus for mental actions, the karma accumulated is the mental factor of intention present at the time of that action. While for physical and verbal actions, first there is an intention during the motivational phase, then that intention is expressed in either physical or verbal form. It is this form that is the karma accumulated, which is the intended action.]
    2. **Their entity:** However, according to Vasubandhu, both A and B are seen as intentions.  
[My summary (cont.): However, for all other schools from Sautrantika up to Prasangika, the karma that is the intended action must also be posited as a mental factor. Thus, for all these schools the intended action is the mental factor of intention present at the time of the physical or verbal action. In this way, mental actions only have *action that is intention*, while physical and verbal actions have both: there is an *action that is intention* during the motivational phase of the action and an *intended action* during the

performance phase of the action.]

3. **Identifying three kinds of action:** Immovable / invariable actions are accumulated by meditating on the concentrations and propel one into the form and formless realms. It is a very stable karma, and is definite to arise in this way.
2. **How karma is accumulated:** See text.

### **How you die, transmigrate, and take rebirth:**

See text. In addition, Rinpoche explained the death process and as part of taking rebirth the 12 links of dependent-origination.

### **The measure of the attitude (Renunciation) having been developed:**

1. **Indicating the measure of the attitude having arisen purely:** “When you have come to understand the characteristics of cyclic existence in detail from the point of view of the two, sufferings and their origins, just the desire to abandon them and the desire that arises to attain their complete pacification is indeed the thought to definitely emerge. However, that alone is not sufficient. Therefore you should generate that mind to the same extent as the mind of someone who does not want to be stuck in a house ablaze with fire or stay locked up in prison and to the same extent that it desires liberation from them. Then it will still be necessary to increase it.”
2. **The development of nothing but an appearance of striving for liberation if nothing but a mediocre thought to definitely emerge has developed:** “If this thought, as taught by Sharawa, is no more than mediocre, like flour thrown into sour milk, also the view that does not want the causes of cyclic existence—the origins—will not become more than that. Accordingly, one's striving for liberation, the cessation that is the ceasing of sufferings and origins, will be the same. Because of that, the desire to accomplish the path of liberation will be mere words, and also, there will be no basis for the compassion that cannot bear the suffering of other beings who wander in cyclic existence. Since the uncontrived mind of unsurpassed enlightenment that has the power to arouse the mind will not arise, you become a Mahāyānist only in your understanding that follows words. For that reason you should cultivate that thought again and again.”

### **Explanation of how the nature of the path leading to liberation is established**

See text. Rinpoche added example for transition: Samsara is like trying to lick honey off of a sharp blade.

- A. **By what kind of basis is cyclic existence averted:** Having this PHR with leisure and endowments, which is difficult to find again, is the best basis for taking ordination, and the best basis for the practice of Tantra, we must make effort to avert cyclic existence.
- B. **By cultivating what kind of path is it averted:**
  1. **Identification of the path—the transition:** The Three Higher Trainings
  2. **Indication that the other trainings will be explained further on:** Ethics is explained here, while Concentration and Wisdom are explained in the great scope as part of the Six Perfections.
  3. **In particular how to train in ethics:**
    - A. **The benefits of guarding ethics:** see text.
    - B. **The shortcomings of not guarding ethics:** see text.
    - C. **How the benefits of generating ethics are great these days:** Due to degenerate times, nowadays preserving one vow for one day is equivalent to someone at the time of the Buddha holding it for an entire lifetime. Example given to illustrate this is the difference between a bright lamp as it appears in daytime and at night.
    - D. **The manner of training in ethics:** There is a need to guard oneself from even the slightest negativities, and (since we are still human and make mistakes) there is a need to quickly purify any which one does engage in. Ethics is important for all

practitioners, as at the end of the day it all comes down to ethics. In particular, Rinpoche emphasised guarding the **Four Doors to Downfalls**:

1. **Ignorance about the trainings / vows** – therefore one should study one's vows and know exactly how to keep them.
2. **Non-conscientiousness** – therefore one should train in:
  1. the **mindfulness** that does not forget the observed objects and aspects of what to adopt and what to abandon;
  2. the **introspection** that individually investigates the three doors at every moment and brings to mind the good or faulty actions you engage in;
  3. the **shame** that shuns faults from the perspective of oneself or the Dharma;
  4. the **embarrassment** that shuns faults, thinking that others will criticize you; and
  5. the **fear** of the fully ripened effects of faulty conduct.
3. **Lack of respect** – therefore one should make effort to respect one's teachers, the Dharma etc.
4. **Mental afflictions** – due to powerful delusions controlling the mind, one may engage in non-virtue without considering such actions to be non-virtues. We must stay alert and apply antidotes to the afflictions as soon as they arise.

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## Great Scope Beings

### Transition:

The lower scopes are taught as a preliminary, in order to develop renunciation, but it is not meant for the practitioner to actually enter the Hinayana path. Foe destroyers can only partially accomplish the work for others, and as such don't complete the work for oneself either. Then, when they do eventually enter the Mahayana, they have to start from the start (generating bodhicitta and entering the path of accumulation etc.) - so why cross the same river twice?

Also, once one becomes a Foe-destroyer it takes far longer to attain enlightenment, due to the very long time spent in the bliss of the absorption, the difficulty in generating great compassion since they don't experience suffering, and due to occasionally slipping back into absorption due to the habit. It is said that it is better to take a tantric initiation, generate wrong views and take rebirth in the hell-realms than attain nirvana, as one will attain enlightenment sooner! [Though obviously we shouldn't aim for this!]

The Buddha is constantly benefiting sentient beings – so it would be a little strange if the final goal of his path (the dharma) was nirvana where one doesn't help any sentient beings!

The benefits of bodhicitta aren't explicitly discussed in the Middle lam-rim, but Rinpoche briefly went over them. First is how Rinpoche listed them, then in brackets are how they are listed in the FPMT booklet *The Bodhisattva Vows*:

1. One enters the Mahayana. (It is the only door to the Mahayana path)
2. One is called a Child of the Victorious Ones. (You will be called a child of the buddhas)
3. One surpasses in splendour even the Hearers and Solitary Realisers. (You will surpass in brilliance even the Hinayana arhats)
4. One becomes a supreme field of merit. (You will become an object of highest respect and offering)
5. One will easily complete all collections. (You will easily complete the extensive collections of merit)
6. Negativities and obscurations are decreased and purified. (The obstructions of your negative karmic impressions will quickly be purified)
7. One accomplishes whatever one wishes for. (You will be successful in whatever you attempt and you will be without need)
8. One is protected from harm from humans and non-humans, and all obstacles. (You will not be overcome by either harm or interference)
9. One perfects all paths and grounds very quickly. (10. You will quickly attain all the realisations of the path to enlightenment)
10. One becomes the basis of happiness and bliss of all sentient beings. (9. You will be an inexhaustible source of comfort and happiness for sentient beings)

**Demonstrating that generating the mind of enlightenment is the only gateway to the Great Vehicle including an explanation of its benefits:** See text.

## The explanation of how to generate the mind of enlightenment:

### A. The way to train the mind by means of the sevenfold instruction on cause and effect

#### Short Presentation:

##### The sevenfold cause and effect is the seven:

7. a complete buddha is born from the mind of enlightenment;
6. this mind from the extraordinary attitude;
5. this attitude from compassion;
4. compassion from love;
3. love from the wish to repay the kindness;
2. the wish to repay the kindness from remembering the kindness; and
1. remembering the kindness from seeing them as one's mother.

#### Extensive Explanation:

##### A. Generating certainty concerning the stages:

1. **Demonstrating that compassion is the root of the Mahāyāna:** Importance of compassion in the beginning, middle and end. See text.
2. **The way in which the other causes and effects become causes and effects of that compassion:** With compassion identified as the root, here we discuss how the first four points are causes leading up to it, while the last two are the results of this compassion.

##### A. The way in which from understanding as mothers through love are causes:

1. **How to develop the intensive wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering:** First it identifies the strength of the compassion we need to generate, which isn't merely a vague wish for someone to be free from some kind of suffering – rather we want to generate a very strong and stable compassion. Therefore in meditation we start with a loved one: when they experience sufferings we cannot bear it – this is the type of compassion we need to generate for all sentient beings – while for strangers and enemies we only generate vague compassion or joy in their sufferings.
2. **The difference of attraction arising or not arising toward friends, enemies, and the in between:** The reason we behave in the above way is due to our reaction to friend/enemy/stranger (or the manner in which we regard each of those) being dependent on how attractive the person appears to our mind. When faced with someone we consider a friend, being someone that appears very attractive to our mind, we feel strong compassion for their suffering; while for someone we find unattractive we fail to feel compassion and even feel joy in their suffering; for anyone in between those two levels of attractiveness we merely have a vague indifference where we neither enjoy nor cannot bear the suffering.
3. **How to generate great love and great compassion by establishing them as greatly attractive by means of the three:** Therefore, since we do this, we meditate on sentient beings as being attractive to us in order to elicit the correct type of compassion. In other words, we generate the discrimination of all sentient beings as being attractive, since then we will naturally consider them in the same manner as a friend: wishing them to have happiness and finding their suffering unbearable. Since the person we are closest to is our mother, we generate the three: recognising them as having been our mothers, remembering their kindness, and wishing to repay their kindness. This results in love-through-attraction, that holds sentient beings to be delightful / attractive as an only child is to their mother. This acts as the cause of both love and compassion.
4. **With respect to mere love and compassion it is not certain which is the cause and which is the effect:** The above generates love-through-attraction which, as described above, gives rise to both love and compassion – but in no particular order.

**B. The way in which the extraordinary attitude and the generation of the mind of enlightenment are effects:** Then as a result of the above steps one generates the love and compassion that wishes: “May all mother sentient beings have happiness and its causes and be free from suffering and its causes.” However, this wish is also shared by Hinayana practitioners, therefore next we need to generate the uncommon Mahayana attitude of taking the responsibility to free all mother sentient beings from suffering, by oneself alone. Having generated this great intention we realise that as we are presently, we cannot complete the welfare for even one sentient being let alone all of them! So we think “who can completely accomplish the welfare of sentient beings in this way, leading them not merely to liberation but establishing them in omniscience?” And based on having reflected on the qualities of the Three Jewels we realise that only a Buddha can perfectly work for sentient beings in this way, and is able to accomplish such a great intention. Therefore, we generate the wish to definitely attain the state of a Buddha, endowed with all the qualities of the Three Jewels, in order to accomplish this great intention of freeing all sentient beings from suffering and establishing them in perfect enlightenment. This wish is bodhicitta.

**B. The actual gradual training:** Also follow the text (page 134).

**1. Training in the mind striving for the welfare of others:**

**A. Laying the foundation for generating this mind:**

1. **Producing an equanimous mind toward sentient beings:** To develop equanimity we should reflect from different points of view: 1) from my point of view, seeing the uncertainty of friends, enemies and strangers in life, how they constantly change; 2) from point of view of sentient beings, they are all equal in wanting happiness and wishing to avoid suffering; 3) from point of view of the Buddhas, who have equal compassion for all beings and see all sentient beings have Buddha-nature; 4) from point of view of emptiness, realising that friend/enemy/stranger is not the true mode of abiding of sentient beings but rather these are just conventional labels and relative, since who I see as a friend someone else sees as an enemy, also if we investigate the five aggregates we won't find a truly existing friend/enemy/stranger anywhere on those aggregates.

Important to distinguish that the perception of friend/enemy/stranger itself does not need averting, as it is a fact that there are those that harm us and those that benefit us etc. Instead, taking the basis of friend/enemy/stranger as a reason to generate attachment/aversion/ignorance and thus holding some close and others distant is what needs averting. The basis itself remains unchanged: the person presently harming us won't suddenly stop harming us, or those benefiting us stop benefiting etc., since our outlook does not change what is happening externally. Even arhats have people who may seek to harm them, but they generate no aversion to such people.

2. **Accomplishing that all sentient beings have an attractive aspect:** The method (or mechanics, i.e. how one leads to the next, why, and what the intended outcomes are) of generating these minds / meditating on these topics has been explained above by Rinpoche, now see text here for specific lines of reasonings / contemplations / points of meditation.

A. **Meditating on all sentient beings as one's mother:**

B. **Remembering their kindness:**

C. **Meditating on repaying their kindness:**

**B. Actual generation of that mind striving for the welfare of others:**

1. **Meditating on love:** Taking the observed object of all sentient beings, in the aspect of being attractive, due to the discrimination of them as all having been one's mother etc., and considering how the thing they seek most of all but are essentially devoid of is happiness – one thinks “May they have happiness and its causes!”

2. **Meditating on compassion:** Again, taking the observed object of all sentient beings, in the aspect of being attractive, due to the discrimination of them as all having been one's mother etc., and considering how the thing they seek to avoid most of all but are essentially drowning in is suffering – one thinks “May they be free from suffering and its causes!”
3. **Meditating on the extraordinary attitude:** Then, based on these wishes and the wish to repay their kindness, one generates the mind that takes responsibility to place all sentient beings in happiness and free them from suffering – by oneself alone!
2. **Training in the mind striving for enlightenment:** Having generated the great intention, we realise that, as we are right now, we cannot complete the welfare of even one sentient being, let alone all. So the thought arises, wondering how one can come to possess the ability to benefit all sentient beings. Then, in conjunction with reflecting on the qualities of the Three Jewels, one comes to understand that one must attain enlightenment if one is going to achieve the goal of leading all sentient beings to enlightenment. Since one is already determined on achieving the first aspiration (of completing the welfare of all sentient beings), one will therefore determine to attain Buddhahood no matter how difficult it is or how long it takes, in order to achieve this aspiration.
3. **The result of the training: identifying the generation of the mind of enlightenment:** “The mind generation is the wish for perfectly complete enlightenment for the welfare of others.” [From notes of Geshe Kelsang Wangmo's teachings on Ornament for Clear Realisations:] **Definition:** Bodhicitta is a special mental main mind (mental consciousness that is a main mind) which is the entry way to the Mahayana path and is concomitant with its assistant aspiration that focuses on complete enlightenment for the benefit of others. **There are two branches:** 1) Other's benefit aspiration – This type of 'aspiration' is a mental factor that must precede Bodhicitta. It is uncontrived and arises naturally and effortlessly. Its object is others' benefit, i.e. it focuses on sentient beings' liberation from suffering in general and enlightenment in particular. 2) Enlightenment aspiration – is a mental factor that is concomitant with Bodhicitta. It is also uncontrived and arises naturally and effortlessly. Its object is one's own enlightenment, i.e. it focuses on one's own enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings (in order to achieve the preceding aspiration). **Division of aspiring and engaging bodhicitta,** likened to wishing and actually going. *Engaging:* Bodhicitta that is directly conjoined with the function of practice of any of the six perfections such as generosity etc. which is included in the discipline of the Bodhisattva vow (that is, in the continua of those who have the Bodhisattva vow). *Aspiring:* Bodhicitta that is not directly conjoined with the function of practice of any of the six perfections such as generosity etc. which is included in the discipline of the Bodhisattva vow. Thus, this indicates two types of aspirational Bodhicitta: 1) Bodhicitta in the continua of those who do not have the Bodhisattva vow (or have transgressed it); and 2) Bodhicitta in the continua of those who do not engage in the practice of the six perfections. Please note: this explanation of aspiring and engaging Bodhicitta is from the Svatantrika school point of view, which differs from Prasangika.

## **B. Explanation of how to train the mind through equalizing and exchanging oneself and others**

### **1. Thinking about the advantages of exchanging and the disadvantages of not exchanging oneself and others:**

- A. To quickly accomplish the two welfares it is appropriate to exchange oneself and others:** In the Shantideva quote, “himself and others” refers to completing the welfare of self and others, while “secret instruction” refers to the practice of exchanging self and others to be a practice one practices secretly.
- B. The advantages of exchanging and the disadvantages of not exchanging oneself and others:** Compared to all the Buddhas we are much older in terms of samsaric existence, but are called “the childish” because we have been seeking our own welfare for a very long time and have come up empty handed. On the other hand, all the Buddhas at one point 'grew up', worked for the welfare of others and quickly attained enlightenment, thus achieving the welfare of others as well as their own!
- C. Therefore buddhahood and so forth are difficult to attain if one does not exchange oneself and others:** Equalising and exchanging self and others is the antidote to self-cherishing, which destroys our ultimate happiness as well as any temporary happiness we may have while in samsara.

We tend to cherish ourselves and worry only about our own welfare while disregarding others', but why? In terms of kindness we can't maintain that we have received more kindness from ourselves than from others, as we are completely dependent on others for all our happiness. Also, we are equal in wanting happiness and wishing to avoid suffering, so why just focus on me?

### **2. Demonstrating that you can generate this mind if you familiarize yourself with it:** The key here is that everything is possible through the power of familiarisation. We come to cherish this body in dependence on familiarity: it too isn't technically “mine” as it comes from the sperm and egg of the parents, however we come to call it “mine” and we do this each lifetime! So in the same way it is possible to become familiar with thinking of others' bodies as our own.

### **3. The stages of meditation on how to exchange oneself and others:**

#### **A. Removing obstacles:**

- 1. Identifying the mind of exchanging oneself and others:** By developing the mind that equalises and exchanges self and others love and compassion naturally arise. We will focus on others' happiness and suffering: wishing to accomplish and remove it, respectively, in the same way we had our own, while neglecting our own happiness and suffering like we did others'.

#### **2. Removing obstacles to it:**

- A. Removing the obstacle of considering oneself and others as distinct individuals:** No one would hold that from a different perspective blue could be perceived as yellow, but we should not think about self and other in such a way. Rather, seeing them like here and there, which are completely relative and dependent on mind.

- B. Removing the obstacle of thinking: “Since the suffering of others does not harm me, I need not make an effort to remove it”:**

- 1. Refutation in terms of the actions of a youth and an elderly person:** Likewise, since the suffering of the elderly person does not currently affect the youth, it would absurdly follow that the youth should not put any effort into alleviating future sufferings! However, we all have our pensions!
- 2. Refutation in terms of different parts of the body and different times:** Likewise, since the hand and foot are different entities, the pain in one not affecting the other, it would absurdly follow that the hand should not rub the painful foot! Or since the hunger felt in the evening isn't felt in the morning,



it would absurdly follow that it would be senseless to buy food in the morning in order to eat in the evening!

3. **Abandoning the doubt that these analogies are not the same as “self” and “other” since they refer to the same continuum or collection:** However, self and other also lack autonomous entity in the same way as the above examples, being merely labelled / posited in relation to a continuum or collection. If self and other had autonomous entity, then it would absurdly follow that there are no others since everyone regards themselves as self.
4. **By the power of familiarization the mind cherishing others can also develop:**

**B. The actual way to meditate:**

1. **Thinking about the disadvantages of cherishing oneself and the advantages of cherishing others:** Since beginningless rebirths in samsara we've been following the self-cherishing mind but it has only brought us miserable results. While we wished for happiness, by relying on self-cherishing – which is an unsuitable method to achieve this – we have achieved nothing. If we had developed the mind cherishing others, we would have attained enlightenment a long time ago: so we would have achieved our own welfare and for that length of time also have been accomplishing others' welfare! Instead we have simply wasted all that time!
2. **The need to put an end to self-cherishing by regarding it as an enemy:**
3. **Generating the mind cherishing others:** Here Rinpoche spoke briefly about the 8 point mind training.
4. **How to meditate remembering the teachings of earlier holy beings:**
5. **The appropriateness of putting effort by many approaches into the methods for generating the mind of enlightenment:**

**Explanation of how to assume the mind generation by means of a ritual:** See text: pages 144-148.

**Guarding that which has been received without degenerating it:**

1. **Training in the cause of the mind generation not degenerating in this life:** [Shahar: Here one can contemplate the benefits of Bodhicitta, as mentioned on page 51 of this pdf, or use the following list which seems to be slightly different.]
  - A. **Training in remembering the advantages, so that the strength of one's delight in the mind generation increases:** According to Asanga's *Bodhisattva Levels*:
    1. **You become a holy field:**
      1. **You become an object of veneration:**
      2. **You become an exalted being:** You outshine the Hearer and Solitary Realiser  
Foe-destroyers by way of your lineage.
      3. **You become a field of merit:**
      4. **You become a support for the whole world:** like the earth.
    2. **You thoroughly hold the merit of non-harm:**
      1. **You are guarded by protectors:** from harm-givers etc.
      2. **Mantras and the like will succeed more easily:**
      3. **Famines and the like will not occur:** wherever you dwell there will be freedom from fear, famine, and harm from non-human beings; you will have little harm, be without illness, and so forth.
      4. **You are without anger and patient:** due to being endowed with patience and a gentle disposition, you will bear harm that is done to you and will not return the harm and the like.
      5. **It will be difficult for you to be reborn in the lower-realms and, if it happens, you will quickly be freed:** Rinpoche gave the analogy of a bouncy ball.

6. **How the advantages are immeasurable:** the benefits are described as limitless by way of analogy.
- B. **Training in generating it six times,** so that the actual mind generation increases:
  1. **Training in not giving up the aspiring mind generation:**
    1. **Giving it up is heavier than a defeat of the vows of individual liberation and as a consequence one must wander in the lower realms for a long time:** One should not get discouraged due to seeing the enormous number of sentient beings and their bad actions, the long time you need to exert yourself (many eons), or that it is necessary to train in the limitless two collections and difficult practices.
    2. **Not giving it up due to delight like that of finding a jewel in a rubbish heap:** Think “What I have found is just as amazing and I will not give it up under any circumstances.”
  2. **Training in increasing the aspiring mind generation:** By reciting, three times a day and three times at night, the special refuge and bodhicitta prayer:
 

I go for refuge until I am enlightened  
 To the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly.  
 Through my practice of giving and the other perfections,  
 May I become a Buddha in order to benefit all sentient beings.
- C. **Training in not mentally abandoning any sentient being for whose welfare the mind has been generated:** The measure for mentally abandoning a sentient being is the occurrence of the thought “I will not work for his welfare now or ever after” in dependence on some condition, for example that he has done something that is unacceptable to you.
- D. **Training in accumulating the collections of merit and wisdom:** Making daily offerings with body speech and mind to the Three Jewels etc.
2. **Training in the cause of not being separated from the mind generation again in future lives:**
  - A. **Training in abandoning the four black dharmas that cause it to degenerate:** Explanations according to the FPMT booklet *The Bodhisattva Vows*:
    1. **Deceiving one’s abbot, master, guru, or those worthy of offerings:** Knowingly confusing one's abbot, guru, or other holy beings with lies, such as changing the subject when your guru asks you to do something, or not telling your guru of your negative actions because you are afraid of his scolding you.
    2. **Causing others to regret virtues that they do not regret:** Discouraging others from practicing virtuous actions, or causing them to regret virtue that they have created, such as saying “it is good but it will be difficult for you to maintain that practice,” when someone is practicing renunciation. You cause them to doubt their virtuous practice. Even if they do not regret their virtuous action, your encouragement to do so is a negative dharma.
    3. **Saying something uncomplimentary and the like about a sentient being who has entered the Mahāyāna:** Abusing a bodhisattva out of anger. Even if a bodhisattva is at fault, if your abusive words are heard by others, you create this negative dharma.
    4. **Acting out of deceit and shiftiness but without the extraordinary attitude:** Putting on airs of having selfless thought, but having ulterior motives other than the pure wish to attain enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings, such as pretending to be a scholar or concealing your shortcomings.
  - B. **Training in adopting the four white dharmas that do not allow it to degenerate:**
    1. **Abandoning lying knowingly (1):** Abandon deliberately lying to any sentient being, whether for the sake of humour or even at the cost of your life.
    2. **Abiding with the extraordinary attitude without deceit or shiftiness (4):** Do not discriminate amongst sentient beings. Text says “abide with an honest attitude”.

3. **Generating the discrimination that bodhisattvas are like the Teacher and praising them (3):** Abandon criticising bodhisattvas. Since you do not know who is a bodhisattva and who is not, it is best to treat all sentient beings as bodhisattvas and buddhas.
4. **Ripening sentient beings (2):** Take upon yourself the responsibility to establish all sentient beings in the Mahayana path by: a) encouraging their enthusiasm for the Mahayana path. Even if you are not successful, you must always try to do this. b) rejoicing in the virtues of others instead of being jealous of their wish to attain enlightenment. c) cultivating love and compassion in all your actions.

**Explanation in three scriptures:**

1. **The advantage of setting others in the mind generation:** In the sutra there is the question “How is it possible to avoid generating the mind thinking to abandon the mind of enlightenment even in a dream?” The Buddha said “Wherever we abide, in a town, city, and so forth, we should strive to set others in enlightenment. By means of this, the mind of enlightenment will not be abandoned.”
2. **The statement that by abandoning pride and the like the mind generation will not be abandoned:** If we have the four – having abandoned pride, having abandoned jealousy, having abandoned miserliness and being mentally joyful when seeing the wealth of others, we will not give up the aspiring mind of enlightenment.
3. **If all actions and conduct are done conjoined with the mind generation, one will not be separated from the mind of enlightenment in all lives:** We must try in all behaviours to generate bodhicitta, that is, all our actions should be conjoined with bodhicitta. By doing this, we will never be separated from the mind of enlightenment in all our future lives. “All behaviours” refers to the four behaviours of standing, sitting, walking, and lying. In all these behaviours our mind should never be separated from bodhicitta and we should constantly be trying to generate it. In addition, before engaging in any virtuous action, we should try to generate bodhicitta. In this way, we will achieve success in all our activities and will never be separated from the mind of enlightenment in our future lives. For this reason, when we finish a prayer and so forth, we should make a dedication to never be separated from the precious mind of enlightenment in all our future lives.

**Having generated the mind of enlightenment, how to train in the conduct:**

1. **The reason why it is necessary to train in the trainings, having generated the mind of enlightenment:**
  - A. **Buddhahood is not achieved by not accomplishing [the trainings]:** If we do not train in the trainings – the bodhisattva conduct of the six perfections of generosity and so forth – we will not be able to achieve buddhahood. Although it is still of great benefit to generate the mind of enlightenment, without training from the bottom of our heart in the bodhisattva conduct, we will never achieve buddhahood. Never! Therefore, we need to train in the method or conduct.
  - B. **First of all tame oneself since others will not be tamed without taming oneself:** Without subduing or taming our own mind, we cannot subdue others’ minds. Thus, if we wish to subdue others’ minds, we must first subdue our own.
  - C. **What must be accomplished:** Having taken the vow, we must train in the trainings, that is, we must guard the bodhisattva vows by training in the six perfections so that they do not degenerate. We must constantly train through thinking that we need to do so in order to be able to take care of other sentient beings. We should not become discouraged, but instead should make a strong determination that, having taken the vows, to train in them

and achieve buddhahood.

2. **Demonstration that buddhahood is not achieved by training in method or wisdom alone:**

A. **How to train in the unmistakable and complete method:**

1. **The need to be unmistakable about the complete method:** Now, having developed aspiring bodhicitta, we must conjoin this mind with the actual practice of the six perfections. Therefore at this point, after having generated bodhicitta, we now discuss the complete set of causes that will lead the practitioner to complete enlightenment as we need an unmistakable path so that we don't try to "milk the horns of a cow"!
2. **Identifying the complete path:** "omniscience arises from the root that is compassion", which is important in the beginning as the cause of bodhicitta, in the middle as what upholds bodhicitta and keeps us from falling into lower vehicles, and at the end as the resultant perfect compassion of a Buddha that works perfectly for all sentient beings. "It arises from the cause that is the mind of enlightenment", thus conventional and ultimate bodhicitta are the basis for engaging in the two collections of method and wisdom, which are "culminated by method" - the practice of the six perfections, which thus result in the two bodies of the Buddha, accomplishing the work of self and others.

B. **Refutation of wrong conceptions about this:**

C. **Refutation of the answers to objections about this:**

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, extracts from the FPMT booklet *The Bodhisattva Vows*, my notes taken during teachings from Geshe Kelsang Wangmo, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.

## How to train in the Mahayana in general:

Developing the wish to train in the trainings of a bodhisattva: See text.

Having developed the wish, taking the vows of the Victors' children: See text.

Having taken them the way in which to train in them:

**What the foundation of the trainings is:** The Six Perfections.

**How the trainings are contained in it:**

1. The **definite number** of the perfections: The number is definite from the point of view of:

1. **High status:**

- A. **How the support has to be excellent in all its parts:** Since the bodhisattva path will take many lifetimes to complete, we need to make sure we have a succession of conducive rebirths (support) in order to accomplish it. Not only do we need a PHR, but also one endowed with the 8 qualities etc.

- B. **How the corresponding causes for that are achieved:** First we need a support endowed with the Four Excellences:

1. Having wealth and resources at one's disposal – Perfection of Generosity

2. A PHR endowed with the 8 qualities (as discussed in the lower scope) – Perfection of Ethics

3. Having virtuous friends, being surrounded by other practitioners, in a conducive environment for practice etc. – Perfection of Patience

4. Ability to accomplish what one undertakes – Perfection of Joyous Effort

However, these four can serve as conditions for the arising of mental afflictions in which case the excellences will destroy themselves as one does not engage in further accumulation of these causes and merely depletes what has been accumulated. Thus like the bamboo and plantain trees, which after giving their fruit die, on their own these excellences will become the beginning of suffering in future lives. Therefore it is necessary to also have the following two:

5. Not being overcome / coming under the control of the afflictions – Perfection of Concentration

6. Absence of wrong views regarding what practices are to be adopted and discarded, the existence of cause and effect etc. – Perfection of Wisdom

- C. **Distinguishing high status at the time of the path and time of the result:**

2. **The accomplishment of the two welfares:**

- A. **How the first three perfections bring about the welfare of others:** In order to benefit others first we start with the practice of Generosity, especially giving of material gifts. However, since generosity accompanied by harm to sentient beings amounts to nothing, like killing a fish to feed a dog, we also need to practice Ethics which refrains from harming others through non-virtuous actions and their bases (non-virtues of body and speech, bases are those of mind). However, if we are unable to endure harm that is done to us we are bound to retaliate with harm and thus damage our ethics, therefore we must practice Patience. By practicing patience we also prevent others from accumulating negativities and inspire them to virtue, both of which are of great benefit to others.

- B. **What brings about one's own welfare:** Since our goal is the two liberations, we must overcome the ignorance grasping at a self, which is the root of samsara, by the practice of Wisdom. However without the practice of Concentration, one's realisation of emptiness will be weak and one will be easily distracted by conceptual elaborations. Thus both are needed in order to accomplish one's own welfare.

- C. **How joyous effort becomes the foundation of both welfares:** Without Joyous Effort we would lose momentum and be overcome by the three types of lazinesses, which prevent us from engaging in the trainings and accomplishing both welfares.

3. **The complete accomplishment of the welfare of others in all aspects:** Also, all six perfections are relied upon as means of benefiting others: “At the outset eliminate the poverty of sentient beings through material things. Following that, do not harm any sentient being whatsoever. Not only that be patient when harmed. Due to being their companion, act with undaunted joyous effort. Rely on concentration and, with magical emanations and so forth, provide whatever they wish for.” By achieving clairvoyance and magical emanations etc. through concentration one can know the dispositions and needs of others and thus provide these to them. “When they have become suitable vessels, give them good explanations in dependence on wisdom, so that by clearing up their doubt, you liberate them.” Thus, through one's practice and realisations of wisdom one can teach and lead sentient beings to liberation. In this way also the last two perfections are seen as working for others' welfare.
4. **Comprising the entire Mahayana:**
5. **Influencing all aspects of the path or method:**
6. **The three higher trainings:** Higher training in Ethics contains Generosity, Ethics and Patience. Its entity is ethics. Since it is adopted when there is the generosity that is indifferent to resources, generosity is the collection of ethics. Also, since it is protected by the patience that does not retaliate, patience is its retinue. The higher trainings in Concentration and Wisdom are contained in the Perfections of Concentration and Wisdom. Joyous Effort is included in all three trainings, since whatever training one engages in one requires joyous effort.
2. **Their definite order:**
  1. **The order in which they arise:** They are progressively dependent for their arising, as practicing generosity gives rise to the wish to practice ethics, then patience, etc.
  2. **The order in terms of inferior and superior:**
  3. **The order in terms of coarser and subtler:** They are progressively more difficult to engage in, thus the practitioner starts with generosity and culminates with wisdom.

### **The stages by which to train in them:**

1. **Training in the perfections that ripen one's own buddha qualities:**
  - A. **How to train in generosity:**
    1. **The entity of generosity:**
      - A. **Entity:** Generosity is the intention to give.
      - B. **The measure for its perfection:** One does not need to eliminate all poverty of all sentient beings, as this would be impossible in samsara! Rather two things are required: destroying the grasping of miserliness and thoroughly completing one's familiarization with the mind of giving to others along with the effects of giving.
    2. **Subdivisions:**
      - A. **From the point of view of individual supports:** It is said that the ordained should favour practicing the generosity of dharma, while the lay practitioners should favour practicing the generosity of material possessions. Especially, the ordained should not put effort into acquiring material things in order to practice generosity, as this would detract them from their studies and damages their ethics. However, if due to previous karma they are effortlessly abundant in material possessions, they should keep what they need to maintain themselves, and practice generosity with the remainder.
      - B. **Of the entity itself:**
        1. **The generosity of Dharma:** Rinpoche added that teaching any kind of craft or science/medicine/literature etc. which is beneficial for sentient beings and is done without misdeed and with altruistic motivation counts as the giving of Dharma. So teaching how to build houses counts, but not how to make

weapons etc.

2. **The generosity of fearlessness:** Saving the lives of others, like through animal liberation, with medicines, helping people during natural disasters etc. Rinpoche specifically mentioned nurses are devoted to this kind of generosity, devoted to helping.
  3. **The generosity of material possessions:** food, clothes, and conducive circumstance.
3. **How to generate generosity in one's mental continuum:**
- A. **How in order to complete the perfection of generosity, the mind giving away all one's possessions rather than the mere destruction of miserliness is necessary:** As mentioned above under measure for its perfection, both are needed, as merely destroying the grasping of miserliness is also achieved by Hinayana arhats, who completely destroy attachment and thus miserliness.
  - B. **Thinking about the advantages of giving and the disadvantages of not giving:** Here Rinpoche mainly emphasised the uncleanness of the body, which is unclean from the point of view of its causes: semen and blood; its essence: the flesh, bones and skin etc., in fact they say the body is made up of 36 unclean substances; its result: excrement. Thus, we can meditate in this way to overcome attachment to the body which is the root delusion that prevents giving; also by way of viewing the skeleton or flesh etc. - these are all in line with reality as these things are actually there!  
Despite being unclean it is the physical basis for our mental basis – our human consciousness – which is very special as it is able to engage in analysis into the nature of reality, and increase minds like love and compassion without limit. In this way, as Shantideva says, we transform this unclean body into the bodies of the buddha, like an alchemist turning base metals into gold.
  - C. **The actual method for engaging in generosity:**
    1. **How to actually generate generosity:**
      - A. **The actual topic:** From Guru Puja (v101), “I seek your blessings to complete the perfection of generosity, Through the guideline teachings of increasing the mind that gives without attachment, Namely, transforming my body, wealth, and collection of virtues of the three times Into the objects desired by each and every sentient being.” Thus, we can visualise transforming these into cooling rain for the hot hells, warm sun for the cold hells, food and drink for the pretas, intelligence for animals, protection for humans, or for those overcome by their attachment giving away one's roots of virtue to do with non-attachment etc. We can also practice this as part of tong-len practice and thus increase our wish to give to all sentient beings.
      - B. **How beginners should act:** At our level we should not practice giving away our body. On the Path of Seeing onwards, the bodhisattva is endowed with mental bodies and so he can practice the actual generosity of body, also at that point attachment has been completely subdued so there is no miserliness. Until then we should train by mentally giving our body away, to create imprints to be able to do it in the future.
    2. **Importance of the inner attitude:** One should be careful not to forget one's generosity, for having given everything away to sentient beings if one were to then use something merely for their own welfare that could even become stealing under certain circumstances. Therefore if we have given something away, we should only use it ourselves if it is for another person's benefit.
    3. **Generosity that is a mere thought:** Practice of visualising offerings, Samantabhadra offerings etc.



4. **How to associate generosity with the six perfections:** Also each perfection should be made to include the other perfections.
- B. **How to train in ethics:**
1. **The entity of ethics:**
    - A. **Entity:** Like generosity, ethics is the intention, in this case to abandon or to refrain from engaging in harm to others. Rinpoche asked us if this would be contradictory to the mind of generosity, since one wishes to engage while the other wishes to refrain? However, they are differentiated with respect to their objects.
    - B. **Measure for its perfection:** Again, it isn't necessary to free all sentient beings from harm, as this would be impossible. Rather it is the complete familiarization with the mind of ethics.
  2. **Its subdivisions:**
    - A. **The ethics of restraint:** the abandonment of non-virtues, with or without pratimoksha vows. Thus one abandons the two types of misdeeds: natural – those that are naturally non-virtuous regardless of having a vow, such as killing; and proscribed/formulated – those that are non-virtuous due to being proscribed in a vow but are not by themselves non-virtuous, such as drinking alcohol or sexual conduct for those who have the intoxicants or sexual conduct vows.
    - B. **The ethics of accumulating virtuous qualities:** “The ethics of gathering virtuous qualities is to observe virtues such as the six perfections and to generate that which has not yet arisen in one’s own continuum, to not degenerate that which has arisen, and to increase it more and more.”
    - C. **The ethics of bringing about the welfare of sentient beings:**
  3. **How to generate ethics in one’s mental continuum:**
    - A. **Preconditions and advantages of ethics:** Considering the advantages of keeping ethics etc. one should meditate on the relevant topics discussed in the lower scopes.
    - B. **The entity of ethics:** “In brief, to take this as the basis and train again and again in the mind of restraint that trains in the trainings of whatever ethics one has promised is the practice of ethics.”
    - C. **Making ethics possess the six perfections:** as before.
- C. **How to train in patience:**
1. **The entity of patience:**
    - A. **Entity:** “The entity of patience is the mind abiding at ease without being overwhelmed by harm and the occurrence of suffering, as well as very abiding dedication to the Dharma. Its opposites are hatred, disheartenment, lack of appreciation, and lack of desire.”
    - B. **Measure for its perfection:** Again, patience is perfected by overcoming our own anger, aversion and other mental factors associated with it and not by stopping others from harming us. Rinpoche gave example from Shantideva, that the earth being covered with thorns, it would be impossible to cover the entire earth with leather, instead one should merely cover one's own feet. Likewise, sentient beings who are harmful are limitless like the sky, if one were to try and destroy all of them there would be no end to that task, it would be impossible. So rather, the way to proceed is to destroy the anger, which is opposing factor to patience, in one's mental continuum and to remain with an unshaken peaceful mind whatever comes up. This is equal to having tamed all sentient beings.
  2. **Its subdivisions:**
    - A. **Patience of not paying heed to harm by others.**
    - B. **Patience of accepting the suffering that arises in one’s own continuum.**
    - C. **Patience of a mind certain with respect to the Dharma.**



3. **How to generate patience in one's continuum:**
  - A. **Meditating on the advantages of patience and the disadvantages of impatience:** see text. Disadvantages include debate about destruction of virtues.
  - B. **The actual way to cultivate patience:**
    1. **How to cultivate the patience that is unconcerned with respect to harm:** see text. Rinpoche added at the end: To develop patience, and all wholesome qualities like love etc., the way to generate them strongly really comes down to our understanding of dependent origination as taught by Buddha Shakyamuni and as expounded and understood in the Prasangika school. As we all want to be happy and generate wholesome minds like love and patience etc. it is necessary to understand that all events and phenomena are produced due to many causes and conditions, and are therefore established relatively, having no inherent / independent existence or establishment. If we really understand this, then our mind will be totally unshaken by whatever happens. Otherwise if one strives for happiness, thinking it comes from a creator god or Brahma, that from our own side we are totally flawless, not understanding that we are established in relation to other phenomena, not understanding how oneself is a dependent-origination, and not understanding the real mode of abiding of phenomena, then it is completely impossible to achieve this happiness. There is no one that created us or the person, rather if we investigate and research we will find it is just as the Buddha said, and it is because of this that change becomes possible.
    2. **How to cultivate the patience that accepts suffering:**
      - A. **Countering the categorical aversion to suffering that arises:** Good to understand that we are living in an impure world sphere (compared to pure spheres of existences) which is said to be impure due to causes which are themselves not pure – the person is the dominant result, while the field is the environmental result, and both are impure as they come about due to karma and afflictions. On other hand pure spheres come about due to the power of enlightened activities and prayers of enlightened beings, so there is no suffering there. Delusions are wrong minds and karma are actions engaged in due to ignorance, therefore there is nothing good or pure that could come out of that. By understanding that these two create our world/environment, one can understand that one is bound to encounter suffering and hardships. So we should train to see these as ornaments, or like a doctor sees that one is bound to experience illness; we are bound to come under sway of the delusions, encounter harmful beings, and experience hardships – even in our dreams. Therefore, it is useful to turn these into helpers on the path, as in the Guru Puja “Even if my environment and the beings therein are filled with the fruits of negativity, And unwished for sufferings pour down like rain, I seek your blessings to take these miserable conditions as a path By seeing them as causes to exhaust the results of my negative karma.” (v96) and “In short, no matter what appearances arise, be they good or bad, I seek your blessings to transform them into a path increasing the two bodhicittas” (v97).
      - B. **Considering the positive qualities of suffering itself:** Also, one can consider all the benefits of suffering, as without suffering we could not generate renunciation, compassion, bodhicitta etc. Also, as explained in the 4NTs, only by contemplating and knowing NT1 do we wish to find out NT2 etc. Thus we can use suffering to increase our good qualities.

3. **How to cultivate the patience devoted to a mind of certainty regarding the Dharma:** One should develop patience in one's practice, as progress may be slow, patience in ascertaining the words and especially the meaning of texts, patience in teaching and studying the dharma etc.
- D. **How to train in joyous effort:**
1. **The entity of joyous effort:** Joy in engaging in virtuous activities.
  2. **Its subdivisions:**
    - A. **Armour-like joyous effort:** Guru Puja: “Even if I must remain for an ocean of eons in the fiery hell of Avici For the sake of even just one sentient being, I seek your blessings to complete the perfection of enthusiasm, That out of compassion untiringly strives for supreme enlightenment.” (v104). Not being tempted by the peace of liberation, but rather staying in samsara for however long, even for the sake of just one sentient being, with great joy and no discouragement – that is the measure of this armour worn by bodhisattvas. So we need the strength of mind, the determination, that there is no other work that is better than setting sentient beings in enlightenment. Since beginningless time we've always worked for our own welfare, never working for other's welfare. Having this narrow minded attitude, we have never been successful in any endeavour. So far we have considered others as unconnected and unrelated to us, so have never helped them. Now we can see, through the training in equalising and exchanging self and others, that we are all the same in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering. The only difference is that now I have found the precious Mahayana doctrine, and the precious Mahayana teacher, and know what activities to discard and engage in, while other sentient beings do not have that luck, therefore it is my responsibility to work for them and establish them in the perfect happiness of liberation and unsurpassed enlightenment. Thus, one determines to work for sentient beings in this way, as there is no better work than this, for as long as space endures – generating a vast limitless strength of mind. Then as one accomplishes others welfare, one's own welfare is accomplished as a bi-product
    - B. **The joyous effort of gathering virtuous dharmas:** Taking joy in accumulating the two collections, purifying negativities etc.
    - C. **The joyous effort of working for the welfare of sentient beings:** Explained later as part of the four ways of gathering disciples.
  3. **How to generate joyous effort in one's continuum:**
    - A. **The benefits of undertaking joyous effort:**
    - B. **The disadvantages of not undertaking joyous effort:**
    - C. **How to actually generate joyous effort:**
      1. **Adverse conditions for joyous effort: *The three lazinesses:***
        - A. **Seeing that one is able to accomplish virtuous dharmas but not engaging in them:** This refers to both the *laziness of procrastination* and the *laziness of attachment to worldly activities*. Mind that puts off practice of dharma, and engages in “bad activities”, meaning attachment to worldly activities, conversing with anger or idle gossip, occupying oneself with unwholesome activities etc. We do need to engage in worldly activities like eating and sleeping and so on but we shouldn't let ourselves be swept away by laziness and attachment. Since dharma practice is done with the mind, we could be practicing it all the time, regardless of what our body is doing, so we should strive to overcome laziness to this extent.
        - B. **The discouragement that thinks “How could I ever accomplish anything like that?”:** This refers to the *laziness of discouragement*. The thought “how can someone like me ever achieve enlightenment or work

for the welfare of others?” This is the worst mental attitude one could have, thus Buddha Shakyamuni said that even flies and mosquitoes can definitely achieve enlightenment, so if they can do it so can we. In *Uttaratantra* of Maitreya it says, “The complete buddhahood abides and shines in all sentient beings in such a way that it is not necessary to create it newly as it is already there. Thusness of the enlightened beings is not different from thusness of sentient beings. Possessing the buddha-lineage, all those sentient beings having bodies (migrators) are always in the nature / possessing the nature of buddhahood.” This means: in the mental continuum of all sentient beings there is tathagatagarbha, the flawless basis or foundation to achieve enlightenment. Thusness in the mental continuum of enlightened ones, the dharmakaya at time of result, is no different than the thusness that exists in all sentient beings. All migrators possess this precious mind, buddha-essence, so there is no reason to become discouraged or depressed thinking one cannot achieve enlightenment.

2. **Relying on favourable conditions for joyous effort:**

- A. **Devotion:** developing faith in karma, the three jewels etc. so as to increase the aspiration to engage in virtuous practices.
- B. **Stability:** of not abandoning one's undertakings, but rather complete them.
- C. **Joy:** developing the kind of joy that never has enough of virtuous practice, like a child that never wants to stop playing.
- D. **Suspension:** rest when you are tired!

3. **How the body and the mind become serviceable through joyous effort:** “your body and your mind become light like a piece of cotton carried by the wind.”

D. **How joyous effort is made to possess the six perfections:**

E. **How to train in concentration:**

- 1. **The entity of concentration:** “The entity of concentration is a mind that abides single-pointedly on any suitable virtuous object.” The mind separated from dullness and excitation.
- 2. **Its subdivisions:** Supramundane is the concentration conjoined with a virtuous motivation such as renunciation or bodhicitta, and which thus becomes the cause of liberation or enlightenment. Mundane is the concentration not conjoined with such motivation, and which results in Form and Formless Realm concentrations.
  - A. **The concentration that causes one to abide in physical and mental happiness in this life:** pliancy / serviceability of body and mind, Rinpoche gave example of body being light like cotton.
  - B. **The concentration that manifestly accomplishes positive qualities:** in common with Hinayana practitioners, the general siddhis.
  - C. **The concentration that brings about the welfare of sentient beings:**
- 3. **How to generate concentration in one's continuum:** Explained in next chapter.

F. **How to train in wisdom:**

- 1. **The entity of wisdom:** The mind that investigates the mode of abiding of phenomena.
- 2. **Its subdivisions:**
  - A. **The wisdom realizing the ultimate:** the first is a conceptual mind realising that dependent-arising is the meaning of emptiness, thus one generates a conceptual realisation of emptiness via a meaning generality. Then, the second, having meditated on that with the mind of calm-abiding, you generate a direct perceiver realising emptiness, having dissolved dualistic appearances, and thus become an

arya being.

- B. **The wisdom realizing conventionalities:** wisdom or intelligence related to any field of study.
- C. **The wisdom realizing the welfare of sentient beings:** Rinpoche added that wisdom is the eyes for the other perfections.
- 3. **How to generate wisdom in one's continuum:** see text.
- 2. **Training in the four means of gathering disciples that ripen the continua of others:** see text. The four are: 1) Giving material gifts; 2) Using pleasant speech; 3) Encouraging others to practice the dharma; 4) Exemplifying what one teaches.

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.

## Explanation of how to train in calm abiding, the entity of concentration

### Attending to the prerequisites of calm abiding

- A. **To stay in a favourable place:** one that is preferably blessed by lamas / previous meditators. Conducive to health, with good water and food etc. Good companions, Rinpoche mentioned it is good to have at least three who hold the same view and ethics doing retreat together in an isolated place, to avoid dangers. Quiet place since one of the biggest obstacles, especially in the beginning is noise. [*Geshe Jampa Gyatso's commentary:* The place in which one trains in calm abiding should be conducive in that it possesses five qualities:
1. the necessities for life such as food and clothing are easily found,
  2. it is free from wild animals as well as enemies such as bandits and so forth,
  3. it has good earth that does not cause sickness in the body,
  4. there are companions with similar morality and views who are good friends that do not cause problems, and
  5. there are not many people during the day and little noise at night such as that of strongly flowing rivers, strongly blowing wind, the howling of animals, and so forth.]
- B. **Few desires:** With many desire, wishing to accumulate things, one becomes like a mouse who keeps running around finding things and storing them etc. Thus one will not be able to sit and actually practice.
- C. **Contentment:** This goes together with the previous, in that one should avoid both asceticism and hedonism, and be content with having only what one really needs. Thus: having all one needs but needing little.
- D. **To completely abandon many activities:** Basically avoiding distraction and wasting time, by devoting oneself only to the development of calm-abiding, thus avoiding non-dharma activities etc. Many activities busy the mind, which is the opposite of what one tries to achieve with calm-abiding.
- E. **Pure ethics:** Keeping pure morality / ethics is the basis for developing concentration. This means keeping one's pratimoksha and bodhicitta vows etc. but generally keeping one's mind in virtue. It is said that regret over one's misdeeds is a great obstacle with respect to developing calm-abiding since it disturbs the mind. Thus by keeping pure ethics one becomes blameless and undistracted by such matters, leaving the mind calm and spacious and able to concentrate on the practice.
- F. **To completely abandon discursive thoughts of desire:** Dispelling attachment to samsaric perfections, as these will give rise to conceptualisations of desire. This can be done by meditating on suffering, impermanence, etc. Also Rinpoche mentioned: In order to abandon discursive thoughts first don't follow them, then observe their nature and they will automatically stop.

**How to cultivate calm abiding in dependence on the prerequisites:** Firstly it explains how one needs to first cultivate the six preparatory practices, generate the mind of bodhicitta, and train in the stages of the small and middling scopes. [*Geshe Jampa Gyatso's commentary:*

One should do the six preparatory practices that were explained earlier on in the text, cultivate the mind of enlightenment, and train in the common paths of small and middling beings. The path of small beings consists in relying on a spiritual teacher, contemplating the precious human rebirth endowed with the eighteen qualities, the difficulty of finding it, its meaningfulness, and so forth. One should do a glance meditation very briefly on these topics. For example, one should think about the eight non-leisures and the ten endowments. The eight non-leisures include the four non-human states of being born as a hell being, a hungry ghost, an animal, or a long-life god. In addition, one is free from having been born in a barbaric land lacking in culture and religion, one has not been born in a dark eon when a buddha has not given teachings, one has not been born deaf and mute, and one does not hold wrong views such as thinking that the law of cause and effect, past

and future lives, and the Three Jewels do not exist. One should think about this and conclude “I am very lucky,” thereby lifting up one’s mind with this thought.

Among the ten endowments, five are from a personal point of view and five are from a circumstantial point of view. At the moment we have all ten of them but they are difficult to find again and, although extremely useful, they quickly come to an end.

One should then do the nine-round meditation on death-impermanence. All beings who are born will definitely die, the time of death is uncertain, and at the time of death all that will help one is one’s Dharma practice. At that time one’s relatives and friends, one’s wealth, and even one’s body will not be of any help and will have to be left behind. Thinking about this, one should determine to practice the Dharma right now.

Then one should think about the fact that if has created non-virtuous actions, one will be reborn in the lower realms, for example, in one of the eight hot or eight cold hells, in a neighboring hell, or in a peripheral hell. Right now we are very lucky to not have been born there. One can also be born as a hungry ghost with inner or outer obstructions or with both inner and outer obstructions. One can also be born as an animal, for example, as one of the numerous animals crowding the ocean or as one of the animals who live scattered on the earth together with human beings such as a cow, buffalo, and so forth, or as a dog, a cat, a bird, and so forth. Animals engage in killing each other and are unable to practice the Dharma due to their stupidity. We are lucky to have escaped such a rebirth, but one should ask oneself: “If I were reborn in the future in one of these realms how could I bear it?”

Thinking like this, one should determine to give up creating non-virtuous karma such as the three non-virtuous actions of body, the four of speech, and the three of mind. Even though one cannot block the actions of mind physically, one should apply mindfulness and introspection in order to do so. In this way one will be reborn in the good migrations as a human or god. However, even if one is reborn as a human or god, such a rebirth is still within cyclic existence. Therefore, one needs to think about the path of middling beings which includes meditation on the four noble truths and their sixteen attributes. One should begin by recognizing sufferings. Then one should think about the causes of sufferings, karma and afflictions, which are to be abandoned. How are they abandoned? By actualizing true cessations. How is this done? By meditating true paths. However, this cannot be done right from the beginning so one needs to practice the higher training in morality, the higher training in concentration, and the higher training in wisdom. By doing so, one will come to realize selflessness, whereby one can abandon the afflictions and achieve the state of liberation or the state of foe-destroyer. One should determine to abandon the sufferings of cyclic existence in this way. But then one should think remember that one’s mother sentient beings are also suffering in cyclic existence and, therefore, generate love and compassion for all sentient beings and develop the mind of enlightenment, the Mahayana mind. Then one should about the fact that if one follows the sutra path it will take a very long time to attain enlightenment. Because of this, one should engage in the uncommon path of tantra, especially highest yoga tantra, in order to be able to quickly achieve buddhahood in order to be of benefit to all sentient beings. One should think about and meditate on these topics in this way.]

Then about the meditation posture, [*Geshe Jampa Gyatso's commentary*:

What should one’s body posture be while training in calm abiding? The Stages of Meditation says that one should sit on a soft and comfortable cushion in the Vairochana posture possessing the eight attributes:

1. one’s legs should be in the fully crossed or half crossed position, like we are sitting here;
2. one’s eyes should neither be open too wide or completely closed, but should be half closed while looking at the tip of the nose;
3. one’s body should not be either leaning backward or bending forward but should be upright with mindfulness placed inward;
4. one’s shoulders should be at the same level, without one being higher than the other;
5. one’s head should not be held either too high or too low or tilted to one side, but should be very straight, forming a straight line from the tip of the nose down to the navel;

6. one's teeth and lips should be in the natural position (without baring one's teeth!);
7. the tip of one's tongue should rest against the upper palate so as to prevent saliva forming and becoming thirsty;
8. one's breathing, inhalation and exhalation, should not be strong and noisy (like snoring!), rather one should breath in and out very normally, without force, such that others cannot hear it, that is, one should breath slowly and gently, without effort.

It is important right from the beginning to sit in this posture with the eight attributes and to breath normally.]

Back to the text:

1. **How to generate flawless meditative stabilization:** In the transition just before this section it explains how there are different ways of explaining the path to calm-abiding. The main ones explained below are abandoning the five faults by means of the eight antidotes, the need to achieve the six powers and four attentions / mental engagements, and the nine mental abidings. [*Geshe Jampa Gyatso's commentary*: The five faults are:

1. **laziness** (we are often lazy!), which has **four antidotes**;
2. **forgetfulness**, its antidote is **mindfulness**;
3. **laxity and excitement**, their antidote is **introspection**;
4. **non-application** of the antidote when these faults arise, its antidote is **intention** which moves the mind to the antidote; and
5. **over-application** of an antidote when no fault has arisen, its antidote is **equanimity** ]

[Shahar: these are covered in the following sections (B, C and D) in terms of how they are encountered and remedied before, during and after focusing the mind on the object. For clarity I have highlighted and colour coded them here and below.

Also, basically, since the main things we want to develop are clarity and stability, the heart of the practice is removing coarse and subtle laxity and excitement. Therefore these are discussed across the following sections not just in terms of being remedied by introspection. Rather we try to prevent their arisal with mindfulness (see sections by colour), then we identify their arisal with introspection, and then we apply antidotes if they have arisen which is discussed together with the antidote of intention / application.]

#### B. What to do before focusing the mind on the object:

1. **The need to rely on antidotes to laziness at the outset:** [*GJG commentary*: Initially one needs to strive to eliminate laziness by applying its antidotes. This is because if one is not able to stop the laziness that does not enjoy meditation but enjoys its discordant classes, right from the beginning one will not engage in meditative stabilization, and even if one engages in meditative stabilization one will not do so continually and it will quickly degenerate. Therefore, right from the very beginning the essential point is to eliminate laziness.]
2. **Individual explanation of the four antidotes:** Laziness has four antidotes which follow on from each other: 1) Based on contemplating the qualities and benefits of developing calm-abiding one develops **faith**; this lead to 2) Developing the intense and sustained wish or **aspiration** to practice; due to this wish and through seeing the benefits one develops 3) Joyous **effort** that strives to accomplish the practice; this eventually results in generating 4) **Pliancy** through calm-abiding, which enable the mind and body to engage in virtuous practice non-stop, having completely overcome all laziness.
3. **The scriptural source for this:** see text (p200) – very clear.
4. **How to reflect on the positive qualities of meditative stabilization:** As the basis of developing faith one should contemplate the qualities and benefits of calm-abiding, as listed here in the text.

### C. What to do while focusing the mind on the object:

#### 1. Identifying the basis which the mind is placed on, the object:

##### A. General presentation of objects: [GJG commentary:

There are **four types of observed objects**, among which pervasive objects are also of four types:

1. setting without analysis,
2. observed object with analysis,
3. the limit of things that are varieties and modes,
4. achievement of a purpose.

In setting without analysis one sets the mind single-pointedly on its object, this being placement meditation. “Modes” (*ji lta*, literally, as it is) refers to ultimate truths or emptinesses, whereas “varieties” (*ji snyed*, literally whatever is) refers to conventional truths or the multiplicity. Observed objects that bring about the achievement of a purpose are those that bring about a transformation in the mind by observing their meaning.

**(From text: As regards objects for purifying one's conduct, there are five meditation objects..)**

There are people who have familiarized with attachment in past lives due to which in this life their attachment to objects is very strong. Likewise, there are those who have familiarized with anger or hatred and so often become angry, as well as those who have familiarized with ignorance in the past and so are presently confused and ignorant. If one has strong attachment in this life, one should take ugliness or repulsiveness as one's observed object. To do this one should imagine an attractive object as having a terrible aspect, so bad that one does not even want to think about it. For example, if one has strong attachment to another person's face, in order to reduce one's attachment to it one should imagine worms emerging from and entering into the apertures and pores. If, on the other hand, one has a lot of anger for someone, one should strive to develop a mind of love toward that person thinking “May he have happiness and the causes of happiness” through understanding that that person is just like oneself in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering. If one has a lot of ignorance, one should meditate on dependent-relationship, that is, on the twelve links of dependent-arising, or on the dependence of the whole on parts, or on the dependence of phenomena being imputed upon a basis. By meditating on dependent-relation one will come to understand that all phenomena do not exist inherently or truly, this being the antidote to apprehending all phenomena as existing from their own side, as being self-sufficient substantially existent, or as being inherently and truly existent. If one has very strong pride, one should meditate on the eighteen elements or constituents, the sixty-four constituents, and so forth. When one sees that these are difficult to understand, one's pride will diminish. If one has a lot of strong conceptualization or discursiveness, one should meditate on the inhalation and exhalation of the breath while letting go of conceptualization. In this way, there are these five different types of meditation for five different types of problems.

**There are also five skillful observed objects:**

1. the five aggregates,
2. the eighteen elements or constituents,
3. the twelve sense fields or sources,
4. the twelve links of dependent-arising, and
5. sources and non-sources.

In the Treasury of Manifest Dharma the five aggregates as well as many other aggregates are discussed. The form aggregate, for example, is further divided into twenty types, the feeling aggregate into five types, the discrimination aggregate into six types, compositional factors into the forty-six mental factors and so forth, and the consciousness aggregate into six types. the eighteen elements or constituents are further divided into the six objects, six sense powers, and six object-possessors. The twelve sources or entrances are further divided into form source, sound source, odor source, taste source, tangible object source, phenomena source, eye source, ear source, nose source, tongue source, body source, and mental source. The twelve links of dependent-arising are ignorance, karmic formations, consciousness, name and form, sources, contact, feeling, craving, grasping, existence, birth, and aging-death. A nonsource is “virtuous actions give rise to suffering”



and “non-virtuous actions give rise to happiness,” whereas a source is “virtuous actions give rise to happiness” and “non-virtuous actions give rise to suffering.”

**The observed objects for purifying afflictions are of two types:**

1. a higher realm as peaceful and the lower realm as rough, that is, looking at the desire realm as having many faults and the first concentration as being free from them; looking at the first concentration as having many faults and the second concentration as being free from them; looking at the second concentration as having many faults and the third concentration as being free from them, and so forth;

2. the four noble truths and their sixteen attributes, which are taught in the Middle Way – true sufferings, true origins, true cessations, true paths. True sufferings have the attributes of being impermanent, suffering, empty (empty of a permanent, partless, independent self), and selfless (empty of self-sufficient substantially existent self); true origins have the attributes of being cause, source, strong producer, and condition; true cessations have the attributes of being cessation, pacification, auspicious highness, and deliverance; and true paths have that attributes of being path, suitability, achiever, and definite emerger.]

B. **Identification of objects for given situation:** Here, in the context of developing calm-abiding, what is the meditation object we should use? People with much discursive thought should use the breath, but otherwise there is a discussion about the advantages etc. of developing concentration based on a visualised image of the Buddha.

**2. How to direct the mind toward it:**

**A. Presentation of the faultless approach:**

1. **Indication that faultless meditative stabilisation has two features:** Here it indicates the importance of the two features of **clarity** and **stability**. Clarity refers to the mind itself being clear, meaning it is a property of the mind not the object. While stability refers to the mind being fixed to the object without ever losing it. [*GJG commentary:* The faultless meditative stabilization that is to be accomplished should have two distinctions or qualities:

1. it should have the intense clarity of a very clear mind, and
2. it should abide single-pointedly on its observed object without conceptuality.]

2. **How it is unreasonable that some people add bliss and the like, making it three or four distinctions:** Some add bliss as a third feature, but bliss is an effect of calm-abiding and not a part of it. Others also add limpidity as a fourth feature, but again this simply arises due to the intensity of the clarity factor. Thus, calm-abiding is the emergence of the two factors of clarity and stability (or single-pointedness), which are impeded by the obstacles of laxity and excitement respectively.

3. **Identification of laxity and excitement and the importance of skill in the method for sustaining meditative stabilisation that stops the two:** How to identify these two and their antidote etc. will be explained further down, here we discuss in terms of how they impede the development of clarity and stability.

4. **How both mindfulness and introspection are necessary as means for the mind not to wander off from its object:** Meditative stabilisation (or concentration) is a mental factor that single-pointedly abides on its object. For this there are two requirements: mindfulness which doesn't let the mind get distracted or forget the object of meditation; and introspection which is the awareness of whether or not the mind is actually distracted. When mindfulness deteriorates and you forget the object of meditation, there is distraction and you lose the object immediately. **Therefore mindfulness that**

does not forget the object is the root.

5. **How the mind is directed toward the meditation object through mindfulness:** Placing the mind is like planting a stick in the ground, strongly and stably, but also the mind should be happy/joyful, not low or intense. Then having placed the mind in this manner, avoid further analysis and just rest on the object.
6. **Identification of mindfulness:**
  - A. **A source identifying the entity of mindfulness:** "What is mindfulness? **Non-forgetfulness** of the mind with respect to a thing it is familiar with; so its function is utter non-distraction."
  - B. **The features of mindfulness:**
    1. **The object feature:** it is difficult to be mindful of something that one is not familiar with, so we should get to know the object well. This is done through analysis, for example recalling all the details of the visualisation before placing the mind on it single-pointedly.
    2. **The feature of the mode of apprehension:** "non-forgetfulness of the mind", this does not refer to the kind of remembering as when someone asks us something and we think about it and recall the answer, this is a continuously sustained and intense focus on the object. When even the slightest distraction arises that is the loss of mindfulness.
    3. **The feature of function:** its function or activity is not letting the mind get distracted from its object.
7. **How it is shown through an analogy that mindfulness continuously ties the mind to the object:**
8. **How meditative stabilisation becomes faulty without a firm mode of apprehension of the ascertaining consciousness:** Here it talks of how even with sustained mindfulness subtle laxity can still arise due to the lack of intensity / firmness of the ascertaining consciousness. With coarse laxity the mind remains on the object but lacks clarity, while with subtle laxity the mind remains on the object and has clarity – and thus is easy to mistake for calm-abiding since it seems to possess the two factors of clarity and stability – however the mind lacks intensity, meaning it is still loose / relaxed around the object. Like holding an object (i.e. a mala) very loosely: one is still holding it but one can barely feel it and it can very easily drop. Thus, the difference is in terms of the consciousness that is holding the object, which needs to be intense and alert, since either way there will be a level of stability and clarity. In the long term, without correcting it, this subtle laxity dulls the mind and reduces intelligence.
9. **Even someone wishing to achieve calm-abiding by placing the mind without thinking of anything must generate the power of mindfulness:** Even those taking nothing as the object of meditation (i.e. Hashang) must generate mindfulness, since wishing to keep the mind empty of conceptual thought also requires non-distraction.
- B. **Eliminating faulty approaches:** Here it talks about how to apply mindfulness, balancing the mindfulness such that the mind is not too excited or lax by respectively relaxing or tightening it. Also it introduces introspection.
- C. **Indicating the length of the sessions:** Here it discusses the length of sessions. According to Rinpoche the quote from *Stages of Meditation III* should be "Like that, gradually, you should sit for one hour, half a session [1.5hrs], full session [3hrs], or as long as you can." As these are the measurements according to our tradition, rather than the Abhidharma system. A full session, like when we talk

of splitting the day into four sessions, are four hours each but with a break so consist of three hours of actual sitting time. That being the case, we sit for three hours, but within that time we can do many shorter meditations.

It is important for the sessions not to be too long, as the mind will become tired and mindfulness will drop inviting distraction, therefore it is better to start with many shorter sessions and gradually increase the length.

**D. What to do after focusing the mind on the object:**

**1. What to do when excitement or laxity occur:**

**A. Applying the antidote to non-identification of laxity and excitement:**

**1. Settling the characteristics of excitement and excitement:**

**A. Settling the characteristics of excitement:** See text for clear definitions.

It is an unpacified mind that pursues attractive / pleasant objects, thus it is of the class of attachment since it chases these objects due to craving. It is a mind scattered outwards, and its function is to disrupt calm-abiding. Rinpoche mentioned there is also an excitement that is not belonging to attachment, but rather is of the class of aversion, called agitation. Here the opposite occurs in that the mind is disturbed due to unpleasant objects. The previous, due to the objects being pleasant, occurs a lot and the mind tends to get carried away by it and as such is seen as a major obstacle for calm-abiding. The latter, due to the objects being unpleasant, doesn't occur so often and the mind doesn't tend to get carried away, and as such is not seen as a major obstacle.

There are two types of excitement:

1) **Coarse** – where the mind completely loses the object of observation, the mind does not stay within the boundary of the object, but rather goes all around the world!

2) **Subtle** – where the mind does not lose the object, the mind isn't carried away outwards, but part of the mind is on the verge of wandering away from the object or is actually distracted / elsewhere. This is likened to a frozen river, where the top layer is frozen solid but underneath there is still movement. This can take a long time to realise, and so one might abide on it for a long time, since on the surface it seems like one is free from excitement since the object isn't lost, however Rinpoche said this is just a waste of time.

**B. Settling the characteristics of laxity:** Rinpoche emphasised lethargy as a cause of laxity (and thus not to be confused as being the same thing), and as being a heaviness of the mind like before one goes to sleep. There is no case of a virtuous lethargy since it belongs to the class of ignorance. Laxity is also of two types:

2) **Coarse** – where the mind lacks the factor of clarity while observing the object, like a darkness falling on the mind. Again, as mentioned in the previous section where laxity was discussed, it is a quality of the mind and not the object.

3) **Subtle** – where the mind has both the factors of abiding and clarity, but there is no intensity in the mode of apprehension of the object (again as discussed above), the mind being not very alert or vivid, without precision. As an example of the intensity needed, it is said one should feel as though they would be able to count the individual atoms of the object.

2. **The method for generating introspection that realises them during meditation:**
  - A. **The need to generate introspection that realises whether or not laxity or excitement have arisen:** We need introspection which is like a spy, a part of the mind that checks whether or not the mind has come under the power of laxity or excitement. Also as we train our introspection it becomes able to check whether laxity or excitement are about to arise / whether there is a danger of their arising, even before they actually arise, thus allowing you to immediately correct the mind and prevent their arising.
  - B. **If you do not rely on introspection, your meditation will come under the influence of laxity and excitement:** Without strong introspection you merely don't notice when laxity and excitement occur and so you carry on regardless, thinking the meditation is going really well, but actually you are just wasting time.
  - C. **The method for sustaining mindfulness is essential as a cause of introspection:** Here it talks of strong mindfulness being the cause of strong introspection. Due to not wandering off the object (due to mindfulness) one will become more sensitive to the occurrence of laxity and excitement and thus will be able to recognise them clearly and quickly. On the other hand, when mindfulness is weak, you also forget to use introspection and not just the object!
  - D. **Watching continuously whether or not the mind scatters is the essential point for sustaining introspection:** Thus the two mindfulness and introspection work together, one remembers the object and keeps the mind on the object while the other keeps watch for whether the mind has scattered. It is important to apply introspection periodically, and find the right balance: too often will have the effect of making the mind more excited, while if left too long one risks losing the object.
  - E. **The need to differentiate well between the methods for sustaining mindfulness and introspection:** Therefore we should get to know how these two work, and apply them.
- B. **Applying the antidote to not endeavouring to abandon laxity and excitement even though they have been identified:**
  1. **The need to intend the application of the antidote:** If, using introspection, one discovers laxity or excitement in the mind but fails to put effort into stopping them then this also is a major obstacle called non-application. The antidote is intention / application / endeavour.
  2. **The actual manner of application:**
    - A. **Identifying the intention and how to stop laxity and excitement:** First it identifies the antidote of application as the intention to abandon laxity or excitement when they occur. Then it speaks of the specific antidotes to apply to those: With laxity the mind is too low, so one should uplift the mind by various means mentioned, such as meditating on image of buddha, reflecting on qualities of the three jewels or bodhicitta, their benefits, on precious human rebirth, etc. or by using visualisations of bright light. For external means of uplifting the mind, do such things as look at bright light, at the stars / moon, splash cold water on one's face etc. With excitement the mind is drawn outwards, or is too high, so one needs to calm it down by various means, such as meditating on ugliness, impermanence and death, suffering, etc. and avoid such objects as mentioned for laxity.

**B. Identifying the causes in dependence on which laxity and excitement arise: see text.**

2. **What to do while free from laxity and excitement:** Here it talks about the equanimity of application which is the final antidote for the final obstacle: over-application. If there is no laxity or excitement in the mind then one should not strive to apply antidotes which would at that point disturb the mind. This mainly talks about the 8th stage of calm-abiding, where due to being so habituated with applying antidotes one can be over-cautious and apply them without needing to. Then there is a summary (p217 explaining the meaning of the scriptural passage ). [*GJG commentary*:

By means of serviceability of body and mind, all purposes are achieved. By abandoning the five faults and relying on the eight applications, meditative stabilization is achieved. The five faults are (1) laziness, (2) forgetting the observed object or the instructions, (3) laxity and excitement, (4) the non-application of the antidote when either laxity or excitement have arisen, and (5) the application of the antidote when neither laxity or excitement have arisen.

The antidotes to laziness are set out saying “the base and what is based on it, the cause and the effect of it.” The antidotes to the other four faults are: (1) to not forget the observed object, (2) to investigate whether laxity or excitement have arisen, (3) to manifestly apply the antidote that abandons them, and (4) to set the mind in its natural state when they have been pacified.

“Based on that” means that based on generating joyous effort in order to eliminate unfavorable conditions, this being laziness, the meditative stabilization that is a serviceable mind arises. Since this meditative stabilization is the cause of achieving the legs of magical emanation that accomplish all purposes, such as the six clairvoyances, the five eyes, and so forth; it is the basis or source, whereby all purposes are achieved. Such meditative stabilization, which is mainly calm abiding, comes from the cause that is abandoning the five faults and relying on the eight applications.

At the time of application, laziness is a fault because due to it one does not apply oneself to meditative stabilization. Instead one thinks “Today I am too tired, I cannot concentrate. It is better for me to sleep. It is better for me to watch a movie. It is better for me to go for a walk, to go dancing, and so forth,” due to which one does not meditate in order to develop meditative stabilization.

Then even when one puts effort into meditative stabilization, when setting the mind on its observed object one forgets the instructions one received regarding meditation. This is a fault because if one forgets the observed object, there is no meditative equipoise on the observed object. When equipoised, if laxity or excitement arise, these two are faults because they make the mind unserviceable. When laxity and excitement arise, if one does not make an effort to apply the antidote this is a fault because these two will not be pacified. Therefore, at this time the intention the moves the mind toward the antidote is necessary. On the other hand, if the mind is free from laxity and excitement, the intention to apply the antidote is a fault.

When laxity and excitement are counted together as one fault there are a total of five faults, but when they are counted separately there are six faults as mentioned in *Stages of Meditation*.

The five faults are laziness, forgetfulness, laxity and excitement, non-application, and overapplication. There are four antidotes to laziness: (1) faith, (2) aspiration, (3) effort, and (4) pliancy. The antidote to forgetfulness is mindfulness, the antidote to laxity and excitement is introspection, the antidote to non-application is the intention to apply the antidote, and the antidote to over-application is the equanimity in which the mind is set in its natural state (this being the equanimity of compositional factors



from among the three types of equanimity).]

2. **The stages of quiescence that arise in dependence on it:** [Shahar: Here Rinpoche explained these three headings by combining into one presentation, following the nine stages of the first heading. In order to present this clearly, I will just give the names for the stages/powers/attentions here (please see text for the definitions), colour code them for reference, then underneath follow Rinpoche's presentation. Keep the diagram of how to develop calm-abiding (the one with the monkey and elephant! See Appendix 2) as Rinpoche explained some of the different parts of this. Also helpful to is the chart, Appendix 3.]

A. **The actual stages of quiescence that arise:** p218

- 1) Placement;
- 2) Continuous Placement;
- 3) Patchy Placement;
- 4) Close Placement;
- 5) Taming;
- 6) Pacification;
- 7) Complete Pacification;
- 8) Making Single-Pointed;
- 9) Even Placement.

- B. **The method for accomplishing them by means of the six powers:** p219-220. [Shahar: just for clarity: accomplishes means the power was applied prior. So first one applies the first power in order to accomplish the first stage, while on the first stage he starts applying the second power until he accomplishes the second stage, etc.]

- 1) Power of Hearing – Accomplishes Placement
- 2) Power of Thinking – Accomplishes Continuous Placement
- 3) Power of Mindfulness – Accomplishes Patchy Placement + Close Placement
- 4) Power of Introspection – Accomplishes Taming and Pacification
- 5) Power of Joyous Effort – Accomplishes Complete Pacification + Making Single-Pointed
- 6) Power of Thorough Acquaintance – Accomplishes Even Placement

C. **How they involve the four types of attention:** p221

- 1) Tight Engagement – Needed during Placement and Continuous Placement
- 2) Interrupted Engagement – Needed during Patchy Placement, Close Placement, Taming, Pacification and Complete Pacification (3 – 7)
- 3) Uninterrupted Engagement – Needed during Making Single-Pointed
- 4) Effortless Engagement – Needed during Even Placement

[Rinpoche's explanation:]

1) **Placement** – This first stage is accomplished through having heard the instruction on how to develop calm-abiding from a spiritual teacher (**Power of Hearing**) and merely attempting the practice, being able to abide on the object for a very short amount of time. There are many conceptual elaborations, due to excitement and agitation, in fact it seems as though they have multiplied! However this is not the case, rather it is merely that we are now able to recognise this coarse excitement / agitation. Here the mind cannot really remain on the object, therefore this stage is called Settling the Mind / Placement, since we must repeatedly place the mind on the object using **Tight Engagement**.

In the diagram: We can see the meditator holding his two tools: the rope (mindfulness) and hook (introspection), and chasing after his mind (the elephant) which in turn is chasing after the monkey (excitement). We can see a great fire, which indicates the level of effort needed.

2) **Continuous Placement** – Here the mind is able to abide on the object for around a minute (or 1 mala of OM MANI PADME HUM). This is accomplished through the **Power of Thinking**, and we continue to apply **Tight Engagement**. Due to this, it seems as though sometimes the conceptual elaborations take a break.

3) **Patchy Placement** – Through applying the **Power of Mindfulness** we achieve this third stage

where our placement is said to be patchy, like when a piece of cloth has holes in it and one patches it up. Similarly, here when the mind wanders one immediately recognises this and brings the mind back. Here we start applying **Interrupted Engagement**.

In the diagram: Here we see that the elephant is roped, indicating the power of mindfulness has a hold of the mind. Also the elephant is turning his head back, showing that he no longer uncontrollably chases after the monkey (excitement). Also we first see the rabbit, which is subtle laxity, meaning the practitioner is first able to distinguish between coarse and subtle laxity.

**4) Close Placement** – We accomplish this stage by strengthening the **Power of Mindfulness** to such an extent that coarse excitement is completely overcome. Therefore the mind no longer loses its object. However now there is a need to start using introspection to regularly check how well the object is being held by the mind. We are still applying **Interrupted Engagement**.

**5) Taming** – At this stage the mind is very well gathered inwards and we have completely overcome coarse laxity. This is accomplished through the **Power of Introspection**. At this point subtle laxity becomes the main danger, so one needs to uplift the mind, however since subtle excitement is still possible there has to be a balance between the two. We are still applying **Interrupted Engagement**.

In the diagram: Here we see the use of the hook which indicates introspection.

**6) Pacification** – At this stage one has progressively reduced both subtle laxity and excitement using the **Power of Introspection**, which is said to be perfected, until there isn't much left for it to check! We are still applying **Interrupted Engagement**.

**7) Complete Pacification** – The powers of mindfulness and introspection having been perfected by the previous stage, one applies the **Power of Effort** in order to accomplish this stage. Due to this effort, at this point even if subtle laxity or excitement arise they are instantly recognised without any doubt or uncertainty, and as such they are gradually eliminated. We are still applying **Interrupted Engagement**.

**8) Making Single-Pointed** – Through having strengthening one's Power of Effort, one accomplishes this stage at which point subtle laxity and excitement have been completely eliminated, therefore the mind has the ability to stay on the object for a very long time and there is not much reliance on introspection anymore. Here we start applying Uninterrupted Engagement, since after a slight initial effort through introspection no further effort is needed to keep the mind on the object since it is not interrupted by any laxity or excitement anymore.

**9) Even Placement** – Through familiarity with the previous stage this type of concentration becomes easy. Thus one accomplishes this final stage through the **Power of Thorough Acquaintance** (or Complete Familiarity). At this point, not only is one able to apply **Uninterrupted Engagement**, but one is able to do so without the slightest effort, rather it is spontaneous and constant. At this point one has achieved single-pointed concentration, but not yet calm-abiding.

## **The measure for the accomplishment of calm-abiding through meditation**

- A. **Indication of the dividing line between having accomplished it or not:** The mind accomplished through these nine stages is called Abiding Single-Pointedly with regard to the Desire Realm, and it is the best mind within the Desire Realm. However, this is not calm-abiding since it is not subsumed within the Form and Formless Realms. In order to be calm-abiding it must be conjoined with bliss and pliancy, which only pertains to those higher realms. In particular, whether or not one has accomplished calm-abiding depends on whether or not has developed pliancy of body and mind. Physical pliancy makes the body serviceable, removing all the hardships we currently endure when trying to practice virtue. Mental pliancy similarly removed all the mental hardships, like doubts/laziness/etc., making the mind able to effortlessly take on any virtuous object we want.

[p227 Clarification of Doubts:] Whether the development of calm-abiding becomes a non-Buddhist, Hinayana or Mahayana path is to do with the motivation with which it is practiced. Thus, with regard to which path to place it on, it could be developed before entering a path or after – however it is necessarily developed by the middling or great path of accumulation. Rinpoche started a discussion regarding precisely where calm-abiding and

the conceptual realisation of emptiness must be developed: we know a practitioner on the great path of accumulation definitely has calm-abiding since at that time they also achieve the Concentration of Continuous Dharma and attain Perfectly Final Concentration (training of going through the concentrations up to the peak of samsara then back down, etc.), but then one could wonder whether it is already necessary to develop by the middling path or only for the great path. Then with regard to the conceptual realisation of emptiness, it is not necessary to be on a path in order to develop this, since there are those bodhisattvas of sharp faculties who are said to develop the conceptual realisation before entering the path. However, if one is on a path one does not necessarily have the conceptual realisation of emptiness, since it is possible to be on the small path of accumulation for example without having generated it. Here again one can wonder where exactly is it necessary to develop it by: it is definitely necessary by the great path of accumulation since one needs to unite it with calm-abiding in order to progress onto the path of preparation, but is it necessary to generate while on the middling path of accumulation? On the middling path of accumulation the bodhisattva develops gold-like bodhicitta which means that their bodhicitta cannot degenerate anymore, and they will definitely continue all the way up to enlightenment, so what is the reason for that? Probably it is due to the conceptual realisation of emptiness, otherwise what would be the reason for that? Could it be the development of calm-abiding? I don't think that would be sufficient, rather it must be something that is related to the view. So this is a point to investigate.

- B. **General indication of how to traverse the path in reliance on calm-abiding:** mundane special insight is common also to non-Buddhists, and involves progressively viewing the faults of the level below one's level of concentration and the advantages of the level above, thus progressing up through the concentrations. Supramundane special insight in general realises the sixteen aspects of the four noble truths, and in particular selflessness.
- C. **Indication of how to traverse mundane paths in particular:** See text (p229) and Appendix 2

This note summary is based on my [Shahar Tene] notes taken during Dagri Rinpoche's teachings, extracts from the commentary by Geshe Jampa Gyatso, and extracts from the text. Any mistakes are mine.



## Four Branches of The Ten Non-Virtuous Paths of Actions

	BASIS	ATTITUDE	PERFORMANCE	COMPLETION
KILLING	A sentient being other than oneself.	<b>Discrimination</b> 1. Discriminating a sentient being to be a sentient being (unmistaken). 2. Discriminating a sentient being not to be a sentient being (mistaken). 3. Discriminating what is not a sentient being not to be a sentient being (unmistaken). 4. Discriminating what is not a sentient being to be a sentient being (mistaken). ➤ Discrimination of the basis needs to be unmistakable and the motivation can be either specific or general. <b>Mental affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons. <b>Motivation</b> The wish to kill.	<b>Performer</b> It is the same whether you do it yourself or cause someone else to do it. <b>Entity of the performance</b> To do it by means of a weapon, poison, mantra, etc.	➤ The death of the other being, before your own death in dependence upon the condition of your performance. (Brought to completion by hatred.)
STEALING	Anything that someone else owns.	<b>Discrimination</b> To have an unmistakable discrimination of something as belonging to someone else. <b>Mental affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons. <b>Motivation</b> The wish to take something from another person without it having been given.	<b>Performer</b> It is the same whether you do it yourself or cause someone else to do it. <b>Entity of the performance</b> 1. It is the same whether you take something by force or by stealth. 2. Also applies to being deceitful with respect to a debt or trust as well as any fraudulent means of stealing. 3. And whether done for your own or another's purpose.	➤ The arising of the thought that one has obtained it, or the arising of that thought in someone you made steal. (Brought to completion by attachment.)

	BASIS	ATTITUDE	PERFORMANCE	COMPLETION
SEXUAL MISCONDUCT	<p><b>Inappropriate persons (5)</b> 1. Your mother &amp; close female relatives, 2. women under the care of their mothers, 3. all men, 4. eunuchs, &amp; 5. ordained women.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate body parts</b> All those other than the vagina.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate places</b> In the vicinity of gurus, stupas, etc.</p> <p><b>Inappropriate times</b> Pregnancy, one-day vows, etc.</p>	<p><b>Discrimination</b> 1. Unmistaken discrimination is necessary (<i>Compendium</i>). 2. Discrimination can be either unmistakable or mistaken for a defeat of impure conduct (Vinaya). 3. Excludes discriminating someone else's wife as your own; discriminating another's wife as someone else's wife may or may not be sexual misconduct (<i>Commentary on the Treasury</i>)</p> <p><b>Mental affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons.</p> <p><b>Motivation</b> The wish for intercourse.</p>	<p>Consists in endeavoring for this purpose.</p>	<p>➤ The union of the two body parts.</p> <p>(Brought to completion by attachment.)</p>
LYING	<p><b>Basis of expression (8)</b> That which one has: 1. seen, 2. heard, 3. discerned by the nose, tongue, or body, 4. become fully aware of (cognised); as well as their four opposites (e.g., the not seen and so forth).</p> <p><b>Object that comprehends</b> The other person who understands the meaning.</p>	<p><b>Discrimination</b> Making something that has been seen, into something that has not been seen, etc.</p> <p><b>Mental affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons.</p> <p><b>Motivation</b> The wish to say something through changing the discrimination.</p>	<p><b>The actual performance (3)</b> Indicating something by: 1. saying it, 2. intentionally not saying anything, and 3. through body language.</p> <p><b>Clearing up doubts</b> ➤ It is the same whether you say it for your own or someone else's purposes. ➤ It can also be done by making others do it (<i>Treatise on the Grounds &amp; Treasury</i>). ➤ You yourself must speak (Vinaya).</p>	<p><b>The actual completion</b> The other person understands what has been said.</p> <p><b>Clearing up doubts</b> If it is not understood, it becomes merely idle talk (<i>Treasury</i>).</p> <p>(Brought to completion by any of the mental poisons.)</p>

	BASIS	ATTITUDE	PERFORMANCE	COMPLETION
DIVISIVE SPEECH	Sentient beings who are in agreement or disagreement with each other.	<b>Discrimination</b> Should be unmistakable (knowing what will divide them or keep them apart).  <b>Mental affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons.  <b>Motivation</b> 1. The wish to divide those who are in agreement; or 2. for those in disagreement not to be reconciled.	➤ The expression of subject matter that may be either pleasant or unpleasant and may be either true or false. ➤ It can also be done by making others do it ( <i>Treatise on the Grounds &amp; Treasury</i> ). ➤ You yourself must speak (Vinaya).	<b>The actual completion</b> The other person understands what has been said.  <b>Clearing up doubts</b> If it is not understood, it becomes merely idle talk ( <i>Treasury</i> ).  (Brought to completion by any of the mental poisons.)
HARSH WORDS	A sentient being who has become the basis for the arising of a hostile attitude.	<b>Discrimination</b> Should be unmistakable (knowing what will harm the being).  <b>Mental Affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons.  <b>Motivation</b> The wish to speak with harsh speech.	➤ Saying whatever unpleasant truths or untruths about a person's: 1) lineage, 2) body, 3) morality, 4) behavior. ➤ It can also be done by making others do it ( <i>Treatise on the Grounds &amp; Treasury</i> ). ➤ You yourself must speak (Vinaya).	<b>The actual completion</b> The other person understands what has been said.  <b>Clearing up doubts</b> If it is not understood, it becomes merely idle talk ( <i>Treasury</i> ).  (Brought to completion by hatred.)
IDLE TALK	A meaningless topic. <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;">             1. Speaking of disputes, divisions, faultfinding;              2. Speaking about news of nations, thieves, etc;              3. Speaking of laughter, play, entertainment;              4. Speaking like a drunkard or lunatic;              5. Expressions of helplessness such as wailing;              6. The talk of one who maintains a wrong livelihood.              7. Reciting the texts of non-Buddhists while delighting in them. LRCM p.224           </div>	<b>Discrimination</b> ➤ Discriminating the topic that one wishes to express. ➤ There is no need for someone to understand.  <b>Mental Affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons.  <b>Motivation</b> The wish to talk disconnectedly and randomly.	➤ Uttering idle talk. ➤ It can also be done by making others do it ( <i>Treasury</i> ). ➤ You yourself must speak (Vinaya).	➤ To finish uttering the idle talk.  (Brought to completion by any of the mental poisons.)

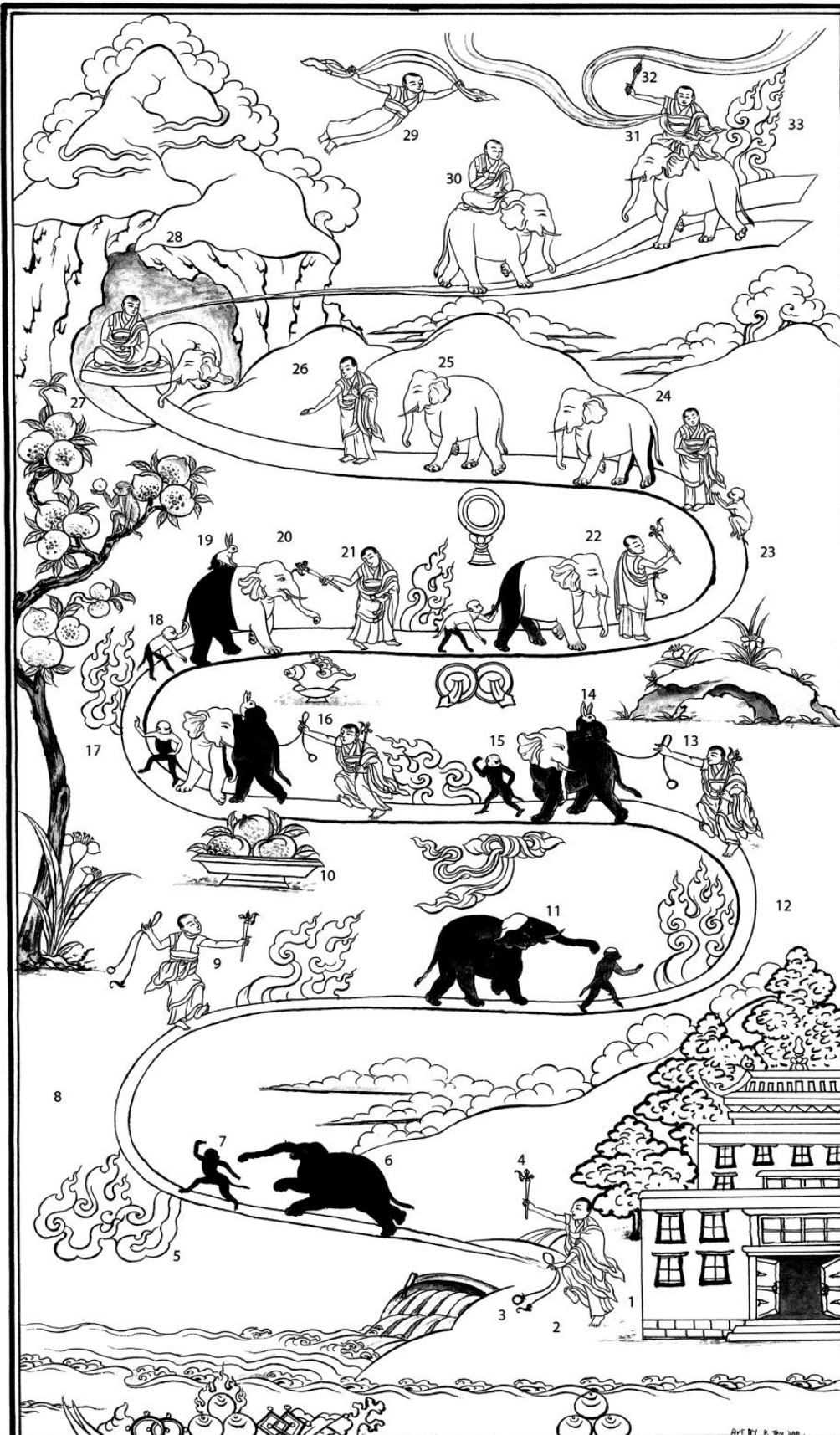
	BASIS	ATTITUDE	PERFORMANCE	COMPLETION
COVETOUSNESS	<p>An object owned by someone else.</p> <div> <b>Attitudes required for completion</b>  LRCM p224 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Grasping at one's own things.</li> <li>2. Attached – wanting more things.</li> <li>3. Longing for others' possessions.</li> <li>4. Envy for others' possessions.</li> <li>5. Not wanting to let go of this kind of mind.</li> </ol> </div>	<p><b>Discrimination</b> Discriminating that basis as that.</p> <p><b>Mental affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons.</p> <p><b>Motivation</b> The wish to make it one's own.</p>	<p>Mentally making an effort to obtain the object.</p>	<p>➤ The thought “May that object become mine.” (When our thoughts become even stronger and we resolve to take some action that will enable us to acquire the object.)</p> <p>(Brought to completion by attachment.)</p>
HARMFUL INTENT	<p>A sentient being who has become the basis for the arising of a hostile attitude.</p> <div> <b>Attitudes Required for Completion</b>  LRCM p225 <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An attitude of hostility;</li> <li>2. An impatient attitude;</li> <li>3. A resentful attitude;</li> <li>4. An envious attitude thinking “how nice it would be if my enemies were harmed.”;</li> <li>5. An attitude dominated by a lack of shame.</li> </ol> </div>	<p><b>Discrimination</b> Should be unmistakable (knowing what will harm the being).</p> <p><b>Mental Affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons.</p> <p><b>Motivation</b> The wish to harm someone, etc., to see them harmed etc., for their resources to decline, etc.</p>	<p>Application to this thought.</p>	<p>➤ The decision to carry out the harm that one contemplated.</p> <p>(Brought to completion by hatred.)</p>

	BASIS	ATTITUDE	PERFORMANCE	COMPLETION
WRONG VIEWS	<p>An object that exists.</p> <div> <p><b>Attitudes required for completion</b> LRCM p226</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An attitude of confusion due to not knowing the objects of knowledge correctly;</li> <li>2. A violent attitude due to delighting in non-virtue;</li> <li>3. An attitude that continuously operates in the wrong way because of pondering improper teachings;</li> <li>4. An attitude that is impaired because of a mistaken denial that thinks that things such as gifts, offerings, and right conduct do not exist;</li> <li>5. An attitude that is dominated by shamelessness and obliviousness about the determination to be free of its faults.</li> </ol> </div>	<p><b>Discrimination</b> Discriminating the denial of an object that exists as true.</p> <p><b>Mental Affliction</b> Any of the three mental poisons.</p> <p><b>Motivation</b> The wish to deny the existence of an object that exists.</p>	<p><b>The actual performance</b> Applying oneself to such a thought.</p> <p><b>Divisions</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Denying causes (“Excellent conduct and faulty conduct do not exist”)</li> <li>2. Denying results (“Fully ripened effects of the two do not exist.”)</li> <li>3. Denying activities             <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the mistaken denial of the activities of planting and retaining seeds (“There is no planting of a seed by the father and no retaining of a seed by the mother)</li> <li>b) the mistaken denial of the activities of going and coming (“There is no coming from a former existence to this one and no going from this to a future one.”)</li> <li>c) the mistaken denial of the activity of being born (“There is no intermediate state miraculously born sentient beings.”)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. Denying existent things (“Arhats and so forth do not exist.”)</li> </ol>	<p>➤ Certainty with respect to one’s denial.</p> <p>(Brought to completion by ignorance.)</p>

### Characteristics Applying to all Ten Non-Virtuous Actions

- ❖ Discrimination of the basis needs to be unmistakable and the motivation can be either specific or general (presented in the context of Killing).
- ❖ Five qualities that are required to make an action, word, or thought complete (presented in the context of Covetousness LRCM p224):
  - 1) Having a mind that is exceedingly attached to your own resources;
  - 2) Having a mind of attachment that wants to accumulate resources;
  - 3) Having a mind of longing due to comprehending or experiencing the good things of others – their wealth and so forth;
  - 4) Having an envious mind, thinking that whatever is another’s should be your own;
  - 5) Having a mind that is overcome, due to covetousness, by shamelessness and an obliviousness about the determination to be free from the faults of covetousness.

# Attainment of Calm Abiding by Means of the Nine Stages of Mental Quiescence





Fault	Antidote
1. laziness	1. faith 2. aspiration 3. effort 4. pliancy
2. forgetfulness	5. mindfulness
3. laxity and excitement	6. introspection
4. non-application	7. intention
5. over-application	8. equanimity

1. The first stage is attained through the **power of hearing**.

## **2. Stage 1 - Setting the mind**

3. Mindfulness

4. Introspection

5. From here until the seventh stage the flame progressively decreases in size until it becomes absent. This difference denotes the measure of the strength of effort required regarding mindfulness and introspection.

6. The elephant is the mind and the black color symbolizes laxity.

7. The monkey is the proliferation of thoughts and the black color symbolizes excitement.

8. The second stage is attained through the **power of thinking**.

## **9. Stage 2 - Continuous setting**

10. Excitement has the five sense pleasures as its objects.

11. From here, the black color progressively becomes white. This symbolizes the factor of clarity and the factor of stability progressively increasing.

12. The third and fourth stages are attained through the **power of mindfulness**.

## **13. Stage 3 - Resetting**

14. The rabbit is subtle laxity. From here, one can individually identify coarse and subtle laxity.

15. Looking back means that having recognized that the mind has wandered, it is again directed back to the object.

## **16. Stage 4 - Close setting**

17. The fifth and sixth stages are attained through the **power of introspection**.

18. The potential for excitement to arise prior to meditation has weakened.

19. Since virtuous thoughts are an interruption at the time of samatha meditation, it is necessary to stop them. At other times it is not necessary.

20. Due to introspection the mind does not fall into scattering and through being uplifted, it is drawn into concentration.

## **21. Stage 5 – Disciplining**

## **22. Stage 6 – Pacifying**

23. The seventh and eighth stages are attained through the **power of effort**.

## **24. Stage 7 - Thorough pacifying**

At this stage it is difficult for subtle laxity or excitement to arise and even if they do arise a little, they are immediately eliminated with the slightest effort.

25. The black color of the elephant is gone and there is no monkey. This means that in dependence on initially applying a little mindfulness and introspection, the mind can engage continuously in concentration without any potential of being interrupted by laxity, excitement or thoughts.

## **26. Stage 8 - Making one-pointed**

27. The ninth stage is attained through the **power of familiarity**.

## **28. Stage 9 - Setting in equipoise**

29. Physical pliancy

30. Mental pliancy

31. Attainment of **calm abiding (samatha)**

32. The root of samsara is cut by the union of calm abiding (samatha) and special insight (vipassana) observing emptiness.

33. Equipped with mindfulness and introspection, seek the correct view of emptiness.

# Concentrations and Formless Absorptions

**Definite emergence from:**

discrimination of nothingness

**Peak of Cyclic Existence**

**Formless realm**

**Nothingness**

**Infinite Consciousness**

**Infinite Space**

discrimination of infinite consciousness

discrimination of infinite space

discrimination of forms and obstructions

**Form realm**

**4th concentration**

**3rd concentration**

**2nd concentration**

**1st concentration**

8 – result of final application

**Separation from attachment to:**

subtle happiness

coarse happy feelings and mental happiness

unfortunate states that are subtle suffering feelings

coarse suffering feelings and mental unhappiness

**Antidote branch**

completely pure mindfulness & equanimity

mindfulness, introspection & equanimity

internal clarity

investigation & analysis

**Benefit branch**

equanimity feeling

happiness which is isolated from joy

joy & happiness from meditative stabilization

joy & happiness from isolation

**Basis branch**

meditative stabilization

meditative stabilization

meditative stabilization

meditative stabilization

**\*8 attentions**

- 7 - final training (... 3 small...)
- 6 - analysis
- 5 - joy-withdrawal (... 3 middling...)
- 4 - isolation (abandoned 3 great desire realm afflictions)
- 3 - belief (calm ab. & sp. insight)
- 2 - individual knowledge of character
- 1 - mere beginner (calm-abiding)

**Desire realm**

**9 mental abidings**

- 9) Even placement
- 8) Making single-pointed
- 7) Complete pacification
- 6) Pacification
- 5) Taming
- 4) Close placement
- 3) Patchy placement
- 2) Continuous placement
- 1) Placement

\* Note: these attentions are required to attain each of the form realm concentrations and formless realm absorptions