

FPMT BASIC PROGRAM ONLINE
Minds and Mental Factors

Transcript of the Commentary
by
Venerable George Churinoff

for the FPMT Basic Program
at Land of Medicine Buddha

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Transcript of the commentary

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A Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness

Clearly Revealing the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors

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April 2004

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Note from the editor

The root text, Kachen Yeshe Gyaltsen's *Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness Clearly Revealing the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors*, translated by Toh Sze Gee, is indented and in a letter type different from the transcript. Quotes from Geshe Rabten's *Mind and its Functions* and Jeffrey Hopkins' *Meditation on Emptiness* (from the section on minds and mental factors, pages 235-268) are in italics. The editor's clarifying additions in the transcript are in square brackets [].

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Minds and Mental Factors

Transcript of the commentary by Venerable George Churinoff

Land of Medicine Buddha, 2003

DVD 1

Meditation

Let's do a little bit of meditation to calm our minds, especially since it is our first class. Try to set a very special motivation both for tonight and for this whole course. The reason for doing so is not just to accumulate knowledge, not just for this life, but in order to accumulate all of the equipment so to speak, that we need in order to practice for the benefit of others, to make our hearts bigger, to overcome our faults, our attachment, our pride, our jealousy or depression.

So let's begin very simple, by sitting comfortable with the back erect, watching your breathing first of all.

Try to progressively take your attention away from the senses and focus just on the inhalation and the exhalation; recognizing them individually; just be that breath! Let go of all other thoughts, worries and preoccupations.

Note when your mind is partially engaging in other activities, watching the activity at your eyes or ears or body consciousness or just engaging in other thinking. Try to disengage it away from that – back to just watching the breathing. Especially at the endpoints, when the direction of the breathing is changing, don't let your mind wander.

When your mind is somewhat concentrated – quieted at least – follow one breath up, as though you were following it up your nostrils, as though in the psychic body it went up to the crown of your head, to your throat, to your heart and just remain in that area with your concentration leaving the observation of the breathing. Just watch the mind – the mind watching itself.

And between the business, the clutter, the worry, the fear, the excitement, maybe confusion also, there are moments of quiet and clarity. See if you can hold on to those moments when they occur. Think of withdrawing your attention away from the outer senses to your heart. Like a breath on a mirror, as it dissipates, it comes to a little circle.

Whatever occurs in your mind, don't grasp at it, don't perpetuate it by your fascination with it or your worry about it. Just let it go! Let's see if you can again perceive the conventional nature of your mind – its clear light spacious, unobstructed, un-obstructing nature.

This is our inner potential, within which we can develop all the good qualities, from which we can extricate, eliminate all faults, all bad habits, all negative states of mind, – however long it takes.

Think of how fortunate we are, to have this opportunity to be alive, with all the Dharma still existing in the world, to have spiritual friends and patrons, to provide the conditions like this to meet and think about the Dharma, and also how fragile, short-lived, this situation is. Conditions are changing, outer conditions, inner conditions. Either our body becomes incapable of living or the conditions to practice the Dharma disappear, but even while this exists, it's dissipating in every moment. We are getting closer to the inevitable end of our life.

Knowing what we can do with this life, rather than simply accumulating more pleasures of the senses or food or clothing or protection – that we can actually create the causes of future happiness, create the causes of actually leaving cyclic existence finding real liberation and peace of mind, even develop the good heart and the altruistic wish to help sentient beings; we can do that within this lifetime. Recognizing however that it's changing every moment, that we are approaching our death with every instance, we must develop a sense of purpose, of resolution, 'I have to make use of this incredible opportunity!'

All living beings have exactly this same potential of the mind behind their individual karmic differences, their appearances, their present states of minds that seem to be elevated or depressed or whatever. All of us have exactly the same nature of mind – clear light.

We have been intimately related with every living being over numberless lives. Whatever problems we may have had this lifetime or whatever delight we may have had in their companionship this lifetime. All of that has happened again and again in equal amounts over numberless lives in the past. All of these beings are exactly like us – wanting to be happy, wanting to be free of suffering.

The most perfect Buddha taught, 'The most sublime purpose we can use this life for is to develop that ability to help sentient beings perfectly, to become enlightened, selfless, wise, kind, loving, compassionate, skillful.' So think, 'For that purpose, for that aim, I'm going to participate in the class tonight, – and, as long as I can, take part in this series of study as the great practitioners of the past in Tibet and India have done, the great

Buddhist saints who studied the mind, studied the Buddha's teachings, revered by the great meditators. A path that can give us the necessary equipment we need in listening to the teachings, in order to contemplate them, in order to meditate on them. So for the dual purposes, my own aim of finding the dharmakaya – becoming totally blissful and free, and for the purpose of others – to emanate aid and guidance for them through the various form bodies of the Buddha, I'm going to listen to the teachings both tonight and in this series in this lifetime – for that aim.'

Then relax. Bring your attention back to the present.

Teaching 1

[Introduction]

This course is on a particular aspect of Buddhist psychology, on the minds and the mental factors. The text to be studied is *A Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness, Clearly Revealing the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors* by Yeshe Gyaltsen.

There is a nice supplementary text, if you would want to get it, by one of my teachers, Geshe Rabten, from lectures he gave many years ago in Switzerland, called *The Mind and its Functions*. Some of you might have this from when we studied Lorig before – it has two parts, one of it what we studied in Lorig (*Awarenesses and Knowers*) and one on the psychological aspect of this course (*Minds and Mental Factors*)

This subject matter is incredibly applicable to practice. One doesn't have to wonder how it might be applied to practice, because all of our life activity, all of our happiness, all of our suffering depends upon our mind. We can see that. It doesn't depend primarily on outer conditions. Primarily it depends upon our state of mind. Outer conditions can be really terrible. As it's said in Lama Chöpa, 'Undesired suffering is falling like rain.' Does that sound familiar, in your own experience? Yet your mind could be very blissful in the midst of that. On the other hand you could be having all sorts of seemingly nice conditions, good friends, success in life, pleasures of the senses etc., but be unsatisfied, maybe jealous and unhappy. The mind is really the core the Buddha taught, is the core essential point to look for, to look at and investigate in order to find happiness. When we start to get a little bit of control of our own mind, then we can start to help others also.

When you are on an airplane and introduced to safety-regulations concerning the use of oxygen masks, what do they tell you to do first, when the oxygen masks fall down? To put it on yourself first! You might think, 'That's heartless, you should put it on your little child first!' – but in order to help others you have to be at least a little bit together. When we talk about the stages of developing the mind, first of all – even if you have the intention of really being totally altruistic, and that's your ultimate aim – somehow you have to look at your own mind first, at your own garbage. Clean up your own act! Get strong! Then you

will be in a position not only to avoid harming others – if you are less angry, less proud, less jealous, less boisterous, less depressed – you will actually have the time and space, as your mind gets more content, to seek methods to help others. But first you have to be able to control your own mind. It's not that you immediately set out to try to benefit others. I think the example of the oxygen masks on the plane is quite useful.

We are fortunate to have a chance to study this text – written by a great Tibetan saint, called Yeshe Gyaltsen. He was one of the main teachers at one of the most famous monasteries in Tibet. He was a great scholar and this is a very interesting text. It wasn't usually part of the curriculum in the main monasteries, minds and mental factors was studied a little bit on the side. We have an excellent translation by the dakini student Toh Sze Gee from Singapore, who was a student of the Masters Program in Italy. This is one of the classic texts that most of the lamas in the Tibetan tradition, especially the Gelugpa tradition would know of. It's not like some obscure strange text that people would say, 'I have never heard of that one.' It was translated many years ago by Herbert Günther, *Mind in Buddhist Psychology*, but that translation is difficult to understand, probably because Herbert Günther was trying to use the terminology of modern psychology. Our translation is just based on the text it self, which makes a lot of sense.

The text by Geshe Rabten, one part of it, the second half of the text, is also talking about minds and mental factors. Those of you who have a chance may find this to be nice to augment your study with. Basically all the material – the definitions and the divisions, the way to understand and to identify these mental factors – comes from the Abhidharma literature. One of the big sections there is about the mind. Basically in the northern Buddhist tradition that came to Tibet, we talk about the two Abhidharmas. We talk about the Mahayana Abhidharma and the Abhidharma of the Lesser Vehicle or the lesser Abhidharma. The famous text written by Vasubandhu is called the *Abhidharmakosha*. His brother Asanga wrote the text referred to by the Upper Abhidharma, called the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*. A lot of the definitions, as you will see, quote one or the other of those texts or many other texts, when it's going into an explanation of the various factors of mind. That's good to know.

Let's take a look inside, let's see what we are getting into here. Usually the Tibetan text itself doesn't have a table of contents but this is useful, to see the way the text is set out. First of all there is some introduction and then the explanation of minds follows. Five pages are talking about mind in general as opposed to mental factors and then there is a large explanation of all of the various fifty-one mental factors as explained in the Mahayana Abhidharma.

The Tibetan text doesn't say 'introduction'. It just begins, often with a set of verses of praise and supplication in order to create the merit, to be able to be successful in writing the text

and in our case in studying the text. Then there will be a verse that is kind of like the author's promise or firm determination to write the text.

I prostrate and go for refuge at all times at the feet of the holy venerable guru who is inseparable from the protector Manjugosha. Please always take care of me with your great mercy.

This could be understood in general to be taking refuge in ones own guru, one's own lama (which is the Tibetan translation of the Sanskrit word guru). Here you think of your own teachers as inseparable with the divine wisdom aspect of the Buddha, Manjushri or Manjugosha; you prostrate and go for refuge to them.

Secondly there is a praise of Shakyamuni Buddha.

You have completed the two collections through the force of exalted compassion,
Eliminated obscuring darkness and know all phenomena,
Clarifying what you yourself have seen for migrating beings;
I bow down to the unsurpassed refuge Lord Muni.

Munindra in Sanskrit means the Lord of Munis. The two collections are the accumulations of merit and wisdom.

In order to achieve enlightenment you need to actually do something; it's not something that just comes to you – you just get into the right position and then it suddenly happens to you. You have to create the causes and conditions for it. Basically everything can be included in two kinds of causes and conditions. One is the side of merit collecting. Which is not like St. Peter in Christianity, who keeps track of what you did, at the gate to heaven – sometimes people are resistant to do things just for some kind of brownie points or some kind of merit. But the virtuous karma that we collect, when dedicated toward enlightenment, helps to constitute the collection of merit. The collection of wisdom comes about when you are able to meditate on the higher wisdom, not just the wisdom of impermanence or other kinds of conventional wisdom, but the wisdom of emptiness that acts as the eye, the sight that can guide us ultimately out of samsara. So we need those two kinds of collections.

Here it's praising Lord Buddha, Shakyamuni, who was called the King, or the Lord, of Sages, or the Munindra. The Buddha had various names at various points in his life. When he was a young child, during the plowing ceremony in springtime he sat under a tree and went into trance, while all the festivities were going on. For many hours he remained in total concentration, and afterwards he was given the name Sage or Muni. Muni means the Controlled One, or Sage, of the Shakya-clan, so we call him Shakyamuni. That wasn't his name at birth, but one of the various titles he received when he was very young. Here it just says the Munindra, the Lord of Sages, the Lord of Munis.

You have completed the two collections through the force of exalted compassion,
Eliminated obscuring darkness and know all phenomena,
Clarifying what you yourself have seen for migrating beings;

I bow down to the unsurpassed refuge Lord Muni.

This is the prostration to Shakyamuni. Migrating beings, drowa in Tibetan, means those who are going or migrating through cyclic existence, through the six realms of cyclic existence without pause. If we are not in one of the six realms, we could be in the bardo. The bardo is not one of the six realms, but it is also some place that we migrate. The Buddha wasn't just propounding some theory. I have a sense that a lot of new age teachers, having heard a little of this and that, a little astrology, sort of put everything together and then present it as though it was some kind of accomplished system. This is something the Buddha himself realized, what he saw in reality and made known for sentient beings.

Due to your earnest single-pointed love for migrating beings,
You are renowned as "Protector Maitri" in all three times;

This is talking about Maitreya – the Sanskrit maitri means love; in Tibetan it's jam gong, jampa means the loving one, gong means protector – or Loving Lord.

To the regent of the conqueror,...

What does that mean, what is a regent? In the twelve deeds of all of the buddhas who will come to this world system, one of the deeds is the descend from Tushita heaven where they are the regent. They are teaching in Tushita heaven – one of the pure realms, not just the god realm called Tushita. When Shakyamuni actually left Tushita and descended to earth to his mother's womb, he passed on the leadership, the crown, the duty of teaching and of being the regent of Tushita, to Maitreya, who will be the next buddha.

...the Protector Ajita,

Ajita means unconquered, unconquerable. That's one of the names or epithets of Maitreya. In the meaning that love can't be conquered.

I pay homage with heartfelt respect.

First there was the prostration as respect to one's guru, whom we try to see as inseparable with the Buddha, especially the Buddha of Wisdom. Then we do prostrations to Shakyamuni and to Maitreya.

You have been predicted by the Sugata himself,
Clarified the excellent systems of the profound and the extensive, and are
Greatly renowned as the "Great Trailblazers";
I prostrate to the Six Ornaments and Two Supremes of Jambudvpa.

Jambudvpa – the Tibetan is jambuling; in Sanskrit dvipa means island or land – the Land of Jambu.

Who is the Sugata? It's to be translated as well-gone; sometimes it's translated as gone to bliss, but that's not a proper translation. The prefix su in Sanskrit is a superlative, gata is the past participle of to go – it means well gone. It's another name for the Buddha.

Clarified the excellent systems of the profound and the extensive,...

We talk about the two collections of merit and wisdom. In order to achieve the collection of merit you need to practice extensive deeds. When it says the extensive this is talking about the bodhisattvas activities which are conjoined with wisdom, but it is just talking about it from the point of view of the conventional level of reality; when we talk about the extensive we talk about the bodhisattvas activities as were explained by Shantideva in the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* and all the various activities of the bodhisattvas that were explained in the *Prajnaparamita Sutras*, the *Sutras of the Perfection of Wisdom*. The profound refers to wisdom, the practice of wisdom. When we say the systems of the profound and the extensive it's not exactly the same as merit and wisdom; the profound refers to the practice of wisdom by which you collect the collection of wisdom, or accumulate the collection of wisdom. And the extensive deeds or the extensive behavior is the way in which you achieve the collection of merit.

This talks about prostrating to these great beings that have clarified the excellent systems,

.....and are
Greatly renowned as the "Great Trailblazers";

– sometimes translated as the Charioteers. What does this mean? It's said that the Buddha himself set out all of these systems, but over time, very quickly, once the Buddha had passed away, it was as if the trail that had once been broken by the Buddha became overrun, like in the old days when the roads build by the ancient Romans had not been traveled on continuously, would get overrun by plants, and you wouldn't be able to see the way. Then the people who re-opened those paths, originally set down by the great armies of Rome, were charioteers, who were able to take their chariots over these areas not well known by others and find the right path. Those that found the intention of the Buddha is the correct meaning of this word.

I prostrate to the Six Ornaments and Two Supremes of Jambudvipa.

Jambudvipa is what is referred to as the Southern Continent or this world system. In the Abhidharma there is a whole discussion about what this meant. In Indian mythology Jambudvipa probably meant India itself.

The Six Ornaments: The Ornaments of the Middle Way are Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, his disciple; there are the Ornaments of Abhidharma, the two brothers we mentioned before, Asanga and Vasubandhu; and the Ornaments of Valid Cognition (pramana), Dignaga and Dharmakirti. Dignaga was the elder, and his disciple, separated via a generation, was Dharmakirti; they wrote the great texts on logic and valid cognition. So those are called the Six Ornaments. You will sometimes find *thanka's* depicting these beings in monasteries and Dharma centers. One way to tell is that there are six, so you know that's maybe the Six Ornaments; and also often some of them are shown in debating postures, because Aryadeva and Dignaga and Dharmakirti were known for their ability at logic etc. These were beings

especially revered by scholars, – not just scholars as opposed to practitioners – but beings who really understand the meaning of the scriptures, because these are the beings who re-clarified what Lord Buddha had meant; they explain what was meant by the sutras themselves. So they are called the Six Ornaments of the Southern Continent.

And the Two Supremes are the two acharyas, scholars, Sakyaprabha and Gunaprabha, who have written texts on discipline, the Vinaya. When we study in the monasteries, there are five great texts that are studied, and one of them is on the vinaya which is called the *Vinaya Sutra*, which is not an actual sutra taught by the buddha, but has that name, and was written by Gunuprabha; and Sakyaprabha wrote some other texts.

Essentially you are talking about the beings who explained the great texts. There are the Ornaments of the Middle Way, the Madhyamika; the Ornaments of the Abhidharma; the Ornaments of Pramana; and the Ornaments of Vinaya.

So there are four kinds of sets there. What's the fifth subject that is studied? Because those are the main subjects that are studied in the monasteries: Madhyamika, the philosophy of the Middle Way, then Abhidharma, once one has become very learned, and then all the way through the education the texts on valid cognition by Dignaga and Dharmakirti are studied. The 5th great text is on the perfection of wisdom – the *Prajnaparamita*. That is usually the subject they begin with. There would be some preliminary courses including what we have studied before this, Lorig, and Drupta or Tenets, what we study on Monday. After that they would go into studying the *Prajnaparamita*, which is mainly talking about the extensive deeds of the bodhisattvas, and in a hidden way it is talking about emptiness.

When they study *Prajnaparamita*, they are learning about emptiness but from some of the lower schools' points of view. Secondly they would study Madhyamika, the Middle Way school – the correct view of emptiness – expounded by Nagarjuna and Aryadeva, and by Chandrakirti and Shantideva. After many years of study – all along they would be studying the texts on valid cognition – they would study Abhidharma, especially the Lower Abhidharma in the geshe class, and the Vinaya, the rules of discipline as taught by the Buddha. After going all through this, they would review it over and over again – sometimes for decades, in the golden years of Tibet.

In this Land surrounded by snowmountains,
You caused the grove of the thousand-petaled (lotuses) of the sutras, tantras
And their commentaries to bloom anew, and are
Worthy of praise equal to the sun – Conqueror;
I bow down to the Lama Protector Manjugosha.

This is a praise to Lama Tsongkhapa, who was Tibetan of course. The prayer we do for His Holiness the Dalai Lama, gangri rawai, also goes 'in this land surrounded by snowy mountains' – so this is one of the epithets for Tibet, the Land of Snow Mountains, the Land of Snow. When I was in Mongolia, the white katags, the ceremonial scarfs, instead are usually blue – and when I asked why, they say 'oh, but you can get white ones too' – but

then they'd say 'Tibet is called the Land of Snow, but Mongolia is called the Land of the Blue Sky.' That's kind of interesting; very beautiful the sky is there, indeed! They also have snow though.

Lama Tsongkhapa, the founder of the Gelugpa tradition, was an absolutely astounding scholar and practitioner. If you have the chance to study his teachings you will see. When you have a chance to read about his life and study his texts you develop an incredible faith that he was really an emanation of an enlightened being. He re-vivified the study of the sutras and the tantras, as well as their commentaries, and clarified many points other people had misunderstood. So this is a praise to him.

Merely by seeing the light rays of your exalted activities,
The eye of awareness seeing the excellent path is illuminated;
May the venerable guru, the light of the day-maker,
Always abide at the lotus stamens of my heart.

Again an entreaty to the guru, whom we try to see as our conduit to the enlightened mind.

Finally a stanza of promising to compose the text along with a display of the author's own humility.

Although others will not benefit from a discourse by one such as me,
For the sake of enhancing my minds familiarity with the excellent explanations and
Due to having been exhorted by others,
I shall write a little on the modes of minds and mental factors in accordance with the texts on
Knowledge (Abhidharma).

It's traditional at the beginning of texts, besides trying to create conditions to be able to complete the text successfully, by praising and prostrating to one's gurus and holy beings, one also tries to make a firm determination that one is in fact going to do that. So maybe it would be worthwhile for us to try to make a firm determination, 'I'm going to study this course.'

So why don't we have a short break, for seven or eight minutes.

Let's continue here with the preliminaries – here it is talking about the rationale for studying this particular subject. Basically, understanding the nature of our mind and the mental factors is incredibly useful, because at the beginning of our practice, one of the main things we have to do is to try to control our mind – to get in control of what's happening. Right now we don't have control over our mind, the various factors of our mind. Usually negative factors arise and they control us. In order to get control you have to first identify, recognize, what's happening. So the very first step is to understand the defining characteristics of these various states of mind. For my own practice, from my own point of view this strategy has been very useful.

First of all you have to recognize all the things that have to be eliminated, and the things that have to be enhanced. You have to have defining characteristics, and you have to investigate that, and see if it makes sense, what the Buddha taught, that negative states of mind are indeed harmful, that they cause harm to us, and they cause harm for others. In

time one can begin to understand the deeper implications of that, of how they create negative karma. We can't see that states of mind create negative karma right now, we can only kind of surmise that from the teachings of the Buddha.

So this kind of text is very useful, because it gives us the defining characteristics, the divisions and all the different varieties of these mental factors. First you have to identify and recognize what the states are – both positive and negative. Let's take the negative states first of all. Once you have identified them, you have to recognize their shortcomings, like, 'Okay, there is anger in the mind!' Over a period of time, through your own experience, through the teachings of the Buddha, again and again contemplating that you have to develop a strong conviction that these states of mind, recognized by you as negative states of mind – let's say delusions – are harmful, and that they are actually your enemies.

At first you might say, 'I've got a lot of desire! That's good! go for it!!' or, 'Man, am I angry, but he needs it, that other person'. 'I have to vent my anger, and they deserve it.' At first we might recognize them, but even if we may have identified the delusions, we might not see their shortcomings.

So first comes recognizing, identifying them. The second step is to become convinced of their shortcomings. It's like when someone is trying to give up addictive behavior. If addicted to cigarettes or alcohol, people often don't even recognize that there is a problem. In therapy it sometimes has to be pointed out to them very clearly that this is a certain kind of behavior, they have to recognize what they are doing, and that the alcohol has this particular effect; in order to give it up, it's crucial to recognize and really become convinced that the addiction is destroying you and your loved ones. Without that step, without recognizing the defects of something, it's very difficult to give up any kind of addictive behavior.

You have to really become convinced of that, see the defects, then, the third step is to investigate what solutions there are, what the antidotes to those negative states of mind are. This is then where you would start to apply meditation to try to eradicate them. Right at the beginning, just to sit down with some book that says how to get rid of anger, just trying to do some meditation, is not enough. You are not going to have the energy to do that until you have first of all recognized what anger is in your own mind. It's not just when you feel uncomfortable – that's not anger; and it's not just being unhappy – that's not anger either. At first you might not be able to recognize what exactly defines anger. First you have to recognize it, then identify it and become convinced of its shortcomings, of its defects; then you are motivated from your own side to apply the antidotes.

There are antidotes. Let's say for instance the antidotes to anger; there are temporal antidotes and ultimate antidotes. Temporal antidotes in the sense that if that particular antidote is being cultivated in your mind, anger would not be able to be present at that time – simply by having cultivated the temporal antidote. The antidote to anger could be love for instance. If you get angry at people – not just at the sky, your Microsoft Word or whatever you are getting angry at – but if while you actually were getting angry at people, you were to cultivate a sense of loving kindness, wanting them to be happy, that itself would

preclude anger from being generated in your mind. That's a kind of temporal antidote.

There are many other temporal antidotes. Many of the teachings that Buddha gave in his many years of teaching were the various antidotes to the 84,000 delusions. Have you heard that expression, 84,000 delusions? The first is.... hmm... I think I mentioned this before, when I studied with Geshe Dhargay in India at the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives many years ago, Geshela started once saying 'There are 84,000 delusions - the first is ignorance..', and then he gave some defining characteristics of that, and the second was attachment and the third was anger, and then he went on to say that all the rest of the 84,000 could be included in those three, and then there was an audible sigh in the room, as though people were thinking '84,000... Okay... so that's going to be a while!!'

It's said in the sutras many times that the Buddha gave 84,000 teachings to counteract the 84,000 kinds of delusions. In general they are talking of many kinds of temporal antidotes, but the ultimate antidote to all of the delusions, serving to eradicate all of them in an ultimate way, so that they will never come back again in the future, is the realization of selflessness and emptiness. That's the wisdom side. The method side of our practice involves eliminating negative states and cultivating positive states - collecting merit, in other words, trying to avoid creating demerit or negative karma and creating positive karma, collecting merit. That becomes the support of our wisdom realizing ultimate truth and also provides cooperative conditions from life to life for our prosperity, for our happiness and comfort, so that we don't find adverse conditions to the path. It's very important to have that method side, not only to have wisdom.

The ultimate antidote to all delusions is the wisdom realizing emptiness, but in order to get to that point, you need to have the temporal antidotes cultivated from time to time. If you put all your energy into trying to recognize emptiness - thinking, 'That's the ultimate cure!' - there would be many other kinds of obstacles in your mind preventing you from realizing emptiness, like your own attachment and so forth. Emptiness is not something that can be captured and understood very quickly.

An example that makes a lot of sense to my own mind is to imagine for instance that we had to clean out a space to grow beautiful plants that's now overrun; it's full of rocks, and poisonous plants are growing there. If I were to go in there with a machete to cut down the plants, someone might try to make it clear to me that just cutting them down would be of no long term use, and that I would have to get down to the roots, because otherwise after the first rain and some sunshine the left over roots and seeds would start to grow again after a couple of days. So eventually you have to get out there and extricate them from the root. That's like realizing emptiness, so that all of the delusions would never rise again. That kind of wisdom, the state of mind where there is no field for the delusions to arise, comes about through wisdom, but at first, in order to get into the field - with our fields being sky high with vines and thorns - you have got to go in there with the machete and try to chop down the poisonous plants; that means, you've got to apply the temporal antidotes to start to subdue anger, jealousy, laziness, the attachment, the pride, the depression; you've

got to temporarily reduce them to provide the conditions, to dig in and get them from the root. Does that make sense?

That's one of the reasons for understanding all of Buddha's teachings. All of them were aimed at creating the right conditions for us to understand emptiness, so that we could liberate ourselves, so that we would have the state of mind to develop the courage to work for others, to have the ability to do that.

Most of our work in this course will be in identifying the delusions, the positive states of mind and those that are neutral. And then recognizing the benefits or the needs of the positive ones, and recognizing the defects of the negative ones, and then developing the resolution to cultivate the positive and to eliminate, through their antidotes, both temporal and ultimate, the negative states of mind.

So let's see how Yeshe Gyaltsen presents this, he is using the same kind of idea:

Intelligent beings

which is one of the epithets for bodhisattvas in general, but here it could mean intelligent beings in general

...who have in mind their welfare in future lives,

who try to protect the mind

not being content simply with acquiring food and clothing for the duration of this life, ...

Not just food and clothing. What are the things people are most concerned with? In our world? In societies in the past it would be acquiring food and clothing, but in the world today, after food and clothing, what comes next? Power! money! pleasure, leisure, fame!; being famous, being rich, being powerful, being liked, being popular – the eight worldly dharmas, all of them are included. It seems very attractive to us to have friends, to be loved, to be in a position of leisure, to have comfort, to be powerful, maybe for some people even to be feared – maybe there are some imprints from having been animals in past lives, knowing that the only way to survive is if you are feared. From a spiritual point of view these worldly concerns are not the ways that can actually help us in the future. If we have the karma from past lives, by seeking out these things, we might find some short lived situation right now, where we have a little bit of comfort, but we are using up our virtuous karma and in so doing are creating negative karma for the future.

...thinking, "What will become of me in future rebirths?" should wonder, "I have circled powerlessly in the three realms

Powerlessly: without my own independence. The three realms? Asia, the Americas??....no, it means the formless realm, the form realm and the desire realm. Which realm are we in right now? The desire realm.

...of cyclic existence since beginningless time continuously experiencing suffering."

Although this kind of thinking may sound kind of depressing – like you know, when people study the stages of the path, the things they don't want to go through are the sufferings and the hell realms; they just want the good parts, right? – but this kind of thinking, although it might sound kind of depressing, is what really motivates you to be able to recognize our state right now, what we have experienced in the past and what we will continue to experience in the future.

“What is the root of this?”

of this continuous suffering cycling in cyclic existence

Having contemplated in this manner, you must come to understand that these sufferings of cyclic existence neither arise without cause, nor arise from a discordant cause,

unrelated causes

...rather, they arise from their own causes – actions and afflictions.

Karma and klesha, or action and afflictions. One of the basic teachings, the very first teaching the Buddha gave, the First Turning of the Wheel, was the teaching on the four noble truths: the truth of suffering, the true origin of suffering, the true cessation of suffering, and the true path leading to the cessation of suffering.

What is the origin of suffering? In the Theravada tradition you will hear that the cause is craving, or thirst, because the Buddha taught in some of his scriptures that this was what causes us to grasp on at the time of death, craving. In more comprehensive teachings, according to both Hinayana and Mahayana Abhidharma, it's much more explicit. It's said, the immediate cause of all our suffering is first of all karma – an Indian, Sanskrit word that means action – that we created in past lives. We create actions, and we have created actions in the past; some of them skillful in the sense of being done without expectation, out of care for others or out of selflessness. They have repercussions that brings pleasure or bring relief to us in the future – for example now. Other actions we have done in the past were done unskillfully out of anger or attachment, ego, pride, jealousy, miserliness, or laziness. They have repercussions as suffering. The main way negative karma ripens upon us is in the feelings we experience – the mental factor feeling – unpleasant feelings.

If we talk about the cause of suffering, the immediate cause is the negative karma we have created, but if you look more deeply, what's the cause of that karma? Essentially it's all of the afflictions, called klesha, or delusions. Some of them, the root delusions and the twenty secondary delusions, are part of the fifty-one mental factors. When we talk about the cause or the origin of suffering there are two things that Buddha said: karma and klesha. Karma means actions, negative karma – well, even contaminated virtue is in the nature of suffering but we will talk about that later. And what is the cause of those negative actions? The afflictions, the klesha, the unsubdued mind, the disturbed mind, anger, attachment, jealousy, miserliness, laziness. And, as we have heard many times, the root of the afflictions,

if you look deeply, the root of them is one particular kind of ignorance that grasps to an ego-identity and grasps to a self of phenomena. So:

“What is the root of this?”

Having contemplated in this manner, you must come to understand that these sufferings of cyclic existence neither arise without cause, nor arise from a discordant cause, rather, they arise from their own causes – actions and afflictions.

The Protector Nagarjuna...

Here it doesn't mean some kind of protecting deity. Protector is a title and means the one who looks after us. Nagarjuna was one of the great Mahayana saints.

...says [in his Precious Garland (*Rajaparikatharatnavali*)] (stanza 1.35):

As long as the aggregates are misconceived,

Better: as long as there is grasping to the aggregates. Sze Gee here takes this from another translation, while the Tibetan actually means grasping, self grasping and grasping at phenomena – which has a sense of misconceiving, but it means grasping to a true identity. So as long as there is grasping to the aggregates, grasping them as true, or misconceiving them, for that long there will be grasping to the I – a self-existent self.

There will be the conception of an I.

When there is conception of an I, there is also action.

Due to that there is rebirth.

When there is this grasping to an I, there is also karma, and due to that, there is rebirth.

This stanza is very famous and encapsulates the 12 links of dependent arising and the four noble truths – at least at the negative side, the cause of the problem. Remember that we said our suffering comes about from actions, and actions are created by klesha, or afflictions, and the root of that is grasping to the self. The root of grasping to a self, in a sense, is grasping to all phenomena, such as one's own body, the aggregates. Therefore it says as long as you have that you haven't realized emptiness, and you are not going to eliminate the grasping to the self. So that is the core, the ultimate solution to get rid of all our suffering in terms of the ultimate antidote – to realize emptiness.

And [his *Treatise on the Middle Way (Madhyamakashastra)*] (stanza 26.10) says:

The root of cyclic existence is compositional actions.

The first of the twelve links is ignorance; samskara is the second link: because of ignorance we create actions or karma. We compose; there is composition – meaning we create karma.

Therefore, the wise do not create compositional actions

do not create karma.

Hence, the unwise are creators;

The wise are not, because of seeing thusness

Why are the wise not creators, agents of karma? Because of seeing the ultimate nature of

reality, which the Buddha called thusness, or suchness.

So this is the ultimate solution to all our problems: if we could realize emptiness, we could prevent creating karma, negative karma, and even contaminated virtue, and we could escape from cyclic existence, and if we had the motivation to attain enlightenment, we could actually attain enlightenment.

Remember, among the Six Ornaments the two Ornaments of Madhyamika were Nagarjuna and his main disciple Aryadeva. Now follows a quote from Acharya Aryadeva from his *Four Hundred Stanzas* – there is a very nice translation of this text, if you would like to study this.

Acharya Aryadeva says [in his *Treatise of Four Hundred Stanzas (Chatuhshatakashtakarikā)*] (stanza 14.25ab):

The consciousness (that) is the seed of [cyclic] existence
Has objects as its sphere of activity

You could maybe say consciousness is the seed of cyclic existence, and objects are it's sphere. The word for 'sphere of activity' comes from the Sanskrit word that has to do with cow; a cow has a circle or sphere that it has to eat its grass in, so the Sanskrit word for sphere has to do with the root for cow....

Acharya Chandrakirti says [in his *Supplement to the Middle Way (Madhyamakavatara)*] (stanza 6.89abc):

The very diverse worlds of sentient beings and
Their environments are established by the mind itself.
It is taught that all migrating beings without exception are born from actions."

Consciousness being the seed of cyclic existence means that all the world and the environment comes about because of our mind's activity – the unskillful activities of consciousness. And consciousness has as its sphere the belief in truly existent objects.

Then a very famous quote from one of the other Ornaments, Vasubandhu, remember, who wrote the Hinayana Abhidharma, the *Abhidharmakosha*:

Acharya Vasubandhu says [in his *Treasury of Knowledge (Abhidharmakoshakarika)*] (stanza 4.1a):

The various worlds are produced from actions.

We might argue that the worlds come about from gravitational attraction, nuclear reactions etc., that it's not from karma that the world suddenly appears. If you did not understand you might think the belief in karma to be some kind of backward unscientific way of looking at things. But Buddhism already from the time of the Buddha understands and has accepted the evolution of universes. When we say the universe comes about because of karma, it's not like something that suddenly happens, but that things evolve because of karma.

And (stanza 5.1a):

The root of [cyclic] existence is the six subtle-increasers

That is another name for the six root delusions that we will talk about later.

Many such statements have been taught.

Yeshe Gyaltsen's approach here after having promised to write the text, is that anybody with intelligence would not be content with just the happiness for this lifetime, food and clothing and other things that we might think of now, but instead would be interested in what is going to happen in the future, and recognize that since beginningless time we have not had independence – we are not independent! We are under the power of our delusions and karma, karma and afflictions, karma and klesha. Even when our mind is controlled our old karma ripens. Even if our karma is not ripening, we create more problems because of our afflictions. Our karma and our afflictions are two-pronged. Just purifying karma is not enough. You could do a million Vajrasattva-retreats and still, as soon as you get out, you might get attached – maybe thinking you look at dakas and dakinis – or get angry, in one second. Purification alone, simply exhausting one's negative karma, is helpful if one can do it, but from a Buddhist perspective this is not the ultimate solution leading to liberation.

Yeshe Gyaltsen states that all of the great scholars he above has paid reference to, have noted that the root of the problem is our mind – it is how the mind acts, and the delusions within the mind; that the root-problem is a certain kind of ignorance conceiving of a self-identity that right now each and every one of us is accepting and acceding to – we believe that, we believe that there is a real self at the back there, like an operator. There is a sense of an operator, a taster, a creator, a controller behind the body and mind. And that's not the only problem. In the Theravada and in the Hinayana tradition that's mainly what is emphasized – that if you could understand the non-existence of that self seeming to be there, the emptiness of that, that selflessness, you could find liberation. But the Buddha taught in the Mahayana sutras that it's not enough to eliminate the grasping to the I. As long as you are still conceiving of, or grasping to, outer phenomena such as your own aggregates or other outer phenomena as truly existent, you haven't a chance of eliminating the real subtle self-grasping.

So this is what all of these stanzas are getting at: we are studying minds and mental factors in order to understand the mind, to be able to control it, to first apply the temporal antidotes and eventually be able to apply the ultimate antidote.

Likewise, Shantideva's *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* (*Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, stanza 5.6) says:

The Propounder of the Truth

This means the Buddha; the Teacher of Reality –

has taught
That in this way, all fears and
The immeasurable sufferings
Arise from the mind.

Everything we experience – it is not like we say: ‘oh, so and so messed me up’. Like kids always say ‘he made me angry, Mummy’. Or we say ‘that annoys me’. As though it has the power from its own side to do something. Actually the mind itself creates these problems, the outer environment doesn’t have the power to do these things. Shantideva also says:

And (stanza 5.17-18ab):

Those who do not understand this secret of the mind,
The great objective of the Dharma,
Wander aimlessly,
Even though they wish to attain happiness and destroy suffering.

If they do not understand what the secret of the mind is – the mind being the creator of all our happiness and suffering. Further Shantideva says:

Therefore, I should hold well and guard well
This mind of mine.

And (stanza 7.41-45):

Physical suffering, mental unhappiness,
The various kinds of fear,
As well as separation from what one desires
Arise from committing misdeeds.

Whatever physical suffering you have – when you are sick, feel pain, have headaches or mental unhappiness (is headache mental unhappiness – what do you think? – probably physical, right?) – it all comes about because of negative karma; it’s not other people’s fault or caused by the pollution in the air, and so forth.

Separating from what one desires, this is one of the six kinds of sufferings one finds in the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*; among these is the meeting what is undesirable, and separating from what one desires. All of these arise from committing misdeeds, Shantideva says.

By performing virtues intended in the mind,
Wherever I go, due to those merits,
I shall be honored with
The excellences that are their results.

Excellences, good qualities. So if you want to be happy, you have to create the causes of it!

Although one who commits misdeeds wishes for happiness,
Wherever he goes,
Those misdeeds
Will completely destroy him with the weapons of suffering.

It is not like with the many parking tickets that I collected in Philadelphia that are now gone, forgotten, because their time limit has run out. The actions we create are not forgotten; they always have a result.

As a result of virtue, the spiritual children of the Sugatas come to dwell in the hearts of vast,
fragrant and cool lotuses

this is talking about being born in the pure lands

The nourishment of the Conquerors' pleasant speech causes their splendour to increase,
Their supreme bodies emerge from lotuses that unfold due to the light of the Munis and
They abide in the presence of the Conquerors.

How is one born in a pure land? By creating virtuous karma.

As a result of many non-virtues, my condition will be wretched due my skin
being ripped off by the henchmen of Yama,
Molten copper melted by tremendous heat will be poured into my body,
Pierced by flaming swords and daggers, my flesh will be cut into hundreds of
pieces,
And I shall plummet upon the fiercely blazing iron ground.

Sounds uncomfortable. These are the results of non-virtue, right? Of negative karma.

Just as it has been said above, all of cyclic existence – the environment

that we encounter, what we see

and its inhabitants – arises through the force of its own causes – actions and afflictions. This has been
taught not just once,

it's not like the Buddha just eluded to this; it's not just some esoteric point that is not
understood well

but again and again, in the sutras and tantras as well as their commentaries. Likewise, it has been
taught that all the excellent qualities of the paths and grounds of the three vehicles,

What are the three vehicles – elephants, horses and donkeys? No. They are the vehicle of
the hearers, the Shravakayana; of solitary realizers, the Pratyekabuddhayana, these also are
Hinayana arhats; and the Bodhisattvayana. They are sometimes referred to as Hinayana,
Mahayana and Vajrayana, but this is not accepted by the scholars, because tantra,
Vajrayana, is actually part of the Mahayana.

the resultant buddha field, exalted bodies, lifespan, deeds, as well as exalted activities

of the bodhisattvas and buddhas

arise solely from their own causes, wholesome virtuous minds. Therefore, the root of all of cyclic
existence and nirvana is established to be the mind itself.

What is this – the root of everything good is the mind – wasn't everything bad coming from
the mind? Not only everything bad is caused by the mind. By using the mind in a
skillful way you create the causes for all of these great pleasures, and the abilities to help
others; if you use the mind in an unskillful way, you create your own ruin.

Hence, it is of utmost importance to understand the modes of minds and mental factors. Thus, here I
shall compose a brief presentation on minds and mental factors.

Brief! Only 92 pages! So this is a great scholar, saying that the presentation could actually
be a lot longer!

This has two parts:

1. The individual entities and divisions of minds and mental factors

2. A summary of the salient points and their application to practice

That's at the very end. The main part of the text is the first, the individual definitions and divisions; entity sometimes has the meaning of definition, of the defining characteristics.

And that itself has two parts, the explanation of minds, and the explanation of mental factors.

Before we read what Yeshe Gyaltsen says on this – do some of you know the difference between minds and mental factors? (reply...).....hmmm very creative. With my teacher, Lama Yeshe, people sometimes wanted to decide how to practice the Dharma by popular decree – like in our society: we'll vote on it, like we'll vote on what the definition of minds and mental factors actually is – and Lama used to say: 'Dharma is not a democracy!'

The Buddha explained how things are, it is not so much open to one's own creative impulses... Where creativity comes in, I think, on the bodhisattsa path is being able to explain that which you have experienced through the teachings of Buddha in new ways that are applicable to people on different levels and in different ways, but it is not so much like creating something new in terms of Dharma.

The word mind here is the Tibetan word sem. The word for mental factor is semjung or semlay jungwa, and means that which is arisen from the mind. Mind and what is arisen from the mind. Mind here refers to the fundamental nature of any of our six consciousnesses: the eye, the ear, the nose, the taste, and the tactile consciousness, that pervades our body – and the sixth, mental consciousness. (Nothing so special about that, like implied in the movie The Sixth Sense – we all have it!)

These all have a particular common quality of being clear and knowing – knowing the mere entity, the mere nature of their perceptual field. The main ability of eye consciousness, as a primary consciousness, is – when we just talk about mind – to know the basic perceptual field, just shape and color. All of the formations, all of the changes within the ocean of the mind, its particularities, are like the mental factors; it's like the mental factors are like the waves on the ocean. Those mental factors would be of that same mind, the same consciousness. The mental factors are not a different entity from the mind, they are like the water and the waves. They cannot be separated. The mental factors engage the particularities of the perceptual field, whereas the main mind is defined as just knowing the perceptual field. The mental factors are those parts of the mind that have particular functions, particular qualities; like feeling is a quality of mind. This is called a mental factor or secondary mind or that what arises from the mind. Mind here essentially means primary mind.

The five aggregates (skandhas) are form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, consciousness. The Buddha said that every being or person can be divided up, like if you took apart a car; you can put all the parts onto different piles, the metal, the steel, the

plastic, the glass, the petroleum – you'd end up with a bunch of piles or aggregates, and once you had taken everything apart there would be nothing left. The same with the person – you could divide the person into bones, blood, flesh, phlegm, and other medical terms. The Buddha did not divide it up in that way, basically the Buddha said there are two parts: body and mind. The body with all its parts is the form aggregate and then the mind has four parts: feelings, discriminations, compositional factors, and consciousness. The fifth aggregate of consciousness is talking about what we here call mind – primary mind.

We will read a little more, and please after class re-read what we did and read the next 5 or 6 pages, and if you have questions, make a note and pay attention whether it gets answered as we go along. If not, feel free to ask.

1. The individual entities and divisions of minds and mental factors

1A. The explanation of minds

Regarding the difference between a mind and a mental factor, [Maitreya's] *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extremes (Madhyantavibhanga, stanza 1.8cd)* says:

There is a note here, saying main mind (tso sem), mind, and primary mind are mutually inclusive and synonymous. (Mutually inclusive means that they mean one and the same thing, they are synonymous.) While 'consciousness' encompasses both main minds and mental factors.

The text is one by Maitreya that Asanga brought down from Tushita heaven, one of the five texts, called *Madhyantavibhanga*, and is delineating what is the middle way from extreme views – a famous text about emptiness, mainly from the Cittamatra point of view.

That which sees an object is a primary consciousness.
That which sees its attribute is a mental factor.

A primary mind just perceives the mere entity of the object. Of the nature of the mind, the same entity of mind, is that which is apprehending differences or features of the object, its distinguishing characteristics or its [specific] color and shape; experiencing it in terms of feeling etc. or discriminating it, having clarity about it with wisdom; all of those are called mental factors. They are not different from the primary mind itself, they are one entity, but they are still differentiable, just like the waves and the ocean. Can you separate the waves from the ocean? Who is a surfer here? Can you have waves without ocean? Really, artificial waves? Can you have a wave without water? That would be interesting! Can you imagine?

You can't have a wave without the ocean – a wave is the same entity as the ocean, as the water, but it is conceptually different from the water itself right, that which is clear etc.

This particular kind of explanation is said to be kind of a meditator's presentation of the mind and the mental factors in terms of differentiating them. The mind knows the mere entity of the object, of the perceptual field, and the mental factors are that part of the same consciousness which are engaging with it in different ways, with the various features of it.

So let's leave it there and do a short dedication.

Dedication

Dedication is a mental activity. It's not just a verbal activity. In a sense it's a kind of prayer, an aspiration that the virtue we have created tonight and in the past and even the virtue we will create in the future, would have a particular kind of result. One can dedicate the same merit again and again. It's not like, 'I've already dedicated this, I can't dedicate it again.' You can dedicate it again and again.

Think for instance, 'Due to this merit created listening tonight with a positive motivation, may I be able to identify this nature of my mind, the mental factors, be able to identify very quickly the negative states of mind, learn their shortcomings and develop the antidotes, both temporal and ultimate, against them. '

'May I be able to identify the positive states of mind and cultivate them. And in so doing may I quickly develop all the good qualities, develop compassion for others, altruism, eliminate my faults, - become not only a happy, content and inspiring person, but be able to lead others to that same kind of spiritual wholesomeness. May I quickly become enlightened due to these merits for the welfare of all sentient beings.'

DVD 2

Meditation

We try to set a very special motivation. Sit comfortably. Relax your body, relax your mind; breathing out the tension as focus on your respiration, recognizing when you are breathing in, breathing out.

When the mind and the body are some what relaxed and yet focused – bring the attention to your mental consciousness. Even though your sense consciousnesses are functioning, your mental consciousness doesn't have to pay attention to them, if it's focused very strongly on something else. So what is disturbing to your eye-, to your ear-, to your body consciousness can be left unascertained, can be ignored. Try to focus on the matrix, the mind, the clear light nature of your mind, within which all of these various thoughts are arising, within the mental consciousness not within the sense consciousnesses.

All of the various events arising within it, whether they be verbalizations to yourself, a sort of internal dialog; whether they be images arising, a sense of them being the past or the future, memories or anticipation; whether it be emotions arising, desire or anger, whether feelings are dominating, pleasant or unpleasant – all of them are transitory, all of them are like clouds within the spaciousness of your mind. Even the sense of the ego, the sense of the body, is not always appearing in the same way to your mental consciousness.

Take as your referent object, your object of observation, just the nature of the mind within which these events are taking place, unobstructed, unobstructing clear light. Here it's not observed by your eye consciousness. It's not something tactile. The inputs from those consciousnesses are arising as tatter within this clarity of your mental consciousness, so let go of them in succession.

Again and again let go of the sense of an I and just dive into the spaciousness of your mind. Be a real daka or dakini.

When you've noticed the appearance of the ego or your body – again let go of that! Try to sense the nature of the consciousness to which it's appearing, as though turning your back on that which seems irrevocably appearing to you. Turn your back on that and try to perceive the perceiver, the knower, the awareness, like a vast clear empty sky, unobstructed, all of the appearances that arise to us, the environment, the experiences we have, friendships and enemies, disasters, good experiences, especially the feelings, the sensations of pleasure or suffering, unhappiness, all of these arise in this clarity of the mind due to causes and conditions. Outer conditions are part of this. The main cause are the actions we have done in the past, the karmic seeds we have laid within our

continuum – our health or lack thereof, our happiness, our well-being, our success, our fame – all due to karma.

Karma that we have created, has been generated sometimes from klesha, that is to say: disturbing emotions. One of which, ego-grasping, is present even when we engage in virtuous actions – this is contaminated virtue perpetuating our samsaric existence.

To make a change – to begin to get out of this cycle of samsara, the race-track of samsara, I have to begun to watch my mind, to identify what's happening, to see what's healthy and what's unhealthy, to see what's creating negative karma, what's creating virtuous karma and at least at the beginning to try to create virtue dedicated toward a spiritual growth, eliminate non-virtue. One of the main activities of a spiritual person is this inner activity of the inner being. We need the support of external actions like prostrations, circumambulations, recitation etc., but the real work begins in our own mind. With the strength we get from that, the accumulation of virtue, we can begin to watch what's happening and identify the mental factors within the ocean of our mind. With increasingly more sophisticated, increasingly altruistic motivation, we can first avoid non-virtue because it will have repercussions on ourselves, and later we avoid non-virtue because it harms others, it's unpleasant to them.

Think, 'All living beings are in exactly the same situation as myself. They want to be happy and free of suffering. Some that seem to be antagonistic now, enemies, problems to us, impediments, are not inherently that way. They have been our friends, our mothers, fathers, our lovers in previous lives and they will be again in the future, all these beings, who have been depthlessly kind to us, just as kind as our present mother has been both in this live and numberless lives in the past. Beginning to become aware of that, wanting to control the mind for their benefit, not just to avoid negative karma temporarily, but to eliminate it from the root through realizing emptiness, by following the bodhisattva path to be able to achieve the ultimate state of everlasting blissful happiness of a Buddha for the welfare of others, I'm going to participate in this class, this semester, this year. All my Dharma activities are done with that motivation in mind, to accumulate merit, to watch the mind, to guard morality. Particularly I'm going to listen to the teaching tonight, participate in order to bring about the ultimate welfare of others by achieving the ultimate state of enlightenment.'

Then relax and bring your attention back.

Teaching 2

In order to be able to control your mind, in order to avoid creating negative karma, in order to create virtuous karma, you have to get familiar with the terrain. If you have become proficient in anything in your live, you know that it takes time. You accumulate knowledge and expertise in a lot of different ways. This particular subject is getting to the

real core of things, to recognize and identify the mental factors and the primary minds in our continua. Once we identify them, thereby we can begin to see and become convinced of the shortcomings of the negative states of mind and the benefits of those that are positive. Then we put effort into applying the antidotes to the negative states of mind and to put enthusiasm, enthusiastic perseverance, effort, into creating the virtuous ones – like bodhicitta. But it's not enough simply to try to apply the antidotes; there has to be some accumulation of merit acting as a support for that kind of endeavor. Otherwise, everyone who ever tried with great aspiration in the past, might have gone of to do retreat thinking, 'I'm not getting up until I've achieved bodhicitta!' – and then just sat. It doesn't work quite as easily as that. You need to have the cooperative conditions also. One of the conditions is study. A lot of people try to do meditation without really knowing what they are doing. Sometimes people try to study without the accumulation of merit, which also is cause for a lot of what the Tibetans call lung – lung depends on mental frustration, tension and so forth. With this aim of studying in order to practice, to put it into practice every day, not thinking of it merely as an intellectual exercise, but putting it into practice, you are accumulating merit and purifying – just by doing that alone. If you then create virtue in addition, do some other purification, these are great preliminaries for this kind of practice, this kind of study, we are doing now.

So last time we began with talking about the introductory verses, and some of the motivational verses, the actual quotations Yeshe Gyaltsen gives to indicate the importance of the mind – that mind is a principal thing!

I think I have told you this story before, in one of the other classes: when I first went to Kopan, the monastery, in 1974, I had been doing some yoga before that, in Beirut, Lebanon and India, so I was doing some kind of practices. And one of the first things we did during my first weeks at Kopan was the Shakyamuni meditation: visualizing Buddha Shakyamuni in front and reciting his mantra, imagining light radiating out purifying sentient beings. And I remember when I was doing this meditation, I was getting this pain in the middle of my chest, and I thought maybe it was due to the yoga I was doing, maybe I should not be doing this yoga – I don't know where I got this idea. And I had planned an interview to see Lama Zopa Rinpoche. Lama Zopa Rinpoche was teaching the course, this was called the 7th meditation course, in 1974. But before I had a chance to have that interview, in one of the lectures Rinpoche was giving – and (like you) I was half paying attention and half day-dreaming, thinking about other things – Rinpoche said, 'Heart is in the nature of fire!' Immediately I paid attention, because I had this pain in my heart. And Rinpoche said, 'While you are in cyclic existence, inevitably there are going to be problems. It's not surprising! Of course! Of course there is going to be suffering while you are in cyclic existence, because that's the nature of cyclic existence. One of the problems that we have, because of our attachment, because of our stubbornness, is that we don't let go of things; we become tense, and we don't let go of that state of mind that feels unhappy with the suffering. Of course it is important to feel disgusted with suffering and want to try to eliminate it, but when there is suffering – and it is inevitably there –, if you don't focus on

it, let it go, then you can begin to have a state of mental consciousness within which you can work.' I found this very fascinating, and the next time we were doing the Shakyamuni meditation, instead of focusing on this pain in my heart, I thought, 'This is my karma. Some karma is ripening; I just let it be, I just let it be there in the background and focus on the meditation.' As soon as I did that, the pain went away, and I was so pleased. So the next coffee break I told my friends about this, and they said 'What did Rinpoche say?' – so I said 'Heart is the nature of fire'. And they all went: "But Rinpoche said, '**Heat** is the nature of fire!'"

Really, we hear what we need to hear sometimes, with a virtuous state of mind, a questing mind. It's said that the buddhas themselves, like when Lama Zopa Rinpoche teaches, or other great beings are teaching, they just speak one word and everyone who hears it, hears it in a way that is suitable for their own mind.

So it is all in the mind. When I went to see Rinpoche eventually, and told him about the yoga I was doing and so forth, I remember the advice; Rinpoche said, 'It's all in the mind... It's all in the mind...'; you know how Rinpoche repeats certain things.

So although in Tibetan Buddhism there are some kinds of physical regimens, like the six wheels, or the exercises of Naropa etc., that may be important at some point along the line, but the main thing at the beginning is your own mind. This is the thrust of some of these quotations, some of them talking about the real ultimate way to control the mind is by understanding the ultimate nature of reality, understanding emptiness. Because all of our mental defects arise from grasping to ourselves as a findable ego. That's something each and every one of us is doing now. (Unless there is an arya being in disguise here... you could all be buddhas for all I know, and I am the last sentient being – you all sitting there giving me the chance to give some lecture! How do I know? there are different appearances....)

We had begun last time to identify the difference between minds and mental factors. When we talk about minds and mental factors, or minds and secondary minds, the Tibetan *sem* means primary mind; it means any of the six consciousnesses, the nature of that consciousness just being clear and knowing, being able to perceive the mere entity of the perceptual field. That's called primary consciousness, or [primary] mind. Part and parcel of that is that within that mind, it does have the ability to experience some particular aspect of the perceptual field, to distinguish, to experience feelings with respect to the perceptual field. Those events within any consciousness, they are not of a different entity from that consciousness, from the primary mind – those particular qualities within that consciousness are called 'that which arises from the mind'; that is literally what mental factor means in Tibetan, *semlay jungwa*, that which arises within the mind, or from the mind. They are not different entities, the mind and the mental factors, although they may seem that way to us.

On page 11 is the quotation from the *Madhyantavibhanga*, one of the five texts of Maitreya:

That which sees an object is a primary consciousness.
That which sees its attribute is a mental factor.

There are two famous definitions for explaining the difference between minds and mental factors. This is one of them. This is sometimes said to be a definition for meditators, [it's defined] in terms of experience. The other definition is the one we are coming to now.

And [Vasubandhu's] *Treasury of Knowledge* (stanza 1.16a) says:

Abhidharmakosha is translated here as knowledge. 'Dharma' is knowledge, 'abhidharma' means higher Dharma – the implication is the wisdom that realizes the ultimate nature of reality; that is the actual Abhidharma. 'Kosha' is when you put a sword in a sheath, that is called a kosha, a receptacle; or a treasure house is also called a kosha, that where you keep treasures, you can put it there and take it out. So therefore *Abhidharmakosha: Treasury of Higher Knowledge*. In there, he says:

Primary consciousnesses know individually.

This quotation has different meanings.

We have six consciousnesses – the eye, the ear, the nose consciousness, tactile consciousness, and the mental consciousness; each of them is separate and knows its own individual objects. That is one sense of that.

But also each of them is individual in that we don't have two mental consciousnesses in general; we don't have two eye consciousnesses etc. If we are perceiving something with our primary consciousness, our mental factors also are going to be perceiving the same thing.

Just as it has been said above, that which knows the mere entity of an object is called a mind. That which, taking the observation of that very object as its basis,

in other words, the mental factor is working within the primary consciousness

engages the object by means of the isolates of other attributes, such as its function, is called a mental factor.

Do you know what that word, translated as isolate, is? The last decade or so they have begun to try settle this concept; earlier we just said the [double] reverse or dogpa – in Tibetan it says dogpa. It's a very famous subject in Indian logic, how conceptual consciousness know things. Conceptual consciousnesses develop mental images of things via an indirect process of excluding other things. For example, when we have a mental image of a pot, that image is developed by it being that which is the opposite of a non-pot. The mental image is the appearance of the opposite of the entity. The mental image of a cow is for instance the appearance of the opposite of a non-cow. What's a non-cow? Non-cow is everything other than cow. Then opposite of non-cow comes back to cow again, right? So this word isolate is related with that kind of philosophical construct. Here one does not have to go into detail about that, at other places it is not even mentioned, but the reason it is put there is that minds and mental factors are the same entity, they are not different entities, but still they are conceptually different. The functions within the mind can be conceptually conceived of differently, as opposed to the general quality of the mind

itself. What isolates the mental factors is this particular kind of construct.

Just as it has been said above, that which knows the mere entity of an object is called a mind. That which, taking the observation of that very object as its basis, engages the object by means of the isolates of other attributes (features), such as its function, is called a mental factor.

It is just as it has been said by the Omniscient Gyel-tsab [in his *Essence of the Ocean of Knowledge: An Explanation of the Compendium of Knowledge*]:

A main [mind], such as a sense consciousness apprehending form, is explained to "know individually" its object. Just so, [such a main mind] does not depend on an ascertaining consciousness being produced; rather, it is distinguished by merely observing form. One should know the mental factors in its retinue....

So what does that mean, in its retinue? Sometimes we say that the main mind is like a king – or maybe like a rock-star, because rock-stars have a retinue, right? They have groupies, they have their manager, a whole entourage that comes along with them – so the main mind is never separated from the mental factors, its retinue, or entourage. The king's entourage or retinue always travels with him, they are never separated. So it is being used in that sense, the main mind and its retinue of the mental factors. Again, they are one entity. From one point of view, conceptually, we can conceive of the main mind, but in that same entity we can conceive of its various functions also. Those isolates, those various qualities within the main mind which engage the object in various ways, not just [engaging] the mere entity of the object, are called mental factors.

One should know the mental factors in its retinue by way of:

- each of their various functions, such as, having taken that observation of form as the basis,

Say for instance if you have a visual consciousness observing form, once you have taken the observation of form as a basis, you should know the mental factors in the retinue of that eye consciousness by way of each of their various functions – the various functions of the mental factors.

such as, having taken that observation of form as the basis, moving the mind towards it, and

What does that mean? What mental factor moves the mind to an object? Intention (or attention? – we will [distinguish these] as we talk about the mental factors; they are translated in different ways.)

Intention is 'that which moves the mind to the object'. (It's very similar to the Tibetan word for mind, *sem*, *sempa*.) So this is referring to one of the main mental factors, one of the five omnipresent mental factors; it does not state it explicitly here, but says 'such as that', [it indicates this mental factor by] mentioning its function.

- each of their various attributes, such as non-forgetfulness of an object that has been previously realized.

Here it is just saying that mental factors have different functions and attributes. For instance in terms of function, the function of intention is to move the mind or a consciousness to an object, to bring it to an object; whereas attention then holds it on an object, or 'pays attention', as we say. The function of mindfulness is to hold an object that

has been previously realized in mind. One of its attributes is to not forget.

So at first reading it may sound quite complicated, but it is just saying that the mental factors should be known by these various kinds of qualities they have, in terms of their functions or their attributes, sometimes by both their functions and attributes.

Therefore, a main mind is a knower distinguished by mere observation of the object itself and does not need to be posited in terms of the other attributes. A mental factor is a knower that, taking the observation of that very object as its basis, engages the object by means of the isolates of other attributes, such as the outcome of its function.

Here it is getting a little more philosophical and technical again. This is going into detail about this first definition for meditators or the definition in terms of experience, how to differentiate between minds and mental factors. Still, within this definition we understand that mental factors are not different entities from the main mind. One entity of mind, in terms of its function of just knowing the mere entity of the perceptual field, that quality of the mind is called primary mind. The quality of the mind that has particular functions within that, like the waves within the ocean, are called mental factors.

QUALM: Are a mind and its mental factors one entity or different entities?

It does not [actually] say qualm in the [Tibetan] text; do you know what a qualm is? Yes, a misgiving, or a doubt; 'if that is true, then what about this...' In the [Tibetan] text it probably just says, 'if someone asks...'

RESPONSE: The *Treasury of Knowledge* (stanza 2.23) says:

A mind and its mental factors are definitely simultaneous.

It almost sounds as if it is answering a different question. The meaning here of 'definitely simultaneous' is that if two things always arise together – if one thing arises, then the other one is always there – if they are always simultaneous, they are going to be one entity. That is the implication of this.

Question: Is it not possible to experience only primary consciousness, is it desirable to have these mental factors?

Answer: You can try to focus on that, but there are some mental factors that are always present. In fact, for there to be a clear understanding of anything, even the entity of the mind, certain mental factors will always be present, certain functions on that consciousness. Again, it is not as though all mental factors are to be eliminated. Some of them are necessary, some of them are good. The ones that are detrimental to us are called klesha, or afflictions, or delusions, in Tibetan nyonmong. Lama Zopa Rinpoche translates this as disturbing emotions, or disturbing conceptions. Those definitely we would want to try to quell, but wisdom for example we would not want to try to eliminate from our consciousness. We will get to this.

Just as it has been said above, [a main mind and its mental factors] arise together simultaneously. Not being different entities, they are the same entity. Moreover, the two – a main mind and the mental factors in its retinue – are said to be one entity and concomitant by way of five types of similarities.

They bear five similarities, they have five things in common. This is now getting into another definition of minds and mental factors. It's said, and I do not exactly know why, that the first definition cannot be held so well in philosophical debate. The one we just talked about, that primary mind knows the mere entity of the object and mental factors know the attributes. This here is another definition of minds and mental factors that is more suitable to debate, but maybe not so tasty for a meditator. It says that a main mind and its retinue mental factors bear five similarities; they always have five things in common. There are two different views on that, from the *Abhidharmakosha* and from the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*, the Mahayana Abhidharma. The lower, Hinayana Abhidharma, the *Abhidharmakosha*, has one explanation of these five things held in common between the primary mind and its retinue – or between a retinue and their primary mind, there sort of is a correspondence both ways – and the Mahayana Abhidharma gives a slightly different explanation of that. Let's go into this, this topic is a crucial point, you will see this many times.

Hence, it is incorrect to assert that minds and mental factors are not similar in time...

or in duration; whenever a mind is present, mental factors are concomitant along with that; they are at the same equal duration.

...and that they are different entities, as well as to posit that their observed objects are separate.

What it is saying is that it is incorrect to say that they are not of the same duration – they are the same duration, they are simultaneous and it's wrong to assert that they are different entities. You cannot separate the mind and the mental factors. It's wrong to think that you can cause all of the mental factors to be non-active, and also it's incorrect to posit that their observed objects, the things that they are observing are different; for instance, as though the main mind could be observing a flower, while the mental factors were observing Chicago; that would be wrong to say. They are observing the same thing.

To explain this clearly, when the mindfulness of an object, for instance, a form, is produced, the two – the mind and the mindfulness in its retinue – are similar in observing the object, form; nevertheless, they are posited separately.

What is mindfulness, is it a main mind or a mental factor? It's a mental factor, right? It is able to keep in mind something that has been previously realized or experienced.

Even though the main mind that bears the entity of a form, and the mental factor mindfulness that is keeping it in mind, have the same observed object, still, they have different functions; they are posited or presented differently; they are conceptually separable.

The knower of the mere entity of the object, form, is called "mind," but from the point of view of the function of acting not to forget, "mindfulness".

It's not like mindfulness is somewhere else; mind and mindfulness are part of the same entity.

They are always simultaneous. A mental factor is always going to be simultaneous with its retinue-primary-mind – retinue usually refers to the assembly of mental factors. The two of them are always going to be together, it is like one ocean, and you are just looking at it from different points of view in which you give these different names of minds and mental factors.

It is not the case that they have separate entities, like a pillar and a vase.

This is a famous example, pillar and vase. They are separate entities. Not only can you conceive of them separately – you can conceive of mind and mental factor separately, right, but these [also] are the same entity, that's why you have to think of them in terms of that sense of isolates – but a pillar and a pot are things you can [actually] separate. You can break the pot, and the pillar is still there. Or you can carve your initials on the pillar and it does not affect the vase.

Let's have a break.

Question: Are omnipresent mental factors always present?

Answer: In any kind of consciousness that ascertains an object, that means, is capable of sustaining a recognition of the object afterwards, there are another five mental factors also present. This is the next category, the five object ascertaining mental factors. But in general, that which is always present are the omnipresent.

So let's continue. A lot of these questions are hard to formulate if you have not yet studied the material. So it is by studying this kind of material that when great lamas come in the future, you will be able to ask questions to them, and understand some subtle points.

These modes have been set forth in accordance with how it has been taught in [Gyel-tsab's] *Essence of the Ocean of Knowledge: An Explanation of the Compendium of Knowledge*. [Ge-dun Drub's] *Ornament of Reasoning, the Great Treatise on Valid Cognition* explains that:

- the definition of a main mind is that which is concomitant by way of the five similarities with the mental factors in its retinue, and
- the definition of a mental factor is that which is concomitant by way of the five similarities with its main mind.

The second definition said that main minds bear five similarities with their retinue mental factors, and that a mental factor is that which bears five similarities with its primary consciousness. So what are these five similarities?

There are two different lists. One is found in the *Abhidharmakosha*, another is found in the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*. That's not to say that those are the only books that have these. *Abhidharmakosha* is mainly trying to explain about the Vaibhashika tenets, one of the Hinayana schools. So in there, from the sutras and from other sources, there is a list of these five similarities.

Regarding the modes of these five similarities, there are two explanations – one from the *Treasury of Knowledge* and one from [Asanga's] *Compendium of Knowledge (Abhidharmasamuchchaya)*. From among these two, the explanation from the Treasury of Knowledge (stanza 2.35a) is as follows:

- (1) similar support
- (2) similar object of observation
- (3) similar [subjective] aspect
- (4) similar time
- (5) similar substance

Their individual meanings are as follows:

- (1) Since a mental factor is also supported by that sense power upon which the mind is supported, their supports are similar.

[Let's take] the eye consciousness, which has both primary mind and mental factors – do you get this? Consciousness in general is a generic term that includes both [main] minds and mental factors. If I were to say: 'Eye consciousness, is that a mental factor or a primary mind?', you can't answer that, because it could be either. Eye consciousness has a component which is primary consciousness and a component which are its mental factors.

So any eye consciousness is based on its faculty, the eye faculty. What is this, is it the eye ball? No, it is some subtle material, the eye faculty or eye organ. The primary eye consciousness has that as its basis, or support, and the eye mental factors also are based on that. They can't be based on the nose organ, the mental factors of the eye consciousness. They have the same support. That's pretty simple. (Well, it could not get subtle when you talk about the mental consciousness but anyway – [we leave that for now].)

- (2) Since a mental factor also observes that object which the mind observes, their objects of observation are similar.

Actually, [for 'similar'] you could say 'the same', that's the implication. If the primary eye consciousness is observing the carnations, then the mental factors are also observing carnations.

- (3) Since, when a mind is generated having an aspect, for instance, blue, its mental factor is also generated in that aspect, blue, their [subjective] aspects are similar.

Referent object refers to the general object. Aspect means that particular thing the consciousness is perceiving.

Question: is it only color and shape? What is aspect?

Answer: No, for instance if my mental consciousness is observing ice-cream and it is perceiving it as attractive or captivating, that would be the aspect of that mental consciousness; the way it's grasping it.

They have similar time or duration (the Tibetan word can mean both just time, or a period of time, a duration, a period).

- (4) Since a mind and its mental factor are simultaneous in regard to the three – production, abiding and cessation – their times are similar.

When the primary mind is being generated or produced, the mental factors are also being

produced. When the primary mind is abiding, having been produced, the mental factors are abiding – they have the same duration. When the primary mind is dissipating or ceasing, the mental factors are also ceasing.

(5) Just as minds of a similar type are distinct substances, likewise, mental factors, such as feelings, of a similar type are also distinct substances, therefore their substances are similar.

This may not be clear in meaning, the way it's translated here, but let's look at the two other books we will be referring to, they [also] talk both about the five similarities in terms of this *Abhidharmakosha* presentation.

Geshe Rabten says (in *The Mind and its Functions*): *Finally they have a similar substance, since their basic cognitive character is always the same. It never happens that a primary mind is a perception, whilst one of its mental factors is a conception. Or that a mental factor is a mistaken cognition, whilst it's accompanying primary mind is an unmistakable cognition.* This is talking about having a similar kind of substance. Because they are the same entity – it is not talking just about that. This interpretation Geshe Rabten is taking – I am not sure if it is drawing exactly on the words of *Abhidharmakosha* – but Geshe Rabten explains this particular point as similar substance meaning that if the primary mind is mistaken, the mental factors will also be mistaken and so forth. If one of them is perceptual, the other will be perceptual, or [if] conceptual, [the other is also conceptual;] and so forth. So that is one interpretation.

Geshe Rabten: *Their cognitive nature or substance is always identical.* We could translate similar here as identical. *The five similarities are applicable to every primary mind and its attendant mental factors.*

Then in Lati Rinpoche's text, [*Mind in Tibetan Buddhism*] on page 143: *A mode of having similarity exists because, for example, the two, an eye-perceiver and the feeling accompanying it have: (1) the same object of observation we talked about that, right? and thus are similar with regard to the object of engagement; they have (2) the same mode of apprehension and thus are similar in aspect; this refers to how it is being perceived, the mode of apprehension; they (3) occur at the same time and thus are similar in time; this means that their time of production, abiding and cessation are the same; they have (4) the same uncommon empowering condition and thus are similar in basis; that was the first one here, similar support; so this is referring to the faculty or empowering condition; (5) only a single substantial entity of feeling arises as the accompanier of a single substantial entity of an eye perceiver and thus they are similar in substantial entity.*

That's a different meaning from Geshe Rabten's explanation. These are different interpretations of 'similar substance'. Geshe Rabten was saying if one is perceptual, the other will be perceptual, if one is conceptual, the other will be conceptual, if one is correct, the other will be correct, and so forth, they have a similar cognitive substance. Lati Rinpoche's explanation of the root text is a little more common: *Only a single substantial entity of feeling arises as the accompanier of a single substantial entity of eye perceiver and thus they*

are similar in substantial entity. [Lati Rinpoche comments:] *This means that two different substantial entities of feeling – two different feelings, which are substances in a sense – would not be generated as the accompaniers of one main mind.* Similarity or identity of substance means that you can only have one feeling in the retinue of any one primary consciousness, and if there is one feeling, you can only have one primary consciousness as its substance. They are not bifurcated; they are not multiplied.

This particular kind of confusion arises because of the phrase that came earlier, that we glossed over quite easily, from the *Abhidharmakosha* (on page 11 [of our root text translation] ‘primary consciousnesses know individually’. This is a famous statement, it comes in different places, also in the sutras we see similar kind of statements. What it means is, I believe, related to what Lati Rinpoche was explaining: in general there is only one continuum of mental consciousness that is knowing a particular object; there is only one eye consciousness that knows an object, not two simultaneously existing. If there are two eye consciousnesses, they are existing at two different times. Also you will only have one mental factor of a particular type at the same time; you can’t [for example] have both a feeling of pleasure and [a feeling of] pain at the same time.

If you bite your lip and feel the pain whilst enjoying the delicious taste of a piece of cake on your tongue, that’s OK – you see, these are different consciousnesses, there is no problem there. You can have different consciousnesses that are separate. Like tactile consciousness and taste consciousness, these are separate [consciousnesses], so they can indeed be existing simultaneously. But you can’t have two taste consciousnesses [at the same time], like saying this is both pleasurable and unpleasurable at the same time; they will either be pleasurable or unpleasurable (or neutral).

You could [maybe] perceive the cake by the eye consciousness at the time it is perceived by the taste consciousness, but the eye consciousness will never perceive taste. When you were a kid – and maybe now also – you were doing your homework, and [at the same time] drinking a pepsi, listening to music or talking at the telephone – doing several different things, and different consciousnesses would all be functioning at the same time.

There is a certain question about how much attention your mental consciousness pays to it, maybe it flicks from one to the other. But it may be capable, say if you are watching a ballet and you are listening to the music which is in coordination to that, it may be that your mental consciousness is paying a little attention to both.

But that is not the question we are talking about here. We are talking about the continuum of one consciousness. Within the continuum of one consciousness, there can only be one consciousness like that. There can for instance only be one eye consciousness, and within an eye consciousness there can only be one of each of the mental factors. They are similar in that they have one substance. Main mind only has one substance; mental factors only have one substance. That seems to be a little more prevalent explanation of this point in the *Abhidharma* than the one Geshe Rabten gave, although I can’t say for sure.

Then there is another explanation from the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya* which was written by

Asanga, the *Higher Abhidharma*, the *Mahayana Abhidharma* – so that was drawn from the Mahayana sutras. Some are a little different here, and the order is different.

The explanation in the *Compendium of Knowledge* regarding the five similarities is as follows:

- (1) similar substance
- (2) similar object of observation and [subjective] aspect
- (3) similar entity
- (4) similar time
- (5) similar realm and level

Both explanations or lists are probably correct. Minds and mental factors bear **all** of these similarities. This is just talking about what was emphasized by the Buddha at different times.

(1) Similar substance refers to the following. In the retinue of a single main mind, there can arise only one mental factor, for instance, feeling, of a similar type; two [mental factors] of a similar type but of different substances cannot occur.

(2-3) Similar object of observation and [subjective] aspect and similar entity refer to the following.

[A mind and the mental factors in its retinue] are similar in observing one object – the object of observation – and they are similar in being afflicted or non-afflicted in terms of the object of observation and the [subjective] aspect.

I do not understand what this means, I had not noticed this before. I will try to explain next time – or maybe it is explained here – maybe there should not be bullet points in the translation. This is talking about entity in the way Geshe Rabten was talking about substance; if one is perception the other is perception, if one is afflicted the other is afflicted:

If a main mind has become afflicted, then the mental factors in its retinue also become afflicted, whereas if a main mind has become uncontaminated, the mental factors in its retinue also become uncontaminated.

(4) Similar time refers to the following. A main mind and the mental factors in its retinue are simultaneous in regard to the three – production, abiding and cessation.

So that's the same.

Now this one is different; so it has been putting some of them together and adding this one:

(5) Similar realm and level refers to the following. If a main mind is a mind of the desire realm, then it is impossible for a mental factor of the form or formless realms to arise in its retinue, and it is impossible for a mental factor of the desire realm to arise in the retinue of a mind of the form realm. That realm in which the main mind is included is also necessarily the realm in which the mental factor in its retinue is included.

You might say: so what? Well, if you were to develop shinez, shamatha, single-pointed concentration, then with actual shinez you would have a mind included in the form realm, and while you are in that concentration, none of the mental factors of the desire realm can arise. Certain mental factors, like anger for instance, don't occur in the form realm. You can still have attachment or other delusions, you haven't ceased them, but that particular mental factor cannot arise, because it's of a different realm.

Five similarities

According to Vasubandhu's
Treasury of Knowledge
(*Abhidharmakosha*):

1. Similar **support**
2. Similar **object of observation**
3. Similar **[subjective] aspect**
4. Similar **time**
5. Similar **substance**

According to Asanga's
Compendium of Knowledge
(*Abhidharmasamuchchaya*):

1. Similar **substance**
2. Similar **object of observation** and **[subjective] aspect**
3. Similar **entity**
4. Similar **time**
5. Similar **realm and level**

7

From the presentation by Emily Hsu, BP at TCL

Regarding minds, [Vasubandhu's] *A Discussion of the Five Aggregates (Pancaskandhaprakarana)* says:

QUESTION: What is a primary consciousness?

RESPONSE: It is that which knows an object of observation.

And the *Treasury of Knowledge* (stanza 1.16a) says:

Primary consciousnesses know individually.

Omniscient Gyel-tsab

who is Gyaltsabje? He is one of the two disciples of Lama Tsongkhapa.

also taught that the definition of a mind is a knower that is distinguished by knowing the mere entity of an object. The way of explanation of the *Ornament of Reasoning on Valid Cognition*

the *Pramanavarttika* by Dharmakirti

has already been described above.

When primary consciousnesses are divided, there are the six groups of primary consciousnesses. It is just as it has been said in the *Compendium of Knowledge*:

QUESTION: What are primary consciousnesses?

RESPONSE: They are the six groups of primary consciousnesses – the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mental primary consciousnesses.

So here it talks about five primary [sense] consciousnesses. Are there also five sets of mental factors? Yes, all of these groups have mental factors.

QUESTION: What is an eye primary consciousness?

RESPONSE: It is an individual knower that is supported by the eye and observes form.

QUESTION: What is an ear primary consciousness?

RESPONSE: It is an individual knower that is supported by the ear and observes sound.

Individual knower refers to the above ‘primary consciousnesses know individually’. Supported by the ear means based on the ear faculty. Ear consciousnesses in ordinary beings continua don’t perceive forms and colors; maybe a buddha’s ear consciousness can perceive everything – but ours are limited.

QUESTION: What is a nose primary consciousness?

RESPONSE: It is an individual knower that is supported by the nose and observes odor.

QUESTION: What is a tongue primary consciousness?

RESPONSE: It is an individual knower that is supported by the tongue and observes taste.

QUESTION: What is a body primary consciousness?

RESPONSE: It is an individual knower that is supported by the body and observes tactile objects.

QUESTION: What is mental primary consciousness?

RESPONSE: It is an individual knower that is supported by the mind and observes phenomena.

‘Observes phenomena’, so that could mean many things. What does ‘supported by the mind’ mean? Based upon the brain, the brain as the organ of the mind?

The eye consciousness is based upon the eye, which means the eye faculty, which is material form. Ear consciousness is based on some subtle material form, which is the ear faculty, not the gross ear but some subtle matter within the ear. The nose consciousness has certain receptors within the nose. The tongue consciousness is based on certain receptors on the tongue. Tactile consciousness has receptors throughout the body. The mental consciousness is not based upon a faculty which is material, like the five senses. That’s why there is a big differentiation between mental consciousness and sense consciousnesses. The mental consciousness is based upon a previous moment of any consciousness; that’s its faculty, its organ; the mental organ is a previous moment of consciousness.

We people in the west often tend to think of mental consciousness as somehow based on the brain, almost as if it was the organ in the same way the eye is the organ for eye consciousness. To Buddhist understanding – not only in the sutra system but especially in tantra – the mind is something much more subtle, and the mental consciousness does not depend upon the brain as its main support. Certain kinds of mental activities, like short-term memory, maybe even some kinds of medium-length memory, depend upon and are accessed by the brain – certain imprints are left in the chemicals of the brain I suppose, which helps in certain kinds of thinking – but mental consciousness in general is based upon a previous moment of any consciousness; on the basis of that, which the mental

consciousness is cognizant of, then the next moment of mental consciousness can arise based on that. It is not necessarily based on a physical organ like the brain; there is no substance in the usual sense of material substance (sometimes the word substance can be used [for consciousness], when talking of consciousness being substance because it's impermanent, but there is no material substance here.)

With regard to the way of positing the three conditions for the six engaging consciousnesses, there appear to be many differences between the higher and lower tenet systems that need to be distinguished, but I will not elaborate on them here.

So what is this talking about, the three conditions for the six consciousnesses? What are the three conditions? Three things have to come together for any kind of consciousness to engage an object: the object (the cup, the color blue, or some mental idea), the organ (even if the object is present, of eye consciousness for example, if there was no eye organ, if you had lost your eye, you could not see, you could not develop an eye consciousness of the carnations), and you need to have a previous moment of that particular consciousness that is called the immediately preceding condition, that is the previous moment of eye consciousness that gives rise to that next moment of consciousness.

In Lorig we have not talked about this very much, but maybe in Tenets, when we get to the Cittamatra system, they have a different idea about some of these conditions. Try to remember that, when we get to the Cittamatra system. But Yeshe Gyaltsen says he is not going into that here.

Although the so-called "mind-basis-of-all" and "afflicted intellect" have been explained in the texts of Asanga and his brother [Vasubandhu], here I merely wish to write about the identities of minds and mental factors common [to the higher and lower tenet systems] as an essential branch of developing an understanding of the way in which actions and afflictions bind us to cyclic existence. This occurs on the occasion of a being of the intermediate scope when sustaining the object of observation and [subjective] aspect of the stages of the path to enlightenment, in the context of reflecting on true origins, the drawbacks of cyclic existence.

Usually we talk about the six groups of consciousnesses. But the Cittamatrins (Mind-only school; 'citta' means mind, 'matra' means only), which was re-vivified by Asanga the Trailblazer, talks about eight groups of consciousness; in addition to the six, they add two more. One of them is the alaya (basis) vishnana (mind), foundation consciousness or mind-basis-of-all.

In the Cittamatra system they say that there is no external world the way it appears to us, as a separate entity from our mind. Everything arises because of imprints on our alayavishnana, and everything is therefore of the nature of mind. The upper tenets, the Madhyamaka's, don't accept that, they say that's going to far, that's not right; there is an external world that, although our mind perceives it, is of a different entity than our mind; there is a dependent arising external to us.

There are various kinds of problems related to that [Cittamatra]idea, but it can be very fruitful. As Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche mentioned, with that particular kind of tenet system, that kind of understanding of reality, you can attain very high realizations in the practice of tantra; you can even achieve the illusory body etc.

In addition to the five senses and the mental consciousness, the usual six groups, there are two more, the alayavishnana, the foundation consciousness or the mind-basis-of-all, and another one called the afflicted intellect, the afflicted mind – that is a very subtle mind connected to the alayavishnana, which misconceives it to be a true self, misconceives the self. So here [Yeshe Gyaltsen] is not going to talk about those because he wants to talk about that which is common to the upper and lower tenets systems, the general kind of six consciousnesses that are common to the Hinayana and Mahayana tenet systems.

...here I merely wish to write about the identities of minds and mental factors common [to the higher and lower tenet systems] as an essential branch of developing an understanding of the way in which actions and afflictions bind us to cyclic existence.

This is what we were talking about before. Because, if we talk about minds and mental factors, this is essential to understand, how actions – karma and the things motivating karma, the afflictions – bind us to cyclic existence. Remember, last time we talked about the four noble truths; the origin of suffering, the second noble truth, is basically comprised of karma and klesha. All of our suffering, the immediate causes of our suffering is our karma. If Maureen has a toothache, if George is cranky, it's because of our past karma. It's the same if your luggage is stolen, if you become famous or you are attractive. How does that karma come about? Because of klesha! Klesha doesn't only consist of the delusions, like anger and attachment, it includes grasping to true existence; ignorance and the wrong view of the transitory collection. Those two mental factors take place even in virtuous actions – contaminated virtue. So klesha don't have to be creating only negative karma. You might think the delusions always create negative karma. They don't! In some cases klesha, like grasping to true existence, can create contaminated virtue, the usual things we call virtue, like for example if you think 'I am going to make prostrations to the Buddha.'

This occurs on the occasion of a being of the intermediate scope...

In most of the world religions, from a Buddhist perspective most people are, what the stages of the path of the lam-rim would say, practitioners of initial scope that are aiming to have some happiness in future live-times. So on the basis of that they are capable of refraining from certain negative actions, like killing or stealing, or they engage in certain virtues, they practice generosity in order to become wealthy in the future, or they observe morality to become attractive and so forth.

The person of intermediate scope, this is the person who has entered the [Buddhist] path, the Hinayana path, takes as his/her understanding, 'Even if I was born as a god or a human – Bill Gates in the future – it will finish, and anyway it's junk! All of samsara is like carrying a big load of thorns on your bag. There is no pleasure anywhere. I've got to escape from samsara!'

A person of great scope thinks, 'Even if I escape from samsara, all the sentient beings, who have been my mother, who have been incredible kind, will still be there. Therefore I have to work for their benefit, to become enlightened.' This is where in the *Lamrim Chenmo* you will find the explanation of the minds and mental factors.

This occurs on the occasion of a being of the intermediate scope when sustaining the object of observation and [subjective] aspect

when meditating on...

of the stages of the path to enlightenment, in the context of reflecting on true origins, the drawbacks of cyclic existence.

Nevertheless, the manner in which the mind-basis-of-all exists or does not exist and so forth is an especially crucial difficult point unshared by the upper and lower tenet systems.

It's not something that's common, that they both accept or they both reject.

Furthermore, Asanga and his brother [Vasubandhu] are followers of the *Sutra Unravelling the Thought (Samdhinirmocanasutra)*; ...

which is the basis for the so called Third Turning of the Wheel of Dharma; it has its own explanation of what constitutes definitive sutras and what are the interpretable sutras.

...when differentiating between the interpretable and definitive scriptures, they posit the mind-basis-of-all and explain all phenomena as being the nature of mind only. The Protector Nagarjuna and his spiritual son [Aryadeva] are followers of the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sutra (Samadhirajasutra)* and the *Teachings of Akshayamati Sutra (Aksayamatiniirdesa)*; when differentiating between interpretable and definitive scriptures, they do not accept the mind-basis-of-all,

they see that as interpretable meaning, because the Buddha didn't mention that in some of the sutras

and, explaining the intention of sutras which teach the mind-basis-of-all as being of interpretable meaning and bearing an underlying intention, they conclude that all phenomena are merely imputed by conceptions.

Mainly what this is saying is that he is not going further into these other two consciousnesses in the explanation of minds and mental factors, because the higher tenets don't accept that and it's not common to the Hinayana. It's worth studying one of Lama Tsongkhapa's most difficult texts on sutra, the *Legshe Nyingpo, The Essence of Good Explanation* of what is definitive and what is interpretable in the sutras. It contains mainly all of the interpretations of the Cittamatra and Svatantrika and Madhyamika of what constitutes definitive sutras, what is really meant by definitive. In some cases the meaning is just literal, and interpretable is what you have to take with a grain of salt.

An example of an interpretable statement would be His Holiness supposedly answering 'pig' to a hippy who asked in a public teaching, 'What would you call the policemen who hit protesters on the head with a stick?'

Another example of an interpretable statement would be, when the Lord Buddha taught Ajatashastu, the son of the king Bimbisara. Ajatashastu imprisoned his father, who died before Ajatashastu could change his mind and let him out. He had also caused the death of his mother I guess, and he was in incredible anguish because of this and couldn't practice at all and was completely catatonic, when the Buddha came to him and said, 'Mother and father are to be killed!' That wasn't a definitive statement on his part. This actually had an underlying intention (it is not so clear here, it is almost presupposing that you know a lot of this language when it says 'bearing an underlying intention', these kind of

interpretable statements). The intention of Buddha was that karma and klesha are like the father and mother, and they need to be extinguished, it's good to get rid of those. When he first heard this, he thought, 'oh, OK; if mother and father are to be killed it's OK!' At least, then he was able to think again, and when he understood eventually what the intention of the Buddha was, I believe Ajatashastu was able to purify in that lifetime.

In this manner, with regard to the mode of the Great Vehicle in the Land of Superiors [i.e., India], there are what are renowned as the two systems of the Great Trailblazers.

Remember, the two Great Trailblazers were Nagarjuna and Asanga; trailblazing, opening up the path of the Cittamatra – Asanga – and the Madhyamika system, in the case of Nagarjuna.

However, it is not the case that they differ in terms of the attitude – the generation of the altruistic mind of enlightenment – and conduct – the six perfections and so forth; rather, the distinction between them lies in the view.

Of reality. Cittamatra believes emptiness to have a certain meaning, whereas Nagarjuna explained it in a much more subtle and profound way.

Although such differences do exist, the views of these two Great Trailblazers – Nagarjuna and Asanga – are not superior or inferior [to each other] from their own side.

Remember that in the tenets class we were saying that all of these tenets are meant to be stepping stones, enabling to lead to an understanding of the more subtle view.

Rather, through the force of the mentality of the trainees, two ways of commenting on the Conqueror's intention have arisen, just as the Conqueror himself had predicted in many sutras.

Thus, if you wish to know precisely the uncommon essential points of this system [of Asanga], such as the way of positing the mind-basis-of-all just as it appears in the texts of Asanga and his brother [Vasubandhu], as well as the proof that all phenomena are of the nature of mind only based on that essential point, you should understand them by looking carefully at the texts of Asanga and his brother [Vasubandhu] as well as the excellent explanations of the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa]. If you wish to understand the uncommon essential points of the Protector Nagarjuna's thought, then you should know them by carefully referring to the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa]'s great commentaries on [Nagarjuna's] *Treatise on the Middle Way* ...

He wrote a great commentary on the *Fundamental Wisdom* by Nagarjuna, and he also wrote a great commentary, one of his great commentaries, on Chandrakirti's *Madhyamakavatara*, the *Supplement to the Middle Way*. He also wrote a commentary on emptiness in the *Greater* and *Lesser Special Insight*, in the *Lamrim Chenmo* and the lesser, which means the *Medium Lamrim*.

...and on [Chandrakirti's] *Supplement to the Middle Way*, the greater and lesser special insight [i.e., the special insight sections of his *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* and his *Medium Exposition of the Stages of the Path*] and so forth. These are excellent explanations difficult to find in the three worlds.

We are getting to the part now on the mental factors, so why don't you prepare, reading the five omnipresent mental factors and maybe also the five object ascertaining mental factors. I think your questions also will get better as time goes on. OK?

Dedication

As we learn about the mental factors we will understand that one of the mental factors is aspiration, to which dedication is related. It's aspiring that the karma we have created, will ripen in a particular way – trying to link that up.

Think, 'Due to this karma, may the bodhicitta in my own continuum and in the continuum of others be generated, and that which has not yet been generated, be generated. May the bodhicitta that has little sprouts, that has begun to be produced, may it never be impaired in any way, may it never decline, but may it increase more and more due to these merits.'

Ardently aspiring in this way can actually cause the karma to ripen in such a way that it can bring that event about.

DVD 3

Meditation

Try to calm your mind by watching your breathing first of all, being mindful – the mental factor mindfulness – of your respiration. As you start to focus in on the breathing, you can recognize that your mind is still paying attention to your eye consciousness, ear consciousness. Try to draw the attention away from them and place it just on the respiration.

Then bring your attention to your mental consciousness and try to apprehend that which we have become familiar with, the conventional buddha nature, the clear light nature of the mind.

Let go of your body, your perception of body. Let go of the other thoughts, worries. Even let go of the sense of the I, the self, the observer.

Within this clarity of mind think, ‘In order to benefit living beings, I have to first learn how not to harm them; also, to go beyond that, to be less needy myself, to have less attachment, which prevents me from having the space and time to be able to help sentient beings. Then to develop the good qualities of mind, body and speech, that accumulate the two collections of merit and wisdom, that bring about my own goal, total peaceful, blissful, everlasting happiness of dharmakaya and the goal of others – the emanation of the sambhogakaya and the nirmanakaya, the enlightened activities, especially the activity of speech, teaching the Dharma, turning the wheel of Dharma, leading sentient beings. So for that purpose I have to hear the Dharma that Lord Buddha taught, I have to think about it, to contemplate, understand what his intention was, the intricacies of his thought. Then to familiarize myself with that, with what we call meditation.

For that purpose, in order to get familiar with mind, the mental factors, especially wisdom that overcomes ignorance, the fundamental primary mind of bodhicitta accompanied by the two aspirations, and so forth, I’m going to study during this course, I’m trying to meditate on the subject of minds and mental factors for the purpose of achieving that goal of enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings.’

Then relax and bring your attention back.

Teaching 3

We are studying the text *Minds and Mental Factors*, written by Yeshe Gyaltsen, who I believe was the Rinpoche, the lama, of Tse Chen Ling Monastery in Tibet. And we got just up to the section on mental factors, on page 16.

Basically what we have done so far, the way Yeshe Gyaltsen set up the text is first of all we had the preliminary verses that we often find, the prostration to and taking refuge in the venerable holy lamas who are inseparable with Manjugosha, which implied Lama Tsongkhapa, as this is a Gelugpa text especially. One of the epithets of Lama Tsongkhapa is Gonpo Jampelyang, or Jamgong, which actually means Protector Manjushri, but often in these texts it refers to Lama Tsongkhapa, who is believed to be an emanation of Manjushri. So Yeshe Gyaltsen sets out some verses of praising various lamas of the past, the lineage lamas, the Six Ornaments, the Two Trailblazers, and also he promised, made a sort of motivation to complete this text.

And then he began to talk about the motivating factors; he quoted Nagarjuna and Aryadeva and Shantideva and other texts, about the importance of knowing about the mind. As I mentioned before from my own experience, how Lama Zopa used to say, 'It's all in the mind!'

OK, the body is important. A lot of people are very concerned about the food they eat nowadays. They are almost religious about this. I remember one of my roommates, a monk, who was eating macrobiotic; he would not touch anything else. But then he kind of binged afterwards and got off that diet, so the benefits were gone....

Buddhism doesn't put so much stress on the 'you are what you eat' sort of thing. Especially in the higher reaches of Buddhism the mind is much more fundamentally important; it determines what's going to happen in the future. What you are doing to the body, the food you take, whether the food has some little defilement in it or not, is in its consequences more or less limited to this lifetime. Obviously you want to eat in such a way that your life will be long, so you can practice Dharma. But it's all in the mind.

Then we talked a bit about the various definitions of primary mind as opposed to mental factors. The primary mind observes the mere entity of the object, whereas the mental factors observe the features or attributes of the object. And they are actually one entity, like the ocean and its waves.

In the Theravada tradition, where the study of the mental factors is very popular, they had various streams. The Forest-monks, that might be more the meditators, and then the City-dwellers that often were the Abhidharmists, studying the *Abhidharma*, the academics who would learn all of the various divisions of which the minds and mental factors were important.

We also had another main definition of minds and mental factors [indicating] the difference between them, more suitable for debate – more logical – saying that the main mind is that which bears five similarities with its attendant mental factors, its retinue of mental factors, and the mental factors are that which bears five similarities with their primary mind.

Those of you who are studying Tenets, you know this book as one of the subsidiary texts we are using [*Cutting Through Appearances*, by Geshe Sopa and Jeffrey Hopkins]. It mentions in the section on the Vaibhashikas [p. 200]: *Only the proponents of the Great Exposition (the Vaibhashikas) say that a mind and its mental factors are different substantial entities; the other schools assert that they are the same entity.*

I may not have made that clear before. When we talked about the five similarities, on page 12, where we talked about similar substance – this is coming from the Vaibhashika system, this first set of five similarities. Here this doesn't mean that the mind and mental factors are one substantial entity, like the ocean and the waves. For the Vaibhashika system it seems almost as though the mental factors have a different entity; that they are not of the same entity of the primary mind. The meaning of similar substance is different here: just like the substance of primary mind has only one primary mind for each consciousness, likewise for the mental factors, of each kind of mental factor within its retinue there is only one substance of each. That's what similarity of substance means here; it doesn't mean that they are [actually] the same substance.

And then there were some questions about what is mental primary consciousness, what is body primary consciousness and so forth, and some talk about the Cittamatra system. So we are up to page 16 – which is section 1b, on the front of the seventh page of the Tibetan text, if some of you want to look there, one line from the bottom...

1B. The explanation of mental factors

Regarding the entity

definition, or nature

of mental factors, it is just as it has been said in *A Discussion of the Five Aggregates*

by Vasubandhu:

QUESTION: What are these phenomena that are mental factors [Tibetan: *sems las byung ba*, literally, that which arise from the mind]?

RESPONSE: They are phenomena concomitant with the mind.

or whatever phenomena has similarities with the mind.

When these mental factors are divided, there are fifty-one:

(1-5) five omnipresent mental factors, feeling and so forth

(6-10) five object-ascertaining mental factors, aspiration and so forth

(11-21) eleven virtuous mental factors, faith and so forth

(22-27) six root afflictions, attachment and so forth

(28-47) twenty secondary afflictions, belligerence and so forth

(48-51) four changeable mental factors, regret and so forth

Thus, it is just as it has been said in *A Discussion of the Five Aggregates*:

Five are omnipresent; five ascertain objects individually; eleven are virtues; six are afflictions; others are secondary afflictions; four are changeable.

[A] The Five Omnipresent Mental factors (kun 'gro)

The Tibetan is kuntu drowa, meaning 'always going' – these [mental factors] are always functioning, often translated as omnipresent. Do you know the bodhisattva Samantabhadra, Kuntu Sangpo? The Tibetan name is Kunsang, which is short for Kuntu Sangpo; kuntu means always, it means always excellent, or fantastic.

The five omnipresent mental factors are:

- (1) feeling
- (2) discrimination
- (3) intention
- (4) contact
- (5) attention

The five omnipresent mental factors are always functioning; they are present in any kind of consciousness which is awake. Exceptions might be when we are just awaking or going to sleep; or at the time of death and at the time of birth some of them may be arising or disappearing. But in general all consciousnesses have these, whereas not all consciousnesses necessarily have any of the other mental factors.

The first one in the usual way of listing is feeling, tsorwa.

[A1] Feeling (tshor ba)

The Sanskrit vedana is feeling, or sensation. The meaning of feeling here is not emotional, like, 'I have really strong feelings! I want to talk to you!'

It refers to a particular kind of sensations that we always experience. One of the most fundamental things in our continuum are the feelings of pleasure or displeasure, suffering, or neutral feelings. You may not recognize neutral feelings. Pleasant feelings are those that once they have arisen or once they have disappeared, you want to get again. That's how you can recognize a pleasant feeling. Unpleasant feelings are those you want to get rid of, when they have arisen. They actually are the experience of the mind, this is how our mind experiences the ripening of our past karma. Neutral feelings are those which when they arise or disappear, you don't have any particular feeling of wanting to separate from them or to get them again. Although maybe if you are in extreme suffering you might be eager to have neutral feelings.

The entity of feeling is just as it has been taught in the *Compendium of Knowledge*:

Abhidharmasamuchchaya, so this is the Higher Abhidharma written by Asanga.

QUESTION: What is the defining characteristic of feeling?

RESPONSE: It has the characteristic of experience;

that's what feeling is!

through the entity of experience, it experiences individually the fruitional results of virtuous and non-virtuous actions.

When we create actions of body, speech and mind, they leave what the Buddha called seeds or imprints within our continua, in the continuum associated with us. Some time in the future they begin to germinate, like seeds in the outside world, and when the right conditions come, they give a result. They are slowly maturing, but when they are totally matured, when they are ready and meet all of the external conditions, they can bring about the result.

Karma ripens in many different ways. We talk about four results of karma.

The maturational result is the full result, throwing you into another rebirth. That's not what is meant by fruition here, although one might get that impression. The maturational result of karma would be when you have done a path of action, like killing or stealing, or a virtuous path of action, like giving or protecting life, if you do it completely with all the various limbs, that can throw you into another rebirth. Into the lower realm, if it's the full maturation of negative karma, or into the upper realms, if it's the full maturation of positive karma. So it is called maturational result.

Sometimes the scriptures mention that there are three [results of karma]; the second one is then sometimes divided into two, so you get four in that way. You have the three, the maturational result, which is rebirth, the result similar to the cause and the environmental result.

The result similar to the cause is of two kinds: the result similar to the cause as an action and the result similar to the cause as an experience. The result similar to the cause as an action or the habitual result is for example if you have killed before, you will kill again. The result similar to the cause as an experience is that if you have killed before, you might be killed or you will have a short lifespan or the medicine you take might not be effective for you.

The environmental result determines what kind of environment you have the karma to experience; whether it's full of thorns or broken pieces of glass on the ground, whether there is war and danger going around or whether it's pleasant and beautiful, and so forth.

In this context we are just talking about the ripening of feeling; feeling is the main way our past karma ripens on us. Feeling is probably the second, the result similar to the cause as experience. Because the first, the maturational result is neutral – being born in the human realm for example, I think it says in the Abhidharma that this is neutral; being born in the human realm in itself is not virtuous or non-virtuous but just an occurrence. Positive or pleasurable feelings can arise from virtuous karma only. Suffering can only arise from non-virtue.

Remember when we talked about karma in the lam-rim, that there are four main outlines of karma:

- it's definite
- it grows, it increases
- it is never lost
- it's impossible to experience a result without having created the cause.

What does karma being definite mean? It means that there is a definite relationship between cause and result – virtuous karma definitely gives pleasurable results, negative karma, which is only defined as negative because it gives suffering results. And there are neutral actions that give rise to neutral feelings, like sweeping the floor with no particular motivation might be a neutral action.

It's very important to know about feeling, because feeling is what impels us. Not only is it the main way our karma ripens on us; it's very, very apparent. When you are depressed for instance, when things are going wrong, when you are suffering, that's very burdensome to you. When your baby leaves you – which from among the sufferings mentioned in the lam-rim would be 'separating from the desirable' –, when you lose your job, or your money, you have the feeling of loss. All of this is happening as a result of your past actions. And there is no way you can experience any of these results, whether it be the four results, maturational, the human realm, or the feelings, without having created the cause. You can always put the blame on yourself.

Here, that which is experienced by feeling is taught to be a fruition; this is taught for the purpose of making known that all feelings that arise within us, whether pleasant or suffering, are solely the fruitional result of actions (karma). Moreover, the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

this is the *Lamrim Chenmo* by Lama Tsongkhapa. This particular quotation is on page 210.

The manner in which actions are definite

the first of the four outlines [of karma]

is as follows. Regardless of whether we are ordinary beings or superiors

These are the arya beings – also arya buddhas – who have realized emptiness, as opposed to the ordinary beings, who have not realized emptiness.

all happiness in the aspect of pleasant feelings – even as slight as that produced in dependence on a cool breeze when one is born in hell – arises from virtuous actions accumulated in the past. Happiness cannot arise from a non-virtuous action.

When we talk about the ten uncommon qualities of a buddha in the Mahayana sutras, one of them is: the Buddha knows what is possible and what is impossible, what has basis, what has no basis. He knows from his own experience, not just from theory, that virtue gives rise to happiness.

Also, all suffering in the aspect of painful feelings – even as slight as that produced in the mental continuum of a foe-destroyer – arises from non-virtue accumulated in the past. Suffering cannot arise from a virtuous action.

How come that foe-destroyers, or arhats, who have attained nirvana, the true cessation of suffering and the cause of suffering, can have a headache? Feeling arises from the ripening of karmic seeds, not from the imprints of the delusions. Those are the seeds that we are talking about, and arhats have abandoned those. But they have also abandoned true

sufferings, haven't they? By definition, they have attained nirvana, they have attained true cessation, and that means the cessation of suffering and the cause of suffering – how can they have a headache?

It is true that he is not creating more karma because his response to it is without ego, but is it possible for an arhat to experience pain and suffering? According to the terminology of lower tenets, because it's nirvana with remainder, he still has contaminated aggregates.

Higher bodhisattvas who have reached the Joyous Ground, the First Ground – this is one of their special qualities – go from joy to joy, and because of their incredible accumulation of meritorious karma they experience bliss even when someone cuts them. Like the bodhisattva who is practising patience in the *Jataka Tales*, the life stories of the Buddha.

So yes, arhats do experience pain; even the Buddha, who went far beyond that and culminated the Mahayana path for the sake of common disciples. There is this story that at one time the Buddha manifested being sick, having a fever, and when asked by the monks how he felt, said, 'There are waves of pain coursing through my body, but my mind is at ease.'

So there is a difference in the way we respond to the feeling of pain. Experiencing those feelings without attachment, without ego-grasping, it's just there, just like watching something, 'there is pain in the body'; it's just recognized. It's not that they are oblivious of it.

This is something they will abandon when they achieve nirvana without remainder; according to their tenets they will abandon the contaminated aggregates then.

The *Precious Garland* (stanza 1.21) says:

From non-virtue comes all sufferings
And likewise all bad migrations.
From virtue come all happy migrations
And the happiness within all rebirths.

'Bad migrations' and 'happy migrations' is referring to the maturational result. Bad migrations are not suffering by definition. The migration itself may be experienced as suffering, but [being born there is neutral, and] just being born in the upper realms is not necessarily pleasure, it's not the ripening of pleasure on our feeling aggregate. Some people born in the upper realms experience misery all the time.

Therefore, happiness and suffering neither arise without cause nor arise from discordant causes such as the fundamental nature,...

This is not talking about science, but talking in a spiritual sense; the fundamental nature is a certain kind of nature from which everything evolves according to the Samkhya. Or like Ishvara would be sending down suffering on us. [Happiness and suffering] do not arise from such incompatible causes.

...Ishvara and so forth. Rather, in general, happiness and suffering come from virtuous and non-virtuous actions [respectively], and even the various instances of happiness and suffering arise

individually, without even the slightest mix-up, from the various instances of these two types of actions.

Karma never gets mixed up, like if you did something good and something bad came back.

We might think that to happen in the world, 'I helped them and they gave me a hard time'; sometimes you benefit someone with a good motivation, but still, because they are in a bad space, they bark at you – does that show that karma gets confused sometimes? That actions and their results are not concordant? Not at all! This is not something negative coming back from a virtuous action, you are in fact experiencing the result of previous karma. What we get back now is usually not the direct result of what we did right now.

What we do now is at most a cooperative condition for karma to ripen. It has two functions: it's a cooperative condition for karma to ripen, providing some condition for others' karma to ripen, for their negative mind to arise or their positive mind to arise, but it also creates karma for the future. Of course, generally, by being kind, honest and helpful right now, people give you a better time.

When we experience negative things, we may think, 'It makes no sense! I'm doing all these kind things for people, I'm doing all sorts of virtuous karma and I have all of this garbage coming back!'; and we might lose faith in karma. But that is because we haven't understood deeply how the actual results we are experiencing are due to karmic seeds we have laid in previous times, usually previous lives.

Heinous crimes, or actions of immediate retribution means without any interval. for example, upon death immediately going to hell. [Immediate retribution does not mean] to ripen in this lifetime. Karma from this lifetime could ripen in this lifetime though, for instance if our guru is involved – that's why tantra is possible, I think – or our parents; these are very heavy objects of karma. It is said that that's why karma created in our youth can ripen in this lifetime – so better to be careful! Mother and father are very heavy objects of karma, next to the buddhas, our preceptors and all the gurus and bodhisattvas and so forth. So some actions that we create in this lifetime can ripen in this lifetime, but not immediately upon doing them; actions we do may please the guru and bring about conditions for blessings, but the karmic results of them will usually come some time later.

Hence, gaining certainty regarding this definiteness or infallibility of actions and their results...

This first point, karma is definite, is what brings about the understanding that causes and their results are infallible. Like in Lama Chöpa, 'please give me blessing to understand that cause and effect are infallible' – infallible here means definite.

...is known as "the correct view of all Buddhists" and is praised as the foundation of all wholesome qualities.

The usual meaning of correct view is the correct view of emptiness. Worldly correct view, from a Buddhist perspective, is [understanding] the definite nature of karma, the infallibility of actions and their results.

When feelings are divided, there are three:
(1) pleasant feelings
(2) suffering feelings

(3) neutral feelings

So feeling is experience –pleasurable, *dewa*, and suffering, *dug ngal* or *dukkha* in Sanskrit, and neutral feelings, *tang nyom*. *Tang nyom* also means equanimity; there is a mental factor *tang nyom*, equanimity, among the virtuous mental factors. There it means the non-application of antidotes, not applying [antidotes] when you don't need to.

Furthermore, it is just as it has been said in *A Discussion of the Five Aggregates*:

which is a text by Vasubandhu

QUESTION: What is feeling?

RESPONSE: It is the three types of experience – pleasant, suffering, and that which is neither suffering nor pleasant.

So feeling IS experience; [the experience] of pleasure, suffering or equal feelings. Equal feelings are more difficult to notice.

- Pleasant [feeling] is that which, when it ceases, you wish to meet with again.
- Suffering is that which, when it arises, you wish to be separated from.
- That which is neither pleasant nor suffering is that which, when it arises, neither of the two wishes occurs.

When these three types of feeling are differentiated in terms of the supports of body and mind, there are six types – three bodily feelings and three mental feelings.

Now we are getting into some interesting divisions here. You can talk about bodily, or physical, and mental feelings.

The physical feelings don't mean only feelings of the body, like 'that hurts!' It could be when you hear an unpleasant sound, like the scratching of fingernails on the black board. Or too loud sounds; not just, for instance, when you hear something like, 'you're a jerk!' – that is something that would cause displeasure to your mind. It could be said very sweetly, with a smile, so that the sound itself would not be an unpleasant feeling of ear consciousness, but [despite that, it] can of course cause displeasure in the mental consciousness.

Let's have a break.

First, the three bodily feelings are:

- (1) bodily pleasant feelings
- (2) bodily suffering feelings
- (3) bodily neutral feelings

Second, the three mental feelings are:

- (1) mentally pleasant feelings
- (2) mentally suffering feelings
- (3) mentally neutral feelings

All of the consciousnesses have feeling as one of their retinue mental factors. Like for example tongue consciousness. Can you experience pleasurable feelings with your tongue consciousness? Definitely! But it's most obvious with the tactile sensation, 'that feels good!' – sensual bliss, the bliss of sexual feeling, when someone gives you a massage or when you

go into a nice warm bath; then you have feeling in the body consciousness.

Bodily pleasant feeling refers to the feelings concomitant with your eye consciousness, ear consciousness, nose consciousness, tongue consciousness and body consciousness.

So the body is obvious; the tongue consciousness also is pretty obvious, right? The nose consciousness also, you can easily differentiate pleasant odors. What about sound, what is an example of an unpleasant feeling in the ear consciousness? Maybe nails on the blackboard, or some discordant sound...

The order in which we list the senses is usually eye, ear, nose, taste, tactile. The tactile feeling is grossest, the tongue feeling is a little less gross, nose consciousness we do notice (but obviously in the animal realm it is much more important), maybe in the ear consciousness we don't so much notice the feeling within it. For sounds that are too loud, I am not sure it is actually ear consciousness, it might be, or it might be tactile. Earache definitely is physical, it's tactile, body consciousness. What is a pleasant feeling in the eye consciousness? Seeing Richard Gere? Seeing something you find attractive, is that giving a pleasant feeling in the eye consciousness? Unpleasant feeling might be more clear; an unpleasant feeling to the eye consciousness could be light that is too bright (or modern art, that might give some discord in the eye consciousness...I'm joking).

You have to differentiate; most of what we experience with the eye or the ear that we think of as pleasant or unpleasant feeling, are mental. This is something you can do during the week, see if you can notice this. Obviously tactile feeling is easy, tongue is pretty easy, nose consciousness is very easy also, but when you get to the ear and the eye consciousnesses, it becomes more subtle to notice what the feelings within them are.

So all of those are included in bodily feelings.

For the eye consciousness, in the case of eye-drops, you can still feel the pleasant feeling in the dark, so it is tactile, it does not depend on seeing, on the eye consciousness itself. Seeing the picture of a deity? Is this not necessarily pleasure? What is pleasure? It is a feeling, it is a mental factor, it can be within the retinue of the eye consciousness.

This is really good, to try to get down to one's understanding.

Feeling can arise within the eye consciousness but whatever consciousness we have of the five senses, eye, ear, nose, taste, it's observed by the mental consciousness; we always have some reaction, 'wow, that's nice! I wish I had that!', or it may be reminding you of a boyfriend or a girlfriend you once had. These are different kinds of pleasant or unpleasant feelings that can arise in the mental consciousness. Or it could be a sense of the sublimity of a Beethoven symphony, or the mental pleasure arising from listening to classical music, from seeing works of art, playing chess or, for a mathematician, solving some problem.

There is pleasure in the mental consciousness. As is always said in Buddhism: the principle, the most important pleasure, which is long lasting and can be increased infinitely, is mental pleasure. In general someone who is more spiritual, not just cultured but spiritual, depends more on that mental consciousness, on the mental pleasure.

What is the difference between bodily and mental feelings?

Feelings that arise in the retinue of the five sense consciousnesses are called "bodily feelings"; feelings that arise in the retinue of the mental consciousness are called "mental feelings."

QUALM: Well then, what is the reason for calling the feeling that arises in the retinue of an eye consciousness a "bodily feeling" [even though the eye and the body are not the same]?

RESPONSE: *Treatise of Four Hundred Stanzas* (stanza 6.10ab) says:

Maybe better to say here: the eye consciousness and the body consciousness are not the same. Is the eye not part of the body? Yes, it is, but the point is that usually we talk about the body consciousness as being tactile consciousness.

Here is a famous quotation from the *Yogic Activities of Bodhisattva's*, a text by Aryadeva, one of the main disciples of Nagarjuna. It's usually called the *Four Hundred*:

Just as the body sense power [pervades] the body,
Likewise, ignorance abides in all.

In the Tibetan text it's on the backside of page 8, page 8b, one line from the bottom. It is a very famous quotation that occurs many times. What does it say?

The body sense power, the tactile sense power, the tactile organ pervades all the body, including the other organs, the faculties. It exists in all those places. It pervades for instance the eye; if you stick a needle in the eye it's not the eye consciousness feeling the pain, it's the tactile consciousness; if you have your tongue pierced, you might feel a metallic taste, but the pain is in the tactile consciousness. Exceptions [to the entire body being pervaded by the tactile organ] are the hairs, the tips of the fingernails and parts of the brain.

Question: I am still confused. Could you give an example of a feeling with the eye consciousness that is not tactile?

Answer: This is what I would like you to investigate. It maybe that when the eye is for example confronted with glaring light, that part of the feeling is tactile and part of it is within the eye consciousness itself, 'it's too bright!' Because if you shine the light on your arm, it is not doing anything to the tactile consciousness there.

Question: It seems that there is always mental feeling involved in the bodily feeling.

Answer: Yes; but still, they can be differentiated. Like in the example mentioned above, of when the Buddha was taking the aspect of being sick, and answered to the question how he felt, 'there are waves of pain coursing through my body, but my mind is at ease.' Sometimes, when we are in a good space something that might otherwise disturb other people or ourselves can take place, and we are not affected by it at all. But at other times our mental consciousness can interpret that [same thing] with great anguish.

There is an interface there, but they can be differentiated.

Holy beings, like the arhats we were talking about before, might have suffering arising in their body or in one of their sense consciousnesses, but their mind doesn't have to react to that, because they have realized emptiness, selflessness. So the more we can overcome attachment, [the less mental suffering occurs] – first by having applied temporary antidotes, understanding impermanence, knowing, 'this will pass!', thinking, 'I will get my money back again', 'I will have a perfect human rebirth!' and so forth – rather than 'oh, my money has been stolen!!' That is completely a mental reaction, isn't it, does not affect the body at

all, while sometimes when you get stung by a bee, you can be very upset by that; that exacerbates and makes the situation even worse. If you can keep calm, then at least the body can heal, and you wouldn't have the mental anguish on top of that. So this is something we have to investigate.

The quotation from Aryadeva is implying this: Just as the body sense faculty pervades the body everywhere the other faculties are present, in the same way the mental factor, the delusion of ignorance, is present in all ordinary activities. Whether we create negative karma or contaminated virtue, even the virtuous karma we have now – grasping to true existence is always present. That's the fundamental kind of ignorance; from among the mental factors that are klesha, [it is] avidya, ignorance, marigpa. [This] ignorance pervades all of the delusions.

There is some discussion about this in Lama Tsongkhapa's texts and other texts, because ignorance has a particular way of apprehending the object, it perceives the object as truly existent, grasps at it as truly existent, whereas attachment doesn't have that aspect. [Attachment] grasps at an object as attractive or captivating. In general we are captivated by something that causes pleasure to arise; the things we call attractive, (which is the word we mainly use for visual things, for a fragrance maybe we use pleasant, 'a pleasant fragrance') – we call them so because they give rise to feeling, because by that condition our karma ripens. Other people can smell the same thing and not have the same karma. Or, it can make dogs happy to eat excrement, they do that with a big smile on their face...whereas we have different karma.

Just as the body sense power [pervades] the body,
Likewise, ignorance abides in all.

Even in virtuous karma ignorance is present. Arya beings create uncontaminated virtue because their ignorance has either been diminished or eliminated completely, so they can create virtue without the presence of that ignorance.

Just as it has been said above, the body sense power pervades one's entire [body], from the crown down to the soles of the feet. Thus, any feeling arising in the retinue of the other four sense consciousnesses, such as the eye consciousness, is also called a "bodily feeling."

It is not as though the pleasurable feeling for example in the taste consciousness is a tactile consciousness; it is just called bodily because it is pervaded by the physical sense power also, and is susceptible to having that kind of feeling.

Also, when these six feelings are differentiated into the two – the materialistic and the non-materialistic – [feelings] are of twelve types.

This materialistic comes from the Sanskrit – the word sometimes comes up as well in the sense of the two kinds of giving: the giving of Dharma and the giving of material [things]. So it doesn't always mean materialistic.

QUALM: What do materialistic and non-materialistic mean?

RESPONSE: Feelings that are concomitant with the craving for the contaminated appropriated aggregates are called "materialistic feelings." Feelings that are concomitant with the exalted wisdom directly realizing selflessness are called "non-materialistic feelings."

It is sometimes translated as disinterested, non-turbulent, or non-fleshy.

There are not many of those [exalted wisdoms] in the continuum of an ordinary being; ordinary being meaning anybody other than a buddha. Even for arya beings, the exalted wisdom directly realizing selflessness only takes place in meditation. Only at the time when you are directly realizing emptiness, the feeling that arises is going to be one in which you are disinterested, and there is no confusion in your mind.

When we study tantra, like with Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche, one of the things one tries to do is to generate a blissful consciousness concomitant with the wisdom realizing emptiness. In the higher stages, what one tries to do to bring about enlightenment quickly, is to have this kind of non-materialistic, non-turbulent, disinterested kind of feeling, the blissful feeling which is concomitant with the wisdom realizing emptiness, so you are not grasping to it.

What are the contaminated appropriated aggregates? Contaminated phenomena doesn't mean contaminated by nuclear radiation etc. All phenomena are either contaminated or uncontaminated. The *Abhidharma* accepts as uncontaminated phenomena only the truth of the path and the truth of cessation. Uncontaminated means that which, when you perceive it or when it is present in your mind, does not give rise to contaminations in your mind, to other delusions. So true cessations and the path that realizes emptiness are not contaminated.

According to the Vaibhashikas even a buddha's body aggregate is contaminated; when you look at a buddha's body you may generate attachment or revulsion. According to the Mahayana that is not the case; if you generate attachment or delusion looking at the nirmanakaya you are not actually seeing the nirmanakaya, you are seeing your own karmic appearance of that.

The contaminated aggregates are first of all our aggregates, thrown because of karma. They are the result of our contaminated karma of the past, that was created out of delusion. Our body is not like that of an arya-bodhisattva or a buddha, which is not arisen out of contaminated karma.

Appropriated means different things. One meaning referred to by Lama Zopa Rinpoche is 'closely taken'. When our consciousness is in the bardo we appropriate the bodily aggregates by entering the fertilized egg – that's one meaning of that.

So the contaminated appropriated aggregates. What are the five aggregates? They are:

- the form aggregate, which includes all the matter of the body;
- the feeling aggregate, which is the mental factor feeling, including all feelings;
- the discrimination aggregate, which is also a mental factor;
- the compositional aggregate, which includes all the rest of the mental factors;

- the consciousness aggregate, which contains all the primary consciousnesses of our six consciousnesses.

We are comprised of the body aggregate, which is all the atoms or molecules of our body, and the mind.

Four of the aggregates are mind; one is the primary consciousness, the three others are all the mental factors, and for some reason feeling and discrimination are centered out.

In the sutras, especially in the Hinayana tradition, there are many different explanations why the feeling and discrimination aggregates are separate. Lama Tsongkhapa found the explanation by Vasubandhu – prevalent in the Vaibhashika system in the *Abhidharmakosha* – to be the most sensible, that they are separated out because they are the source of samsara for ordinary beings and for scholars, or pandits.

Most of the arguments we have in life evolve around feelings: to get rid of bad feelings, to get good feelings. We want to have pleasant feelings of the body; we want to have a good taste; we want to hear ego-pleasing words. Like ‘I love you!’. Sometimes that’s not enough and we want to have the bodily component also, ‘Oh – you only want me for my mind!’ Or if we do have the body pleasure, ‘You only want me for my body!’ We want everything! We want to have all of those feelings.

And discrimination then is discriminating one tenet, one philosophical system, as superior to another; this is what scholars argue about, and what causes them – out of the their ignorance – to revolve within cyclic existence.

So this is one explanation of why these two are set apart.

The feeling aggregate is the mental factor feeling, it is not like what we sometimes call it, like ‘feelings of love’. Love is not in the feeling aggregate, feeling is just sensation.

QUALM: Well then, if one were to explain the above-mentioned “non-materialistic suffering feeling,” how can a suffering feeling be present in those who possess the exalted wisdom directly realizing selflessness?”

If you have a deep special wisdom, directly realizing selflessness, how can you have suffering feelings in the continuum? It does not mean at that time [of the exalted wisdom], it means: in the continuum of one who possesses that wisdom. It means whether it’s manifest or not, they have realized emptiness –it’s an arya being.

RESPONSE: There are many such cases.

For example, the *Scripture on Discipline (Vinayagama)* says that even foe-destroyers who have abandoned the conception of self experience suffering feelings such as headaches due to the fruition of past actions.

So remember the example I gave of the Buddha, although the Buddha is said not to have actually been experiencing suffering, he was manifesting as the arhats might, that ‘there’s waves of pain coursing through my body, but my mind is at ease.’

Furthermore, when feelings are divided by way of their supports, (or their bases; the basis for the visual feeling is the eye organ) there are six:

(1) feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a visible form, an eye [sense power], and an eye consciousness;

For an eye consciousness to arise, three things have to be present: the organ – that would be the retinene cones in the back of the retina –, an object – it might be an image on the retina – and there has to be an eye consciousness. Otherwise there could be feeling in the eye consciousness of a corpse, from which the consciousness is gone.

Those three have to aggregate together. The coming together of those three things is the omnipresent mental factor contact, which always precedes feeling. Feelings arise from contact, which is the aggregation of the various organs, the various consciousnesses.

In the ear consciousness it would be ear feeling; or, maybe more easy to understand, for the tongue or gustatory feeling the mental factor arises from the contact which is the aggregation, the coming together, of these three things: the tongue consciousness (the preceding moment), the object of taste, and the organ. Before I put the cookie on my tongue, there probably was a neutral feeling of tongue consciousness, something not of a particular flavor, but now.... wow...there is some particular feeling arising because of that aggregation.

- (2) feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a sound, an ear [sense power], and an ear consciousness;
- (3) feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of an odor, a nose [sense power], and a nose consciousness;
- (4) feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a taste, a tongue [sense power], and a tongue consciousness;
- (5) feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a tactile object, a body [sense power], and a body consciousness; and
- (6) feeling arising from contact upon the aggregation of a phenomenon, a mental [sense power], and a mental consciousness.

Further, these six are each divided into three – pleasant, suffering and neutral– giving eighteen types of feeling.

There are the six kinds of feelings: feeling arisen in the eye consciousness because of aggregation of the three things, feeling arisen in the ear consciousness etc.; and each of them is again divided into three: pleasant, unpleasant and neutral. So you have 18 kinds of feelings.

Fearing wordiness, if I were to describe in detail their individual identities, I shall leave them out.

In different sutras Buddha sometimes elaborated all of the different things. In the shorter versions of those sutras only one thing is mentioned, and you can understand all the rest by example. There are three famous sutras of the *Perfection of Wisdom*: the small, the middling and the large *Perfection of Wisdom*. They all supposedly refer to the same incident: the Buddha was teaching on Vultures Peak, where he talked about emptiness (not the *Heart Sutra*). And various episodes took place, and different disciples remembered it differently; when they recited it later, some of them remembered it in a very brief version – 8.000 verses. Some remembered it a little more elaborate – 25.000 verses. Others remembered it a lot more elaborate – the *100.000 Verses Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* – all talking about the same thing. So did the smarter people remember more details? It depends on different things. His Holiness the Dalai Lama mentioned once: there were two great scholars of the

same period, maybe Jamyang Sheba and I can't remember who the other one was. One of them, whatever explanation of a text he gave, it was always incredibly extensive, the other always gave very concise explanations, but both of them offered all the information.

Moreover, when feelings are divided by way of object of abandonment and antidote,

Objects of abandonment are the things that are to be abandoned by the path, the things we have to give up: the delusions, the seeds of delusions, the imprints; the antidotes or the remedies are the things that give rise to the abandonment of those objects of abandonment.

there are two:

(1) feelings that support adherence

or longing

and

(2) feelings that support deliverance.

(1) Feelings that support adherence are feelings that are concomitant with the craving for the attributes of the desire realm.

– the desirable objects. The attributes of the desire realm are what gives rise to attachment. The mind of someone who has developed shinez or shamatha (tranquil abiding) is elevated from our mind, they are said to be separated from attachment to the desire realm. No matter what kind of objects they are confronted with, no attachment arises. Separation from attachment is of course also present in the mind of arya beings, who have eliminated attachment by the antidote. But even by developing tranquil abiding, even before you become an arya, if you have this very deep concentration you become less and less interested in the ordinary desire attributes of this world. That's a good reason for developing tranquil abiding.

(2) Feelings that support deliverance are, for example, feelings that are concomitant with the mental consciousness that, having turned away from the attachment to the attributes of the desire realm, is included within the actual first concentration.

When you develop tranquil abiding, shamatha, your mind is elevated for that period of time, while you are in that concentration, to the actual first absorption, the first dhyana, (in Pali they call it jhana) or the first concentration. (Dhyana or jhana supposedly is the origin for the Chinese word chang and zen). The ordinary feelings within our consciousness now, as our mind is fully enmeshed in the desire realm, are called feelings that support longing or adherence.

Such a twofold division of feelings is taught in order to make known: the manner in which craving is induced through the force of feeling and the manner in which one can become free of attachment to feeling in dependence on an actual concentration.

Actual concentration occurs when you develop the dhyanas. The Tibetan is samten, also a common Tibetan name. When you develop shinez, first you approach [it with] what's called the access or preparation to the first concentration, that is not the actual first concentration yet. But then by using lhaktong, vipashyana or special insight to separate yourself from attachment to the desire realm, by looking at its defects, and by looking at the attributes of

the first concentration – with that kind of deep penetrative insight, your mind actually separates from attachment; the attachment [of the desire realm] is left behind. There is still the seed of attachment in your mind; you haven't abandoned attachment yet with an actual antidote. But temporarily your mind is free of attachment by attaining that actual first concentration.

Therefore, if you wish to understand these modes precisely, you should carefully consult the upper and lower *Knowledges* [i.e., the *Compendium of Knowledge* and the *Treasury of Knowledge*]. Also, one should learn from the *Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* how not to let the three – pleasant, suffering and neutral feelings – become causes of the three poisons.

What are the three poisons? Attachment, which arises from pleasant feelings. Aversion and anger, which arise from unpleasant feelings. And bewilderment or ignorance in general is continued by neutral feelings.

You may notice this coming week, when you investigate feelings: attachment does not arise in the sense consciousness. For instance, if you taste a nice cookie, attachment doesn't arise in your tongue consciousness because of that pleasure, it arises in the mental consciousness. The interface between sense and mental consciousnesses means that both can be functioning; the tongue consciousness is experiencing that pleasant feeling, whereas the mental consciousness is aware of that and can develop attachment to that, like, 'how can I get the rest of them!'

Craving is a delusion, a mental factor – is craving present in the tongue consciousness? Is it the tongue consciousness that wants to get more? No, it is the mental consciousness. Attachment only takes place in the mental consciousness. But there is always an interface, it is not possible for the tongue consciousness to experience something without the mental consciousness apprehending that. It is the mental consciousness that makes the decision, 'Oh that was nice! I want to get more of those... I wonder how much they cost!'

There is the feeling of pleasure, but there is a difference between craving and feeling; the feeling causes the craving, or the memory of the feeling, or the anticipation of something you maybe never have experienced yet causes the craving.

This is interesting; if you notice yourself daydreaming or fantasizing, usually about sensual or physical pleasure or fame or success, that can generate a pleasurable feeling in your mental consciousness, or it can actually have a result in your body consciousness also, obviously. So they are related, but feelings are said to be the conditions giving rise to delusions – in this case to craving. Unpleasant feelings give rise to aversion.

Shantideva, in the *Bodhisattvacaryavatara*, in the chapter on patience, talking about the antidotes to anger, says: if there is anything you can do about the situation, there is no reason to be unhappy, if there is nothing you can do about the situation, there is no reason to be unhappy. So there is no need to be unhappy – you don't need that unhappy mind! Why is he talking about unhappiness, when he is supposed to be talking about anger? Because unhappiness always is the precursor of anger. If you can keep a happy mind, you will never be angry.

Please check this next week: when you get a little irritated about something, a little angry, a bit of depression arising, it will be because something is being experienced by your mental consciousness as unpleasant. Whenever there is feeling in the continuum of an ordinary person – not one who has tranquil abiding, not one who has realized emptiness – the pleasant feelings will always give rise to some kind of attachment. In that person's continuum, either from previous lives or because of training the mind in this lifetime, there can be a certain amount of non-attachment to it because of training the mind. Thinking, 'oh this will pass', or seeing the defects of something even if it looks attractive. We do learn, we do learn to stay away from it. Moths don't know that, they go right into the fire. It's said to be a sign of intelligence, of maturity, when, even though something is perceived as pleasant and it gives rise to a pleasurable feeling, we can prevent ourselves grasping for it, if we can overcome the craving through some kind of wisdom, like 'this will pass', 'there are defects of that' and so forth.

So next time, why don't you try to read over what we have done, and see if there are any questions, and also read the section on discrimination and attention and contact, and we will try to quickly go over the other omnipresent mental factors. The first omnipresent mental factor is feeling.

Let's spend a moment to dedicate the virtuous karma, the merit that we have created.

Dedication

Try to calm your mind and concentrate your mind so that it's not distracted by other things.

Recognize what you are dedicating: with the act of listening, of paying attention with a positive motivation that we created at the beginning, we have created roots of virtue, strong virtuous karmic seeds that are laid within our consciousness. It is definite that, if they do mature, they can only give rise to something which is pleasurable. They can't give rise to suffering, it is impossible, there is no basis for them to arise as suffering. We have created some incredible thing.

To dedicate it means to make an aspiration (another object ascertaining mental factor) that this may ripen in a particular way, which can actually lead it in that direction. Think, 'Due to this karma, may this become the cause of my quickly developing the bodhicitta which is not yet developed in my own and in others' mental continua. Due to this merit may it become the cause of whatever inklings, beginnings of bodhicitta that have arisen not to decline but to continue to grow more and more.

If you have some understanding of emptiness, think of the emptiness of the three spheres; the emptiness of the karma itself, the karmic seeds, that's the object to be dedicated; the goal dedicated to, the generation of bodhicitta, empty also of being

findable, empty of any true existence; and the act of dedication itself, the person dedicating, the so called activity of dedicating also is empty of any kind of true existence, is not findable from its own side. All three are merely imputed by the mind; they have no substantial true existence as it appears to us.

Even so, within emptiness, knowing that, still cause and effect is infallible.

DVD 4

Meditation

Quiet the body. Relax your body, relax your mind. Tell yourself, as I often tell myself, 'Relax!' – and relax your mind. There is a great art in that – learning to let go of all the things occupying you. It would be nice, if we could be practicing mindfulness of the Dharma all the time, but sometimes in everyday life we get caught up in our worries and our expectations, our desires, and so forth. Especially when you have a chance to do some formal meditation, remember everything ultimately is okay. Everything is empty of existing the way it appears, so solid, findable, threatening, so entrancing and siren-like. With the highest thought to achieve enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings, think, 'I'm going to begin by concentrating my mind by practicing mindfulness of the breathing'.

Like the changing breath, everything we experience is changing moment by moment.

Begin to learn to let go of your attention to the eye consciousness and the ear consciousness and so forth. Let go of other thoughts that come up.

Then changing your attention to the object of the mind itself, the mental consciousness. Follow one breath up, as though it were going to the crown of your head, then down to your throat, to your heart chakra. Then let go of your attention to the breathing. Just watch the mind within which all these thoughts, discriminations, feelings are arising. Try to see beyond them, behind the transitory appearances to our mind. Try to see the nature of the mind behind those thoughts, [the nature of the mind] within which the thoughts are arising, like a vast ocean or space.

The thought of I arises within this space, sometimes in the relatively discernable, easily observable sense of a controller, the experiencer, the meditator – the one who wants, the one who loves, the one who experiences. Although at first, before we know other reasons, we can only take the Buddha's valid speech as a reason, see if you can let go of that sense of I, by saying that Buddha taught that such an I does not exist.

The mere I, that is merely labeled to your body and mind, is continuing; it's not as though you will disappear. That I, that was the cause of our unskillful actions in the past and continues to be so in the present and will be in the future, never existed. It was only the sense of it, the conception of it that drove us to commit unskillful actions; the sense of truly findable objects of enjoyment or truly findable fearful undesirable objects to avoid, was what drove us to various actions.

Think, 'In order to be a lesser burden for sentient beings, in order to be less harmful to them, in order to be less needy myself, to overcome the sense of ego so that I can actually

find the space and time to benefit sentient beings, I'm going to listen to the teachings on the minds and the mental factors. I'm going to hear the Buddha's teachings, and, as the Buddha said, develop that wisdom from hearing, studying first of all, then contemplating, analyzing it, and eventually meditating on it. I'm going to participate tonight and listen, in order to quickly become enlightened for the welfare of all sentient beings.'

Then relax and bring your attention back.

Teaching 4

At the present we are studying the omnipresent mental factors. Those who are new can maybe discuss what came before with the others.

There are fifty-one mental factors. Fifty-one is the number given in the Higher Abhidharma. These are not the only mental factors, but the main ones described by the Buddha. Just like when we talk of the ten paths of non-virtuous actions, it does not mean there are only ten things that you have to avoid – they are just the main ones but there are other things that are not included as well.

The first omnipresent mental factor, feeling, doesn't mean emotions – something like, 'I have feelings for you!' Feeling means the sensations of pleasure, suffering or neutral feelings. The translation 'indifference' instead of 'neutrality' seems to imply a mental stance of being indifferent, but that wouldn't be what is meant here. Feeling is a response experienced in your mental continuum. It's not so much due to your volition. Except for when you pick up the chocolate in order to experience the feeling of that; you can induce pleasurable feelings in the mind or in the body just by the will, by imagining certain things. You can imagine the sun, or have some sensual dream, or some fearful dream – mentally created objects – or just daydreaming can create objects. But it's not as though you cause the feeling to arise; you cause some condition for the feeling to arise by coming in contact with something.

The second omnipresent mental factor is discrimination, or sometimes called recognition or discernment. The Tibetan word is *du she*. I like the translation discrimination.

This is one of the two mental factors that are themselves one of the aggregates. Feeling is the other one. So discrimination – like feeling – is one of the five aggregates. When we list the aggregates, we usually start with the form aggregate and then there are four others – feeling, discrimination, compositional factors, primary consciousness – all of which are mind, or consciousness. The mental factor discrimination is the aggregate of discrimination. As mentioned above, feeling and discrimination are singled out from the other aggregates for some special treatment.

Phenomena don't inherently have a certain name. Some names might be more appropriate upon analysis, but that might be due to do your own likes and dislikes, to your own analysis and your own state of education. When you read other texts, this is useful to know, because they are translated in different ways. In Geshe Rabten's text *du she* is translated as discernment.

[A2] Discrimination ('du shes)

Regarding the entity of discrimination, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is the defining characteristic of discrimination [Tibetan: 'du shes, literally, aggregation-knowing]?

RESPONSE: It has the characteristic of knowing upon aggregation.

The word *du*, of *du-she*, has to do with aggregating or coming together. The Sanskrit etymology doesn't have that sense, but the Tibetans have almost taken the meaning from the defining characteristic of discrimination – 'knowing upon aggregation'. Especially these two mental factors, feeling and discrimination, are both said to arise upon the activity or presence of the mental factor contact. Contact is an aggregation of three things: the object of the consciousness, the consciousness, and the faculty.

For instance, let's take eye consciousness: when an image falls on your retina – which is essentially the location of the subtle eye organ, I would say where the rods and cones are, some subtle matter there – you have (1) an object and (2) the organ – the organ needs to be present, functioning, not destroyed [or damaged] – and also (3) consciousness is present; then the mental factor contact, upon the aggregation of those three, empowers the faculty to be suitable to give rise to the [eye] consciousness.

It has the entity of apprehending the sign and apprehending the mark,

Entity, or nature... Mark also implies marks perceived by a conceptual consciousness, not just by the sense consciousnesses; it is sometimes also translated as idea.

...through which one designates an expression to objects of perceptions, hearing, differentiation and knowledge.

That has to be explained. This is a quotation from the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*. 'Designating an expression' is a very famous phrase in Tibetan; it has the sense of imputing a convention, giving some kind of terminology to an object. Because objects don't naturally have names, it's something our mind has to impute. The function of discrimination is not necessarily to do this designation; it is through discrimination of something that we have the power to give names, or impute conventionalities or designate expressions to objects of perception, of hearing, of mental analysis [by Sze Gee translated as differentiation] and perception [knowledge].

Just as it has been said above, it is a knower

discrimination is a knower, a consciousness

that, upon the aggregation of the three – object, sense power, and primary consciousness – apprehends the uncommon sign of an object.

Maybe that is why it's called recognition sometimes, because it's a mental factor that is able to distinguish. Discrimination distinguishes the uncommon sign of the object.

Discrimination is not only an activity of the mental consciousness, it takes place also in the sense consciousnesses. Without discrimination the perceptual field would just be one undifferentiated whole. The presence of discrimination is – even in the eye consciousness – not like a conscious thing that makes you think, 'this is that.' There is a discrimination in your mental consciousness that discriminates or apprehends the distinguishing sign of something; but here its mere presence in the ear, eye or nose consciousness is what allows you to differentiate between the various objects of that sense, allowing you for instance to distinguish or discriminate the various odors coming to your nose consciousness – a particular sign, the uncommon sign of particular objects.

Then there is a quotation from a text by Vasubandhu:

Also, *A Discussion of the Five Aggregates* says:

QUESTION: What is discrimination?

RESPONSE: It apprehends the sign of an object.

Literally, apprehending, or holding, the object as a sign.

When discrimination is divided, there are two:

- (1) the apprehension of a sign and
- (2) the apprehension of a mark.

So here those two words come back that we saw above, in the original definition, where it said that the defining characteristics are that it has the entity of apprehending, or grasping, signs and marks.

- (1) The apprehension of a sign is an apprehension of an uncommon sign of an object which appears to a non-conceptual consciousness.

That means, when your senses perceive something and are able to differentiate – just in the perceptual field – that is by the activity of discrimination.

- (2) The apprehension of a mark is an apprehension of an uncommon sign of an object which appears to conceptual thought.

An apprehension is a grasping... So here there is a different term that is used for discrimination within the mental consciousness. Because most of the discrimination within our mental consciousness is done via conception; for the most part we don't have a perceptual mental consciousness for any duration, it's mostly conceptual. And in our thinking process there is a discrimination that recognizes thoughts and objects; the signs it's recognizing in this case have a different name, which is here translated as mark.

The bases of engagement for these two types of discrimination are perceptions, hearing, differentiation and knowledge. Their meanings are as follows.

- Perceptions involve designating an expression to objects manifestly perceived.
- Hearing involves designating an expression in dependence on hearing credible words.

I am not sure about the word perceptions; actually, it literally just says 'seeing'. This is from sutra. Hearing is also separated out, so I am not sure it should be perception here [- seeing and hearing seems more appropriate.] The foundation for the engagement of the two kinds of discrimination, the discrimination present in direct perception and the discrimination present in conception, [in the first case] involves perceptions, when you directly perceive something, when you see or hear something. That's probably what the Buddha was referring to here. And when you hear things you have faith in, you can make discriminations about them, about what you've heard. So perception – the first one here – should just say seeing, because these are probably divisions that the Buddha gave. Seeing and hearing are the most common ones, and then analysis in our mind, and then in general when you know things directly, with all the senses.

- Differentiation involves designating an expression to objects ascertained in dependence on signs.

This is the kind of discrimination that arises when you are involved in using logic – the Tibetan word means logical sign.

- Knowledge involves designating an expression to objects ascertained directly.

When we finish this I will show you some of this in the other two books that may make this a little more accessible.

From the *Abhidharmakosha*:

The *Treasury of Knowledge* explains discrimination as being twofold:

- (1) the apprehension of a sign with regard to an object and
- (2) the apprehension of a sign with regard to a convention.

(1) The apprehension of a sign with regard to an object means to apprehend it through individually distinguishing the object's particularities, such as blue, yellow, and so forth.

(2) The apprehension of a sign with regard to a convention means to apprehend it through individually distinguishing the convention's particularities, as when one thinks, "This is a man; that is a woman."

The convention's particularities, or the features of a convention....The word convention here means a term arising in the mind, it does not mean conventional phenomena.

The *Abhidharmakosha* talks about two kinds of discrimination. That involves, when you perceive an object directly, distinguishing the objects' particularities, and the second is in terms of thinking about things. For instance, when with your eye consciousness you see a man and a woman, and your mental consciousness distinguishes, 'this is a man and that is a woman.'

Further, when discrimination is differentiated in terms of its support, there are six:

- (1) discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a visible form, an eye [sense power], and an eye consciousness;
- (2) discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a sound, an ear [sense power], and an ear consciousness;
- (3) discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of an odor, a nose [sense power], and a nose consciousness;

- (4) discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a taste, a tongue [sense power], and a tongue consciousness;
- (5) discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a tactile object, a body [sense power], and a body consciousness; and
- (6) discrimination arising from contact upon the aggregation of a phenomenon, a mental [sense power], and a mental consciousness.

That same list also came when we were talking about feelings, remember? There was a way of saying there are six kinds of feelings arising because of contact; the mental factor feeling in the eye consciousness, ear feeling, nose feeling and so forth. There are also six kinds of discrimination in this way.

Also, when discrimination is differentiated in terms of its object of observation, there are six:

- (1) reasoned discrimination
- (2) unreasoned discrimination
- (3) discrimination of the small
- (4) discrimination of the vast
- (5) discrimination of the limitless
- (6) discrimination thinking "there is nothing"

Reasoned discrimination, literally: discrimination with signs; unreasoned discrimination literally: discrimination without signs. Discriminations can be divided up in different ways – like you can cut up a pie in different ways. These various kinds of discriminations are mentioned by the Buddha in the sutras.

- (1) Reasoned discrimination is of three types:
 - (a) discrimination skilled in the relationship between names and objects
 - (b) discrimination observing the compounded [as] impermanent and so on
 - (c) discrimination having a clear object of observation and [subjective] aspect

Migpa and nampa – migpa means the referent, and nampa means the way you are perceiving it. So in a sense it is subjective, but it also has some objective characteristic.

- (2) Unreasoned discrimination is also threefold; its three kinds are the opposites of the three types of reasoned discrimination mentioned above.
[i.e.,
 - (a) discrimination unskilled in the relationship between names and objects
 - (b) discrimination observing the compounded {as} permanent and so on
 - (c) discrimination lacking a clear object of observation and {subjective} aspect

An example of discrimination skilled in the relationship between names and objects is as mentioned above, 'this is a man, that is a woman!'

The third means, if you were trying to discriminate something, and the object you were trying to discriminate was not clear to your mind – because you were partially inebriated or just waking up from sleep or just going to sleep or at the time of death or at the time of birth – that would be a discrimination lacking a clear object of observation and aspect.

So those are two divisions of discrimination. One is clear and skillful discrimination, the other is either wrong or unskillful. This may not be a perfect division of the pie; some of these may overlap one another.

- (3) Discrimination of the small refers to (a) discriminations in the continuum of an ordinary being of the desire realm who has not obtained an actual concentration and (b) discrimination observing the attributes of the desire realm.

This would be the discrimination present within the consciousness of either a being in the desire realm or a desire realm mind, and the discrimination present in the continuum of a form realm being or someone who has developed the actual first concentration. These are different kinds of discriminations in such a person's mind.

You can be born in the form realm, let's say in the first concentration – there is something called the first concentration which is actually a place, the brahma realm – and you can actually develop that same mind in this lifetime through developing tranquil abiding, single-pointed concentration, and in addition to that engaging in what the Buddha called vipashyana. You know the word vipashyana, we talked about it before, penetrative insight. There are two kinds, mundane and supramundane. Mundane vipashyana means using that penetrative insight – once you have a very tranquil mind – to analyze [for example] the defects of the desire realm and the good qualities of the first concentration, and thereby separating your mind from attachment to the desire realm, by subduing this attachment.

We actually do have something analogous to that: when you've met someone you liked at first and then you started seeing their bad qualities and you kept on thinking about that, then you could separate from the attachment to them. Even though when you see them again one part of your mind might find them still attractive, but due to the power of your consciousness you can to a certain degree be separated from attachment to them.

When you have tranquil abiding and then you develop the first concentration, you are actually separated from attachment to the desire realm. So it's a different kind of mind. You don't have to be born in that first concentration to have that mind, you can develop it while born in the desire realm.

The discrimination of the small refers to the discrimination in the continuum of our own minds now, or it refers to when you discriminate the attributes of the desire realm.

(4) Discrimination of the vast, refers to (a) discrimination observing the form realm and (b) discriminations in the continua of form realm beings.

(5) Discrimination of the limitless refers to discriminations observing the source of infinite space and the source of infinite consciousness.

(6) Discrimination of nothingness refers to discriminations observing the source of nothingness.

There are four concentrations in the form realm, and also in the formless realm there are four concentrations. The first of those is limitless or infinite space. If you are in the fourth concentration of the form realm and want to go beyond that, you [do that by] thinking there is nothing but space, by doing an analysis which is another kind of mundane special insight or vipashyana, by which you can separate from the mind of the fourth concentration of the form realm and attain the first of the formless concentrations. [You do that] by meditating on everything being just space, there is nothing but space, infinite space, limitless space, that is all there is, there is no longer form. So you achieve what is called the formless realm, the first of the formless realms.

Then you go beyond that, thinking that there is not just space, there is just consciousness. That's the second of the formless concentrations: infinite consciousness. The third of the formless concentrations is called discrimination of 'nothing at all'. Then you think, 'There is no space! There is no consciousness! There is nothing!'

What about the fourth, what is the fourth called? It's sometimes called the Peak of Samsara, because it is the highest you can go within samsara. You are separated from all of these other kinds of attachment – but there still is some attachment and the seeds of all the other delusions in the mind. It's sometimes called 'Without Discrimination and Without Non-discrimination', literally, but what it means is without gross discrimination but not without subtle discrimination. It's almost as though there is no discrimination; there is no discrimination that everything is space, or that everything is consciousness, or that there is nothing at all, so it is like there is no discrimination at all – a very, very subtle mind. So that's why I think [among the divisions of discrimination listed here] that there is no category for this one, because there is not any gross discrimination.

The Tibetan actually says 'without discrimination, not without discrimination' – meaning without gross discrimination, but not without some subtle discrimination. There is still some subtle discrimination, because discrimination is an omnipresent mental factor, and that consciousness is pretty close to an unconsciousness state, but not quite.

Let us go back over this again, reading the same section in the text *The Mind and its Functions*, page 111 [in the 1992 edition] the section on discernment, which is how du she is translated here. As we go along we will check how this compares with the definitions we have here. A lot of it is the same, sometimes it exemplifies it and clears up some points.

Geshe Rabten says: *Discernment is a distinct mental factor having the function of identifying the object to be one thing as opposed to another by means of differentiation.*

You might think that by translating it as *identifying the object* it has become a completely different definition from what we had in our text, because it didn't seem to say anything about identifying the object. Actually in Tibetan it's the same as we have here, certain words have just been translated differently. *Identifying the object* was in our text translated as apprehending the sign or grasping at the sign. So this might give you another insight into what that means. Grasping a sign or apprehending a sign means identifying it. That's not the usual word for identification, but that is the meaning.

Geshe Rabten says: *This is the inherent quality of the mind, whose task it is to distinguish one object from another. Either by identifying it with terms and phrases – is that done with the sense consciousnesses? You might say 'I saw a man', or 'I saw a woman', but that term, distinguishing it as such is done by the mental consciousness, right? – This is the inherent quality of the mind, whose task, function, it is to distinguish one object from another. Either by identifying it with terms and phrases as in the case of most conceptions...*

Because not all conceptions conceive of things with terms and phrases. Remember, from Lorig, that there are two kinds of conceptual minds? Conception was defined as ‘that which apprehends a sound and meaning generality as suitable to be mixed’; so there were some conceptions that only perceived meaning generalities, some perceived sound generalities, (that meant conventionalities), and some that perceived the object, thinking, ‘oh, this is a wristwatch!’ Discrimination is not limited to that in conception, but this is one of the functions, in the conception that is suitable to mix a meaning generality (something you had actually perceived before) and the name attributed to it. Discrimination takes place and is used in conception in that particular kind of function.

Like when a baby first sees its mother’s face, she doesn’t think, ‘mummy’ or any such label. Then at a certain point, when the baby can differentiate or distinguish what it has begun to recognize as mum, and that that has the name ‘mamma’, this would also be by this kind of discrimination. Still, there is also discrimination present even when she just discriminates mamma from the rest of the perceptual field, with just the eye consciousness.

Geshe Rabten continues:.. *as in the case of most conceptions or by merely making a distinction between objects, as in the case of perceptions. Thus it is present in all forms of cognition, playing an essential role in abstract thought and imagination as well as in the simplest visual and audial perceptions. Well, also gustatory, olfactory, tactile – not just visual and audial. Although of the four divisions that are given in this text it is as though the Buddha singled these two out. According to their bases there are six forms of discernment, ranging from discernment associated with visual contact up to discernment associated with mental contact. Also six types of discernments are classified according to their referents.*

That’s the last section we had in our text, right?

Geshe Rabten: *Discernment with a sign – This is of three types: that which is skilled in relating terms to their corresponding objects as in conceptual thought, right?; that which discerns concrete, impermanent phenomena and that which has a clear, distinct referent.*

Discernment without a sign in our text reasoned discrimination – this is also of three types, being the opposites of the three mentioned above. The first is the discernment of the young child who, having not yet learned a language, does not identify objects with signs, i.e. names and terms. The second is the discernment of a meditative perception of ultimate truth in which there is no sign of any conditioned phenomenon.

So this one without sign is not necessarily bad, [which,] because it said [in our translation] ‘unreasoned discrimination’ [may be felt as the implication, because of the word ‘unreasoned’]; so maybe that’s not such a good translation. Because the first division is when you perceive conventional phenomena, impermanent phenomena; but for the second one, one of the meanings of it is not just the unreasoned, unlearned discrimination of a child but also the discrimination of emptiness, when there is no sign of conditioned

phenomena; and the third is the discernment of the formless absorption at the peak of cyclic existence in which there is no sign of a clear or distinct referent.

So all four discriminations, all four formless absorptions are in fact indicated here. So if someone were to ask you, 'where would you find the discrimination of the Peak of Samsara?', that would be in this second division, discrimination without a sign. Remember, we said that division five and six referred to the first three formless absorptions.

Geshe Rabten: *Discernment or discrimination of the limited is present in beings abiding in the desire realm, who have not attained even the preparatory stage for mental absorption – the preparation of the first absorption, or of the first concentration. It is said to be of something limited since it discerns a world in which life is shorter, afflictions are more numerous, endowments and even the environment are of a lower quality than in higher states of existence – the first absorption, the second and so forth. So that is the discrimination that you have to overcome with the mundane vipashyana, to separate from attachment to the desire realm.*

Geshe Rabten: *Discernment of the vast: this is a discernment existing within the realm of form. It is of the vast in the sense that it discerns a world in which afflictions are fewer and wholesome qualities are greater than in realm of desire.*

The discrimination in the continua of all four absorptions in the form realm are given that same name.

Geshe Rabten: *Discernment of infinity or limitless discernment or discrimination – exists in the formless realms where one is absorbed in the infinity of space and the infinity of consciousness. It is so called because it discerns space and consciousness to be infinite.*

Geshe Rabten: *Discernment of nothing at all. This is the discrimination of the formless realm in which the mind is absorbed in nothingness this is the third of the four realms in the formless realm. It is so called since it considers that there is nothing at all presenting itself to the mind.*

Let's have a break and see if there can be any discernment of tea, maybe cookies....

We should be bearing in mind the level of transmission of Dharma in the west! There is so much material in a text like this that, even when translators have studied it a bit, there might be things, some subtlety of meaning, that is not translated. So it is good to have a couple of different sources that are quite authoritative, and to see how the different translators translated different sections. Sometimes this clarifies things up a bit.

Another good source of study for these mental factors is *Meditation on Emptiness* by Jeffrey Hopkins. Its section on the minds and mental factors comes very much from our text by

Yeshe Gyaltsen, and in my opinion the way Jeffrey Hopkins translates some of the definitions helps to illuminate things.

We are spending a lot of time on these two mental factors, feeling and discrimination, and maybe on intention also. We won't go into so much detail with all of the mental factors; that would take too long.

Jeffrey Hopkins [p. 241]: *Discrimination apprehends, upon the aggregation of an object, sense power and a consciousness, the uncommon signs of an object.*

Question: What is uncommon, what would be a synonym of uncommon?

Answer: A common sign of these two cups would be that they are both impermanent. Or what is common between these two is that they are both ceramic. You are discriminating the uncommon signs in order to be able to differentiate one thing from another. It knows, what's uncommon, what's different or special about one thing, as opposed to another. That's the flavor of discrimination as well, isn't it, that it knows what's differentiating one thing from another.

Jeffrey Hopkins then says: *There are two types of discrimination: 1. non-conceptual apprehension of signs because discrimination is an apprehension of, or grasping at, some uncommon sign: 2. apprehension of the uncommon signs of an object appearing to a non-conceptual mind. And conceptual apprehension of signs or marks: apprehension of the uncommon signs of an object appearing to thought. These two types of discrimination operate on: (1) perceptions, involving the designation of expressions to objects manifestly perceived or seen – this is probably why Sze Gee translated it as perception [based on Hopkins], but I think it means seeing; (2) hearing, involving the designation of expressions in dependence on hearing believable words, (3) differentiations, involving the designation of expressions to objects ascertained in dependence on signs, such as in determining that an article is good due to possessing the sign of superior quality, (4) knowledge, involving the designation of expressions to objects ascertained directly. This is talking about the four divisions on top of p. 21 in our text. There is also a division of discrimination of two types: 1. discrimination apprehending signs in objects, and 2. discrimination apprehending signs in expressions. The first one, discrimination apprehending signs in objects is apprehension individually differentiating the features of an object such as blue, yellow and so forth. And discrimination apprehending signs in expressions, conventions in our text, p. 21 – he translates that as expressions: apprehension individually differentiating the features of expressions such as in, 'This is a man, that is a woman.'*

You have to think about it and see what these various divisions mean.

Then he talks about the six kinds of discrimination in terms of the different senses and from the viewpoint of the object of observation. The final statement is: *In general*

discrimination involves the differentiation and identification of objects; as a mental factor accompanying a non-conceptual mind such as eye consciousness, it implies a non-confusion of the details of the object without which a later identification could not be made. In the sense consciousnesses discrimination is merely able to differentiate. It is not consciously saying, 'this is blue, this is yellow' etc., but the fact that discrimination is there means that the consciousness is discriminating and doesn't just make everything one homogeneous whole. Discrimination is the heart of identifying the object of negation in the view of selflessness. You have to be able to differentiate or discriminate, when you want to identify the object of negation.

Do you know what that means, identifying the object of negation? When you are meditating on emptiness, the first most important step is to recognize or identify how the I or self seems to be appearing to the mind. It's one of the most crucial points, easily skipped over, but in the great texts it's given in incredible detail, how to actually identify the subtlemost object of negation. Jeffrey Hopkins quotes from an oral commentary: *Discrimination is the heart of identifying the object of negation in the view of selflessness and then reflecting on a reasoning proving non-inherent existence; thus, far from being a hindrance to the path, correct discrimination is to be enhanced.* The point being that someone might say 'you're always discriminating, you are so picky...'; maybe in the world that kind of discrimination could be a hindrance, and you might think that all discrimination has to be eliminated. But obviously you need discrimination when you are actually trying to pinpoint what is to be abandoned in the path, what is to be accepted; what is the object of negation, how does it actually exist, how does it not exist.

Question: Is discrimination a kind of wisdom that you try to cultivate?

Answer: When you do Lama Tsongkhapa or Yamantaka practice there are different kinds of wisdom that you pray to have descending [into you] etc. This mental factor discrimination, *du she*, is not a kind of wisdom. You have to be careful; when you talk about some kind of discriminating wisdom, that might be a translation of a completely different term. It's not talking about this mental factor. In its passive sense, in the sense consciousnesses, it's merely the ability of such consciousness to differentiate, to discriminate various parts of the sense field; and in terms of conception it's able to differentiate the distinguishing marks to recognize something and has the ability to discriminate and give names to things. So it is involved in all those different processes but it's not itself called wisdom. The first of the wisdoms we will encounter is what's called *prajna*, or *sherab* in Tibetan, one of the five object-ascertaining mental factors.

When Jeffrey Hopkins says, 'discrimination is the heart of identifying the object of negation', we are not talking about using discriminating wisdom. It's like for instance if I say, 'Mindfulness is the heart of concentration.' – it doesn't mean that mindfulness is concentration. It means that mindfulness is an essential factor to develop concentration.

We talked about the word isolate or [double] reverse at the beginning of the text, in the sense that you can differentiate various qualities of the mind, various functions of the

mind – slightly different from one another. For instance you can have mindfulness of something, but concentration is a slightly different function of the mind although they might be related to one another. It's the same thing here: discrimination might be present when there is wisdom, but it would not necessarily be wisdom. As said, you can have discrimination present in your eye or your ear consciousness, while wisdom is not a mental factor that occurs in the sense consciousnesses. The mental factor discrimination doesn't analyze, doesn't differentiate the faults and good qualities of things, whereas wisdom has a different function, in terms of spiritual value, but also you can talk about wisdom in a worldly sense, for instance like, 'this is going to be more profitable than that!'

Generally you should check which word or phrase is being translated in this or the other way. That's why it's good to know a little bit of Tibetan, or to look in the glossaries and see what is actually being translated.

It is difficult to say what exactly this 'discriminating wisdom' that occurs in the sadhana is the translation of, so we can't easily say more about it. We can look for a moment at the mental factor wisdom, the fifth of the object ascertaining mental factors, on page 32: *What is wisdom? It strongly differentiates the qualities of things that are to be examined.* The mental factor discrimination does not analyze like that, it does not differentiate faults and good qualities of things. So wisdom has a different function.

The next three object ascertaining mental factors that are introduced tonight are intention, contact and attention. On page 22:

[A3] Intention (*sems pa*)

Intention is sometimes translated as mental impulse. In Geshe Rabten's text, translated by Stephen Batchelor, it's the same, intention.

Just as discrimination is involved in conceptual activity and in perception, intention also is a mental factor that's present in all of our conscious activity, whether it be sense consciousness or mental consciousness.

Intention – impulse might be another side of it – is what moves the minds and the mental factors with which it bears similarities. For instance, within the retinue of a primary eye consciousness, one of the retinue is necessarily going to be the mental factor intention. That is the factor, whether it be voluntarily or involuntary, – and here you see why impulse may be an appropriate word, because intention sounds almost like intentional, but it doesn't have to be intentional – that moves the primary mind within which that mental factor is present and the rest of the mental factors that are present with it, to a particular object.

Is motivation a synonym of intention? No – the eye is not motivated. Sometimes it might be activated by the mental consciousness, which is motivated to do something, but that's not necessarily intention. Motivation is a more complex sequence of events. When you talk about the ten paths of non-virtue, usually translated as the ten non-virtuous acts, one of the

elements is motivation. And often at the beginning of a meditation we try to correct our motivation. That involves a lot of different mental activity. Motivation is more complex than just intention.

Intention is what within the sense consciousness moves the primary mind and mental factors to an object, and it is what in the mental consciousness is consciously, intentionally, thinking, 'Oh, I'm going to think about this', moving the mind to a particular object. It arises because of karma, I think, but it itself also is karma. The movement of the mind is what we call action or karma. Karma is not just like when people say, 'Why did my purse get stolen?', 'Why did my baby leave me?', 'Why is it cold today', - and the answer that is given to that is 'It is karma'. That is not very clear, not very discriminating. What you can say is that the loss of your purse or your camera or the fact that you came down with some sickness etc. is the result of your past karma.

Actions are of three kinds: those of body, speech and mind. Actually, the fundamental actions are those of mind. The actions of body and speech only come about because of mental intention, motivating actions; that is the mental consciousness, and the actions brought about by it. So intention is in some ways the most important of the mental factors because a certain variety of intention in the mental consciousness is the creation of karma - is karma. It doesn't mean it is the past karma; it is karma, it is action. When we talk about karma and its results, it is that which is the motion of the mind. It becomes virtuous or non-virtuous not by its own sake, but by what happens to be present in the rest of the mind, what other mental factors are there.

If, for instance, you take a cloth on a nice polished mahogany table, and the cloth is clean, if you then rub it on the table, it might shine the surface and leave a nice effect. But there will be a little scratch left on the surface when you put some very fine powder on the cloth and then move it. The movement is like the intention; what's present in the mind is what results of that motion. It may leave some thin scratch on the surface. If you put rough sand and rocks under the cloth and move it across the table, aunt Mathilda is going to go crazy, because you will leave this big indentation in her table.

So depending on what's present within the mental continuum when intention takes place, it determines whether the karma that is created becomes virtuous - if there are virtuous mental factors within the mind being dragged along by the intention - or whether it becomes non-virtuous, when non-virtuous mental factors are present. If the mind is a totally neutral state, neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, the movement will be creating neutral karma. It is the motion in the mind that is the creator of the karma. Anger, for instance, creates negative karma when intention moves the mind to the object while anger is present.

We might think, 'killing is heavy karma', 'saying bad words, lying, being abusive creates karma', also, 'saying good words or being generous creates karma'; we might clearly see

actions of body and speech as karma, but we might not think of the fundamental mind that motivates those actions as karma. While that actually is the fundamental karma! The actions – motivated or intended by them – are subsequent; they also create negative karma, they are paths of action depending on intention, but the fundamental karma is this mental karma.

This is a quote from the *Abhidharmakosha*:

It is just as it has been said in the *Treasury of Knowledge* (stanza 4.1cd):
They are intention and that produced by it.
Intention is mental action.
That produced by it are actions of body and mind.

‘Mind’ here is a mistake, it should be speech. Because next it says:

Intended actions are of two types:
(1) physical actions
(2) verbal actions

At the moment I’m first of all trying to give a little background to intention.

Some intention doesn’t arise – this movement of the mind – because of your conscious intention to do something. Some of it does, and in this case it’s obvious why it’s called intention, but sometimes it arises like an impulse because of some karma, almost like unavoidable. Lama Yeshe used to say that it would be very useful in this lifetime to do a Vajrasattva retreat in order to purify very heavy karmic seeds in our mind: both to avoid having rebirth right after this life in the lower realms, which would cut off the continuity of our practice, and also to overcome those certain impulses, like when, just before you are about to go on a three year retreat, you fall in love.

Some intention arises because of impulse, not because it’s in your nature or in your genetics, but because of karma you have created in the past. Even your conscious decisions, even your conscious intention, has a certain karmic cause behind it. Everything arises because of karma, even our intention in our mind, even this mental factor intention.

So let’s see what the text actually says about intention.

[A3] Intention (*sems pa*)

Regarding the entity of intention, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

In this context usually when it says entity it means the defining characteristic; like in, ‘what is the entity, what is the nature of intention?’. From the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*, the *Higher Abhidharma*:

QUESTION: What is intention?

RESPONSE: It is a compositional mental action of the mind. It has the function of engaging the mind in virtue, non-virtue, or the unspecified.

or unpredicted. There are three kinds of karma; karma is either virtuous, non-virtuous or unpredicted. Neutral, unspecified; which doesn’t mean there is a big category we are

uncertain about. The unpredicted karmas – where the Buddha didn't say, 'These actions are virtuous, these are non-virtuous' – are referred to as unspecified.

Intention is a mental action which composes – this is the same meaning as in the second link of the twelve links of dependent arising: compositional actions, meaning the composition of karma, the creation of karma. Sometimes the second link is just called karma or karmic formations. Intention is mental karmic formation, karmic formation of the mind. By the movement of the mind intention engages the mind while virtuous, non-virtuous or neutral mental factors are present. If they are neutral mental factors, the action is unpredicted [or unspecified] – that's the terminology the Buddha used.

Just as it has been said above, the mental factor which rouses and moves the mind that is concomitant with it

or: that bears similarity with it

to an object is called "intention." This is said to be the principal among all mental factors; it is taught that any mind or mental factor engages an object due to the power of this mental factor. For example, just as iron is helplessly drawn by a magnet, the mind helplessly engages an object due to this mental factor intention.

Helplessly, or powerlessly, without choice. The primary mind does not move itself, it is moved by intention. Intention is what moves the mind to focus on an object. It's not moved in space; it orients itself to apprehend a particular thing, due to intention. Some of the intention is intentional, like in the mental consciousness, some of it is just impulsive due to ripening of karma, when your eye focuses on something for example. Some of that is also due to desire in your own mind, when you want to look at someone or something.

When intention is divided in terms of its basis, there are six:

the same six kinds of divisions we had for feeling and discrimination.

Would you have the same for anger? No, because anger is purely a conceptual mind, it only takes place in the mental consciousness. If you make big angry eyes, is there anger in the eye consciousness? Or can there be attachment in the eye consciousness? The attachment or anger is not in the eye consciousness, right? So it does not work with all of them, but with the omnipresent mental factors, for sure, there are going to be these six divisions.

- (1) intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a visible form, an eye [sense power], and an eye consciousness
- (2) intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a sound, an ear [sense power], and an ear consciousness
- (3) intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of an odor, a nose [sense power], and a nose consciousness
- (4) intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a taste, a tongue [sense power], and a tongue consciousness
- (5) intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a tactile object, a body [sense power], and a body consciousness
- (6) intention arising from contact upon the aggregation of a phenomenon, a mental [sense power], and a mental consciousness

This intention is mental action. In general, there are two types of actions:
(1) actions that are intentions
(2) intended actions

There are two types of karma: karma which is the mental factor intention and karma which are those actions brought about by that intention – intended actions of body and speech.

It is just as it has been said in the *Treasury of Knowledge* (stanza 4.1cd):

They are intention and that produced by it.
Intention is mental action.
That produced by it are actions of body and ~~mind~~ speech.

Intended actions are of two types:
(1) physical actions
(2) verbal actions

Furthermore, although they are infinite, it is taught that condensing the principal ones gives the seven physical and verbal actions and, taking into account their motivations as well, the ten paths of actions.

Here's a question for you: [it's fairly easy to] see how mental actions are karma, but intention also takes place in the sense consciousnesses, in the eye consciousness, the ear consciousness, the nose consciousness – it is what moves that particular consciousness along with the other mental factors, towards its object. Is that also creating karma or is it only the intention within the mental consciousness that creates karma?

What we are singling out here is that mental factor that is the fundamental creator of karma, that is the movement of the mind. It is called intention. Intention is mental karma, it is the activity of the mind. It is not by itself virtuous or non-virtuous by nature, it becomes that by what is present, like the example if dragging either sand across the surface, or some nice polish; the effect that the motion of the mind has depends on what is present in the mind.

Intended actions are of two types:
(1) physical actions
(2) verbal actions

Furthermore, although they are infinite, it is taught that condensing the principal ones gives the seven physical and verbal actions and, taking into account their motivations as well, the ten paths of actions.

What I mentioned before is worth being said again: often what we hear and think of as the ten non-virtues or the ten virtues is not really what the Buddha actually taught in this context; which is the ten paths of virtuous actions and the ten paths of non-virtuous actions. They are called paths because they only become complete when a certain kind of path is engaged in. You have a particular object that you have an intention toward, you have a preparation for that action, you complete the action, and so forth. When all of these factors are present, then that is called the complete path of action. If there is a complete path of non-virtuous action, that can actually give rise to a maturational result. Do you remember when we talked about the four results of karma before, and one of them, the maturational result, was rebirth in either the upper or the lower realms? And what about rebirth in some sort of intermediate realm – is there anything between the upper and lower

realms? No, there is not; there is no full maturation of neutral or unspecified karma, of the kind of karma that gives rise to neutral feelings within our continuum. Only virtuous or non-virtuous actions have a maturational result, a rebirth in either the upper or the lower realms. In general, only when the entire path of action is accumulated, do you create the karma of a maturational result in the upper or lower realms. If some part of it is missing, it usually doesn't have the power to give rebirth in the upper or lower realms. That's why if you are skillful, even when you are being naughty, if you try to avoid the completion of the act or the various factors involved in that whole path of action, at least you can avoid creating a heavy action.

A path of action, like those ten paths of virtuous actions and the ten paths of non-virtuous actions, can have four results. If some factors are missing, they won't have the maturational result, but they could still have the result similar to the act as an experience, and similar to the act as an action, or the environmental effect.

If you take the principle actions of body and speech, there are seven. So there are seven negative actions mentioned: three negative actions of body: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, and four of speech: lying, divisive speech, harsh/abusive speech, and idle gossip.

Basically the vows of the ordained, the Pratimoksha vows, involve these actions of body and speech. In the Pratimoksha vows the actions of mind are not involved, only the seven actions of body and speech. Some of these vows are naturally negative, some of them are as prescribed by the Buddha, that you shouldn't eat after midday for example; you shouldn't do this, you shouldn't do that. All of the vows are only involved in abstaining from actions of body and speech. The *Abhidharmakosha* describes the vow itself to be a physical phenomenon – a kind of form. Jeffrey Hopkins translates it as non-revelatory form. It's not something you can see with the eye consciousness. It's a subtle kind of form accepted by both the Vaibhashikas and the Prasangikas. Because it's form, then, when you take a vow, it's like a dam that can prevent the water; and because it's form, it can only prevent the infractions of body and speech, which themselves are form, physical; it can't prevent something more immaterial like actions of mind. So this is something to think about, this is said in the *Pratimoksha*.

Usually, when we divide up the ten paths of non-virtue, we do make that differentiation, of those more easy to control that are physical, actions of body and speech, and those of the mind itself, which are more difficult to control. Those three last non-virtuous actions of mind are covetousness, ill-will, and wrong view.

So if you have a wrong view, does that mean you are creating negative karma? Do you have the right view of emptiness? If not, does that mean you are creating negative karma because of that? No; wrong view means consciously holding what is correct to be incorrect, not just not knowing what's right; it's like being opinionated in a wrong sense,.

Thus, it is just as it has been said in the *Treasury of Knowledge* (stanza 4.66bcd):

Through condensing the most obvious among them,
The paths of actions, the virtuous and
Non-virtuous in kind, were taught to be ten.

Furthermore, when actions are divided, there are three:

- (1) virtuous
- (2) non-virtuous
- (3) unspecified

Actions are also of three types:

- (1) meritorious
- (2) non-meritorious
- (3) immovable

Is meritorious the same as virtuous? It definitely sounds like it, doesn't it! When we dedicate our virtue, we say gewa diyi; gewa means virtue. Sonam means merit – as in the collections of merit and wisdom.

There is a slight difference, and here it becomes more clear: meritorious, non-meritorious and immovable. Immovable (or unfluctuating) actions are not the same as unspecified actions. It means actions that only can give rise in a particular realm. For instance, if you meditate, develop vipashyana and obtain the preparation of the first concentration, that creates a certain kind of karma to be born in the first concentration. That karma is called immovable; it won't fluctuate; it won't cause you to have wealth as a human, or to have good results some other place; it can only ripen in that particular result. It is a specific kind of karma: immovable actions give rebirth in the form- and the formless realm.

Is immovable karma virtuous or non-virtuous? It looks like it is itself unpredicted... The karma to be born in the upper realms in general has to be virtuous... So one would think that immovable karma has to be virtuous...

The karma to be reborn in the hell realm is not immovable karma, the actions of immediate retribution are not called immovable actions. Because some of the results of those can arise in different realms, some of it can arise in the hell realm, or in the animal realm. The result of immovable karma can only ripen in that realm.

Question: Can you purify that karma?

Answer: I am not sure, I do not think so. But it might be it can be postponed; not sure it can be completely destroyed.

Question: Can you give an example of such immovable karma?

Answer: When based on mundane vipashyana you separate from attachment to the desire realm and attain the preparation of the first concentration, that karma, that action, creates something that is immovable, that can only give the result of ripening in the first concentration of the form realm.

I am not sure whether it is called meritorious – maybe it is not, because the division is into meritorious, non-meritorious and immovable. I leave it for you to investigate that. It looks like it is itself unpredicted. But it is not [entirely] the same as unspecified karma, because there are many types of unspecified karma. Like sweeping the floor without any kind of motivation – that is not immovable karma but it is unspecified. One would say that the karma to be born in the upper realm in general has to be virtuous, so one would think that immovable karma has to be virtuous. So that [might be] the difference between virtuous and meritorious: if you add immovable to meritorious karma, the collection of those two would seem to cover virtuous karma.

In this regard, it is very important to know in detail:

- the identities of these actions, the manner in which their results are established,
- the distinctions between projecting and completing [actions],
- the distinctions between those that are definite to be experienced and those that are not definite to be experienced, and,
- in regard to actions that are definite to be experienced, the distinctions between:
 - action that will be experienced in the present life [i.e., the life in which the action was accumulated],
 - action that will be experienced upon taking rebirth, and
 - action that will be experienced in some other rebirth.

Fearing wordiness, I shall not elaborate on them here. Those who have dexterity of intelligence should know them by carefully consulting the root text and the self-commentary of *Treasury of Knowledge* composed by the supreme scholar Vasubandhu as well as the stainless excellent explanations of the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa].

We will stop here.

If you would read ahead about the object ascertaining mental factors, you can make a note of your questions for next time.

Dedication

Due to the motivation set at the beginning which involved intention, the motivation we created at the beginning created a certain kind of force that permeated this entire action of listening and thinking. Even if our mind might have wandered we created virtuous karma by the force of that motivation. Due to this virtue may we achieve both our own goals and the goals of others, for ourselves a perfect, blissful mind of enlightenment without any ego-grasping, without any suffering within our continuum, total blissful everlasting joy and the welfare of others, the capacity and motivation to manifest the form bodies, the nirmanakaya, the sambhogakaya, the omniscient mind engaging in enlightened activities, especially the turning of the wheel of dharma.

Due to this karma, may it bring about that effect. Due to this virtue may we quickly achieve the state of enlightenment from which we can lead each and every sentient being into that very same state.

Exercise

- Throughout the week, try to be aware of what type of feelings are arising.
 - Are they physical or mental feelings?
 - Are they pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral?
- Investigate what are the causes of these feelings.
- Investigate whether these feelings give rise to afflictions, attachment, aversion, etc.

From the presentation by Emily Hsu for the Basic Program at TCL

DVD 5

Meditation

We try to quiet our mind. Maybe in this meditation we can begin to identify some of the mental factors also.

Relax your body and mind. Try to set – even from the very start, even though the meditation is meant to put our mind in a quiet state – a positive motivation. Think, ‘I’m going to be quieting the mind now in order to develop good qualities for the benefit of all sentient beings. Focus first of all on the breathing.

Even from the start, try to bring your attention inward, away from the senses. At the beginning you are actually using the tactile sense to recognize either the raising and lowering of the abdomen or a sense of motion by the nostrils, but eventually you could be watching something more subtle, this inner motion of the energy current in and out.

Reminding yourself: it’s not the eye consciousness or the ear and body consciousnesses you want to attend to. Discard your attention to them. Focus more inside.

Then as usual bring your attention further away from the breathing to the more subtle object of just your mental consciousness itself.

Now the second stage of subtlety begins. Not only letting go of the attention to the outer distractions, but even the inner distractions, of the various discursive thoughts, images, conversations. Try to see beyond them, through them. Focus on the clear light nature of the mind.

Think of the situation we find ourselves in. Within this basically clear mind, due to our past actions, our karma, we experience different feelings of pleasure, discomfort, or neutral feelings, as one of the main ways karma ripens on our experience.

Because of our ego-grasping this gives rise to attachment for what is pleasurable, sensing that it is true and seeking it out, trying to keep it longer. Not always aware of the karmic consequences; that this has arisen because of our virtuous karma, and not just because of the outer conditions that we are creating now; that we are using up the resource of virtue, of merit; and that by pursuing pleasurable feelings – usually done out of attachment – we create negative karma to be without in the future.

Uncomfortable feelings give rise to aversion – desiring to be free of them. Sometimes even expressing themselves in body and speech as verbal abuse and harmful actions of body.

All living beings within cyclic existence, who have not yet eliminated all the delusions and the ego-grasping from their mindstream, are in exactly the same situation, under the

influence of karma and klesha of their past actions, and of the emotional or afflictive response now to the karma that is ripening.

Think, 'For their benefit, for all of the living beings wanting so desperately to be happy, but not knowing the best way to find that; wanting to be free of suffering but actually, in attempting to be free, creating the cause of more suffering', think, 'For their benefit, for my own benefit also, I'm going to investigate better the mind, get familiar with this inner laboratory, so that we can perform the great spiritual experiments. Through that familiarity to be able to develop the good qualities, eliminate the negative thoughts'; like in the word 'sangye', to eliminate all that is negative and expand all that is positive.

Think, 'I'm going to listen tonight and study this course, whatever obstacles, whatever sometimes particular facts may not seem so important. As the Buddha taught this material, great pandits, yogis and yoginis of the past have studied it, in order to sharpen their minds, to understand the Buddha's teachings, to understand better what meditation is about by understanding the mind. For that purpose I'm going to listen to the teachings tonight, engage in this study and contemplation.'

Then relax – bring your attention back.

Teaching 5

So, what do you think, are you beginning to get some more clarity about the mind, or is it more unclear? Any questions?

Question: On page 23 it says 'This intention is mental action. In general, there are two types of actions: (1) actions that are intentions and (2) intended actions. Is number one the mental impulse, and number two the bodily and verbal actions?

Answer: Yes, because a little further on it says: 'Intended actions are of two types: (1) physical actions and (2) verbal actions'. The mental factor intention is the main way we are creating karma. Because even if we engage in physical and verbal actions, we are motivated by the mind, by the mental intention.

It depends on whether what is present in the mind is virtuous or non-virtuous. For instance a question came up today in the elder hostel, about killing. One of the precepts of Buddhism in general is not to engage in killing, but there is the example often given by the great lamas, of Shakyamuni Buddha who, when he was a bodhisattva, out of compassion intended to kill someone. Here there are two different traditions; some lamas say that because the mental factors present in his mind were not afflictions, there was no negative karma created whatsoever; I think Lama Zopa tends to that direction nowadays. And some lamas say that the intention to sever the life-force of another being inevitably has some karmic consequence. [In the first case,] because the mental intention moving the mind was

all motivated out of compassion, the mind was being moved by this, it was like moving that nice silky cloth in the example I gave above, like polish, rather than a cloth rubbing sand on the tabletop that scratches it; if you put nice polish underneath that cloth that is moving like intention is moving of the mind, it actually has a beneficial effect; it creates virtuous karma.

Here we are talking of two kinds of actions. Actions which are the mental factor intention, and actions which are motivated by it, are intended by it, intended actions of body and speech.

Question: What is your personal belief about that situation?



Answer: My personal belief probably does not make much difference; but my personal belief is that, trying to see in our own

life, how to watch our minds, how to tame our minds, it seems that it requires a very high state of mind to engage in that kind of activity. One of the bodhisattva vows is to not avoid engaging in negative actions of body and speech – so that means intended actions – if it is to benefit sentient beings. Usually from the Theravada or Hinayana point of view, the monastics in general make a vow never to perform negative actions. Some might be holding very rigidly to that, for example, they can never lie! If, for instance, the mafia comes into the room and asks, ‘Where is Tom, we want to kill him!’ , then that kind of practitioner might say ‘that’s him, over there’ because he can not lie. A person with a higher motivation – not wanting these people to create the negative karma of killing, not wanting Tom to die – might say, ‘You mean the guy, who just went down the road on a motorcycle really fast, who was afraid? He went that way.’ That would be lying, but a bodhisattva would make the decision to take the karmic consequences upon himself, seeing with some kind of wisdom the benefit for others.

Maybe we can say today that it’s good [to hear this] to leave some imprint on our mind, but it doesn’t mean that anybody having taken the bodhisattva vows should go around killing, lying and stealing. It has to do with the particular situation and with having clairvoyance, knowing the karmic consequences for each individual. And not being angry at the person if you were killing, as the Buddha was not angry at that individual who was trying to take over the ship and kill everyone on board so he could obtain that wealth. Having

Two types of actions

Two types of actions:

- actions that are intentions**
 - mental actions **mental factor of intention**
- intended actions**
 - physical actions
 - verbal actions **motivated by the mental factor of intention**

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compassion for them too; having first tried with peaceful means and then used influence, like of the four kinds of actions, peace and power, or influence, [and increase and wrath]. Then, when you cannot have any success in that and there is a great need, then to engage in that. I think it is something definitely possible, and it's good to keep in mind.

It's said in the Mahayana teachings that the keeping of the vows without an understanding of emptiness is not really keeping the vows the Buddha explained in such situations. Thinking, like the Buddha said, if there were a dream piece of cream cheesecake here, an illusory piece of cheesecake, and then, not recognizing it as illusory, you would be meditating on this cream cheesecake as impermanent, as suffering etc. – the different aspects of the first noble truth, impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless – meditating on this without understanding emptiness is not actually a skillful method. That monk would be trying to use these temporal antidotes without seeing that it's actually a piece of illusory cream cheesecake. It is the same thing with the vows, if one is holding very rigidly to the vows, thinking of them as just rules and so forth, without an understanding of emptiness, one could think maybe that the Buddha made a mistake, and this is some kind of aberration. But I think it comes out of that kind of wisdom.

So let's continue. We finished intention last time, right?

[A4] Contact (*reg pa*)

At first glance the mental factor contact almost seems to be some physical occurrence. One has to understand what the meaning is, the definition.

So in the sequence of events contact has to precede both feeling and discrimination. It will always come first, before feeling and discrimination. In fact both of the definitions mentioned that feeling and discrimination arise after aggregation. [They are listed first here because of the five aggregates, where they are] centered out specially. But the thirdly listed one, contact, actually precedes them. The definition of discrimination said: knowing upon aggregation; that means knowing upon the actualization of contact, which is the bringing together of the sense faculty and the consciousness and its intended object. That is a condition to give rise to discrimination and to feeling.

As for this order, I think feeling and discrimination are single out from among the mental factors of the five aggregates. One of the aggregates is physical and the other four are all conscious. So feeling, discrimination, and then compositional factors includes all the other mental factors, and the last aggregate is primary consciousness. So at one side is body, at the other primary mind, and then in the middle all the mental factors. Because these two are so important, maybe that is the reason they are listed first here, feeling and discrimination. These mental factors are indeed these aggregates, it is all that is meant by them. The feeling aggregate meant all of the aggregate, the pile or heap or skandha of all of the feelings, whether it be in the eye consciousness, ear, nose, tongue, body, mental consciousness, all of them within your continuum; that constitutes the feeling aggregate. Whereas, if you just say feeling, you could just be talking about eye feeling or the feeling of your body

consciousness.

Question: Does contact also always come before intention? Because it seems to imply that in the six division of intention on page 23.

Answer: Yes, contact is what actualizes, what gives rise to these other mental factors.

Question: But intention being mental consciousness, it seems it can come before contact?

Answer: We have to check. Let's see further in the text, maybe it becomes clearer.

Regarding the entity of contact, the Compendium of Knowledge says:

QUESTION: What is contact?

RESPONSE: It distinguishes the transformation of the sense power upon the aggregation of the three.

For a mental phenomenon to arise, the three conditions that always have to be present are:

- (1) the dominant, empowering condition
- (2) the immediate condition and
- (3) the object condition.

Without a faculty, the dominant, empowering condition, the consciousness has no basis for its action.

Without an object it doesn't have anything to know.

Without a previous moment of consciousness to act as the spring-board, as the continuity for the next instance, there is no continuity of consciousness. For instance, we can say, 'now a stream of water will come through here', but there is no stream of water coming through here! It doesn't just sort of start out of nothingness; you need a continuity – [which for consciousness is] the immediately preceding condition.

It has the function of acting as a support for feeling.

and the others. Geshe Rabten says: *Contact is a distinct mental factor that, by connecting the object, the organ and the primary consciousness (the coming together, the aggregation) activates the organ.*

This is in the sense of distinguishing the transformation of the sense power. [Contact] activates the faculty; before the mental factor contact arises within the consciousness, the consciousness may be there in the faculty, but until the mental factor contact arises, the faculty is not fully activated to act as a basis for that mental phenomena.

It is said to activate the organ since, due to its co-operation, the organ is transformed into an entity with the ability to act as the basis for feelings of pleasure, pain and indifference.

Does the faculty feel pleasure, pain and indifference? No. Remember that the Vaibhashikas said that the faculty could actually be a valid cognizer, which would imply that it could experience suffering and pleasure. Feelings are mental phenomena, so the sense-faculty

itself doesn't experience that. It's just a physical entity acting as the basis, but without that faculty the feelings can't arise within the consciousness. so next time you get a massage, you can think about this...

Geshe Rabten: *It is the basis for these feelings because when a primary consciousness apprehends an object it is the contact that causes the object to be experienced as something attractive or unattractive and that gives rise to feelings of pleasure and pain.*

The experience of something attractive or unattractive – is that like a decision you make? 'Ah, Clayton looks attractive tonight!' No, something is called attractive, because it is karmically potent for you. Like in the example of a dog that sees excrements as attractive, whereas for us it may not look attractive.

Geshe Rabten: *Although it acts as the basis for feelings, it does not act as the basis for the feeling that occurs simultaneously with it. It only acts as the basis for feelings that arise subsequent to it.*

Remember, under feeling it said that the main way karma ripens on our aggregates is through the experience of feeling. Whatever feelings we have, whether they are pleasurable [or not]; even the slightest cool breeze, like it says in the lam-rim teachings, is due to some virtuous karma we have created in the past.

Here one of the things talked about is the time. The mental factor contact acting as the basis for a particular feeling always has to precede that feeling because it's a cause or condition of that. All of the higher tenets, other than the Vaibhashikas, do not accept simultaneously acting cause and effect. Did we talk about that in Tenets? Maybe Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltsen's text it did not mention this so much, but it is in some of the other texts.

The Vaibhashikas accept the possibility of cause and effect being simultaneous. What do you think about that, could cause and effect be simultaneous? Generally we think causes have to precede effects because they bring about the effects in the next instance. The Vaibhashikas say that there is a particular thing called 'simultaneously acting condition'; when they talk about these mental factors like contact and feeling being simultaneous, the contact, which is the basis for feeling, can be simultaneous with it. So they call that a simultaneously acting condition.

There are two kinds of relations – you may think good and bad, but they are: causal relationships and natural relationships. If there is a relationship between two objects, then they can either be causally or naturally related.

Natural relationships are taking place simultaneously – like the water and its heat or, in this case, coolness, are naturally related. The coldness of the water and the water are naturally related, it's not like one causes the other; they are present at the same time, like the color of the mug and the mug. They are not causally related.

The Buddha taught contact to be in causal relationship with feeling, intention and so forth – as we saw earlier. It's the cause of them, a causal condition. So according to the

upper tenets, causes always have to precede effects, but the Vaibhashikas said that there are some cases where they were simultaneous, like contact that is the cause of feeling can be simultaneous with it. The upper tenets would say that's not the case; from the Sautrantika's and the upper tenets' point of view the contact which is a cause of feeling, is always the previous moment of contact. Whenever you have some feeling, the contact which was the cause of it would be the contact of the previous moment that was activating the organ.

I don't believe contact only takes place once, as if you have the contact and then 'it lifts off' or something like that. Contact is a mental factor that continues to act. And every moment of its acting, by its presence, with the consciousness being present and the object being present and the faculty, this particular quality of mind, [contact], activates the faculty, the sense power, so that the next moment within the consciousness can give rise to these experiences of feelings etc. Does that make some sense?

Just as it has been said above, contact is a knower that, upon aggregation of the three – object, sense power and primary consciousness – distinguishes an object in accordance with whatever subsequent feeling, pleasant and so on, that is to be experienced.

So actually contact itself is some kind of knowing of the object. It's not the same as discrimination where you are recognizing something by a sign. Contact is not just some kind of passive activity.

Here, "transformation of the sense power" [in the above citation] is stated for the following reason. For example, due to meeting with an attractive form, the eye sense power transforms into a cause of attachment to the pleasant feeling. Likewise, contact, by distinguishing an attractive form, transforms into a cause of a pleasant feeling.

When contact is differentiated in terms of its support, there are six:

Support means the basis, all of these different sense powers; support or basis here means the faculty... So it could be contact supported by the faculty of eye, ear, tongue, body, or the mental faculty – here it says 'sense power'.

- (1) contact upon the aggregation of a visible form, an eye [sense power], and an eye consciousness;
- (2) contact upon the aggregation of a sound, an ear [sense power], and an ear consciousness;
- (3) contact upon the aggregation of an odor, a nose [sense power], and a nose consciousness;
- (4) contact upon the aggregation of a taste, a tongue [sense power], and a tongue consciousness;
- (5) contact upon the aggregation of a tactile object, a body [sense power], and a body consciousness;
- and
- (6) contact upon the aggregation of a phenomenon, a mental [sense power], and a mental consciousness.

Contact is the same word we use when we make offerings, sparsha – but we are not offering the mental factor contact, what we are offering are the objects of touch – like smooth, or warm, for tactile sensations – so sparsha can mean contact but it can also mean object of contact.

[A5] Attention (yid la byed pa)

This is usually not translated differently.

Two kinds of attention are mentioned in the scriptures. Here we find only a couple of

lines about it. Intention is the mental factor moving the mind in general to an object. Attention is something that goes to a particular object within the perceptual field and holds it to that.

It's different from intention, it's not creating karma. But it is very important, because one of the great pitfalls in our practice is what the Buddha called inappropriate attention. In English we would call it dwelling unnecessarily on something – it means to pay attention in a way that gives rise to attachment. Like when you see somebody thinking, 'Wow, nice hair, look at these eyes!' Or inappropriate attention can be, 'Look at that person. He really messed me over' or, 'Not only did they say something bad about me, but they are not as high status as I am.' 'I work harder than them.' That kind of attention can make you act inappropriately and that gives rise to the delusions.

So when we talk about the causes of the delusions in the lam-rim, one of the main causes is inappropriate attention. Of course the primary, the root cause is the ego-grasping; ignorance being present is the root.

If there is no seed of anger, attachment or ego-grasping in your mind, attachment and anger, pride and jealousy are not going to arise.

Also the object – that's another cause that can give rise to the delusions – even if you've subdued your attachment, you are calm, having done a long Vajrasattva retreat, and then someone brings you the cream cheesecake, or you see Richard Gere or whoever, then attachment can arise from the seed because of the instigation of the object.

Another way is through inappropriate attention. Generally your mind is not in an afflicted state, but inappropriate attention could make you begin to think about something in an unskillful way, 'Oh – not bad!' – or: 'Bad!' Inappropriate attention can act to instigate all the different delusions.

Regarding attention, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is attention?

RESPONSE: It is an engagement of the mind. It has the function of holding the mind to the object of observation.

So intention moves the mind to the object and attention kind of keeps it there, finely, going in the details.

Just as it has been said above, it is a knower (consciousness, cognizer) that focuses the mind which is concomitant with it on a particular object of observation.

Concomitant here is talking about the five similarities: it focuses the mind with which it bears similarities, on a particular object.

Attention is the action to focus, but that focus is by the whole mind, just like when we were talking about doubt the other day. By the power of doubt the whole mind is two-pointed, it has qualms, but it is actually the mental factor doubt that is doing that. Here attention is doing the focusing – we can call it mental focus, sometimes it is called that. The whole mind is focused, because of the activity of attention.

It is not like attention can be separated out from the mind as a different entity. It's

only knowable by means of mentally distinguishing it; just like the emptiness of form and form are not different entities, they are like two sides of the same coin. Maybe you can take a fine saw and saw a silver dollar into two so you have the head and a tale separated, but generally the two things can't really be separated. This mental factor can't be separated from the mind of which it is a part, although we can [conceptually, mentally] distinguish within each mind the faculty called primary consciousness – the part or nature of the mind that is merely knowing the general entity of the perceptual field –, and the mental factors that are the aspects of the mind that engage in particularities.

What is the difference between intention and attention?

They sound the same in English but not in Sanskrit. Still, there could be some confusion, because they are both talking about some kind of movement of the mind toward an object.

Intention moves the mind to general objects, whereas attention directs the mind to a particular object.

Intention moves the mind to the perceptual field, attention kind of focuses in – sometimes inappropriately, sometimes appropriately. Inappropriate attention is, for instance, to think, 'Wow – if I had that, I would **really** be happy!' Appropriate attention would be focusing on the empty nature of the object; that it's impermanent; it's the nature of suffering; it's selfless; it's not satisfying – knowing, 'Even if I had that, I would not be happy!' All of these meditations that can help to prevent klesha from arising in the mind would be appropriate attention. That would be skillful ways of the mind attending to the object.

So if you are attracted to something – because of karma you find something attractive, and pleasant feelings arises – you must try to guard the mind then from the inappropriate attention starting to dwell on it. Because of inappropriate attention you not only find something attractive, but once you have the feeling that experiences it as pleasant, the mind is then kind of embellishing that.

Geshe Rabten: *There are two types of attention: realistic (appropriate) attention, i.e. when the mind is attentive of existent object, and mistaken (inappropriate) attention, i.e. when the mind is attentive of non-existent object.*

Like thinking, 'This is an object of **real** pleasure', 'This is a **real** friend!' 'They gave me a chocolate bar!' or, 'They gave me a kiss. They are a real friend!' That would be inappropriate attention.

Geshe Rabten: *If any of these five (omnipresent) mental factors should be absent from any particular perception or conception, that cognition would be unable to function or even exist.*

There are some situations mentioned in the Abhidharma, some very rare occurrences where not all of them are present. Such as at the time of waking up, when your senses are not quite activated yet, at the time of birth, at the time of death, at the time of going to

sleep, at various times when the mind is unclear, at the time of becoming unconscious or 'falling inebriated to the ground'.

As Lama Yeshe used to say: 'They will have a big nirvana because they have a big samsara!'

So 'it would not exist' – that's a little strong; it wouldn't be fully proper cognition.

Geshe Rabten: *For if there were no feeling, no experience of pleasure, pain or indifference would occur. If there were no discernment, no recognition or identification of the object would occur.*

Like a drug-addict, someone in a coma or sort of spaced out, when you don't recognize what is happening around you because that mental factor is not active.

Geshe Rabten: *If there were no intention, no involvement with the object would occur; if there were no contact, there would be no basis for the occurrence of feeling and if there were no attention, the mind would not be directed towards any object. ... Occasionally, such as at the time of the subtle death consciousness, at the moment immediately prior to the taking of birth and when the mind is absorbed in a cessation, some of these omnipresent mental factors are merely present in a dormant or latent state.*

What does the mind being absorbed in a cessation mean? There are different kinds of meditative states called cessational absorptions, like the absorption without discrimination, one of the formless realm absorptions – literally it's saying 'not without subtle discrimination'.

A certain kind of absorption can give rise to birth in that state, like when we talk about the long-life gods in the lam-rim text, one of the unfree states when we talk about the eight freedoms and the ten endowments, that we are free from being born as a long-life good. Here it doesn't mean just in general the devas, it specifically refers to the long-life state of the cessational absorption, the absorption of no discrimination.

Born in that state they may remain for eons without any kind of clear mind, because not all the mental factors are in an active state. Maybe they experience a certain amount of bliss or contentment, very subtle.

You can compare it with having some hole on the internet, some guy every day taking 5 dollars out of your bank-account, but when you look at your bank-account seeing that you still have 1000 dollar, you think, 'not bad' – but unnoticed by you the money is draining away; similarly, the karma to be born in those states is using up virtue so that usually, when they fall from those states, because not only did they not create virtue during their time there, since there is no active mind, but they are just using up their virtue, so usually they fall to the lower realms after these states.

There is another cessational absorption which I think is in the form realm rather than the formless realm. In the Hinayana tradition they sometimes think there is a state in which the mind has ceased. They call it cessational absorption. There is another meaning of that

cessational absorption in the Mahayana, when we talk about the meaning of emptiness and so forth; but they think it means that the gross mind totally ceases for some period of time, and when that cessational absorption ends and the person arises from it, the mental consciousness again manifests. From a Buddhist perspective these are not necessarily enviable states to end up in.

[Discussion of the category of omnipresent mental factors]

What is the reason for calling these five mental factors – feeling and so forth – “omnipresent” [Tibetan: kun 'gro, literally, go all]? They are so-called because they are mental factors that accompany [Tibetan: rjes su 'gro ba, literally, go after] all minds.

Every consciousness we have will always have these five, so they are the fundamental ones that we have to be familiar with.

Furthermore, if any of the five omnipresent mental factors are missing, then the utilization of an object will not be complete:

When we talk about the utility body of the Buddha, the sambhogakaya, we call it enjoyment, right? Enjoyment body. So the enjoyment or utilization of the object will not be complete.

- if feeling is absent, then there will be no experience;

of pain pleasure of indifference

- if discrimination is absent, then there will be no apprehension of the uncommon signs of the object;

you will not recognize it

- if intention is absent, then [the mind] will not be directed to an object;
- if attention is absent, then [the mind] will not be focused on a particular object of observation;
- if contact is absent, then there will be no support [for feeling]

and the others

Therefore, in order for the utilization of an object to be complete, all five omnipresent mental factors must be present without exception.

Let's take a break.

The fifty-one mental factors are elaborated in the Mahayana Abhidharma. In the Hinayana Abhidharma there is a slightly different list; I think in the *Abhidharmakosha* there are forty-eight mental factors. So when you talk about fifty-one, you talk about the presentation from the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*, the general Mahayana presentation; generally the same as the Hinayana presentation but there are some slight differences.

We talked already about the omnipresent mental factors; there are five other mental factors that are present any time you ascertain an object. When you recognized an object – [which is] more than just having a general kind of consciousness when you know the object and you experience feeling – once you have some kind of understanding of the object, there are

five other factors. Here they are called the object-ascertaining mental factors.

Yul means object, nges is to ascertain. There are different translations of yul nges nga (nga means five). John Dunne translates it as 'the five mental states for a determined object'; he pointed out in a note that according to the Sanskrit object-ascertaining is not correct, because they don't actually ascertain the object but they are present whenever an object is ascertained – which is more or less the same.

[B] The five object-ascertaining mental factors (yul nges)

The five object-ascertaining mental factors are:

- (1) aspiration
- (2) belief
- (3) mindfulness
- (4) meditative stabilization
- (5) wisdom

These are very important.

Aspiration is generally, when we talk about prayer etc., to aspire; it also is kind of like desire: aspiration for something, wishing for something.

Belief – sometimes translated as appreciation (or inclination; involvement by John Dunne).

The third to the fifth are very common.

The third, mindfulness, also could be called recollection, but the word mindful has a good sense of keeping something in mind. It's not just memory. It's the same word as for recollection in Sanskrit.

The fourth, meditative stabilization, is sometimes just called concentration, samadhi in Sanskrit.

The fifth, wisdom, is the Sanskrit word prajna, in Tibetan: sherab. You know that as a Tibetan name probably.

Especially mindfulness, concentration, and wisdom are involved in the evolution of the three higher trainings. Mindfulness comes about particularly because of the higher training of morality, because to keep your vows you have to be mindful of them, and that also inculcates that particular ability, which acts as a foundation then for concentration, which then acts as a foundation for discriminating awareness, another word for wisdom. If you don't have a concentrated mind, you can't develop wisdom in its full form.

So aspiration, belief or appreciation, mindfulness, concentration and wisdom. So let's see, we will go through these successively.

[B1] Aspiration ('dun pa)

Regarding the entity of aspiration, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is aspiration?

RESPONSE: It is the very wish to be endowed with this or that [attribute] of a desired thing. It has the function of acting as a support for making effort.

When we talk about developing single-pointed concentration, shinez, or calm abiding –

which is a particular form of samadhi, a fully qualified samadhi; not all samadhis are calm abiding – there are five faults have to be overcome

The first fault is laziness. In order to overcome laziness the first thing you need is some kind of faith. You have to have some confidence that what you are going to engage in will have some positive fruits. Then on the basis of faith you can develop aspiration: ‘this is possible’, ‘this is great, that this can be done!’ – different kinds of faith that it is possible to achieve and you should achieve it, having faith that it is a good quality. Then you develop this mental factor aspiration, ‘I want to develop single-pointed concentration’; ‘I want to be good, I want to get rid of my anger!’; whatever it is, somehow it starts from some confidence or faith that this is beneficial, and then you develop aspiration, the desire for that. And that again can lead to effort. (That’s where the joke ‘aspiration is the mother of invention’ came from. One of the two or three bands I ever saw was Frank Zappa, once in Philadelphia I think...What were they called? Frank Zappa and?...the Mothers of Invention.. yeah, yeah...)

Faith gives rise to aspiration, which gives rise to effort; effort then gives rise to flexibility or subtleness. Which is one of the mental factors leading to subtleness of body and mind. Which uproots your laziness; when you have that kind of mind, like Lama Zopa Rinpoche or other great beings, nothing is an impediment any more. ‘Oh – another puja’, ‘Another page George wants me to read’; ‘oh God, when is he going to stop!’ So you won’t have that when you have this kind of subtle mind; if you’d be sitting in front of a wall, it is as though you could count every atom in the wall: ‘No problem; you want me to count the atoms in the wall? OK!’ We don’t have that kind of subtleness.

Those are the antidotes to laziness when we talk about tranquil abiding.

First comes faith, then because of faith we have aspiration. Aspiration – here it says – acts as a support for making effort, for perseverance. This is very, very useful for yourself, if you realize that you have a little bit of laziness or you want to achieve something, what you have to develop then is the aspiration for that. The aspiration will act as the support, as the basis for your perseverance to achieve that goal.

QUESTION: What is aspiration?

RESPONSE: It is the very wish to be endowed with this or that [attribute] of a desired thing. It has the function of acting as a support for making effort.

Just as it has been said above, it is a knower that, upon observing some intended thing, seeks it. The way in which aspiration acts a support for effort is as follows. [Maitreya's] *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extremes* (stanza 4.5ab) says:

What’s the middle way? Three of the five texts by Maitreya were from the Cittamatra point of view. The *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extreme* is explaining what is the middle way from the Cittamatra point of view. All of the philosophical systems, when they talk about the middle way, settle on a middle way between the extremes of nihilism and the sense of eternalism or permanence.

Nihilism in the world today could be Camus and the Existentialists, they were kind of nihilists. A nihilistic point of view could be about what comes after this lifetime, that there

is nothing after this lifetime, so why not commit suicide, or why not just do what you want – that could be a nihilistic view.

A nihilistic philosophical view would mean one that negates too much, that says that things do not exist at all, ‘Everything is an illusion’. That would be negating too much, because from a highest philosophical viewpoint phenomena do have some kind of recognizable continuity between cause and effect, appearances do arise. So negating too much, saying that nothing exists whatsoever, is nihilistic.

The other side, the other extreme of permanence might be saying that the soul exists forever, in a gross sense; or from a philosophical point of view it could be that phenomena really, truly, exist.

To find the middle way means to find the middle way, not just between asceticism and hedonism, also between subtler views like whether the soul ceases at death or continues forever; the final meaning is talking about the view of reality, the ultimate nature of reality, whether you are negating too much or whether you are not negating enough. Those are the two extremes.

This text by Maitreya – the *Madhyantavibhanga*, in Tibetan: Uta Namshe; u means center, ta means limit, namshe means distinguishing; distinguishing what is the middle view from the two extremes – contains a lot of discussion about how to develop samadhi. It’s a very interesting text to study.

The support and that supported by it and
The cause and the result.

The *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* also says:

If you cannot stop the laziness that is a non-enthusiasm toward cultivating meditative stabilization, and that takes joy in its discordant class, then from the outset you will not be inclined to engage in meditative stabilization. Even if you do achieve it once, it will quickly degenerate since you will be unable to sustain it. Therefore, it is most crucial to put an end to laziness at the beginning.

Enthusiastic perseverance – the opposite of laziness – doesn’t mean when someone has a lot of energy to make money or to find friends or accumulate influence; it means when someone has enthusiasm to engage in virtue.

There are different kinds of laziness, like the laziness of dejection, ‘Oh, I can’t do anything, I might as well just take it easy’; ‘Oh, how could I work for all sentient beings, there are numberless sentient beings.’ Or slightly different, ‘If the bodhisattvas have to work for eons even for one sentient being – forget it!’

Another kind would be a sense of insufficiency of myself, ‘Me, poor me – I’m nothing!’ – not recognizing that your mind has the ability to change.

Then there is laziness of procrastination, thinking, ‘Yes, this has to be done – but tomorrow!’

Yet another kind, the main laziness – they are sometimes divided 3, 4 or 5 lazinesses – is attachment to non-virtuous actions. Wanting to watch TV, to go to the disco, wanting to

have the complete collection of the Grateful Dead – never missing one. Attachment to what is not really beneficial is one of the greatest obstacles to performing virtuous activities.

If you cannot stop the laziness that is a non-enthusiasm toward cultivating meditative stabilization, and that takes joy in its discordant class, then from the outset you will not be inclined to engage in meditative stabilization. Even if you do achieve it once, it will quickly degenerate since you will be unable to sustain it. Therefore, it is most crucial to put an end to laziness at the beginning.

Regarding this, when you attain pliancy

or subtleness, that is the actual antidote to laziness...

in which your body and mind are filled with joy and bliss, laziness will be overcome, since no weariness will arise in your application to virtue all day and night. In order to generate that [pliancy], you must be able to undertake continuous effort in meditative stabilization, the cause for generating pliancy. And in order to produce that [effort], you need a continuous fervent aspiration that seeks meditative stabilization. As a cause for that [aspiration], you must have the stable faith of captivation due to having seen the excellent qualities of meditative stabilization.

These are the four antidotes in reverse order.

Therefore, for a start, you should meditate again and again on faith that reflects upon the excellent qualities of meditative stabilization. Having witnessed the sequence of these through your practice, you will apprehend this excellent essential point with the clearest certainty.

As a proof for this point, [Tsong-kha-pa] cited the [above] passage of the *Discrimination of the Middle and the Extremes*, "The support ..." He explains its meaning as follows:

The support (of enthusiastic perseverance) is aspiration, the support of striving. The supported is striving or effort.

Often we don't have aspiration unless there is a necessity. But, some people do! Some people aspire – the so called 'American dream' – which I think is a bit of an aberration but anyway – 'I want to become a millionaire! I want to become president!'

The cause of aspiration is the faith of conviction in excellent qualities. The result of striving is pliancy.

This verse is talking about the four antidotes to laziness. The support of enthusiastic perseverance is aspiration, the mental factor of wishing, in a pure form. All aspiration doesn't have to be virtuous at all. These are neutral mental factors.

How about the omnipresent mental factors, are they virtuous or non-virtuous? When you have faith in the Buddha, or you have faith in the Dalai Lama and you are in his presence and have a pleasant feeling, is that pleasant feeling neutral? It becomes virtuous by sharing similarities with the virtuous mental factor present in the mind, right? The omnipresent mental factors are not virtuous or non-virtuous by their own power. Also these [object-ascertaining] mental factors are not virtuous or non-virtuous by their own power. like the omnipresent mental factors; they are not virtuous or non-virtuous by their own power.

So here, for wisdom, there can be positive and negative wisdoms. You can use wisdom, the mental factor here, to make money or avoid paying taxes, to build a better bomb, to nuke the enemy.

So none of these are virtuous or non-virtuous from their own side, whereas, if you apply them, obviously aspiration towards virtuous qualities can predispose the mind to virtue.

Carefully reflecting upon these modes...

That is this argument about faith giving rise to aspiration, giving rise to effort, giving rise to pliancy, that kind of ability to do things.

...is an especially important essential point of practice, just as the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa] has said. If you turn your mind inwards and carefully contemplate these modes in which the path has been taught by the Great Trailblazers...

Who were the Great Trailblazers? Nagarjuna and Asanga, they were the Great Trailblazers.

Remember, sometimes they are called the Charioteers; the Buddha had sat out the path, but then over time, not being tread well, not being understood well, plants grew over the road, and someone has to find it again and open it up: blaze the trail. Maybe in our sense it means making a new trail; but here it means opening up a trail that was lost or overgrown. So they are considered to be Nagarjuna, who re-opened the Middle Way and Asanga, who re-opened the understanding of the mind-only school, the Cittamatra.

...to be definite in sequence, without leaving them as mere words, then you will gain certainty regarding these modes. However, if you are keen merely on the words, and understand the texts of the Great Trailblazers to be simply some extraneous doctrine or a branch of debate, then you will toss them away when it comes to practice. So there will be no way to gain certainty about these methods. Let alone generating the excellent paths that please the Conquerors in your continuum, you will not even have the good fortune of having the object that is to be understood dawn [to your mind].

A lot of lamas say that it's a sad thing, when people that study, the kind of study like in the monasteries in the Gelugpa tradition, where the monks and the nuns study these kinds of texts, and then later might come to their lama in some little village and ask, 'How do I practice?' - as though what they studied so far had just been philosophy, and now they wanted to know some essential oral instruction, the quintessential instruction, expecting the lama now finally to reveal some secret knowledge. However, what is taught by the Trailblazers actually is to be practiced! If you don't understand and put into practice these things, you will study all of this and it will just be mere verbiage; then later you may be all excited about some individual meditator who gives some quintessential instruction. When Chöden Rinpoche or Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche comes and gives quintessential instruction, that always will be a way of understanding how to put these teachings into practice. All of you saw what a great scholar Kirti Tsenshab Rinpoche was, or Chöden Rinpoche, an incredibly erudite expert. Their practice comes out of that, by putting into practice what these great beings have delineated; not just by looking for some simple kind of practice, like reciting om mani padme hum backwards or something like that; like philosophy is one thing and practice is something else.

When aspiration is divided, there are three types:

- (1) the aspiration wishing to meet
- (2) the aspiration wishing not to be separated
- (3) the aspiration that seeks

Most of our life we wish to meet with pleasure, riches and fame etc.; that's our wish, our aspiration. We wish to be separated from hot, cold, suffering, loneliness, etc. 'Aspiration that seeks' means, in some context, aspiring for another rebirth or it could be aspiring to leave samsara.

The aspiration that seeks is of many types – the aspiration seeking wishes, aspiration seeking views, and so forth.

Let's see whether Geshe Rabten's text helps a little bit here: *Aspiration is a distinct mental factor that, having focused upon an intended object, takes a strong interest in it. It has the function of acting as the basis for enthusiasm.*

If you want to develop aspiration, if you wish to aspire for virtuous qualities, you have to focus on something – that is the meaning of intended object – and take a strong interest in developing it, in achieving it. To do that, you need some kind of faith or experience, because qualities like samadhi are not things we can see the benefits of directly.

It's the same for aspiring for something in worldly life; you see people aspire for wealth because they see other people, like uncle Charlie who worked hard and made a million dollars, thinking: 'I can do the same thing. I also want to have that!' That kind of aspiration would be developed from actually seeing.

So aspiration obviously doesn't have to come from faith alone; aspiration can arise from some subtle qualities too, and because they are not tangible that would be based on faith.

Geshe Rabten: *In general, any wish or yearning to obtain a particular object is an aspiration.*

Any wish we might have in our mind would be an example of this mental factor aspiration. For instance, when we dedicate our merits, that's an activity of aspiration.

The Tibetan word for prayer, monlam, is very similar to mopa, which means to wish and also to aspire; sometimes it's called the path of aspiration. You pray, 'May this come about!', wishing; that state of mind predisposes virtuous karma to ripen. It's not as though if you pray hard enough, God will answer your questions; that's what we think in the world, that's an analogy to the world – if you ask father enough times, you bring him gifts, and finally he will accede to your wish, your prayer – but that's not what prayer means in this context. A path of aspiration – it doesn't use the exact word here, dunpa, but it's similar to that – or prayer means a conditioning of your mind through aspiring again and again towards some goal. This kind of aspiration causes your karma to experience that, to begin to ripen; that's one of the efficacies of that.

The bodhisattvas engage in all kinds of different prayers in order to ripen their karma of the past right now; it's not as though someone else is going to provide what they want, but by praying for it, when they have the ability, can cause the karma on their mind-stream to ripen very quickly and to manifest now.

Geshe Rabten: *In general, any wish or yearning to obtain a particular object is an aspiration, and depending upon the nature of that object or goal, the aspiration becomes wholesome and constructive or unwholesome and destructive. It is thus important to learn which objects are worthy of aspiration and which are not. There is a threefold classification of aspiration: aspiring to encounter wishing to meet once again that which has passed; in some cases you may not have encountered it this lifetime; you want to find success or love and so forth, or to meet with that which you have separated from aspiring not to be separated from what one is experiencing at present; and aspiring to achieve a certain goal in the future. It can further be divided into four types: a strong interest in an object of sensual desire; a strong interest in a material object; a strong interest in a particular opinion or view; and a strong interest in liberation.*

The word interest means to wish to achieve or to perpetuate. Strong interest or aspiration in a particular view or opinion could be negative, could be like opinionatedness.

[B2] Belief (mos pa)

Belief – to me it is more like appreciation, for something you have already experienced in the past. John Dunne translated it as inclination and as involvement; neither of these give me much of a taste.

Regarding the entity of belief, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is belief?

RESPONSE: It holds an ascertained thing (something which has already been recognized) to be just the way it has been ascertained. It has the function of non-captivation.

Let's see what Geshe Rabten says – this is a different definition but it covers the same thing: *Appreciation is a distinct mental factor that stabilizes the cherished apprehension of a previously ascertained object...*

It stabilizes an object which was desirable, that you cherished; to me appreciation is a good meaning.

...and does not allow the mind to be distracted by anything else. Thus it has the function of cherishing the object and securing the recollection of it.

Without appreciation, if you don't see the quality of something, it's hard to keep it in mind. Maybe you keep it in mind because you are forced to, or you are being paid to, but that would be a form of appreciation.

Geshe Rabten: *Appreciation of an object only follows after the object's qualities have been ascertained as being worthwhile or valuable. Once appreciated in this way the mind will be far more inclined to pursue a certain form of behaviour in order to either obtain the object or realize a goal*

embodied in or otherwise related to the object. In the practice of Dharma, appreciation is an essential element for a meaningful state of faith and confidence.

We said faith is a prerequisite for aspiration. So in a sense this kind of appreciation can give rise to that aspiration, can give rise to the faith; you could call it belief in that sense.

Geshe Rabten: *The stronger one's appreciation of the natures and characteristics of the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, for example, the stronger will be one's faith...*

You could also use belief in this context, because you don't yet have a direct realization. Here the word belief is not what is meant when we talked about correct belief in the seven ways of knowing, this is a different word – appreciative belief.

...in their infallibility, and the stronger one's motivation to realize one's spiritual goals. In fact the Buddha himself, in the Sutra Requested by Sagaramati, has said that appreciation is the very root of all that is wholesome. There are limitless forms of appreciation since the objects appreciated by the limitless sentient beings are infinite. But, in brief, we can talk about two kinds of appreciation: those that are mistaken and those that are realistic.

Just as it has been said above, it is a knower which holds the object that has been ascertained by its valid cognition, thinking, "It is just like this and not otherwise." Here its function is specified as "non-captivation", because when one has gained firm belief in the object that one has ascertained, an opponent cannot steer one away from it.

So non-captivation means: the function of not being captivated, not being seduced. Appreciation may not be as strong as belief in its ability to keep you from being seduced away. If you really have belief in something or appreciation for something, if you are talking about qualities, if you are talking about views, no other person can steer you away from it.

For example, reflecting upon the difference between the Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers in the context of going for refuge, one analyses, "Which is an infallible refuge?"...

A non-Buddhist refuge might be God, Indra, the gods of the desire realm or Brahma, or it might be money (or plastic).

*...and ascertains that only the Teacher, the Buddha, is an infallible refuge. Then, when the doctrine taught by him and the spiritual community properly practicing this doctrine are also ascertained by valid cognition to be infallible refuges, a firm belief in them as final refuges is gained. Thereupon, Forders and so forth cannot lead one astray and one has then joined the ranks of Buddhists. Based upon this, all wholesome qualities will increase. Furthermore, *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* says (stanza 7.40):*

The Muni has taught that belief is the root
Of all that belongs to the class of virtue,
And the root of that is
Constant meditation on the fruitional results.

Forders refers to non-Buddhist, false paths to liberation.

We will begin with belief next time, on Sunday, and I think we will easily finish the object-ascertaining mental factors and then, what comes next is the virtuous mental factors. That's good to do them before the non-virtuous, that we often hear a lot about without knowing what to cultivate.

Dedication is an application of this mental factor aspiration. It's aspiring, wishing that the virtuous roots of merit that we have created now have a particular result in the future. That modifies our karma; it can cause karma to ripen in the way we wish – within what is realistic. An example often given in the teachings compares the function of the reins of a horse to the function of aspiration: If you just leave the horse to decide by itself, it will take you to places you don't want to go, but by pulling the reins in a particular way you can decide where to go; that's similar to the function of aspiration.

The three elements, as we said many times, the merits to be dedicated, the goal we wish for or aspire that these merits may become the cause of, and the actual act of dedication, the act of aspiration; we meditate separately on the emptiness of those three things, what we call the emptiness of the three spheres.

In this case the emptiness of the karma, the emptiness of a goal and the emptiness of the actual active aspiration.

Where can you find the act of dedication? It's just a name that we label to this particular sequence of events. So let's do that!

Dedication

First we of all let's do the conventional dedication, which is aspiring that the virtue we have created tonight, the virtue we have created in the past, even the virtue we create in the future, ripen in such a way that would please the great bodhisattvas, Manjushri, Samantabhadra, who's behavior we emulate. May this karma ripen in such a way that we very soon will engage in these great bodhisattvas' deeds, overcoming our laziness, our self-interest, developing altruism and real love for others, compassion for them – due to this merit. Aspiring that the merit we have created, may ripen, become the cause of that particular result and not just ripen in samsaric pleasure alone.

When one does aspirational prayers, one says again and again many different kinds of aspirations like that.

Now think of the dedication within the sphere of emptiness, the emptiness of the three spheres, to dedicate this merit so that the merits themselves cannot be destroyed, not alone that they will not be exhausted until the goal comes, but this will prevent them from accidental destruction by anger or wrong view or abandoning the Dharma etc.

The merits we have created, although they do function, they don't exist the way our mind solidly thinks of them as some real findable entity. The merits we have created are merely imputed by the mind to those sequences of events that created that virtue.

So to let go! See it as kind of appearing, like an illusion, but not existing findable the way we conceive of.

The goal of sequentially practicing the bodhisattva path like the great bodhisattvas Manjushri and Samantabhadra and so forth, achieving all of the six perfections, working for the welfare of sentient beings, becoming a real inspiration to others, that goal also, achieving ultimate enlightenment, is just a name conceptually designated to that collection of parts, that state, that basis of designation. There is nothing findable from it's own side, but still it functions.

And the state of dedication we are doing now, aspiring that this karma is ripening in that way.

By this person, by this dedicator; also the person is empty.

And the act of dedication is empty of existing the way it appears as truly findable from it's own side. The only way it exists is merely as a designation by the mind in terms and concepts – the only kind of reality; otherwise it's totally empty and vacuous, but still functions.

DVD 6

Meditation

Let us relax our minds and bodies and first try to focus our attention with mindfulness on the breathing.

If the mind is overcome with discursiveness, you can imagine breathing incoming blessings of the buddhas, when you breathe in – in the form of white light – and as you breathe out, breathe out all your discursiveness, all these thoughts, as if you are breathing them right out from the two side-channels at your nostrils – all the discursive conceptual thoughts.

Follow one breath down to your heart, and with your mental consciousness, instead of focusing on the breathing, focus on just the nature of mind behind the thoughts. It has a different nature than the busyness of the thoughts themselves. It's spacious and empty – it has the same continual appearance as clear light.

Let go of the sense of the body that is appearing within your mental consciousness, but does not have to be attended to, let it dissipate, as you let go of other thoughts in the same way, of your attention [to them]. Let go of the sense of the ego and the sense of a duality between the observer and the object observed.

Think, 'Whatever other outside situations might be taking place, at this moment I have a life of leisure and endowments, as the Buddha explained, sometimes called a perfect human rebirth; or at least most of the features [of it], with which I can practice the Dharma as the great beings of the past have done.

All of the temporary disappointments or desires pale in comparison to what can be done with this mind in terms of Dharma, its great purpose, its great utility. Many living beings don't have that opportunity now; they are born in the un-free states or even as humans have many obstacles, having committed very violent crimes, or being very opinionated, predisposed against the Dharma, or so attached to their worldly pursuits that they don't find the space and time to actually think about practicing the Dharma.

So while we have this opportunity, we should use it for the greatest benefit in every moment by practicing the meditations on the altruistic mind of enlightenment, bodhicitta. We can create so much virtue, purify so much negativity by the practice of observing reliance upon a spiritual friend, the guru, in the same way we accumulate merit that otherwise it may take countless eons to accumulate, in a very short amount of time; and in so doing provide the basis to develop special wisdom, which is the real aim of the Buddhist path, that provides the essential ingredient to overcome our own delusions, to achieve omniscience, along with, combined with, conjoined with the

altruistic mind of enlightenment, so that instead of being a problem for others, a burden for others, instead of being part of the problem, we can be part of the solution for sentient beings, leading them, inspiring them.

So think, 'For that purpose, in order to better understand the mind, to develop my good qualities and virtuous mental factors, to overcome the negative, I'm going to listen to, contemplate, meditate on the teachings on the mind, primary minds and their mental factors, to better acquaint myself with this territory, unknown, this seemingly untamed territory within my consciousness, the laboratory of the mind.'

Then relax – bring your attention back to the present.

Teaching 6

Belief continued

Question: From page 28 it seems to me that I need to have valid cognition to have belief, is that correct?

Answer: We had something like this before with subsequent cognition, which realizes something that has previously been realized. [Here as well,] you can't really have the mental factor belief or appreciation unless you previously ascertained the qualities of the object in question through valid cognition. This is one part of this bit in the text. To continue:

For example, reflecting upon the difference between the Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers in the context of going for refuge, one analyses, "Which is an infallible refuge?" and ascertains that only the Teacher, the Buddha, is an infallible refuge. Then, when the doctrine taught by him and the spiritual community properly practicing this doctrine are also ascertained by valid cognition to be infallible refuges, a firm belief in them as final refuges is gained. Thereupon, Forders and so forth cannot lead one astray and one has then joined the ranks of Buddhists. Based upon this, all wholesome qualities will increase.

In some contexts the word 'belief' and sometimes the word 'appreciation' works better. This kind of belief is not just like when we talk about correct belief [in Lorig]. This [mental factor] belief here is based on something ascertained previously; an ascertaining consciousness has realized some aspect of something.

The section on minds and mental factors in Jeffrey Hopkins' book *Meditation on Emptiness* is drawn from the same text by Yeshe Gyaltsen; he does not translate all the details of each definition but because of knowing the Tibetan very well and having studied it with Tibetan lamas he puts together [a very clear presentation]. He says about this mental factor: *Belief holds an ascertained object to be just as it was ascertained.*

Once you've ascertained something, it keeps that appreciation. When you for instance say, 'I appreciate good music!', that means you have already somehow perceived it as good and you are keeping that sense of cherished value, allowing your mind then to remain with that. As it says in our text: the function of belief is specifically as non-captivation – because once one has a firm belief in it as it was ascertained, an opponent can not steer you away from it. If you appreciate the Grateful Dead, having ascertained their

good qualities, then even if someone tries to tell you that some other music is good, it does not sway you away!

Question: My question is referring to the arising of contact not acting as the basis for feelings that arises simultaneous with it, while one of the similarities of a mind and its accompanying mental factors is that they occur at the same time.

Answer: Is there any contradiction here? They are saying the same thing!

At any one moment the minds and mental factors present have a natural relationship with one another. If they are simultaneous, in one consciousness, bearing five similarities, they have a natural relationship with that mind – so they are not cause and effect of one another. But we do say that the mental factor contact is the cause of feeling. So how could that be? [It's because] the feeling simultaneous with it is not its effect.

It's not as though there was one moment of mental factors, there is a whole sequence. The contact of a previous moment acts as the cause of the feeling and discrimination and so forth of the next instant, and the contact that is simultaneous with the feeling and so forth is acting as the cause of the feeling, contact and so forth of the next instant.

The previous moment of consciousness in general is a substantial cause of the next moment of consciousness. And some of the mental factors are causally related.

Anyway, any of the mental factors that are simultaneous with one another, they cannot be in a causal relationship with one another – according to the Buddhist schools other than the Vaibhashikas. The Vaibhashikas say there are such things as simultaneous acting conditions. From the higher tenets' point of view that's erroneous.

Question: There has to be a first moment of feeling etc

Answer: When you talk about any particular stream of consciousness... like, for instance, when you are asleep, your consciousness is unmanifest, so when you are waking up, there will be moments where not all of the five omnipresent mental factors are fully qualified – remember we talked about that, at the time of birth or death, at the time of intoxication or at the moment of being knocked unconscious. At the time of waking there will have to be a moment of contact actualizing, let's say, a sense consciousness and then the feeling and discrimination and so forth can arise the next instant. That would be a good example!

As for in beginningless time – where was the first contact? In any one stream of consciousness there will be a first moment of contact. Contact is always there in an unmanifest form, but in any fully actualized consciousness the five omnipresent mental factors will all be manifest although there are some exceptions at the boundaries, when there has to be a contact first that acts as the cause of the very next moment of feeling, discrimination etc.

Question: I just want to clarify this: a mental factor can be the cause of another mental factor, for example contact can be the cause for feeling. But a mental factor can never be the cause of a primary consciousness...

Answer: It can be the condition of the next instance of consciousness.

Question: I imagine the omnipresent mental factors as a kind of bridge, the top of the hierarchy – they are always there and other mental factors can be generated from them....

Answer: Other mental factors maybe in a sense generated from them because you need not only contact but you need intention to move the mind towards something and then wisdom and other things can arise. It is not so much that these are called the causes of the other ones, but these are always going to be there, whatever else is there, these are always there.

Good!

So we continue with the object-ascertaining mental factors. What are they? Aspiration, belief, mindfulness, meditative stabilization and wisdom. Very good.

Aspiration is the foundation for enthusiastic perseverance, induced sometimes by faith, like the aspiration to develop single-pointed concentration – one of the main things mentioned in our text, is induced by the faith in the good qualities of that.

Let's take a look at the last page of this section, page 33, to see why these mental factors are called object-ascertaining.

[Discussion of the category of object-ascertaining mental factors]

What is the reason for calling these five mental factors – ~~intention~~ aspiration and so forth – "object-ascertaining"? Since these mental factors hold [an object] through apprehending the individual features of the object, they are said to "individually ascertain objects."

Generally according to the Mahayana tenets these mental factors are not present in the sense consciousnesses. Some might think to have samadhi in the sense consciousnesses, but in general the sense consciousnesses do not ascertain anything; ascertaining has a certain sense of having been produced by the mental consciousness. You don't have aspiration within the sense consciousnesses, neither belief, nor appreciation; mindfulness almost sounds like you might.

There is some discussion in the scriptures about even some of the other mental factors, like attachment and so forth, whether they might be present in the sense consciousnesses. There might be some argument about this, but in general these are not going to be present in the sense consciousnesses, they only take place in the mental consciousness; so they are different [in this] from the omnipresent mental factors, which are present in every consciousness.

Whether this is the process we go through in ascertaining something as separate from ourselves? These mental factors may not be necessary to ascertain that, because even to the sense consciousnesses there is a sense of separateness; separateness appears to our sense consciousnesses. In fact, from the Cittamatra point of view – the people studying Tenets will pick up on this – it's an error to view phenomena as distant and cut off from the

consciousnesses that are apprehending them, but they do appear that way. That sense of difference is not brought about by these object ascertaining mental factors, it's the way phenomena appear due to the imprints left on our consciousness since beginningless time – how they appear due to our karma.

[B3] Mindfulness (dran pa)

Mindfulness is a very important mental factor, and we find it very much enshrined in the Theravada tradition. Has any of you ever done a course of meditation on the four close placements of mindfulness, satipatthana? These courses are often offered in India for example. Sati is the pali word for the Sanskrit smṛti; patthana means to place or to closely place. This is one of the very important practices the Buddha taught in the Pali canon, called the *Satipatthana Sutra*. In the current Theravada tradition, besides the sutras about vipassana, the *Mahavipassana Sutra*, this is one of the sutras that's called on, satipatthana, close placement of mindfulness and vipassana are the essential methods to achieve liberation. They are different mental factors obviously, different states rather.

Generally there are four close placements of mindfulness; placement of mindfulness on the body, on the physical; on the feelings; on consciousness, and on phenomena – sequentially becoming more and more fine. All the meditations you find taught in the Theravada tradition have this aim. Let's start from the breathing meditation, watching the inhalation and the exhalation, this is one of the limbs of the close placement of mindfulness on the body or on the physical – you are watching something physical. When you get tired of that, you also watch your posture, then when you get up you also do the walking meditation – walking very slowly. Sometimes it people think it has to do with elegance, walking very slowly and elegantly, if they do not understand the point of it, but it has to do with being mindful of every motion of the body; the foot touching the ground, then coming down, and rising again, and the with eating, the close placement of mindfulness of the body while eating, recognizing the motion of the arm and the motivation behind it, tasting and eating very, very, slowly, chewing, masticating.

Generally if you eat very slowly, things will begin to taste differently; if you take even a little piece of bread that otherwise you might not think about, and you just chew that and savor the flavor, you will start to be mindful of and be aware of flavors you were not noticing before. Once at our monastery, when I first went to Kopan, in 1974 I think it was, we had a group of French people at the course, and after the morning meditation for breakfast there was some kind of porridge, I think the French would call it gruel. So the first couple of days, when they were in line for breakfast they'd be going 'where is the omelet, where is the croissant, where is the café' – expecting their French breakfast, and I remember watching them eating, they'd be eating with disdain while watching the sunrise, putting it away; then after a couple of days, when their minds had calmed down, the very same people were eating the very same porridge or gruel with incredible pleasure, delightfully, watching the sunrise.

So mindfulness of the body is an introduction to one of the four noble truths.

In the Mahayana sutras it says that the Buddha taught the four close placements of mindfulness as entries into the four noble truths, into the truth of suffering, the truth of cause of suffering.

The second one, when you are mindful of feelings, why would that be an entry into the truth of the cause of suffering? By understanding how we respond to our feelings, creating more suffering; feelings are the energizers for developing attachment, hatred, indifference etc., which are the causes of suffering. So it's a little more subtle than it appears at first.

The close placement of mindfulness on consciousness is similar to what we do when we watch the mind in what's called Mahamudra meditation; but there they watch the consciousness and have some kind of beginning of a taste or entry into the truth of cessation. And when they place their mindfulness on phenomena, impermanence and selflessness, that is an introduction to the fourth noble truth, the truth of the path.

Sometimes people wonder why in the Mahayana tradition we don't have those vipassana meditations as they have in Goenka tradition and in the Insight Meditation Center, but a lot of their courses are mainly about the four close placements of mindfulness. Why don't we find that in the Mahayana, it is something that was lost? It's not actually lost, you do find it in the scriptures, but the great lamas say that in the Mahayana these four close placements of mindfulness are not taken as the main object of mindfulness in post meditation as in the Theravada, watching the body and the feeling etc.. The main thing taken from this in the Mahayana is the mindfulness to develop bodhicitta, the mindfulness of the kindness of all sentient beings, the shortcomings of the self-cherishing thought, the mindfulness of the benefits of cherishing others and so forth. In lojong, the *Wheel of Sharp Weapons*, we learn to be mindful of those various factors like whenever anything occurs, to be mindful that that is a result of karma and to use that to help overcome, to fight the two obstacles, the self-grasping and the self-cherishing thought. So it's not as though the four close placements of mindfulness are lacking in the Mahayana.

So let's look at the actual definition from the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*:

Regarding the entity of mindfulness, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is mindfulness?

RESPONSE: It is a non-forgetfulness of the mind with respect to a familiar object. It has the function of non-distraction.

So it has to be familiar – this sounds a little like what we were talking about before with subsequent cognition or with belief, it is something which has already been known, something that is already familiar. How can you keep something in mind that is not already familiar– when we try to be mindful of something, we have to recognize that first. That's why, when we do meditation, when we try to focus our mind on something, the first stage

is trying to identify the object, and then you can be mindful of it.

Once you are mindful of it, then you can develop concentration on it; first you have to find the object. That's why the breathing meditation is so easy, because the breathing is very easy to find. There might be some people who, when say to focus on the breathing, don't know where to focus, but normally you just have to be a little bit aware of your breathing to pay attention to that.

But how about when you try to visualize the Buddha? Then you have to construct the object, you have to find that object by relying upon some description, or on previously looking at a *thanka* or a statue, or if one had the fortune to see the Buddha themselves; on the basis of that, bringing that to mind, then you can begin to develop the mental factor mindfulness.

Mindfulness has the function of non-distraction. In terms of single-pointed concentration mindfulness will be there, also, along with single-pointed concentration; it's that part of that kind of tranquil mind holding an object that doesn't allow you to be distracted, that keeps to the object; so it's a cause of concentration.

Just as it has been said above, it is a knower that possesses three features. These three features are:

(1) objective feature – a familiar object

(2) [subjective] aspect feature – a non-forgetfulness upon having observed that object; and

Like when you watch the clear light nature of your mind, the more mindfulness you have of that, the more you can prevent forgetting that, losing that object, the more you are mindful of it.

(3) functional feature – non-distraction

The function is to prevent distraction. What is distraction? It is a particular mental factor, in Tibetan: *nampar yengwa*. Distraction is when you have an object in mind, and the mind then moves to some other object.

In general the main kind of distraction happens due to attachment, right? For concentration the main obstacle is usually not being distracted to something that bombs you out – maybe at our level that could be a big distraction, when something is worrying you – but when you are actually concentrating, the main kind of distraction is when you are subtly distracted by something attractive due to attachment. That's what sometimes is translated as excitement. There is a general kind of distraction, but the main kind of distraction is distraction to something which is captivating to you. It's not that difficult to avoid being distracted by what is unattractive. At first worrisome things might be distracting for you, but later the more difficult is to prevent the mind from going to something more comfortable, even being attracted to the bliss of the concentration, to the superficially [happy] kind of state it brings. Mindfulness has the function of preventing this kind of distraction.

When we go through the nine stages of mental abiding to develop tranquil abiding, mindfulness is sequentially enhanced along those levels to get rid of the main kind of

distraction, which is called excitement. The other kind of hindrance to single-pointed concentration would be the sinking mind – we will talk about that later – that has a different antidote.

(1) Since mindfulness is not produced with respect to that which has not been previously familiarized with, the objective feature is stated as “a familiar object.”

(2) Even though the mind might have previously familiarized itself with an object, if it does not presently dawn as an object of the mind, mindfulness will not occur. (Just because you knew something in the past, if it doesn't come to your mind now, mindfulness is not actualizing.)

Thus, [the subjective aspect feature] is specified as “non-forgetfulness of the mind.”

(3) Since the stability of the mind is enhanced in dependence on special mindfulness, its functional feature is specified as that of “non-distraction.”

The two features we try to develop for fully qualified concentration are stability and clarity.

If you are not stable you lose the object completely, you are distracted; you have the object for one moment and then you start thinking about something else or you want to do something else. Sometimes we can keep our mind stable for a very short amount of time. So we have to enhance that stability.

The other factor of concentration is clarity, and what is causing the unclarity of the mind is the sinking. When you bring the consciousness inside to the mental consciousness, you bring your attention inside, sometimes if you are not skillful you bring it inside too much and the mind becomes to sink, it becomes unclear. So even though you might have some kind of visualization, you are holding that, and you are not being distracted totally to something else but the object is not clear, so you don't have fully qualified concentration.

Here mindfulness doesn't have so much to do with the clarity aspect, it has to do with the factor of stability. The stability of the mind is enhanced in dependence of special mindfulness

(3).... the stability of the mind is enhanced in dependence on special mindfulness, its functional feature is specified as that of “non-distraction.”

This mode in which mindfulness possesses the three features is very important in both the contexts of sutra and tantra. The Protector Nagarjuna says [in his *Letter to a Friend*] (stanza 54):

O Lord, the Sugata taught that mindfulness of the body is
The sole path to be traversed.
Pay attention and guard it;
Due to mindfulness degenerating, all qualities will be destroyed.

The Buddha taught mindfulness to be very, very important. If you are not mindful of what you are doing, if you are not mindful of the vows you have taken or of the decisions you have made for your life, you are in ‘deep duty’.

Sometimes the Buddha said, in the *Mahavipassana Sutra* and the *Satipatthana Sutra*, ‘This is the sole path!’, almost like the statement attributed to Christ, ‘I'm the way, the truth and the light; other than me there is no way to the father!’ Someone might get incensed, Buddhists might say, ‘that is ridiculous!’ But you can understand that in the same context. The Buddha said in a certain context ‘mindfulness of the body is the sole path to be traversed’; it doesn't mean that that is the only thing ultimately, but [in that context it is saying] that you HAVE to do that. Just as, I think, what Christ meant was that other than

by his example – ‘Other than by me, I’m the way, the truth and the light,’ – other than by that kind of example of altruism and wise action, there is no way to find the ultimate. So I see that in the same kind of context, when it says ‘the sole path’; it doesn’t mean that all the other teachings the Buddha gave about emptiness and bodhicitta are [dispensable] – it just means that at a certain stage this is the main thing.

Like when you are learning mathematics, you say to a kid: this is the main thing! If you don’t know the numbers, you can’t become an accountant, you can’t make a million dollars. Of course you need other things too, right, but at that point that is the main thing.

And Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds (stanza 5.26-30) says:

Even though learned,
Faithful and diligent in effort,
Many become tainted by downfalls
Due to committing the fault of lacking introspection.

Introspection is another mental factor aligned with mindfulness. Mindfulness is what keeps the mind on an object, and introspection watches whether mindfulness has lost the object or not. It’s like a mental spy.

Though they have amassed merit,
It is pilfered by the thief of non-introspection
Who follows upon degeneration of mindfulness;
They proceed to a bad migration.

This band of thieves, the afflictions,
Looks for an opportunity;
Upon finding an opportunity, it pilfers my virtue and
Even destroys the life of a good migration.

Therefore, mindfulness should never be displaced
From the door of the mind;
If it does go, recalling the anguish of bad migrations,
Place it back.

Due to association with spiritual teachers,
The teachings of the abbot, and fear,
Fortunate ones who act respectfully
Easily generate mindfulness.

We will take a break here.

Mindfulness has these three features: that of familiar object, its nature is not-forgetfulness and its function is to prevent distraction.

Do you know the *Eight Verses of Training the Mind*, one of the three lojong texts that in the Gelugpa tradition are considered seminal? We studied one of the three main lojongs, *Wheel of Sharp Weapons*, and there is another lojong that is called *Seven Point Training of the Mind*, which is quite elaborate, and the *Eight Verses of Training the Mind*, which is quite brief.

The first verse goes: *Vigilant of my mindstream throughout all actions, whatever delusions arise, endangering myself and others, I will confront and avert them without delay!* So this is talking about the mental factor mindfulness and the vigilance that goes along with it. Vigilance is we also called alertness. It comes up in the context of the twenty secondary mental factors along with non-introspection, the lack of that. Once we have established some mindfulness, then we can have the state of alertness or vigilance to watch whether we are being mindful.

Vigilant of my mindstream throughout all actions, whatever delusions arise, endangering myself and others, I will confront and avert them without delay – this is the real practice! Yesterday somebody asked what kind of practice we could do to help somebody who is sick, could we do some pujas or mantras, or powas – what can we do, liberate animals etc. But the main practice is to be vigilant of the mind and preventing the intention, the creation of negative karma, and replacing it with, being mindful of keeping virtuous states of mind. Like the example given of the two guards on either side of the door, holding spears outside of the king's gates. If someone comes, who is not supposed to be there, they will be vigilant, they don't just stand there like statues. We, our mind, should be vigilant, when delusions are arising, and the basis for that vigilance is mindfulness, being mindful of the state of our mind. Mindfulness is not just being aware; it means keeping in mind something which was previously ascertained or already familiar rather. It talks about if you are familiar with a peaceful calm state of mind or being mindful of your vows, 'I will not kill; I will not lie; I will not get angry today; I will not allow my mind to be overcome by my addictive personality!' – being mindful of that alone, being mindful of attachment, and whenever that starts to come up, rather than seeing it as a friend, being vigilant, remembering that, preventing that enemy from coming up. Mindfulness and vigilance have to be conjoined.

The increase of all the excellent qualities of the paths and grounds are contingent upon the two – mindfulness and introspection (alertness or vigilance) – and all accomplishments of meditative stabilization of sutra and tantra are necessarily achieved through this special mindfulness. Therefore, this very method of relying on mindfulness is of utmost importance for those who, from their heart, wish to practice. In this vein, *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* says (stanza 5.22-23):

Let my gain and honor,
My body and livelihood vanish;
Let even my other virtues degenerate,
But may my mind never degenerate.

I urge you,
Those who wish to guard their minds,
Guard your mindfulness and introspection
Even at the cost of your lives!

Question: what happens with mindfulness if the mind actually goes, like with Alzheimer?

Answer: We call it short-term memory, right, mindfulness not being able to perpetuate, to remember who you are. I can't really say; I'd think that for somebody who has cultivated mindfulness throughout their lives it might compensate some at that time.

So we have talked about aspiration, appreciation or belief, and mindfulness. Now the

remaining two are meditative concentration and wisdom.

[B4] Meditative stabilization (ting nge 'dzin)

Sanskrit: samadhi; this is not the word shinez in Tibetan, or shamatha. What is the difference between samadhi and shamatha? Samadhi is present in our mind now; when we are ascertaining something we have to have the ability to keep the mind on the object for some moments of time, not through the factor of mindfulness but just by this factor of samadhi. But that kind of samadhi we have now is not fully qualified samadhi. The first really qualified samadhi, when you have control over it, is called shinez, is called shamatha. Shamatha is a kind of samadhi, but not all samadhis are shamatha; there are other kinds of samadhis, even very deep samadhis. Bodhisattvas have hundreds of thousand different kinds of samadhis.

Regarding the entity of meditative stabilization, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is meditative stabilization?

RESPONSE: It is a one-pointedness of the mind with respect to an imputed thing. It has the function of acting as a support for knowledge.

Sometimes this samadhi or tingnge dzin is translated as single-pointed concentration, sometimes just as concentration. It doesn't have to be meditative, it's in our mind now.

An imputed thing means that it's not a mental factor present in your eye consciousness when you are able to keep your eye consciousness focused on one thing – that is not samadhi. We don't enhance, develop, samadhi using outer objects. Some people concentrate on a candlelight – also that's not samadhi. According to Asanga and Vasubandhu the realm of samadhi is not in the sense consciousnesses.

Question: Could focusing on an external object not help developing single pointed concentration?

Answer: There is obviously a relationship, for example, if you are keeping your eye on something, your mental consciousness has to motivate that. Like for my god-son (or in our case maybe buddha-son) who has great difficulty concentrating, when we meditate I tell him to keep his eye on the clock, watching the hand go, for some thirty seconds, and that can help develop some concentration. But the samadhi itself is not generated in the eye consciousness.

Just as it has been said above, it is a one-pointedness of mind that, within observing an imputed thing
an object of mental consciousness

is continuously set upon it. The objective feature of meditative stabilization is specified to be "an imputed thing," because, when cultivating meditative stabilization, one holds the mind to an object of observation that is imputed by the mind.

Lama Yeshe used to say that the close placement of mindfulness on the breathing, when you are watching the breathing, is called mindfulness and not single-pointed concentration on the breathing, because it's an object which is moving, it's impermanent. The thing

imputed by the mind, the mental image, is something which is constant and so you can develop single-pointed concentration on the basis of that with your mental concentration, whereas just concentrating on the breathing doesn't allow that.

Our friend Allan Wallace, who was a monk for many years, Jampa Kelsang, said that it was one of his deep desires to develop single-pointed concentration; he quoted Geshe Rabten who in accordance to the Gelugpa tradition had said, 'Unless you have single-pointed concentration, it's very difficult to develop bodhicitta in one lifetime.' So he had very noble reasons for wishing to develop single-pointed concentration or shinez – fully qualified samadhi. If you have developed shinez, then whatever virtuous action you do, they can be really strong; you can develop bodhicitta and other kinds of wisdom quickly while without samadhi it is difficult.

He used to have this question, because he studied in the Theravada tradition also and they develop close mindfulness on the breathing, while this seems to be on something that is moving. So he investigated and asked some of his Theravada masters also, if I recall his explanation well, and they said that indeed, that is true. What happens is that through mindfulness of the breathing, at the end of watching that for a long period of time you can develop a mental image of the wind element, the subtle air element. It's not like a shape or a color, but a mental image of what that is, motion. Each of the four elements has a definition, and one of the qualities of the wind or air element is 'that which is moving' or motion. So by being mindful of the breathing, you eventually develop a mental image, and it's upon that that those who follow the satipatthana, the close placement of mindfulness methodology, eventually develop single-pointed concentration, when the mind has been calmed a lot. Watching the breathing is very good, it is a method especially for overcoming conceptualizing mind, discursive thought, because the discursive thoughts are very much on three airs in the side-channels, the 72.000 nadis outside of the central channel.

The objective feature of meditative stabilization is specified to be "an imputed thing," because, when cultivating meditative stabilization, one holds the mind to an object of observation that is imputed by the mind. Furthermore, although there appear to be many enumerations of objects of observation for meditative stabilization, when condensed, it is taught that there are four [categories]:

Geshe Rabten: *Concentration is a distinct mental factor that is capable of dwelling one-pointedly, bearing the same aspect, for a sustained duration of time upon a single referent. It has the function of acting as a basis for the increase of intelligence and of bringing all mundane and supramundane phenomena under control. Concentration exists, to some degree, in the minds of us all. At present this faculty may be undeveloped and only able to remain on one object for a very limited duration. But with continuous effort and practice its ability to dwell one-pointedly upon a single object can be developed until, in a state of mental quiescence, one may remain for days concentrating on a particular object. Furthermore, beings who have taken birth in one of the formless realms can spend eons absorbed in concentration on extremely subtle objects such as the infinity of space and the infinity of consciousness. Concentration is also an important factor in the heightening of intelligence. When we are taking a photograph, the steadier we hold the camera, the sharper will be the picture. Similarly,*

the firmer and more intense our concentration becomes, the sharper and more acute becomes our intelligence.

We do have concentration now, but it's not as developed as it can be. There are different kinds of objects to develop concentration.

If you have either *Liberation in the Palm of your Hand* by Pabongka Rinpoche, a commentary to some of the great lam-rim texts, or if you have the *Lamrim Chenmo*, volume three, the section called the lhaktong chenmo, the great section on vipashyana, it's actually about shinez and lhaktong, about tranquil abiding and penetrative insight. Here it talks about if you try to develop shinez, you need to have an object, so what to choose; the breathing, Buddha, tummo, the emptiness of the mind, Mahamudra, what is the best object to use. The Buddha taught different kinds of objects of concentration.

Furthermore, although there appear to be many enumerations of objects of observation for meditative stabilization, when condensed, it is taught that there are four [categories]:

- (1) objects of observation for purifying behavior
- (2) objects of observation for purifying afflictions
- (3) pervasive objects of observation
- (4) objects of observation for [developing] skill

Also, the objects of observation for [developing] skill are taught to be of infinite types – observation of the [five] aggregates, observation of the [eighteen] constituents, observation of the [twelve] sources, observation of [the twelve links of] dependent- arising, and so forth.

To develop skill in means one can meditate on the five aggregates, the 12 entrances or the 18 elements or dathus. The Buddha explained that all impermanent phenomena can be divided into five aggregates or skandhas or heaps: form, feelings, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness.

The person is also an impermanent phenomenon, and itself can [also] be divided into five skandhas, or aggregates or heaps.

But all impermanent phenomena, whatever impermanent phenomena there are, can be divided into these five heaps of form, feeling, discrimination, compositional factors and consciousness.

Is there anything that is left out here, from among the impermanent phenomena? Non-associated compositional factors?

The compositional factors aggregate includes both associated and non-associated compositional factors. Associated compositional factors means compositional factors that are associated with the mind, like the mental factors. Non-associated compositional factors means impermanent phenomena that are neither material nor associated with the mind.

So all impermanent phenomena can be divided into [falls under] any one of these five aggregates. But you can't put permanent phenomena into any one of those aggregates though, like space or cessation or emptiness; [the five aggregates are a way of dividing up only impermanent phenomena; and among them, the person as a very special impermanent phenomenon, can itself be divided up into the five aggregates of the person.]

A cup could be put into the form aggregate. A corpse does not have feeling, discrimination or the other fifty-one mental factors, nor does it have consciousness; it is just

form, it comes into the form aggregate.

Sometimes we analyze phenomena to develop skill, we analyze the five aggregates.

The Buddha taught also another way to divide all phenomena into the 12 entrances or sources – in Sanskrit: *ayatanas*, *kye che* in Tibetan.

Remember, there are three conditions for consciousness to arise: the dominant condition, the faculty; the immediately proceeding condition, the previous moment of consciousness; and the objective condition, which is something that has to be perceived. When those three come together there can be the arising of consciousness.

We could say that for any of the consciousnesses there would be two doors or sources for it to arise: the object and the sense base; these are two sources for the consciousness arising. For an eye consciousness to arise you need the source or the entrance of the eye-faculty, and you need an object; then of course you need the immediately proceeding moment but that is the arising of the consciousness.

There are twelve entrances; the eye entrances are visible forms and eye faculty; the ear entrances or ear sources are sounds and the ear faculty, and so forth.

What are the sources or the doors to mental consciousness? What are its objects? The mental consciousness can know all objects, but its particular objects are called phenomena, *dharma*s. The mental organ is the previous moment of any of the consciousnesses.

Developing skill in these also includes dividing all phenomena up into twelve entrances. All phenomena, permanent and impermanent, can be divided into these twelve entrances.

At other occasions the Buddha talked about dividing all phenomena into eighteen *dathus* – meaning elements or constituents. It's similar to the division into twelve entrances, if you add the six consciousnesses; for each of the six senses you have got three things: the faculty, the object and the consciousness itself. Three times six is eighteen; those are the eighteen *dathus*.

How can the twelve encompass everything? Where do the consciousnesses go?

We talk about the twelve entrances; and supposedly all phenomena, permanent and impermanent, can be put into one of these categories of the twelve entrances. And another way of mapping them all is eighteen *dhatu*s, which is bigger, a bigger classification than the twelve entrances, it includes the six consciousnesses also, right, the five senses and the mental consciousness. So how can the twelve include the eighteen? Where can the six consciousnesses be found in the twelve? Is it the form entrance? No, that's visible forms. Is it the form faculty? No, that is material! Is it the ear entrance, the sounds? No, consciousness is not sound. The ear-faculty? No, that is material! It's none of the five faculties. It's not the *dharma* entrance, because that's talking about other kinds of phenomena.

It's the mental entrance, which is any of the other six consciousnesses; that one

entrance includes all these other six things in the eighteen dathus.

The Buddha said that certainly all impermanent phenomena could be divided up in all three of these ways. Sometimes when you divide up the person, you divide the person up in the five aggregates, the twelve entrances, the eighteen elements.

Another way of dividing up the person is into the six elements: earth, water, wind and fire, consciousness and space. It says in Nagarjuna's text, 'The person is nothing more than the six elements.' When you develop skill in those different kinds of things, it's called the objects of observation; also observation of the twelve links of dependent arising. Those are objects of observation for developing skill.

What are the objects of observation for purifying behavior, for purifying afflictions and the pervasive objects of observation? You can find these for example in Pabongka Rinpoche's says in *Liberation in the Palm of Your Hand*, or here, in volume three of the *Lam-rim Chenmo* on page 35: *The objects of meditation themselves: The Bhagavan stated, that yogis have four types of objects of meditation, these being (1) universal objects of meditation, (2) objects of meditation for purifying your behavior, (3) objects of meditation for expertise, and (4) objects of meditation for purifying afflictions.*

So all four are here, they are just in a different order.

The universal objects of meditation are of four types: (a) discursive images, (b) non-discursive images, (c) the limits of existence, and (d) achievement of your purpose.

So that is something you can investigate. Basically it's about how to encompass all objects of meditation in this one category, how it pervades everything.

The objects of meditation for purifying behavior are objects that purify behavior in which attachment or the like [hatred, delusion, pride, or discursiveness] are predominant. There are five such objects of meditation. Respectively they are: (a) ugliness, b) love, (c) dependent-arising, (d) differentiation of constituents, and (e) inhalation and exhalation.

So there is meditation on ugliness or repulsiveness; what is that an antidote for? It's for purifying attachment. It's said that when a meditator wants to try to develop samadhi, if their primary obstacle, something that is preventing their attaining it, is attachment or lust, then they take as their object to purify that behavior repulsiveness. We can see this from Shantideva's explanation in the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, where he calls the woman's body a pile of puss; you might think, 'He is really a man!' – but actually the nuns are supposed to meditate in the same way, it's not that the guys' body would be something special. To overcome that kind of first obstacle in which you have strong attachment to physical form, you meditate on repulsiveness.

Here you can meditate on other things also, like this cup of coffee – you can meditate that five minutes after you drink it, it has become partially urine, partially components of excrement, some elements in your blood – that there is nothing inherently pure about it, its actual nature is repulsive. That helps to overcome the compulsive lust or attachment to things.

Meditation on love helps to overcome the behavior of hatred and anger.

Meditation on dependent arising helps to overcome ignorance in general.

Differentiation of the constituents is to overcome pride. You need to understand this. There is an elaborate meditation that Buddha taught; whenever you have any kind of phenomena, you analyze all of the constituents that the Buddha understands, and the interconnectedness between these things – then when you realize how little you do understand, your pride will go down.

Meditation on the inhalation and exhalation, on the respiration, is particularly for individuals overcome by discursiveness.

These are called the objects of meditation for purifying behavior.

There are also five objects of meditation for expertise, namely expertise in: (a) the aggregates, b) the constituents, (c) the sources, (d) dependent arising, and (e) what is and is not possible

What is and is not possible or states and non-states; that's meditation on karma. Virtuous karma can only give rise to something which is conducive within cyclic existence, pleasure or higher rebirth; that's a state; that's possible. Virtuous karma cannot give rise to negative experiences; anything, which is negative, can only arise from negative karma.

Purifying afflictions means either merely reducing the strength of the seeds of the afflictions or else utterly eradicating the seeds. – that would be meditation on emptiness, right. *In the former case, the objects of meditation are the comparative coarseness of each lower stage and comparative calmness of each higher stage.* This is mainly talking about the meditation on mundane and supramundane vipashyana, penetrative insight. Mundane vipashyana is the observation of the desire realm, seeing the shortcomings of this in comparison to the first concentration and seeing the benefits of the first concentration. In so doing you are extricating your mind from the level of the desire realm and elevating it to the level of the first concentration. Likewise developing all of the dhyanas, the four concentrations and the four formless absorptions. This separates you temporarily from attachment and delusions, but you haven't eliminated the seeds of them. Whereas if you meditate on the supramundane vipashyana, on emptiness, selflessness of the person, selflessness of phenomena, that is the way to eliminate all of the afflictions from the root.

So that's a little explanation, you can elaborate that further. Whenever shinez is taught, those objects of observation of tranquil abiding are taught. Here it's just talking about objects of samadhi in general, only in terms of samadhi as an elevating factor.

Nowadays, it seems that there are some instructions at odds with the wording of the Conqueror's scriptures that clearly teach the method of performing staring meditation within observation of a form appearing to the eye consciousness. However, Arya Asanga clearly stated that meditative stabilization is not produced in sense consciousnesses; rather, it is only produced in a mental consciousness. Moreover, its object of observation is not form appearing to a sense consciousness; rather, it is only a mental object imputed by the mind.

When you are actually developing single-pointed concentration, it's that mental image you are focusing your mental concentration on. It might be a mental image of Buddha and, as said before, the first stage is finding the object.

At first, to find the object, if you are visualizing, is a bit difficult, because it doesn't appear to your mind directly. You always have to construct that through familiarity. You could easily have samadhi on your girl- or boyfriend, your mum and dad and so forth; because of familiarity it's easy to call up that image, there are moments that you are concentrating on that single-pointedly. To do this with respect to things we are not familiar with, like the Buddha or Tara, you have to find that object by bringing it to mind, either by looking at a statue or a thanka, and then try to recall that or by reminding yourself: the arms are like this, the hands are like this, one hand is holding the begging bowl, one hand is over the knee; he is wearing saffron robes and his legs are crossed, the soles of his feet have the dharmachakra in them and the nails are copper-colored – reminding yourself discursively like that is called analyzing.

Analytical meditation is used to develop the mental image. Then, once you've got that, you stabilize on it with single-pointed concentration.

The object for the meditation purifying the behavior of hatred is meditation on love. How do you find that object? You don't just say, 'It's there – love.....' That's not how you meditate on love. This is talking about concentrating on the subjective state of love; again, you have to analyze first.

Generally we put people in three categories: friends, where it's easy to imagine a state of affection or love towards them; strangers – it may be possible, but usually I don't love the busman, the collector, someone I don't know; with enemies, it's very difficult for us to imagine developing love for them at first. So you have to overcome these obstacles first, to equalize them and then generate a positive sense of affection for them through logic, through wisdom, reasoning that they have all been your mother, they have all been kind to you, and it's to your benefit that they will be happy. (For a materialistic person that would make a lot of sense, 'If the enemies are happy, I profit – the market still go on. If there is no conflict in South-America, I will still have a good market.'))

So you can use at first the gross mind to overcome the hatred. You have to find the object love; love is not like an objective object, like the appearance of Buddha that you imagine out there, like an image of love that has certain qualities and I'm going to concentrate on that; meditation on love means developing your mind in the aspect of love.

So there are different ways of analyzing, first of all to find the object of concentration, and then you focus on that with single-pointed concentration. But you don't use, according to

Asanga, and according to Kamalashila in his *Stages of the Meditation* that His Holiness has taught many times, about how to develop concentration, his *Bhavanakrama*, the Gomrim, and Maitreya in his *Madhyantavibhanga* – they all say that single-pointed concentration is not developed with objects of eye consciousness, but there may be some efficacy for a beginner to focus the sense consciousness on something, because then indirectly you are focusing the mental consciousness on that. But that is not an infallible method to develop concentration – just to be sitting for days in a cave watching a candle, and of course you have to change the candle from time to time.

All meditation can be put in the two categories of either analytical or stabilizing meditation.

The supreme stabilizing meditation is calm abiding, tranquil abiding, shamatha. Fully qualified analytical meditation is vipashyana, but even before we have this fully qualified stabilizing meditation, even when we stabilize on something for only a few moments – that can be put under the umbrella of the general category of stabilizing meditation. When we analyze something, then that can be put under the umbrella of analytical meditation.

Even when we are trying to stabilize on something, we still have to have the mental factor of alertness that just knows whether you've lost the object or not. Once you've lost the object you have to apply an antidote – so then you have to leave the stabilization in order to recover it. Once you're in the stabilization, you're not analyzing, you're just being vigilant whether you've lost the object. Once you've lost the object, and you know that through introspection, then you no longer have the stabilization and again have to analyze, for example, if you are being distracted by something, to see the disadvantages of that or to apply the antidotes.

QUALM: Well then, does the object of meditative stabilization definitely have to be a real object?

RESPONSE: No. Whether the object be real or erroneous, if one attentively familiarizes oneself with it internally over and over again, clear appearance and non-conceptuality with respect to that object will arise.

How can you have a non-conceptual mind to which a non-existent is appearing? Remember, we had this in Lorig. A non-conceptual mind to which a non-existent is appearing could be the meditator who is meditating on the whole ground being pervaded by skeletons, by bones.

This is a good point to have a break for lunch. We will talk at lunch and then we continue this afternoon.

Dedication

So dedicate the merits we have created so far with conventional dedication first of all, aspiring for these merits to ripen in particular ways. Sometimes we can dedicate particularly for the long life of our gurus, for the proliferation of the Dharma, for our own realizations, bodhicitta and so forth, to increase; that we follow the bodhisattvas activities. Particularly dedicate the merits.

In general you could say, 'Due to these merits, may I quickly become a guru-buddha in order to lead each and every sentient being to that very state.' So we are thinking of the merits we have created this morning and this life and linking them to that state – our eventual achievement of enlightenment for the welfare of sentient beings – making a firm decision, a wish that these merits ripen in that way.

And in so doing, seal it within the sphere of emptiness. Knowing that if you conceptualize these things as real, that that merit you have created can be destroyed by anger, wrong view, abandoning the Dharma and so forth.

So meditate on the emptiness of the merits we are imagining dedicating, they are only imputed by the mind, they can't be found from their own side but still function, it's not an erroneous, total imagination.

The goal dedicated to is empty. That is, our own enlightenment is just a state imputed, doesn't exist from its own side.

The act of dedication, the dedicator, the linking of these merits with those goals also can't be found from its own side, it's just a dependent arising phenomenon empty of true existence. It still functions.

DVD 7

Meditation

We do a short meditation to recall our motivation. Try to settle your mind again. Let go of the flashiness of your eye consciousness and the trains of thought that have been engendered during conversations at lunch, thinking, and see if you can pay mindfulness to the respiration, to the breathing, in and out.

And through the force of familiarization bring your attention to the consciousness itself as in the third close placement, similar to that. Here watching the specific characteristic of the mind, of its nature – clarity, and in so doing letting go of everything else, all the other content, whether it be the seeming obscurity of the mind or the unclarity.

Even though this is not a meditation on emptiness itself, you can remind yourself, ‘As there is no self the way it’s appearing to my mind, I can let go of that. There is no fault, there is nothing lost, I still exist conventionally.’ Let go of the appearance of your body, let go of grasping to that, adhering to that, so that, as you concentrate instead on the spaciousness of the mind, those appearances begin to subside.

Within that clear calm state think, ‘All living beings are exactly the same as myself in wanting to be happy, wanting to be free of suffering. Whatever transient circumstances predispose me to look at them as attractive or friendly or as unattractive or as objects of anger, as enemies or as strangers, all of those are unreliable, changeable, transient. They have all been equally enemy, friend and stranger, and in the long run like myself want to be happy – equal to me – wanting to be free of suffering, recognizing in the larger scale of things – we are all part of one large entity of sentient beings. Wishing the best for all living beings, ultimate peace of mind and bliss. How wonderful that would be!’

Think, ‘I’m going to listen to, contemplate, meditate on the subject of minds and mental factors to better understand my mind, to develop the good qualities, eliminate what has to be eliminated, develop what has to be developed, become less of a burden, but of actual benefit for sentient beings. First to avoid harming them, then to collect all the virtuous prerequisites, even knowledge and so forth, and then ultimately tame, completely tame the mind. I’m going to listen to the teachings in order to become enlightened, for that purpose, with the motivation to benefit all sentient beings.’ Then the act of listening will become very powerful.

Now, bring your attention back.

Teaching 7

Talking about concentration, Asanga said that the object of samadhi had to be mentally

created. Here the question comes up: If you are looking at a candle, that concentration of the eye consciousness – it seems understandable that it's not fully qualified samadhi, but the after image, when you close the eyes and concentrate on that, is that a suitable object?

Even when you are concentrating with the eye consciousness, the mental consciousness does have a mental image of that. At the same moment you are conceptualizing that, you will be holding that, but when you are concentrating with the eye consciousness... – remember when we were talking about inattentive consciousnesses, whether the mental consciousness has a certain amount of facility to pay attention to the different consciousnesses, either sequentially or at the same time? If you are really concentrating on one thing, putting your attention from your mental consciousness on to what's the input for the eye consciousness, you don't have the ability then to concentrate on other things, to be attentive of other things. So you are not really attentive of the mental image as much, if you are watching that, but I think there is some correlation; like, for instance, when some people visualize the Buddha have a statue of Buddha in front, and by looking at that might try to keep the mental image of the statue. Eventually you have to close your eyes and try to – within your mental consciousness – have the elongation of that mental image going along with it. The mental image you are concentrating on will be the object with which you develop single-pointed concentration.

QUALM: Well then, does the object of meditative stabilization definitely have to be a real object?

RESPONSE: No. Whether the object be real or erroneous, if one attentively familiarizes oneself with it internally over and over again, clear appearance and non-conceptuality with respect to that object will arise.

Even if you familiarize with something unreal, that can appear clearly to a non-conceptual consciousness. There is a discussion whether this is a realistic mind or not. A bodhisattva who thinks, 'I will lead all sentient beings to nirvana, to enlightenment first, then I will achieve enlightenment.' This shepherd-like bodhicitta is in some ways one of the most powerful, because it really subjugates the self-cherishing and puts others welfare first, but in reality you can't lead other sentient beings to enlightenment unless you yourself are enlightened. You wouldn't know the path. But even though that is the case, even though the bodhisattvas do meditate on many such kinds of things, which are not factually concordant, like visualizing all of the horizon, all the world, filled with corpses and so forth, still that is not called an erroneous consciousness.

It is just as it has been said in [Dharmakirti's] *Commentary on (Dignaga's) 'Compendium of Valid Cognition' (Pramanavarttikakarika)*:

Therefore, utmost familiarization with whatever – whether real or unreal –
Results in a clear non-conceptual mind
When that familiarization is thoroughly completed.

The functional feature of meditative stabilization is specified to be "acting as a support for knowledge," because, through the force of analysis with the wisdom of individual investigation in dependence on calm abiding in which the mind is internally set in equipoise, one achieves the special insight observing modes and varieties.

'Modes and varieties' is a way of translating a particular phrase from Sanskrit into Tibetan. The modes of phenomena is talking about when you have an understanding of the

conventional nature of phenomena; because they arise in many different varieties. The ultimate nature of phenomena from the Mahayana point of view, the Cittamatra or the Madhyamika point of view, is all of the same taste, so there are no different kinds of modes. The varieties are the different kinds of appearances to our mind; when you sit, many different appearances come – pleasant, unpleasant, happy, unhappy; those are all called varieties, and that is a synonym that refers to conventional truth. The mode of phenomena means the ultimate nature.

As mentioned above you can have special insight, vipashyana, observing the conventional nature, all the different kinds of varieties of phenomena, or you can take special insight analyzing the ultimate mode of phenomena, which is emptiness. The supramundane vipashyana analyzes the ultimate nature, mundane vipashyana is analyzing the various kinds of modes of phenomena.

‘It acts as a support for knowledge’ talks about the three higher trainings: ethics or vinaya, concentration and wisdom. Training in ethics or morality, in concentration, even certain kind of training in wisdom, is something we share with non-Buddhist practitioners. When these practices are conjoined with renunciation of samsara as a motivating factor they are called higher trainings.

That doesn’t have necessarily to be conjoined with bodhicitta. The higher trainings means that the reason why you are practicing ethics or morality, is to get out of samsara, not just to have an attractive form in the next lifetime; because one of the karmic results of practicing morality is to have an attractive form. The result of practicing generosity is to have resources etc. Practicing those trainings simply to have those results is not called higher training; higher training in morality is with the goal of achieving liberation..

On the basis of the higher training of morality we can develop the higher training of concentration, and in turn develop the higher training of wisdom. It’s said that they really act as a support of one another.

When it talks about acting as a support for knowledge, it means that concentration, meditative stabilization, acts as a support for the higher training of wisdom and for wisdom itself, like in the example Geshe Rabten gave of the camera’s moving, and you don’t get a clear picture, even though you have clarity and you have a good lens. The classic example that is given is when you are walking through a monastery that has been destroyed holding a candle, and you are trying to see the frescos on the wall in a dark room – if there is a wind going, and the candle is flickering you only get an image of the fresco for an instant, then things disappear, and you get another image of that. That’s like trying to develop wisdom without concentration. It doesn’t lead to a deep insight. You need concentration, you have to be able to focus on something continually in order to develop wisdom of it. You have to see it clearly for some length of time to be left with an imprint in your mind.

Supramundane vipashyana would from the Mahayana point of view mean the wisdom realizing emptiness. First analyzing emptiness, and then even when it’s analyzed and

realized, it's still called vipashyana. Special insight is not only analytical, it has the actual nature of wisdom.

So at the point when it's analyzing, it's an ability [to not lose the stability of the calm abiding,] like putting a little goldfish in a calm body of water. [The calm water is like your mind] that you have developed calmness and clarity in through developing calm abiding; then learning how within that calm mind to analyze [is like the goldfish], and when you are able to analyze without causing the delusions or any kind of distractions to arise [it becomes special insight]. Analyzing the ultimate nature of phenomena with that special insight brings about the wisdom realizing emptiness, first conceptually, then non-conceptually.

So that would be talking about modes, the special insight observing modes; the mode of phenomena, the way it exists, the way everything exists. The varieties of phenomena means the special insight, the mundane vipashyana, that would be observing the various faults and qualities of the desire realm compared to the qualities of the form realm and so forth.

Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds says (stanza 8.4):

Having understood that afflictions are destroyed
By special insight that is fully endowed with calm abiding,
First seek calm abiding;
That is achieved through taking joy in non-attachment to the world.

The ultimate goal is to have the wisdom realizing emptiness. Knowing that the klesha, the afflictions, the delusions, are destroyed in total by the wisdom that realizes emptiness, that means the special insight that is fully endowed with calm abiding. Just the special insight endowed with calm abiding is not enough, but it is a prerequisite; you have to have calm abiding first, then you have to develop special insight within that, and then you focus that on the ultimate nature of reality. It's that kind of wisdom that can eliminate the delusions. Knowing that, the person first seeks calm abiding, as Shantideva says in the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, that is achieved through taking joy in non-attachment to the world, and this comes about through higher practice of ethics and morality, because higher practice means based on renunciation, non-attachment.

Also, the *Scripture on Discipline* repeatedly teaches the ways in which the training in meditative stabilization depends on the training in ethics, and the training in wisdom depends on the training in meditative stabilization. In this manner, those who wish for liberation from their hearts should regard these great texts as supreme quintessential instructions.

An example sometimes given is that the higher training in morality is like the cutting down of a big tree; the higher training in morality is like the strength of the logger. The ability to put the axe in the same place each time is like concentration.

First of all, if you do not have the strength you are not going to be able to cut down a big tree, even if you have a sharp axe – which is like the wisdom – or the ability to place it in the same place each time. If you have a really dull blade and it's one of these big redwoods, it's going to take you forever.

The higher training of morality – the strength – acts as a basis for successful development of the higher training of concentration – which is like putting the axe in the

same place each time – and then the sharpness of the axe is analogous to the higher training in wisdom. They act as a supports, sequentially, for one another.

[B5] Wisdom (shes rab)

Regarding the entity of wisdom, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is wisdom?

RESPONSE: It strongly differentiates the qualities of things that are to be examined. It has the function of overcoming doubt.

In comparison to discrimination, wisdom has the function of overcoming doubt, whereas discrimination doesn't necessarily lead to a mind free of doubt. Discrimination is differentiating the qualities of something; wisdom is not just distinguishing a mark, but analyzing the qualities and faults of something.

Just as it has been said above, wisdom is a knower that individually differentiates the faults and good qualities of things that are to be examined.

When it says 'faults and qualities', you might think [that means in a sense] limiting its analysis to those; but [what it actually means] is that if you are analyzing the faults of bad behavior and the benefits, the qualities, of good behavior, virtuous karma etc., that is what is brought about through the faculty of this mental factor – wisdom.

Objects that are to be examined by wisdom are of three types: virtuous, non-virtuous, and unspecified.

[Wisdom] individually differentiates the faults and good qualities of these.

There are four ways of reasoning for differentiating faults and good qualities:

- (1) functional reasoning
- (2) reasoning of dependence
- (3) logical reasoning
- (4) reasoning of nature

This comes about in many, many circumstances. When you are doing meditation, you should apply your wisdom with four kinds of reasoning.

The reasoning of the ability of something to perform a function, here it says functional reasoning. That could also be taken as the reasoning of agents and their actions or the ability to perform actions; analyzing in your own experience whether certain things bring certain kinds of results.

Reasoning of dependence.

Logical reasoning, literally meaning reasoning established by correctness or appropriateness, using syllogisms and so forth.

Reasoning of nature.

Sometimes, without correlating with these four, when you do a lam-rim mediation, like on the perfect human rebirth or on the inevitability of death or on the nature of samsara, on the suffering of the lower realms etc., you try to analyze in different ways in order to bring about some understanding. You analyze whether this explains everything you can think of, whether there are any internal contradictions, whether this is logically consistent etc. This is related with these four reasonings.

I will see if I can find a more elaborate explanation of these four reasonings in some of the other scriptures, but often they are just mentioned. There is not given much commentary on this, although the Buddha talked of it very often.

When one gains certainty through analysis with these four types of reasoning, doubt will be overcome. Hence, its functional feature is specified as “overcoming doubt.” With these meanings in mind, the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa] says [in his *Beginning and End*] (stanza 14):

Having properly examined day and night the meaning of what has been heard
With the four types of reasoning,
May I eradicate doubt with analytical awareness
That arises from contemplating the objects that are to be contemplated.

Here it's talking about the four kinds of reasoning – those are not the four divisions of wisdom. We have four kinds of wisdom, the wisdom arising from hearing, the wisdom arising from contemplation, the wisdom arising from meditation, and the innate or inborn wisdom.

What is the meaning of wisdom arising from hearing, or listening. The word ‘arisen’ is in there, although people might abbreviate it into ‘the wisdom of listening’, but it doesn't mean, ‘it's wise to listen!’

Part of it is simply understanding the meaning of the words. Like when someone says, ‘Death is certain!’ – and you think, ‘Oh yes, death is certain!’ Some wisdom arises on that level, but if you don't analyze or contemplate that, then if someone else says, ‘Come on – death is not certain! You know Larry Ellison is having his body prior-genetically preserved, and he will come back in the future, when they have solved all these diseases. So death is not definite!’ You might think, that seems to make sense.

Only having understood something on the verbal level through hearing, although a certain wisdom arises that way, it's not very stable. One has to investigate that through analysis, through contemplation. When you contemplate something in different ways through these means of analysis, this reasoning, then you develop a deeper kind of wisdom called the wisdom arisen from contemplation, where you find a deeper kind of insight, of wisdom, than just on the verbal level.

What Lama Tsongkhapa advised us to do, while we are listening and trying to understand the words, was to put those into some kind of analysis and then try to go on to the third step, a deeper kind of insight that's developed through meditating on what has been first heard, or you could say studied.

Hearing doesn't mean only hearing through the ears, it can actually mean reading. In the time of the Buddha, as I understand it, there were not that many written texts, but there were written texts and the Buddha did talk about the benefits of writing things down; but through the many centuries in Tibet it was not considered a prerequisite for all the monks to learn how to write or how to compose or to study grammar. It was sometimes thought of as a diversion, a distraction.

So there is a certain wisdom comes about through hearing or study, like when you read a book and realize, 'Oh, death is definite! – Yes, I got that.'

Then if you contemplate that, if you put that into your own thinking, whether it would be in everyday life, while walking around, or sitting at the table thinking, or in what looks like to be meditation. We might think that to be the wisdom arisen from meditation, when you are doing analytical meditation on this insight that death is definite, but actually this would be the kind of analysis through which we could generate the wisdom arisen from contemplation, because you would be contemplating that in many different ways, using logic etc.

Once you have got an insight into that, you have got the taste of the meditation, then you focus your mind single-pointedly on that, and in so doing you can develop a deeper kind of insight, called the wisdom arisen from meditation.

Usually in the scriptures there are very precise definitions of some of these. The wisdom arisen from meditation, for instance, involves the development [and is posited] only from the point of having developed a union of tranquil abiding and penetrative insight; then you have the ability to develop that kind of wisdom arisen from meditation.

Even though we have something similar now, for instance, you first hear of the benefits of love, and you develop a certain wisdom of understanding that. Then you contemplate how it's possible to love sentient beings, and you actually get a certain taste of that, a little insight of how it's possible to feel friendliness and love, happiness in others being happy, even being joyous that your enemies have happiness. Once you have that, even if you just focus on that single-pointedly, try to keep that in focus; that's a little bit like wisdom arisen from meditation.

Three different levels like that can be achieved this lifetime through effort, and then there is also the wisdom we have innately in our mind from having cultivated these kinds of wisdom in previous lifetimes.

Geshe Rabten here translates wisdom as intelligence (prajna). If you associate this with intellectual [it may become a problem]. We have to go beyond the associations we have with those words, some people say, 'I'm an intellectual!' it's like kind of a label people put on themselves. I don't find intelligence so illuminating either, but there is some reason for using it. It's useful to think of the pros and cons of these words, because then we can begin to recognize what is meant. We are just trying to graft on to certain concepts, English words. The words themselves are not going to be perfect matches. They will only start to fit once we have associated the definition with the word. Like when I say surf-city-coffee, I know that I associate this word with some particular taste of soy-mocca, something very nice, but the word itself could be applied to anything, it doesn't have to apply to that. Once you have made the application of the name to a particular thing, for you that's sufficient; that word can work. You can call it anything you want.

So if intelligence works for you that's ok!

Geshe Rabten: *Intelligence is a distinct mental factor having the specific function of fine discrimination. Sze Gee called it strongly differentiating; you could say thorough discrimination. It examines the characteristics or the value of a recollected object. In addition it has the function of cutting through indecision and doubt with unilateral certainty – it makes one-pointedness – maintaining the root of all wholesome qualities both foreseeable and unforeseeable – that means you can see qualities of the present life, maintaining the root of those and of those that are in the future and being similar to an eye that beholds or a lamp that illuminates concealed phenomena.*

Sometimes we talk about the third eye of wisdom. Opening the wisdom eye means not like in Lobsang Rampa's 'Opening the Third Eye', surgically making an opening. In the Seventies, that was a very popular book. It turned out that he was a British postman who had this feeling that he had been a Tibetan lama. He wrote this series of books.

If the wisdom eye is not open, it's because you don't have any innate wisdom from previous lives. In that case you would first listen to the teachings, you would seek out hearing and study.

Geshe Rabten: *The examining, analytical quality of intelligence ... – it doesn't have to be only analyzing. Analyzing sounds like its something active and hasn't come to a decision yet. Wisdom – that same word used for analyzing – can mean it has come to the decision, and is focusing on that. There is a question about that, when you talk about vipashyana. Vipashyana sounds as though it's only analyzing, but actually its nature is wisdom. It's developing wisdom through the analysis and even when it has finished the analysis, it's still present, it's still called vipashyana, it still has the quality of prajna, of wisdom. ... should not be confused with the uncertain wavering between two alternatives of indecision. Due to unknowing, indecision merely fluctuates between two alternatives concerning an object about which no certainty has been found. Intelligence, on the other hand, analyses two alternatives by means of differentiating the specific characteristics of an object whose fundamental presence has been ascertained.*

After having perceived some object, you begin to differentiate, whether that is something good, something to be cultivated or something to be avoided, is it beneficial, virtuous or non-virtuous. *Intelligence can be applied in unwholesome as well as wholesome pursuits.*

These object-ascertaining mental factors are not necessarily wholesome. You might think wisdom has to be wholesome, but it doesn't. Sometimes, when we talk about enthusiastic perseverance, the way it's defined only refers to the perseverance in virtuous activities, having joy in pursuing virtuous activities. But here, these mental factors can be virtuous or non-virtuous; they are a more general category.

It has enabled people to construct highly complex weapons of destruction on the one hand and codes of

ethical conduct on the other. But by far the most important role it plays is that of discerning the nature of ultimate truth – selflessness the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena; that’s the most important role wisdom plays.

It may seem somewhat difficult to call unwholesome things wisdom and that’s why we have to get familiar with how it’s used in Buddhist terminology.

Some of the words, when we talk for instance about enthusiastic perseverance, *tsondru* in Tibetan. When we talk about the mental factor *tsondru*, the way it is defined only refers to the virtuous enthusiastic perseverance, to having joy in pursuing virtuous things. If someone has a lot of joy in making money and harming others, like for instance serial killers, you could say, ‘That guy has got a lot of perseverance!’ – but that wouldn’t be the mental factor perseverance.

Here we are talking about the five object-ascertaining mental factors and they are not classified as being virtuous from their own side; just like the five omnipresent mental factors, they can be virtuous or non-virtuous.

Although sometimes – I heard a lama in New Zealand once give a lecture on these five mental factors only from the point of view of their virtuous counterparts, neglecting their negative counterparts; but there are counterparts of each of these which can be negative.

You can have concentration, be concentrated single-pointedly, on some negative thing. That still constitutes *samadhi*, but you are not going to be able to develop supreme wisdom through that. Black magicians, for instance, , in order to develop various kinds of magical powers with evil intent, they are going to need a certain amount of *samadhi*.

Also wisdom itself is the analytical property of the mind, it’s a mental factor, something which has the particular function of analyzing qualities and faults of things. It can be used also in a deficient way, in this negative way, for example, thinking, ‘If I do that, I will get more profit, then I will become more famous, I will become more powerful.’ that kind of wisdom then can be negative.

Question: Is it then wisdom or the use of wisdom that is negative?

Answer: Wisdom itself is neither virtuous nor non-virtuous, it depends on how it is being used. whereas for instance anger itself by its very nature creates negative karma, it is non-virtuous by nature.

Geshe Rabten: *It has enabled people to construct highly complex weapons of destruction on the one hand and codes of ethical conduct on the other. But by far the most important role it plays is that of discerning the nature of ultimate truth – selflessness. Both for the inference as well as for the immediate perception, a keen intelligence is the vital factor in reaching a comprehension. That is the direct perception of selflessness; you need a keen intelligence, a keen wisdom, both for developing and inferential understanding and to have a direct perception.*

Nevertheless, without being mounted upon the firm concentration of mental quiescence, it alone lacks any power to cause one to progress along the path to liberation. Similarly, mental quiescence and the various other levels of concentration also lack any liberating power by themselves alone. Just

concentration alone, the ability to remain in concentration for a long time, doesn't have any liberating quality by itself alone. For that we need to have a union of concentration and wisdom.

Geshe Rabten: *Thus it is essential to combine the firm concentration of mental quiescence with the intelligent discrimination of penetrative insight.*

There are four kinds of intelligence: that which is inborn, that which occurs from learning, that which occurs from reflection, and that which occurs from meditation. Inborn intelligence is the natural acuity of mind that we inherit from our actions in previous existences; thus it varies greatly from individual to individual. The other three forms of intelligence are the outcome of intellectual training and spiritual discipline that we follow in this life. Furthermore, we can distinguish between intelligence that analyses what actually exists, i.e. selflessness, and intelligence that analyses what conventionally exists.

This is talking about the modes and varieties; as mentioned above, we can talk about the wisdom of the mode of phenomena, the ultimate nature, selflessness, emptiness or about the wisdom analyzing the conventional, the varieties of phenomena.

So far we have talked about ten of the fifty-one mental factors.

Those that are called omnipresent, which are included also in the sense consciousnesses – in all consciousnesses that are fully qualified, but you remember, there are some exceptions, like the first moment of consciousness when you are waking up or falling asleep, of the birth consciousness, of death; there not all of them will necessarily be present, like venerable's question about contact: first there needs to be contact and then you will have the first moment of feeling etc. when you first wake up. They are in non-manifest form first of all.

Then we talked about the five object-ascertaining mental factors which form the Mahayana point of view are only present in the mental consciousness, for the most part.

And we finished with wisdom. Although this text by Yeshe Gyaltsen doesn't talk about the four kinds of wisdom, but it's important to know that wisdom is of those categories: the innate wisdom – a karmic consequence of past lifetimes, the wisdom arisen from hearing, contemplation and meditation.

It's a little bit like nature nurture, like why some kids are smart, and others are not – is it due to their genes or due to their upbringing? Nature means the genetic make-up. From a Buddhist perspective even that is not really the nature; the nature is the innate qualities that are in our mind from previous lives, that predisposes us to take rebirth within an embryo with the capacity for certain features, certain capacities for certain experiences; that of course can be embellished by nurture. In this case the nurture of wisdom would be seeking out hearing, seeking out learning etc., contemplating, studying that and then developing the ability to meditate on that.

[Discussion of the category of object-ascertaining mental factors]

What is the reason for calling these five mental factors – ~~intention~~ aspiration and so forth – “object-ascertaining”? Since these mental factors hold [an object] through apprehending the individual features of the object, they are said to “individually ascertain objects.”

Geshe Rabten says at the beginning of this section, on page 16: *Aspiration, appreciation, recollection, concentration and intelligence are said to be the mental factors that ascertain their objects, because they perform the function of ascertaining their particular objects by means of distinguishing a specific characteristic of the objective field. For example, aspiration ascertains that which is desirable within the objective field, appreciation, that which has been understood as being valuable, and recollection, that which has to be borne in mind. When the mind is actively engaged in a task, be it wholesome or unwholesome, all of these mental factors are constantly at work, giving direction, coherence and meaning to the train of our thought and behavior.*

The next section talks about the virtuous mental factors. In the Mahayana *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*, the Mahayana Abhidharma, there are said to be eleven virtuous mental factors – I am not sure whether that is the same in the *Abhidharmakosha*.

[C] The Eleven Virtuous Mental factors (dge ba)

There are eleven virtuous mental factors:

- (1) faith
- (2) shame
- (3) embarrassment
- (4) non-attachment
- (5) non-hatred
- (6) non-ignorance
- (7) effort
- (8) pliancy
- (9) conscientiousness
- (10) equanimity
- (11) non-harmfulness

Non-attachment, non-hatred and non-ignorance are the three roots of virtue.

Effort we could also call perseverance.

Pliancy is the ultimate antidote to laziness, remember, we said faith gave rise to aspiration which gave rise to effort, and then you could actually develop mental and physical pliancy.

Conscientiousness is somewhat in a similar category to shame and embarrassment, being conscientiousness about one's activities.

Equanimity refers to a particular, very special mental factor that has to be applied when you are developing single-pointed concentration, it does not mean equanimity in general. It is talking about a mental factor that knows to stop applying the vigilance or alertness or introspection once the mind is so trained that if you would still apply effort in being vigilant you can't develop single-pointed concentration – so this the mental factor that has to be applied at that particular time, which is virtuous.

Non-harmfulness, or ahimsa.

This is useful, because now we are talking about mental factors which by their very presence in the primary consciousness cause the consciousness to be virtuous.

By their application, whatever our mind moves to by the mental factor intention, we will be creating virtuous karma because of the presence of these. So it's wrong to think, 'I can't create any virtue, because I don't have any plaster left to make tsatsas' or 'I can't get to the gumpa to make prostrations; I lost my prayer-books; I can't make any virtue.' The main kind of virtuous karma arises through the activity of the mind. and the first mental factor that by its very nature is virtuous is faith, so by merely cultivating faith, while the mind is in the state of faith, you create virtuous karma. That's nice to know, isn't it.

[C1] Faith (dad pa)

Regarding the entity of faith, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is faith?

RESPONSE: It is a conviction, clarity, and wishing with respect to an existent that is endowed with excellent qualities and power. It has the function of acting as a support for aspiration.

In the *Madhyantavibhanga* by Maitreya and in the Buddhist scriptures in general the different faults of concentration that have to be eliminated in order to develop calm abiding are mentioned. The first fault is laziness. The ultimate antidote of laziness is pliancy; when you are completely subtle, you have no problem applying yourself to virtuous activities. Pliancy is brought about through enthusiastic perseverance. Enthusiastic perseverance, practicing concentration takes place because of aspiration, and aspiration comes about because you have faith in these qualities of concentration so you would apply yourself to it. That's what it means when it says faith acts as a support for aspiration.

Just as it has been said above, faith is a knower that has the aspect of conviction, clarity, or wishing, and it serves as the direct antidote for non-faith. When divided, faith is of three types:

- (1) clarifying faith,
- (2) faith of conviction and
- (3) wishing faith.

Also: lucid faith, believing faith, and longing faith. None of these are what we call blind faith.

When it says faith is a knower, 'knower' means that it is a conscious phenomenon; it is not just an object, or a permanent phenomenon, it is actually a state of mind, it is a consciousness, in this case a mental factor. Faith could be to have a faithful mind in general, then the whole mind would be influenced by the presence of that faith, and the whole mind would take on the entity of having faith.

Faith has the quality either to have developed a lucidity or limpidity or clearness of the mind, a calmness of the mind or a wishing or a belief, a strong conviction with respect to that what exists and is endowed with excellent qualities and power. Simply having faith that George Bush will be able to pull us out of the recession would not be called faith, even if it were to be true – which it's not – I'm joking... Faith here is seen with respect to objects endowed with excellent qualities and power, such as the Buddha, Dharma, Sangha and things which are true, such as the existence of past and future lives etc. It's faith in what is

conducive to our spiritual practice. Just having faith that your friend will bring back your car or that they will be faithful to you is not this mental factor.

(1) Clarifying faith is a clear mind engendered by seeing the excellent qualities of those so endowed, such as the Three Jewels.

It does not mean clear in general like the clear light nature of the mind.

Sometimes people might think it's blind faith, because simply being in the presence of beings endowed with good qualities and perceiving those qualities brings about a certain clarity or calmness of the mind. Clarity here implies, like in the example of the legendary gems of the Chakravartin emperors, that if the water is polluted by mud, they put in some gem and the water becomes limped and all of the mud sinks. If faith is present in the mind all the doubt and anger, worry and depression, desires and what else you have, pride, jealousy, low self-esteem, everything sort of subsides because of the presence of that mind.

Why is it called "clarifying"? For example, when one places a water-purifying gem in dirty water, the murkiness of the water is immediately cleared away. Similarly, when this faith is generated, the murkiness of the mind is cleared away, whereupon all excellent qualities of realization become suitable to arise in one's continuum.

It's difficult for good qualities to arise when you are depressed, when you have low self-esteem, when you are angry, when you are incredibly desirous, unsatisfied; the mind is kind of obscured by those. Faith is a very useful prerequisite.

Of the various objects we can use for concentration, one that is useful in all cases is to visualize Buddha because through familiarity with that, simply bringing to mind Buddha's presence, that can engender faith in the consciousness, and in so doing your meditative session become virtuous. Whereas meditating on something else, like the earth-totality or the earth-element, which is neutral by nature, you would not necessarily be creating virtuous karma. Simply visualizing Buddha; it will create some virtue too from the side of the object, but it can engender a state of limped faith, clarifying faith. If you are in the presence of your guru, someone you have developed a lot of confidence and faith in, you know their qualities, then merely being in their presence makes you feel 'everything is ok'; that's lucid faith.

Faith of conviction is stronger – it is something we should try to strive for, because we might have lucid kind of faith, which might have a certain amount of karmic, an inborn element to it, and some of the lucid faith comes about from conviction, but faith of conviction is:

(2) Faith of conviction is the gaining of conviction through contemplating the modes of dependent-arising, cause and result, and so forth that are taught by the Conqueror.

By analyzing, you can develop faith of conviction that the Buddha, the guru or the teacher, our spiritual friends, are objects of veneration.

There is a difference between faith and actual wisdom; faith does not yet necessarily have the component of wisdom. The faith of conviction comes about through experience, you are convinced of something, you can have that kind of belief or faith; it may not have

come about through realization.

(3) Wishing faith, is, for instance, having contemplated the modes of the four noble truths, ascertained true sufferings and true origins as objects of abandonment, and true cessations and true paths as objects of attainment, and having understood that these can be attained if one makes the proper effort, the faith thinking, "I shall definitely obtain them."

So it comes about by knowing that certain states of mind are possible, and then wishing for that. Wishing faith does not mean 'oh, I wish I was a buddha', or 'I wish I was smarter' – that's just wishing, right? Wishing faith seems to be quite sophisticated. Having certainty about certain truths, than knowing that it is possible to attain them, than developing the aspiration to attain them. So it is faith in the possibility that these things are attainable and then wishing to attain them..

Geshe Rabten: *Faith is a distinct mental factor that, when referring to such things as the law of cause and effect, the Triple Gem and so forth, produces a joyous state of mind free from the turmoil of the root and proximate afflictions.*

When faith is present, delusions cannot be present in the mind at the same time. The mind cannot be virtuous and non-virtuous at the same time. If your mind is non-virtuous, by putting it into a state of faith, that can then cause the non-virtuous state to be subjugated, to be eliminated.

Geshe Rabten: *It has the function of acting as the basis for generating an aspiration for wholesome qualities that have not yet been generated and increasing any such aspiration already generated. In brief, it acts as the doorway through which all positive qualities manifest. Faith or confidence...*

Confidence also is a good word; faith almost sounds a bit religious, right? Some Tibetan geshe, in first coming to the west, would give refuge to people and just make the statement, 'Buddha is the perfect object of refuge; there is no refuge other than him!' That almost sounds like what I heard in churches, when I was a little boy. As though merely hearing those words you should have faith; maybe if you had faith in that individual it could, but that would be similar to what we might call blind faith due to some imprint from the past. Sometimes you would be totally resistant to that, you wouldn't believe it at all; if you did have some confidence or faith in those things that were true and faith in objects that did have power, that might be what is meant by blind faith.

In this context that would be lucid faith – brought about by actually seeing the excellent qualities, by some kind of direct perception, being in the presence of something, not just by blind faith, not just because of someone saying something.

Geshe Rabten: *Faith or confidence is extremely important as the foundation of the practice of dharma. The Buddha once said that just as a burnt seed is unable to produce a seedling, likewise a mind devoid of faith is unable to cultivate anything wholesome.*

You have to have some faith! Even to make the first step, to do your nyungne, to put some bowls on the altar when someone says you create virtuous karma by making offerings, by studying; you have to have some kind of faith.

Another word for it sometimes comes up when we talk about refuge; the two causes of refuge are fear and faith, right? – and sometimes in the texts it says fear and hope. Fear of suffering, and then, at least, even if not faith yet, at least some hope – like, ‘I’m going to try this!’ – that would be kind of a precursor of faith – ‘I hope this works!’, ‘if it doesn’t help, it won’t hurt’. Have you seen the book *The Cult of Tara*? At the beginning of the text was a question to a shepherd, asking why he was drawing a magic circle around his sheep at night, and he answered: ‘I’d be a damned fool if I didn’t’. That’s more on the level of hope, right?

Geshe Rabten: *If we have firm confidence in something, such as the certainty that suffering inevitably arises from an unwholesome action,...*

This is not something we can have an actual realization of at first. Is it possible to realize how suffering arises from unwholesome actions, or is that deeply hidden?

There are two levels when we talk about karma. It’s said that it’s possible to realize that happiness arises from virtue, so that’s not considered to be a deeply hidden phenomenon. Deeply hidden with respect to karma is that by a certain action there will be a particular result in the future. The only way we can know, realize that kind of phenomenon is on the basis of the Buddha’s prediction, the Buddha’s assertion, that because of this you will have that particular result in the future.

Like in the story of the two very poor people at the time of the Buddha; the mother – as usual – had more faith in the Buddha than the man, and gave their last loaf of meager bread to the Buddha, they were both practically naked, had no other things, and the Buddha said, ‘As a result of this, you will be borne in the future as a Pratyekabuddha in this or that world’ etc., and the husband said, ‘Oh yeah, right!’, as if saying ‘you can say anything you want!’

From this small action, how could such a big result come? This is an example of the multiplying effect of karma as explained by the Buddha.. From a small seed, a big tree can grow whose shadow can cover hundred of thousands of carts etc.

The connection between that particular karma and that result would be deeply hidden, but it’s said in the scriptures that the fact that virtue gives rise to happiness and non-virtue gives rise to suffering, is something that can be realized; that is not a deeply hidden phenomenon, but something you can reach certainty to. Although at first we just have faith in that; to have that kind of certainty in the law of cause and effect is a higher realization.

...then we shall automatically be motivated to adjust our behavior accordingly and abstain from such activity. If you have faith, you can easily avoid negative actions.

Similarly, if we have confidence in the reliability of a particular person, then we shall have no hesitation in believing what he says and following any advice he may give us. Faith does not only mean to have a reverent attitude before certain holy beings; it should be understood as a factor of mind capable of broadening and expanding one's understanding.

It doesn't mean just being humble or respectful – taking some demeanor in the presence of the teacher. That's not necessarily even faith at all; that could be fooling your self.

There are three kinds of faith: believing faith, admiring faith and longing faith. It almost sounds like we have different divisions here, but when we look at the definitions we have the same thing.

Believing faith – in our text faith of conviction – is a state of complete conviction and certainty in such things as the qualities of the Triple Gem, the infallibility of the law of cause and effect and so forth. It is unshakeable and cannot be enticed away by other propositions. *Admiring faith* is a state in which the object of faith is held to be particularly excellent and dear. It is a mind endowed with a joyous and delighted quality – in our text clarifying faith. *Longing faith* – in our text wishing faith – is a state in which one has considered the object of faith the state of enlightenment, nirvana or bodhicitta to be attainable. It is thus characterized by a strongly interested longing to attain it.

Most of Jeffrey Hopkins' presentation comes from Yeshe Gyaltsen's text, with some embellishments and some things condensed down.

Jeffrey Hopkins [page 248]: Faith has the aspect of clarity, conviction, or a wish to attain with respect to the existent (such as actions and their effects), the possession of qualities (such as by the Three Jewels), or powers (such as the powers of the path to actualize cessation). The fact that the spiritual path has the power to eliminate our suffering and bring about joy etc. It has the function of serving as a basis for aspiration. The faith of clarity, or clarifying faith, is, for instance, the clarity of mind that comes through perceiving the qualities of the Three Jewels; it is called clarifying because just as when a clarifying jewel is put in water, the dirtiness in the water is immediately cleansed, so when this type of faith is generated in the continuum, mental troubles are cleared away, whereupon the qualities of realization are suitable to be generated.

Any particular state of faith might be more than one of these faiths, can have more than one of these qualities. For instance, faith of conviction can also have the lucidity allowing realizations to be easily generated.

Jeffrey Hopkins: The faith of conviction is, for instance, the gaining of conviction in dependent-arising or in actions and their effects through contemplating these doctrines as set forth by the Conqueror.

It could also mean developing conviction in the guru. And not just by being in their presence. By studying the scriptures you can develop some kind of conviction that it's worth listening to.

So it doesn't mean only to have conviction in things you have to contemplate and you can't perceive. And sometimes, even if you perceive them, you don't perceive qualities. But just by being in the presence of His Holiness or other great Lamas some kind of clarifying faith can arise.

Jeffrey Hopkins: *The faith which is a wish to attain is, for instance, the faith thinking, 'I will definitely attain the cessation of suffering', upon contemplating the four noble truths, ascertaining true sufferings and true sources as objects of abandonment and true cessations and true paths as objects of attainment, and realizing that through striving in the proper way these can be attained.*

So that particular kind of faith, like the faith of aspiration or wishing faith, doesn't have to be based on the other faiths. It can be based on some kind of realization that such things are possible, and then you develop the faith that you can actually do it, that it is possible to attain those states.

Jeffrey Hopkins: *Although the world equates faith and liking, they are not the same.*

This misconception comes about because of the Tibetan words faith and liking – with the implication that when I say, 'I like my friends', it means also that I have faith in them.

Jeffrey Hopkins: *Liking one's child or spouse and liking beer are cases of liking but not of faith. Also, the faith which is a concern and conviction from one's depths with respect to the faults of cyclic existence is faith but not liking. We don't have the same verbal confusion in English as in Tibetan.*

Jeffrey Hopkins: *The faith which is a conviction and liking from the depths through contemplating the qualities of a spiritual guide or the benefits of wholesome actions and their effects is both faith and liking. Furthermore, faith and respect are not the same though they are considered to be so in the world. For instance, liking a spiritual guide is faith, but respecting a spiritual guide involves contemplating his kindness, knowing shame, and valuing him highly; thus, faith and respect are different mental factors. When we talk about the meditations on devoting to the spiritual friend, respect is a little bit different than just faith.*

Jeffrey Hopkins: *As explained earlier, effort is the cause of all auspicious qualities, and in order to generate effort, aspiration seeking those qualities is necessary. In order to generate aspiration, one must perceive those qualities and have the faith of conviction in them. Thus, faith is frequently praised in the scriptures and their commentaries as the basis of all auspicious attainments.*

[C2] Shame (ngo tsha shes pa)

Regarding shame, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is shame?

RESPONSE: It is an avoidance of misdeeds on account of oneself (you take yourself as a reason). It has the function of acting as a support for effective restraint from misconduct.

Just as it has been said above, shame is an avoidance of misdeeds on account of oneself.

The two mental factors, shame and embarrassment, use different reasons for avoiding non-virtue.

[C3] Embarrassment (khrel yod pa)

Regarding embarrassment, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is embarrassment?

RESPONSE: It is an avoidance of misdeeds on account of others (takes others as a reason). It has the function of just that [i.e., acting as a support for effective restraint from misconduct].

Just as it has been said above, embarrassment is an avoidance of misconduct on account of others.

[Discussion of the pair – shame and embarrassment]

What is the difference between shame and embarrassment? Although both of them are similar in terms of avoiding misconduct,...

When these mental factors are present they cause one to shun non-virtuous action. Sometimes we say, 'I would be ashamed to do that, my guru would be disappointed', or 'it's a shameful thing to do', or 'I would be embarrassed to do that'. If you think of your guru at the crown of your head that might help you develop the mental factor of embarrassment.

...shame is such that, when one is about to engage in misconduct, one avoids it, thinking, "This is not something I should do".

If, for instance, one thinks, 'I shouldn't do this, because thereby I will create negative karma!' or 'I should not do this, because my reputation will go down!' – that has to do with basically taking oneself as a reason.

It's hard to imagine that that could be a virtuous mental factor if you were to avoid doing something because your reputation would be damaged. Is that a virtuous mental factor? Is that wise selfishness? In taking oneself as a reason, does it have to be a higher reason or can it be kind of selfish, like the consideration that otherwise my reputation might be diminished, and people won't give me offerings anymore? This is something to think about!

In the case of embarrassment, when one comes close to engaging in misconduct, one avoids it on account of others, thinking, "If others were to despise me [as a result of my engaging in misconduct], this would not be fitting." One avoids misconduct due to concern about the displeasure of one's gurus or, teachers – the principal object.[causing] this avoidance. Their function is specified as "acting as a support for effective restraint from misconduct," because shame and embarrassment are definitely necessary for restraining misconduct of the three – body, speech, and mind. If shame and embarrassment are absent, one will be unable to restrain oneself from any misconduct whatsoever, for, without fear about the fruition from one's own side, and lacking concern about the displeasure of one's gurus, teachers, and so forth, there will be no way to cease misconduct.

Avoiding killing, because we are with someone who is very virtuous and liberating animals, maybe that's not shame or embarrassment, because shame and embarrassment are virtuous mental factors and are based on some kind of higher reasons, such as understanding the law of cause and effect. Virtue doesn't have to be without a sense of ego, right?. Most of the virtues we are creating now are contaminated virtues; they are contaminated because we still grasp to true existence. We think, 'I am going to make this real offering, because I want to experience real happiness! I want to attain real enlightenment!' Within that realm you can have embarrassment and shame, but I think, going beyond that, if you are thinking, conniving with the eight worldly dharmas, 'I better not do this, because my benefactors won't approve, and then they won't give me something' - that's not the meaning; that wouldn't be a virtuous state of mind.

That's something to think about for next time.

Dedication

So see if you can let go of your attention to the senses, to your body.

If you take the mind itself as the object for a few moments, that can by familiarity calm the mind very quickly.

And within a state of faith in the law of cause and effect - it may be partially a faith of conviction, maybe not a total conviction, you may still have some doubt about that, because doubt is something that comes before faith - but due to thinking, 'I have created some virtuous karma and that will have some karmic result, this energy will have some result in cyclic existence, some beneficial, happy, result, as its virtuous karma, because we motivate it with virtue'. 'May this ripen in such a way that it does not cause me to create pride in whatever qualities arise in the future. If I have resources, may I not be avaricious and miserly with them. If I have high status, may I not develop pride and so forth. In whatever way this karma ripens, may that situation be such that it is enhancing of my spiritual practice. Every time this karma ripens, may it continue to enhance my spiritual practice up to and including my achievement of enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings.'

Seal that conventional dedication, of the varieties, within the emptiness of the three spheres - the sphere, first of all, of the actions we have created.

Where are the actions? What are they? They are merely labeled - the karma we have created today. You can't find them in any particular spot or location. The actions are labeled to a sequence of events: the motivation, the carrying out of that action.

The objects dedicated, to the continued development of our spiritual practice up to including enlightenment. None of the individual states also can be found upon analysis. They are merely imputed - designated.

And the act of dedication itself, is a name that we give to this activity of trying to join the virtuous with the results, also un-findable upon analysis, merely existing as a concept but having karmic efficacy in so doing, in aspiring that these roots ripen in that way.

There is no self who is dedicating, no truly existent self. There is no karma. There is no goal, ultimately. There is no action of dedication ultimately.

DVD 8

Meditation

Sit comfortably with your body relaxed and your mind relaxed. Watch your breathing first of all.

When your mind is somewhat concentrated, bring your attention to your mental consciousness. Withdraw it even further away from your senses, as though to your heart-chakra, and with one part of the mind try to be alert, try to be conscious of what is happening within the rest of the mind.

See if you can focus your attention on the space, the quiet between the thoughts, and thereby let the continuity of all the discursive thoughts begin to fade away, as you don't feed them, as you don't give attention to them.

All the appearances to our mind arise due to our karma.

In order to experience pleasure and in order to avoid negative experiences, in order to avoid suffering, we will have to abandon the cause of karma – not just karma but the cause of it also, klesha. All of the living beings in this world or in the universes, whatever political system, economic system, social system is set up – until they abandon the causes of suffering, they too will still be emerged in samsara. Identifying with the totality of sentient beings, identifying with our equality with them, wishing – just as we wish to be free of suffering – wishing all of them to be free of suffering, the causes of suffering.

Recall that the only way we can do that is by understanding the nature of the mind, developing our wisdom, our good heart.

So for that end, in order to achieve a state in which we have reached our own goal, everlasting blissful happiness and the goal of all others, the ability to manifest the various form bodies of a buddha within the realm of the dharmakaya. 'In order to reach that state I'm going to participate in the class tonight, listen, contemplate, try to meditate, familiarize my mind with what is conducive, that I have contemplated, got clear. To begin with I'm going to listen to the teachings for that goal, to eventually become enlightened, so that I can eliminate all sufferings – those that I know now, those I have known in numberless lives in the past.'

Then relax – bring your attention back to the present.

Teaching 8

Of the fifty-one mental factors – five omnipresent, five object ascertaining, eleven virtuous, six root delusions and twenty secondary delusions, and four changeable mental states – we

finished the first ten, and began the eleven virtuous mental factors, started with faith and will review a little of that. How many different kinds of faith are there?

Lucid or clarifying faith, faith of conviction, wishing faith, or the faith that desires to attain – those are very famous and those division you will find in many different texts.

Faith continued

(1) Clarifying faith is a clear mind engendered by seeing the excellent qualities of those so endowed, such as the Three Jewels. Why is it called "clarifying"? For example, when one places a water-purifying gem in dirty water, the murkiness of the water is immediately cleared away. Similarly, when this faith is generated, the murkiness of the mind is cleared away, whereupon all excellent qualities of realization become suitable to arise in one's continuum.

What is a water-purifying gem? It may need a little less difficult karma than a wish-fulfilling jewel. If you place it in the water it causes the mud to disappear and the water to become clear. nice to have when traveling in Nepal!

It is like the basis, to have that kind of clear mind; because when your mind is kind of upset, depressed, feeling bad, jealous, proud, all the various kinds of kleshas are present, it is very difficult at that moment to develop realizations – you have to apply some antidotes to get rid of those states. so if your mind can be in a state of faith, lucid faith like this, thinking of the qualities of a buddha etc, that can help to allow your mind to be in a state that is suitable to give rise to various qualities, as it is formulated.

(2) Faith of conviction is the gaining of conviction through contemplating the modes of dependent-arising, cause and result, and so forth that are taught by the Conqueror.

Cause and result refers to karma. Having conviction based on years of practice and analyzing is a very strong kind of faith that can not be lost easily.

And these three kinds of faith are not contradictory.

(3) Wishing faith, is, for instance, having contemplated the modes of the four noble truths, ascertained true sufferings and true origins as objects of abandonment, and true cessations and true paths as objects of attainment, and having understood that these can be attained if one makes the proper effort, the faith thinking, "I shall definitely obtain them."

The way this is phrased, it sounds like wishing faith is something quite sophisticated; it seems to have some understanding that these things can be attained, it is not just wishing, like 'I wish I could become buddha'. For instance, looking at the clear light nature of your mind and recognizing that the delusions can be eliminated, that could be a basis for developing this kind of wishing faith.

Here I have merely identified some illustrations of the three types of faith; it is not that all [instances] have been exhausted here. Nowadays, in our world, liking and faith are spoken of as if they are the same; liking beer is said to be "faith in beer," but liking and faith are nevertheless not the same.

There is some idiosyncrasy of the language here. I don't think in English we use the word faith, what we are translating as faith, for liking. In India and Tibet there is this use, at least at some time, because it says 'nowadays', and this comes up in several of the texts.

Faith is by entity a virtuous mental factor, whereas liking has both virtuous and non-virtuous factors.

You can like your guru; you can like Buddha. There are some non-virtuous things you might like. Is liking beer non-virtuous? Consuming beer, is that non-virtuous? Attachment we know is a mental factor that creates negative karma. If you just like something, is that attachment? Does that create negative karma? It depends on how much you like something...

If this is explained in detail, there are the four possibilities:

- (1) that which is liking but not faith
- (2) that which is faith but not liking
- (3) that which is both
- (4) that which is neither

(1) The first, that which is liking but not faith is, for example, liking one's son, one's wife and so forth, and liking sources of misdeeds, such as drinking alcohol and eating meals after noon [when ordained].

Just liking to drink alcohol is not necessarily negative. It doesn't say these things are negative, but they are sources of misdeeds. That kind of liking can predispose you to create negative karma. If you have the vow not to drink alcohol, not to eat after midday, then, because you have some liking for those things, that can predispose you to that. The liking itself is not negative.

(2) The second, that which is faith but not liking is, for example, fear from one's depths and faith of conviction regarding the drawbacks of the sufferings of cyclic existence.

Having faith in the shortcomings of cyclic existence is not liking; that you have to get old, that all of the nice smooth skin on your body will be wrinkled, and you won't be able to enjoy the things you enjoy now, nor that you eventually have to leave this body and all your friends. These are not things we enjoy, we do not like them, but we can have faith in them as drawbacks of cyclic existence.

(3) That which is both faith and liking is, for example, faith from one's depths and liking due to contemplating the excellent qualities of the spiritual guide and the benefits of wholesome actions and their results.

(4) That which is neither faith nor liking is anger, suffering, and so forth.

Anger itself is just a mental factor. It's not the mental factor liking nor the mental factor faith. Suffering also is not a mental factor. Is suffering not feeling? Is the suffering itself the mental factor feeling? Is the mental factor feeling the suffering or the experience of suffering? Or is there no difference? You may check, maybe you have to analyze this. For example, does all suffering have to be feeling?

There are three kinds of suffering: suffering of suffering, changeable suffering and all-compounded suffering.

Suffering of suffering we all are familiar with; that is what ripens upon our body and mind as unpleasant. Another kind of suffering is called changeable suffering, it is that what we experience as pleasure; you can't say that pleasurable feeling is suffering feeling, but it is in the nature of suffering.

If you translated the word *dukkha*, suffering, in another way, you could say pleasurable feelings are by their nature unsatisfactory; because even at the moment you are experiencing pleasurable feelings it's not real pleasure.

Remember the example that we talked of many times: when you experience something pleasurable, what's actually happening is what we maybe could call relief: one suffering is going down by coming in contact with something else – in the example of the chocolate cake one suffering might have been engendered by seeing the cake and desiring it, some kind of thirst for it, which is being diminished by coming in contact with it, which, being a contaminated phenomenon, will eventually be recognized as suffering; but when the bigger suffering is going down we are getting some relief, it is only when having eaten several pieces of chocolate cake takes place, when the suffering of desiring the cake or the taste for it, the hunger has been satiated, that we notice the suffering of eating cake.

There is a difference between suffering in general, suffering can be a nature, and the feeling of suffering. You can't say that pleasurable contaminated feeling is suffering, but you can say that it is the nature of suffering.

When we talk about the first noble truth, the truth of suffering, there are these various kinds of sufferings; there are the suffering feelings, and then there are contaminated pleasurable feelings, which the Buddha taught actually also to be *dukkha*, actually unsatisfactory. If they were real pleasure, the more of that cake or ice-cream you had, the happier you would be. The insight that this does not bring real happiness is something humans can understand; it's difficult for the animal realm to understand that. Maybe it's difficult for a lot of us to understand it too. We imagine, if we had a lot of money, if we had a certain friend, if we had love, if we had our warm house, we would be happy. That's what the Buddha called changeable suffering: pleasurable feelings.

QUALM: Well then, are liking and respect the same or are they different?

RESPONSE: Again, in the world we speak of them as if they are the same, but in fact they are not. Liking a spiritual friend is faith, but respect for him involves contemplating his kindness, knowing shame, and valuing him highly. Hence, when [liking and respect] arise in the continuum, they are separate mental factors.

Here it says, liking a spiritual friend is faith. In the previous section it said liking and faith are different. The third example up here was something which was both faith and liking. So there is also something which is liking but not faith, and something which is faith but not liking, and something which is both.

If, in accordance with how they appear in the great treatises, you analyze these modes in detail with the wisdom of individual investigation, examining the way in which they are generated in the continuum by turning your mind inwards, then you will get to know them; you cannot know them merely through words. With these meanings in mind, the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa] repeatedly advises that, in order to perform wholehearted practice, you must rely upon a skilful spiritual friend and acquire much hearing on the meaning of the scriptures.

Continuum here means the mental continuum.

One of the first sections of the lam-rim is about how to rely on a spiritual friend and –

something we don't appreciate that much – about the need to accumulate hearing, to hear the teachings again and again. In hearing the teachings you develop the wisdom of hearing.

However, nowadays, when these great textual systems are explained to foolish beings who are deprived of the gem of intelligence and are inferior in merit, they become frightened, terrified and flee faraway, as though a poisonous snake had sensed the odor of musk, or a little child had caught sight of a whirlpool. Those who view the exalted speech of the great scholars and adepts from the Land of Superiors [i.e., India] as pith instructions seem like stars during daytime.

Here, the function of faith is specified as “acting as a support for aspiration,” because, as explained above, the cause of all excellent qualities is effort; in order to generate effort, one needs the aspiration that seeks; in order to generate aspiration, one needs to see the excellent qualities as well as possess the faith of conviction. For this reason, faith is praised more than once as the foundation of all virtuous qualities in the scriptures and their commentaries. In this vein, the *Formulae of the Three Jewels' Blaze* (*Ratnolka-dharani*) also says:

Faith is the forerunner, and, like a mother, is the procreator.
It guards and increases all excellent qualities.
It dispels doubts and frees you from the four great rivers,
Faith signifies the city of happiness and goodness.

Faith is without murkiness and clarifies the mind.
It abandons pride and is the root of respect.
Faith is a jewel, a treasure,
And the best of feet.
Like hands, it is the root of gathering virtue.

Just having faith in the mind, if you can generate faith when you feel otherwise disturbed that can clarify the mind and can actually create a state of virtue and predispose your mind to create other good qualities. So when you feel bereft of any kind of virtuous state, try to generate faith.

If someone just tells you to be patient, not to be angry, or to have faith, this is sometimes difficult to do if you don't know what it means and anger is already there. If you are in a state which is opposite to faith, then you have to actually apply antidotes and recall reasons for generating faith, or come in contact with spiritual friends. That's why the great monasteries or spiritual structures are of so great value, because even their presence can help to generate faith in your mind.

Also the *Ten Teachings Sutra* (*Dasa-dharmaka-sutra*) says:

Faith is the best of vehicles
Through which you will be guided and definitely emerge.
Therefore, intelligent people
Rely on following faith.

Wholesome qualities do not grow
In people who have no faith,
Just as green sprouts [do not grow]
From seeds scorched by fire.

Buddhist academics or scholars sometimes are a little bit hurt when more respect is being paid to the monks or the Sangha or to other so called practitioners than to them, because they also felt to know about Buddhism, but oftentimes, what they are lacking is faith. They may know a lot about Buddhist philosophy but don't put it into practice. Without faith you are not going to generate effort, you are not going to generate aspiration – the desire to

achieve these goals – so just knowing things is not going to be enough, you need to have faith as a basis! That is perhaps one of the reasons why faith is mentioned first here.

Thus, all wholesome qualities are companions of faith. [Shantideva's] *Compendium of Trainings (Sikṣasamuccaya)*, stating, “having made firm the root of faith,” also teaches that faith is the root of all paths.

Shantideva's *Compendium of Trainings*, the *Sikṣasamuccaya* is a good companion for studying the *Bodhicaryavatara*, if you have the opportunity.

The root of all the different mental paths leading to higher spiritual goals is faith. In the lam-rim we always talk about training in root-faith; usually that refers to the faith in the spiritual guide, but it also means faith in these other things.

Even the Great Being, the Protector Nagarjuna, emphatically taught that faith is the foundation of all paths. With these meanings in mind, the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa] made the statement “Training in faith, the root” one of the outlines in his *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*, and stated that “the root of all happiness and goodness is the faith of conviction.”

Shame and embarrassment continued

Shame and embarrassment are not things usually thought of in a Western context. Maybe it comes up in other religions that you need to have a sense of shame and embarrassment; is this similar to conscience, if we look at the definition? Like when we say, ‘my conscience told me...’ or ‘my conscience is bothering me’; or when some guys consider their wives as their conscience... may be this is more like conscientiousness.

Nagarjuna mentioned in his *Letter to the King* that for a lay person shame and embarrassment are some of the most important mental factors to generate.

Shame is an avoidance of misdeeds on account of oneself. It has the function of acting as a support for effective restraint from misconduct. Embarrassment is a similar thing, is an avoidance of misdeeds on account of others.

We have to see the discussion here:

[Discussion of the pair – shame and embarrassment]

What is the difference between shame and embarrassment? Although both of them are similar in terms of avoiding misconduct, shame is such that, when one is about to engage in misconduct, one avoids it, thinking, “This is not something I should do”.

There could be various virtuous reasons for taking oneself as the cause. It might just be, ‘This is not something I should do! I’m a monk’, or ‘I’m a Tibetan Buddhist’ or ‘I’m a practitioner’ or ‘I’m a Vajrayana practitioner’. Or it could be thinking in terms of karmic consequences upon oneself, ‘I shouldn’t do this because of suffering in the future!’

Or you can take yourself as a reason, thinking, ‘I shouldn’t do this, because this is harming others, and I wouldn’t like to experience this!’ – thinking in terms of equality with others; ‘I wouldn’t like to hear these harsh words that I’m about to deposit on someone else’s lawn!’

Remember the question raised above: is it this virtuous mental factor if I think, 'I'm not going to do this action, because if I do, my benefactors will not give me any more offerings', 'I won't be famous' etc.

No; shame is a virtuous state of mind and in this case the motivation is not virtuous. As stated in the lam-rim, actions that take as their motivation the happiness of this life alone don't become virtuous. You need at least a certain aspiration of thinking about the happiness of future lifetimes, or the happiness of others and so forth. If your main motivation is the happiness of here and now, it's almost impossible for that to become virtuous. So when you are avoiding a non-virtuous action on account of yourself, not all of it falls into this mental factor.

Geshe Rabten, page 126: *Self-respect is a distinct mental factor that avoids evil for reasons of personal conscience or one's own spiritual tradition. It has the function of restraining from harmful conduct of body, speech and mind, and is a basis for all moral disciplines. Examples of self-respect would be as follows: we might be about to cause harm to another being, but on considering that we would dislike such harm to befall us, we withdraw from the action.*

That would be a virtuous action; that would be avoiding the negative action taking ourselves as the reason. Not just being motivated by compassion for the other person; part of it could be said to be the cause of compassion for the other person.

Geshe Rabten: *Similarly, we may be on the verge of committing an action, but when we recollect that it is not a fitting action for someone who is supposed to be a practicing Dharma, and hence we restrain ourselves. Whilst riding a horse it is very important to keep a steady hold on the reins in order to prevent the horse from getting out of control. Likewise, without a sense of self-respect our conduct is liable to become chaotic and unrestrained, thus leading us into conflict and suffering.*

There are two forms of self-respect: the avoidance of evil for the sake of oneself and the avoidance of evil for the sake of one's spiritual tradition.

We will take a break.

We had some good thoughts about this in the break-time.

What was the example again? If I'm embarrassed to let my spiritual friends see something I do and avoid a non-virtuous action for that reason – whether that would be virtuous? It could be. It depends. If I know my spiritual friends to be intent on virtue they can be like our conscience, a support of our spiritual practice – that can be embarrassment or consideration for others; but if you are just concerned about your reputation with them now, thinking 'they will find me a jerk, if I do that!' – that would not be this virtuous mental factor; you would have been avoiding non-virtue, and it would be kind of a mixed karma because of that, creating some virtue by avoiding non-virtue but not very much, because the motivation wouldn't be to avoid the non-virtue so much as to avoid the lack of respect of your peers for the present. So you have to think about that. Maybe 'consideration

for others' makes it a bit more clear.

Geshe Rabten: *Consideration for others is a distinct mental factor that avoids evil for the sake of others. It has the function of restraining harmful conduct of body, speech and mind, acting as a basis for maintaining the purity of one's moral discipline not disappointing the gurus etc., preventing a lack of faith occurring in others that could also be a reason why you would avoid certain non-virtuous actions, because others might develop a lack of faith and thereby acting as a cause for joy to arise in their minds. This mental factor is very similar in nature to self-respect, except that it restrains one from evil through considering that were one to commit a particular action, it would cause disappointment or suffering for others. In general, self-respect and consideration for others are the determining factors whereby people in this world are regarded as being noble or not.*

They have this sense of self-respect or shame; they avoid negative things on account of the negative consequences for themselves and they avoid negative things on the basis of the amplifications for others.

What about the compassionate mind? Both of these might be present, say if you have compassion for others and would not harm them for that reason. That would be is more simultaneous with consideration for others; if you are thinking about the karmic consequences for yourself that would be more taking shame as the basis for restraining from non-virtue.

Geshe Rabten: *They are like a vessel that contains all divine and human virtues as well as a strong fence that guards them. Nagarjuna once said that there are two things that protect people in the world: self-respect and consideration for others.*

These are very important mental factors that we might not ordinarily think about, and by cultivating them and trying to enhance them in our continuum, we can keep our mind in a virtuous state.

Is it possible for the mind to be by nature – talking about the entity of the mind – virtuous and non-virtuous at the same time? Of course in front of a buddha statue you can create mixed karma because due to the power of the object you are [always] creating some virtue, but can a virtuous and a non-virtuous mental factor be present in the mind at the same time? Why not? Do you remember the five similarities? In general, if the mind is virtuous, a non-virtuous mental factor cannot be present.

Of course it can change! Even if you keep your mind in a state of faith or consideration for others, it doesn't remain that way forever; because of your mind becoming distracted or sinking or whatever, then other mental states can arise and non-virtue can replace that, but while the virtue is present, non-virtue can't stick its ugly nose in there.

Talking about anger, for instance; if your mind is meditating on a state of love and compassion, then because that is a virtuous state it is impossible for anger to be present. Not only is it impossible for anger or even attachment to be present at that time, but in

particular loving compassion acts as an antidote to anger, so that even if your mind is distracted, because it has been in that state, it predisposes you from easily becoming angry again.

So these are very important mental factors; faith, shame, and consideration for others.

Geshe Rabten: *There are two aspects to consideration for others: the avoiding of evil for the sake of other beings and the avoidance of evil for the sake of the spiritual traditions of others.*

Evil is probably a translation of the Tibetan word for, not so much non-virtue, but possibly sin – which becomes charged with meaning from our own christian tradition, so it gets mental projection, in which case it is better to find another word. Evil might be a bit heavy as well, maybe negativity sounds better.

We have done three of the eleven virtuous mental factors. The next three mental factors are called the three roots of virtue. The three roots of non-virtue were attachment, anger, ignorance.

Usually when we talk about the three poisonous minds, we talk about attachment, hatred, and bewilderment or non-ignorance, or delusion. But when we talk about the six root delusions, we have attachment, anger, ignorance, right? They are not exactly the same.

Hatred is not exactly the same as anger; we will talk about anger when we talk about the six root delusions. Which one is stronger, anger or hatred? Hatred, right? His Holiness has said that sometimes there might be moments of anger in our mind, but hatred indicates some kind of long-term solidification, something stronger than anger. It's not considered one of the secondary mental factors, it's just like a stronger version of anger.

Here the three roots of virtue are called non-attachment – or quite skillfully called detachment in Geshe Rabten's book –, non-hatred, and, as Sze Gee calls it, non-ignorance which is also called non-bewilderment, because the usual word for ignorance, marigpa, is not there, it is timug.

If we say non-attachment, you might think, 'right now I'm kind of satisfied, I have a state of non-attachment.' Is that a virtuous state? 'I am not attached right now'. But that is not the meaning of non-attachment or detachment; these three mental factors all are antidotes to these respective states, and they are actually virtuous states of mind, not just the absence of anger etc. Right now you might not be angry or you might not have hatred manifest in your mind, but this doesn't mean you have the mental factor non-hatred. That's why detachment seems good; not just not being attached, but detached.

[C4] Non-attachment (ma chags pa)

Regarding non-attachment, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is non-attachment?

RESPONSE: It is a lack of attachment to [cyclic] existence and the articles of [cyclic] existence. It has the function of acting as a support for non-engagement in misconduct.

Just as it has been said above, it is a knower, which is disenchanted and lacks attachment.

So at first glance, when it says it is the lack of attachment you might just think, 'if attachment is not present I have this mental factor', and because it's a virtuous mental factor you might think that whenever attachment is not present, you are in a virtuous state of mind! But that's not necessarily the case. So a lot depends on the translation – this is translated by [probably initially by Gonsar Rinpoche and then] by Stephen Batchelor.

Geshe Rabten: *Detachment is a distinct mental factor that, when referring to an object within conditioned existence, acts as the actual remedy for attachment towards it.*

When attachment arises, the mental factor detachment causes me to disengage from that by thinking, 'it's in the nature of suffering', and, 'even if I had that, I wouldn't be happy', and 'two hours after eating it, it has already turned into excrement', whatever, 'it's not really so pure as I think.'

All these various kinds of reasons can act as aids to developing non-attachment to that. Knowing that it is impermanent, the attractive physical form that might be alluring us..

Geshe Rabten: *Being removed from the object, it remains detached and one does not grasp for it. It has the function of preventing attachment and increasing the remedy for it.*

Attachment is the tendency of the mind that desires to possess a particular object, whether it be animate or inanimate. For as long as we allow ourselves to be subjected to its demands, we shall only obtain disappointment and suffering – never the satisfaction that we seek.

Isn't attachment our friend that gets us what we want? Isn't attachment good? Why should non-attachment be a virtuous mental factor? Isn't the arising of attachment what causes us to get what is pleasing for us? You are attached to some friend, and because of that you do things for them, and then become even better friends, then you stay together; isn't it like the glue keeping relationships together? Why is it to be avoided? Often we are happy with someone else's attachment for us – although sometimes we notice after a while that it becomes a burden... at a certain point it might seem satisfying for our self-esteem, but it is what keeps us stuck in cyclic existence. Attachment by its nature is a state of mind, which causes the mind to be unclear. It's called a klesha, a delusion. It has the tendency of observing something which is attractive or pleasant, what in itself is no problem, but then, on the basis of having observed that, because of superimposing upon the object qualities it doesn't really have, it wants to obtain or wants to avoid losing it.

If you didn't want to separate from the holy guru for good reasons, because they are spiritual guides wouldn't necessarily be attachment. It could turn into attachment if you exaggerated their qualities. With respect to some beautiful person, exaggerating the qualities of them or anticipating some kind of pleasure they might engender for us, clouds the mind and prevents us from seeing how that can change, how it's not really in the nature of pleasure.

Detachment is an anti dote to that. It is not necessarily an exact manifestation of wisdom, but it is a mental factor that acts as an antidote to attachment. It's a mental state seeing things more clearly.

Attachment is a state of mind that superimposes on something that we perceive as attractive or pleasant, qualities it does not really have, and on the basis of that it exacerbates, it increases our desire for it – wanting to get it or to avoid losing it. That is what is called attachment. It causes the mind to be unclear. If we are not exaggerating the qualities of something, if in referring to our companions, the help we give them and they give us, if we are beneficial for them and they are beneficial for us, that bond keeping us together, the friendship, the love, doesn't have to be attachment. but oftentimes our sense of love is very much mixed with attachment. In the West often when we say, 'I love you!' – it's kind of an expression of liking, 'I love peanut butter' or 'you please me' – we want the other person to know, so that when we please them by chance, we can sort of circle around one another. If that is the basis for our relationship, if it is based on attachment like that, then when the other person doesn't please us any longer, we say, 'I'm sorry, I don't love you any more', or, 'I'm trading you in for a new model', or we find pleasure in someone else.

A real sense of love is not based on attachment, that's is not the glue that keeps the relationship together. From a Buddhist perspective a real loving relationship, the glue that keeps it together, is our affection for the other person; not so much wanting us to be happy, which is kind of self-centered, egoistic, but wanting them to be happy. Then, if the other person changes, you continue to love them. It might be a challenge still, but it has more chance based on Dharma glue keeping the relationships together. The more we can develop detachment for our loved ones, non-attachment, the more we can eliminate attachment that wants to keep them for our own benefit, because they are pleasurable for me, the more our relationships can be authentic.

Geshe Rabten: *For as long as we allow ourselves to be subjected to its demands, we shall only obtain disappointment and suffering – never the satisfaction that we seek. Thus detachment is the opposite of attachment; it withdraws us from a compulsive involvement with the object through an understanding of its true nature.* Compulsive involvement – this reminds me of Glenn Close in *Fatal Attraction* – very scary – that was attachment, right? Also *The Hand that Rocks the Cradle*, also very scary! These might be good movies [on the disadvantages of attachment] for our Thursday night Dharma class!

Thereby it eliminates the grasping and clinging to possess. Being under the influence of attachment, we find ourselves driven here and there in the pursuit of transient pleasures lacking any real value. With detachment though, we are enabled to see more clearly and objectively and thereby focus our attention and energy on the accomplishment of truly worthwhile aims.

It takes some time to really see the shortcomings of attachment and to cultivate this mental factor. This is not something the modern world has a lot of. The whole enterprise of publicity or advertising industry is trying to develop our attachment.

[C5] Non-hatred (zhe sdang med pa)

Regarding non-hatred, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is non-hatred?

RESPONSE: It is a lack of malice with regard to sentient beings, suffering and the sources of suffering. It has the function of acting as a support for non-engagement in misconduct.

Just as it has been said above, it is a knower that conquers the generation of hatred within observation of any of the three objects that generate hatred [i.e., sentient beings, suffering and the sources of suffering] and is a lack of malice.

Question: Does this mean that these three virtuous mental factors can only be present in relation to non-virtuous mental factors; that non-virtuous mental factors need to be generated first in order for them to occur?

Answer: No. For instance, you might have experienced over time that your attraction to something and attachment to it caused problems, and generated [non-attachment or detachment] through effort. Or you may have cultivated them in past lifetimes. Similar to the innate wisdom we talked about, some of these virtuous mental factors will be innate in our mind if we cultivated them in past lifetimes – a certain sense of detachment, a non-interest in things. Not necessarily at first clearly delineated in our mind what the reason is, it could be because of having used reasons in past live-times that we are already predisposed for not falling for them, not being attracted to them, even though they appear to be attractive and pleasing. Like, for instance, when someone has stolen our silverware; at first we might have to use reasons to understand that they are an enemy, later we won't have trust in them even without recalling that particular occurrence. So there might be a continuum of lack of trust in that.

Question: Would they then only be present, since they are antidotes, when the potential object of hatred and attachment and bewilderment arise, and you use it as an antidote then?

Answer: I think that these mental factors can be present even if these objects are not around. It does not have to be only observing an attractive object. These virtuous states of mind are not like virtue and non-virtue, that one can not be present if the other is present. You can have several of these virtuous mental factors present at the same time.

For instance, in a state of mind in which you have a deep appreciation for the law of cause and effect complementary with the emptiness of phenomena, knowing phenomena to be empty and yet still the appearances that you have arise because of cause and effect; that itself could be manifesting non-attachment; that can be an antidote to attachment right there. You can manifest different flavors of this; it does not have to be just one particular mind.

Geshe Rabten: Non-hatred is a distinct mental factor that, when referring to one of the three specific objects, bears the characteristics of loving kindness – so it is of the nature of loving kindness; later we will see another mental factor called non-harmfulness which is in the nature of compassion; so in a sense this is similar to loving kindness, it bears the characteristic nature of loving kindness – which directly overcomes hatred. It has the function of acting as the basis for the prevention of hatred and for the increase of love and patient acceptance. The ‘three specific objects’ mentioned above refer to someone who is actually afflicting harm upon us; the harm itself; and the cause or instrument of harm, e.g. thorns or poisons, weapons, etc. Upon recognizing one of these three things as the cause of our suffering we tend to dislike the thing and subsequently becomes angry towards it. This anger immediately causes agitation and tension in the mind that leads only to irrational and uncontrolled behavior.

Sometimes people think anger is good. Especially people from New York. so if you are watching this in New York, excuse me, we are in California here right now; you could say that the West coast is more into attachment...For the sake of the East coast: California is like granola, you take out the fruits and the nuts and there is nothing left...

Some people believe anger to be their ally, because without anger the world might just step over them. ‘I’m just a weak little person; if I don’t have some anger to show my stripes, others will take advantage of me!’. But there is a difference between being vigilant and decisive and being angry. Anger is a state of mind in which you have experienced something uncomfortable – as opposed to comfortable in case of attachment – you then exaggerated the faults of that to such an extent that the mind now has lost its clarity; and there is an inherent clarity all the time, but because of the shaking of the mind, you can no longer decide the correct thing to do, you are ready to strike out, either physically or verbally. Or, if you can’t, you plan to take revenge in future; revenge being best served cold, so ‘you’ve scratched my car but that’s ok, don’t worry’, and meanwhile you may be planning something for the future. But that’s not non-hatred.

Anger is a state of mind that is not really able to act in a constructive way, to be resolute and make the best decision. In seeing something that is destructive, like other people being harmed or yourself being harmed, you can still respond to that situation with strength of mind and decisiveness, but without anger. Anger causes our mind to engage in activities that we later regret. Anger is a state that actually creates negative karma and even burns up virtue. So non-hatred is a very useful state of mind to have.

Upon recognizing one of these three things as the cause of our suffering we tend to dislike the thing and subsequently becomes angry towards it. This anger immediately causes agitation and tension in the mind that leads only to irrational and uncontrolled behavior. Non-hatred is the opposite response: without blindly reacting to the situation it maintains a clarity of mind characterized by love, kindness and patient acceptance. It is a positive mental factor that, upon cultivation, will eradicate the negative factors of anger and hatred. Attachment and hatred are like boiling water in the mind. Detachment and non-hatred are similar to cold water that, when poured into the boiling water has the function of calming and cooling the afflictions of attachment and hatred.

When the mind is boiling, generating the mental factor of non-hatred can cause the mind to cool down, not to be agitated and also to develop non-attachment, the actual antidote to attachment. Non-hatred can cause the mind to, even you might be worried if you are going to get that last piece of cream cheese cake, with a sense of non-attachment to recognize that even if you can have this piece of cream cheese cake now, in a couple of hours you won't even remember that pleasure; that all of the pleasure, all of the cream cheese cake you have had in numberless lifetimes up till now, has not eradicated your desire for cream cheese cake – it hasn't quenched the thirst. So this is not really going to be satisfying. Whatever method one uses to eradicate that kind of desire can cause the mind to return to a calm state again.

[C6] Non-ignorance (gti mug med pa)

Regarding non-ignorance, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is non-ignorance?

RESPONSE: It is knowledge [arisen] from fruition, scripture, contemplation or realization, and is a wisdom of individual investigation. It has the function of acting as a support for the non-engagement in misconduct.

Just as it has been said above, it is a wisdom of individual investigation that is able to serve as the antidote to ignorance [arising] from its cause – being either acquired through birth or arisen through application.

Geshe Rabten: *Non-bewilderment is a distinct mental factor that arises from either an inborn disposition, learning, reflection or meditation. It acts as a remedy for ignorance and accompanies the firm intelligence that thoroughly analyses the true nature of objects. It has the function of preventing bewilderment; increasing the four types of intelligence; so non-bewilderment has the function of increasing the four kinds of wisdom: innate, the wisdom of hearing, contemplation, and meditation and acting as an empowering factor in the actualization of wholesome qualities pertaining to purification. Non-bewilderment is a clarity and sharpness of mind that dispels bewilderment about a particular object. Bewilderment is like the darkness in a room, and non-bewilderment is like the light that clears it away. It itself is not a form of intelligence...*

The mental factor intelligence or wisdom is one of the five object-ascertaining mental factors. It can be virtuous or non-virtuous depending on the application. You might think this one to be just an application to wisdom in a virtuous situation, but it is not that mental factor.

...but is a lucid quality of mind accompanying the firm intelligence that bears a relationship of similarity with either enthusiasm or concentration.

Wisdom bears the five similarities with either concentration or enthusiastic perseverance. Enthusiastic perseverance is a virtuous mental factor; concentration is by its nature neither

virtuous nor non-virtuous, it is unpredicted. If those mental factors are present and accompanied by wisdom, non-bewilderment will be present.

Geshe Rabten: *Most of us are born with a certain degree of non-bewilderment inherited from previous wholesome activities. Nevertheless, for it to aid us in gaining liberation, it is a quality that needs to be heightened and developed firstly through learning and study and subsequently through reflection and meditation. It should be noted further that the terms 'detachment', 'non-hatred' and 'non-bewilderment' do not denote a state of mind that simply lacks attachment, hatred or bewilderment. The negative prefixes are not indicating a simple negation of these mental factors, rather they are denoting the converse remedial mental states for them. The Tibetan negative particles ma and med can denote one of three meanings: a simple negative, not this or not that; something other than what is stated, not this but that; or the converse or antithesis of what is stated, as we have here with detachment etc. Thus detachment, non-hatred and non-bewilderment are affirmative phenomena that have a wholesome remedial effect on the mind.*

All the teachings that the Buddha gave had the sole aim of counteracting the unwholesome afflictions within the minds of his disciples. Hence, since attachment, hatred and bewilderment are the principal source of all afflictions, their direct remedies of detachment, non-hatred, and non-bewilderment become the very root of all that is wholesome. To the same degree in which they are cultivated and strengthened, a corresponding weakness is inflicted upon the afflictions. Faith, shame and embarrassment are present in many virtuous states of mind and prevent us from engaging in non-virtue, but if you want to get rid of the afflictions, these three roots of virtue actually act as the remedies to these non-virtuous states. Thus, to develop them is the very heart of Buddhist practice, and for those who genuinely strive for liberation this is the path whereby to fully overcome the inner enemy.

In Yeshe Gyaltsen's text, on page 38, it says:

[Discussion of the three – non-attachment, non-hatred and non-ignorance]

These three mental factors are like the root of all virtuous qualities, the method for ceasing all misconduct, and the essence of all the paths. All paths and stages are for the sake of abandoning the three poisons as well as their imprints, and all misconduct definitely arises from one of the three poisons.

So these are the opposite or the antidotes to the three poisons: attachment, hatred and bewilderment. Everything negative comes from the wrong view of conceiving reality and our self, either from the ignorance conceiving of a self of phenomena or the ignorance conceiving of a self of persons. That's the root of everything, from that these three poisonous minds arise, and from those everything else is kind of a subsidiary. Sometimes it's a mixture, a little bit of two or three or one of them. Some of them, like spite or grudge, are mainly just an extension of hatred or anger, some other ones, like jealousy, are based on attachment for something, and then you are feeling uncomfortable, when someone else is getting it, so it is a mixture. All of our negative actions can be traced down to these poisonous minds.

Hence, their function is specified as "acting as a support for effective restraint from misconduct".

The divisions that are instances of these [three mental factors] are infinite, because, taken extensively, all paths are subsumed within them.

It's not that non-bewilderment is just one mental factor or one particular instance; it has many different varieties and depends on the circumstances.

Furthermore, regarding non-attachment:

Non-attachment to this life, one's mind having turned away from this life to seek the purpose of future lives is the attitude of a being of the small scope.

According to the lam-rim, the individual of the small scope has to develop a kind of detachment to the happiness of this lifetime. On the basis of that – whatever kinds of circumstances arise here and now – they are not so concerned, because they are thinking about the happiness of future lifetimes. That state of mind allows them to create the first kind of virtue. If you are only centered on the happiness of this lifetime alone, just your success and happiness now, there is no way it's said to create virtue. This is really, really interesting to think about.

Aren't some people creating virtue, even they are only thinking about the happiness of this lifetime? There might be many people like that, who don't have any sense of future lifetimes. Some people find joy in benefiting others, even if they don't believe in future lives, and they may believe you just disappear after death. Can they create the virtuous karma? Karma that will ripen on you as happiness in future lives. Can someone like that create virtue to be born as a human again? There is something to contemplate.

Think about the different reasons for a person to practice what looks like – to the world – something virtuous. Is philanthropy necessarily virtuous? Why are they doing that? If it brings happiness to others, is that a virtuous action? We have to analyze. Even in our own case, you could be doing it for reputation in order to become the most famous philanthropist in the world or maybe it's a combination of different things, it might reduce taxes or help business. If you become a philanthropist people might like you and buy your soap or your oil or you might do it for self-satisfaction right now. In some cases this may be due to an imprint from past lives that you get satisfaction in the happiness of others. That might even be a similar motivation to a person of high scope, but not a lot of people are like that. Mostly we are not going to do something just because others feel good about it.

This is a really interesting section, so let's leave it here and see if you can read the next section and we continue next time, and think about this.

Is philanthropy necessarily virtuous? If it brings happiness to others, is that a virtuous action? Say a person gives a million dollars to the poor, but their motivating factor is to get a break on the tax, to be mentioned in the newspaper, all of these other things. That is not necessarily virtuous at all! Virtuous actions are created by, motivated by, the mind, by the mental factor intention, by the associated mental factors that are present. Just the action itself is not virtuous. For instance, you might see someone making prostrations. Is that virtuous? They might be thinking, 'How many people are watching me? Now I've got more than Dorje. He's got 10.000 – I've got 100.000!'

Actions themselves are not virtue or non-virtue. But there are some actions that create virtue merely by the power of the object, even when our mind is distracted. That's why it's good to do for instance prostrations – unless you have good concentration and will never lose visualization – in front of consecrated images etc., so that even if your mind is wandering, you will still be creating virtue by the power of the object. If you just go outside, imagine the Buddha and do prostrations, that can create virtue, but if your visualization disappears and you get distracted, you won't create the same strength of virtue. The visualization is not the main thing though, one can be mentally paying respect even if the visualization is not clear; but the visualization can induce a state of faith.

Question: Are the virtuous mental factors also in some sense object-ascertaining?

Answer: They are not classified as object-ascertaining. They themselves are alert states of mind, but with them some object is ascertained but they are not just ascertaining the object.

Dedication

We have created some virtuous karma this evening. Depending on how much strength you put into the motivation at the beginning, we created various degrees of virtue, which will ripen within cyclic existence, or possibly beyond. It can possibly become a cause of liberation and enlightenment. By the power of dedication we can direct those, like turning the reins of a horse and make it go in a particular direction. So through the mental factor aspiration, think, 'Due to this virtuous karma may it ripen in such a way that I quickly attain the state of buddhahood, enlightenment, for the sake of all living beings.'

Try to seal this dedication within the emptiness of the three spheres. The emptiness of the karma that we are imagining, dedicating the karmic seeds, the merit; and the emptiness of the goal dedicated; and the emptiness of the dedication itself.

DVD 9

Meditation

We begin with some meditation, try to set our minds with a good motivation. Relax your body. Relax your mind. And with the intention of practicing concentration and to develop a motivation for the welfare of others, begin to watch your respiration.

Try to focus your attention on the breathing. Let go of the other thoughts. You may notice as you continue to practice that your distraction to other thoughts are fuelled by the sense of ego and by the sense of the reality of the outer objects, especially the excitement that sees various objects as pleasurable, fuelled by the sense of some true happiness out there that we might be attending to. So calling to mind the antidote to that, recognizing, remembering egolessness, emptiness, even impermanence and the true nature of suffering, let go of your attachment to those thoughts – the various things that come to your mind, that cause your mind to be distracted – and just focus on the respiration.

Once you are beginning to get a little bit of stability, shift your attention to the more subtle object of your mental consciousness, within which all of the mental factors can be found at one time or another – fifty-one mental factors.

It doesn't mean that every particular experience of the mind is a mental factor; the objects that appear within our mind are mental images, referring to various things. Sometimes they arise due to memory, due to karma, due to the continuity of having thought about them previously – today perhaps – or seeing something that triggered other associations.

Try to recognize within this mind both the objective thoughts and the subjective responses, the mental factors, virtuous and non-virtuous mental factors. All of them are transient. Just focus on the clear light nature of the mind, try to let them subside by not following them, letting go again and again. Just abide in that space-like clear light nature of the mind.

Within this clarity of the mind quite often the sense of our ego, the self, the atman, appears in various degrees of subtlety and grossness and we go along with that, we accede to that, grasp to that as though it were actually true.

The appearance of the self is not the main problem, that even appears to tenth level bodhisattvas on the verge of attaining enlightenment, but they have overcome the grasping to it, as have arhats. See if you can recognize within the spaciousness of your mind, the capacity to recognize this vacuity, this emptiness of a self.

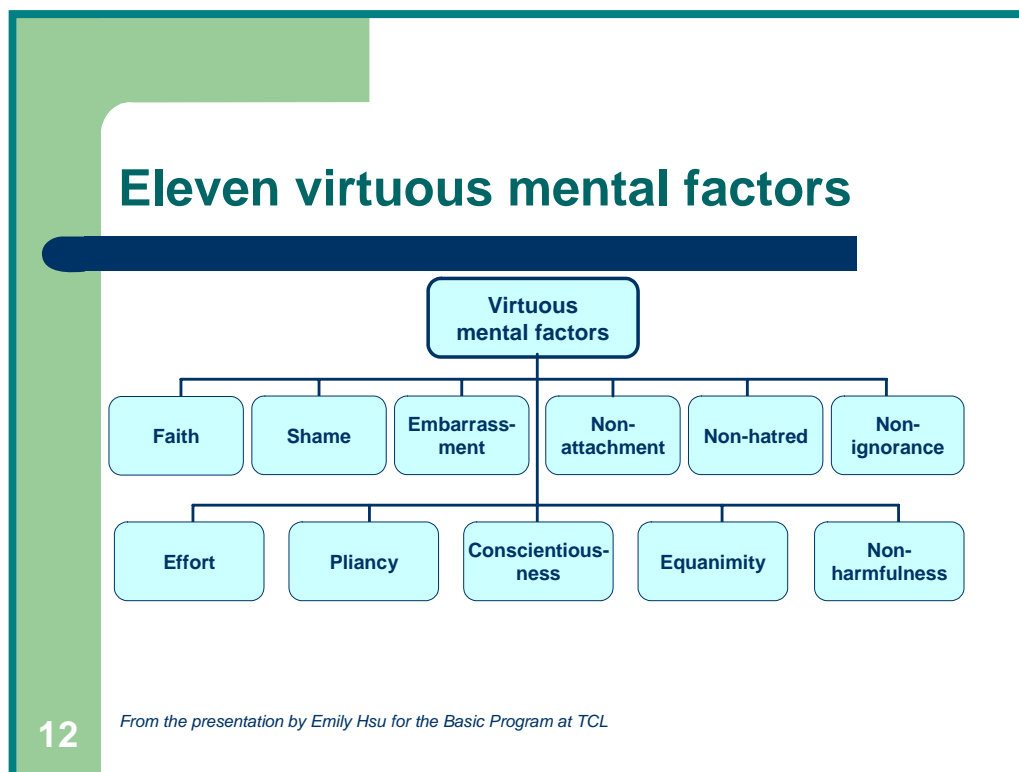
At this moment we have a life of incredible value, leisure. We have everything we need, every endowment to practice the dharma as the great meditators of the past have done.

Having met holy gurus, having the energy ourselves to practice, and faith and aspiration to put that into practice. What a wonderful opportunity this is – but short-lived, because with every moment we are approaching the inevitable end of this karmic manifestation, of this lifetime. As are all other sentient beings; so for their sake, those who have been our mother in numberless lives, our dear friends, our lovers, our children, our parents, who have even helped us when because of our karma we have seen them as enemy, with a feeling of sympathy, out of compassion for them, wanting their suffering to end, recognizing that the only way we can contribute to that ending is for ourselves to end our own suffering, for ourselves to attain enlightenment, to lead others – those we have karmic connection with – out of that confusion. For that reason we are going to listen, think, contemplate, meditate on the subject of the mind and its various manifestations, the mental states, the mental factors – virtuous, non-virtuous – to recognize these, to be able to control the mind to attain enlightenment for the welfare of sentient beings.

Now bring your attention back to the present.

Teaching 9

How many mental factors are there? Too many! Numberless! Fifty-one mental factors; we have talked about the omnipresent, the ones that besides in the mental consciousness we definitely find in the sense consciousnesses; and about the object ascertaining mental factors; both of these are categories of five, very famous. And we have been talking about the eleven virtuous mental factors, we are somewhere in the middle of them.



We talked about faith, shame and embarrassment or consideration for others, and last time we talked in particular about the three roots of virtue, non-attachment, non-hatred and non-ignorance. And you will remember the special point about those, as roots of virtue they are the opposite of the three poisonous minds, they are actually antidotes of the poisonous minds. They are not just the passive lack of the poisonous minds, they are actual remedies, positive states, and they are proactive.

They have been mentioned without much elaboration, and now in the following discussion it goes a bit more into detail, looking at certain qualities they have in common; like shame and embarrassment have also some qualities in common, remember? Because one of them is based on taking oneself as the reason and the other is taking others as the reason for restraining from negative actions, right?

[Discussion of the three – non-attachment, non-hatred and non-ignorance]

These three mental factors are like the root of all virtuous qualities, the method for ceasing all misconduct, and the essence of all the paths.

Sometimes, when you are wondering about your own behavior, when you have recognized your behavior as destructive – sometimes non-virtuous sounds too religious, right? – not constructive, not benefiting yourself or others, you can always go back to these roots. Somehow the temporary antidote lies in these. The ultimate antidote of course is the realization of emptiness.

Non-attachment is a sense of renunciation. This mental factor is a state of mind which actually acts as an antidote to attachment; it sees the things that we ordinarily find attractive and we inappropriately attend to, getting sucked into it, in the nature of suffering. Non-attachment is a mind appropriately attending to things, looking at them in terms of their impermanence, the nature of suffering, the fact that they are selfless and so forth. Seeing for instance that the outer conditions are due to your karma, that kind of understanding also can act as an antidote.

All paths and stages are for the sake of abandoning the three poisons as well as their imprints, and all misconduct definitely arises from one of the three poisons.

When we are talking about the paths and stages we are mainly talking about the five paths: the path of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation and no-more-learning. These are not all the paths, we also have the stages of the path, the path of the individual of lower scope, the path of the individual of the intermediate scope, and of the great scope, and so forth.

‘All paths and stages are for the sake of abandoning the three poisons, and all misconduct definitely arises from one of these three poisons.’ But didn’t we say that a lot of negative actions arises from just grasping at true existence? It is like a central root under the ground that branches; likewise the central root is grasping to true existence and then that can trifurcate into the three poisonous minds, the roots of non-virtue and then all of the other

misconduct can arise out of those.

Hence, their function is specified as “acting as a support for effective restraint from misconduct”.

The divisions that are instances of these [three mental factors] are infinite, because, taken extensively, all paths are subsumed within them.

Furthermore, regarding non-attachment:

(1) Non-attachment to this life, one's mind having turned away from this life to seek the purpose of future lives is the attitude of a being of the small scope.

You know this from the lam-rim, right? The individual of small, middling and great scope?

The stages of the path as presented first in this sense, which does not mean that this was something the Buddha didn't teach, but this particular system of the stages of the path was first presented by Atisha, who wrote the *Lamp of the Path to Enlightenment*, which then was elaborated on by other Tibetan lamas.

The first way of entering the spiritual path, the initial scope for the beginning person is to be able to give up the compulsive interest in this life alone. Probably, even though we might think of ourselves as wanting to practice the meditations of the person of great scope, we are probably, if you are like me, still at that first stage; we are still caught up with attachment to the happiness of this lifetime. We certainly have instances when we can go beyond that, but that is still where have to put a lot of effort. So non-attachment to this life, that particular non-attachment, that is part of this mental factor, is the main practice of a person of the small scope.

(2) Non-attachment to all the marvels of [cyclic] existence, having turned away from one's depths from adherence is the attitude of a being of the intermediate scope.

That's a greater kind of non-attachment, a greater kind of renunciation. We talk about renunciation of this life and renunciation of samsara. The real renunciation we talk about in Buddhism is mainly talking about renunciation of a person of intermediate scope, when you have the insight: even if you were to be born in a better position in the future as a human or a god, all of that is impermanent, is of the nature of suffering, is never satisfying; it would have to be left behind and in enjoying it, we use up our virtuous karma and usually create more negative karma. So that deeper kind of renunciation is the attitude of the person of intermediate scope.

(3) Non-attachment to the extremes of both [cyclic] existence and [solitary] peace, and seeking non-abiding nirvana is the attitude of a being of the great scope.

There is renunciation of this lifetime and then renunciation of all of samsara, but this is talking about another kind of renunciation or non-attachment, for the individual of great scope. The person of intermediate scope is grasping to his or her own solitary peace – not the word solitary as in solitary realizer or pratyekabuddha – this refers to the individual who wants to escape from samsara and still has a subtle grasping to that as a result of self-cherishing. So maybe we have to investigate what this means here; whether this is somehow connected with self-cherishing or an actual sense of renunciation.

Explained in this manner, it follows that all the scriptures will need to be explained here. How could I possibly do that? Here, I merely indicate the door to the intelligent ones. Likewise, the same applies also to non-hatred and non-ignorance.
Here, non-ignorance is a wisdom of individual investigation,

Remember, we said before this non-ignorance was not necessarily the mental factor prajna, among the object ascertaining mental factors. This is a clarity of mind, although here it says it is a wisdom of individual investigation.

and is of two types:
(1) [non-ignorance] acquired through birth
(2) [non-ignorance] arisen through application

We have talked about the different kinds of wisdom – the innate wisdom and the wisdom arisen from hearing, contemplation and meditation. So this is talking about that.

From among these two,
[(1) non-ignorance] acquired through birth is indicated by “[arisen] from fruition” [in the above citation], because it arises from the fruition of past actions without depending on the circumstances of this life, and

The popular subject of ‘nurture or nature’ – although the terminology has existed already a long time – is asking about the main causes for human behavior: is it more due to nature or to nurture? When they say nature, they are mainly talking about biology, chromosomes etc., and by nurture, they mean the environment, where you grow up, the education. From a Buddhist perspective both nature and nurture are involved in all of our experiences. Nurture is in a sense coming from the karmic imprints in our minds and also predisposes some of the karma ripening in our particular experience; like what kind of body we have, what kind of chromosomes we have. And nurture also is due to karma, whether we have the karma to be born in a rich family with a lot of education or love or the karma to be born in a dysfunctional family.

(2) [non-ignorance] arisen through application refers to the three – the wisdom arisen from hearing, the wisdom arisen from contemplation, and the wisdom arisen from meditation.

Here Yeshe Gyaltsen’s text seems to be saying that this non-ignorance is a kind of wisdom, whereas earlier we read that it was not identical with wisdom, it was kind of a clarity of mind.

The basis upon which one engages in hearing with the wisdom arisen from hearing is the Conqueror’s (Shakyamuni) scriptures as well as their commentaries.

Hearing the teachings of the Buddha doesn’t mean the same as listening to the news! The teachings of the Buddha kept in the monasteries are called the Kangyur; ka is honorific for speech, gyur means translation; the translation of the Buddha’s teachings. The Tengyur; ten is Tibetan for shastra, meaning the translations of the Indian commentaries.

The Teacher’s scriptures have twelve divisions:

The Buddha said his teachings could be encompassed in three baskets: the vinayapitaka, the sutrapitaka and the abhidharmapitaka. The Sautantrikas would say that the

abhidharmapitaka are not separate teachings the Buddha gave, that they are really found within the sutras. But usually those are the three divisions.

But here we have twelve divisions. This is another elaboration that the Buddha himself gave in many situations. This is interesting and we will encounter this again at other times.

The Teacher's scriptures have twelve divisions:

- (1) set of discourses
- (2) set of melodious descriptions
- (3) set of prophecies
- (4) set of verses
- (5) set of purposeful expressions
- (6) set of background accounts
- (7) set of expressions of realizations
- (8) set of legends
- (9) set of birth stories
- (10) set of the very extensive
- (11) set of marvels
- (12) set that settles

Since it would be verbose if I were to explain in detail the identity and principal subject matter of each of them, I shall not write more here.

Acharya Chandrakirti taught that these twelve branches of scripture can be subsumed into nine branches; by taking the four – the main background accounts and its associates [i.e., (7)-(10) in the listing above] – as one, [the twelve] are condensed into nine. The nine [divisions] can in turn be condensed into three:

- (1) the basket of discourses (*sutrapitaka*)
- (2) the basket of discipline (*vinayapitaka*)
- (3) the basket of knowledge (*abhidharmapitaka*)

The main subject matter of these three baskets is the three trainings. It is often taught that:

- (1) the main subject matter of the basket of discipline is the training in ethics
- (2) the main subject matter of the basket of discourses is the training in meditative stabilization
- (3) the main subject matter of the basket of knowledge is the training in wisdom

The set of birth stories are the *Jataka Tales*. I'm not sure what the 'set that settles' means. Acharya sometimes means preceptor, but also means scholar or learned one; it is not Chandrakirti's first name. The main subject matter of the three baskets are the three higher trainings, right? Morality, concentration, and wisdom. Some of those listed may merge into more than one basket.

The basket of discourses is the *Sutrapitaka*. Many of the things we study are from the *sutrapitaka*, because the *Abhidharmapitaka* even in our collection of texts in the Tibetan or in the Sanskrit tradition is quite small. The *Vinayapitaka* is well defined, mainly the rules of the monks etc. The *Sutrapitaka* is not just talking about concentration; it's talking about the antidote to distraction and about how to develop concentration, indirectly some parts of the sutras talk about wisdom and so forth, and in a sense are considered to be *Abhidharma*.

In addition, the *Compendium of Knowledge* teaches that:

- the three trainings are equally taught in the basket of discourses;
- the two trainings in ethics and in meditative stabilization are taught in the basket of discipline, and

The *Compendium of Knowledge* is the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*, that is the Mahayana *Abhidharma*.

The Vinayapitaka, because it talks about morality, it also teaches about concentration in the vinaya teachings; to be mindful of morality creates a very conducive state to develop concentration.

- the training in wisdom is taught by the basket of knowledge.

What is the intention behind this? When one guards the stipulated boundaries of discipline by properly relying upon mindfulness and introspection,...

The mental factor mindfulness is the main thing that brings about concentration; introspection or alertness is like the mental spy which is then watching whether distractions are rising or sinking is taking place; so those two act in tandem to develop concentration.

...one will be able to effectively cease laxity and excitement through just that,...

That means through those mental factors, that you develop through the practice of morality, which improves your mindfulness, trying to be mindful of the vows you have and through introspection, watching whether attachment, anger or other things are coming up, by cultivating that through the practice of morality, you are developing those mental factors, which are the very antidotes to the main faults of concentration, laxity and excitement. That's one of the reasons why morality acts as the basis for the higher training of concentration.

...whereupon it becomes the supreme method for generating meditative stabilization. Nowadays, forming an understanding of such stages of the path is extremely rare.

'Nowadays' – I think maybe late 1600, 1700s? Not sure, we can check.

Lama Yeshe used to say: a lot of westerners are very interested in developing single-pointed concentration, because they hear about all of the marvelous features of that. You can have psychic powers, fly, know others' minds. Besides, if you have a higher aspiration, with concentration you can easily make other realizations, you can develop bodhicitta, you can develop renunciation, etc. Lama Yeshe said 'People want to have this but they don't know what the secret is!' The secret lies in the training of morality!

For many reasons morality, the practice of ethics, acts as a basis. One of the important things is to have a succession of human rebirths, because you can't finish especially the Mahayana path, and the sutra path in one lifetime. If you die before the path is completed, one of the important things is to have a succession of human lives, because if you are born in the lower realms it is like 'one step up, twenty steps back'; whatever imprints are left on your mind, they might be very, very diminished if you are born as an animal, and then as an animal again, and then as a hell being and so forth.

In terms of practice we need the higher training in morality, ethics or vinaya, in discipline, because in observing morality, also the bodhisattva morality, being aware of your vows and having the mind of introspection or alertness, watching whether other contravening mental states are rising – sort of tempting you away from observing that. By

cultivating those mental factors, keeping the morality, you are strengthening the very factors you need to develop single-pointed concentration. That's one of the points he is making here.

And we have heard many times why the higher training of concentration is said to be a support of wisdom: without concentration, even if you have a sharp mind because of wisdom from past lives, you analyze a lot in this lifetime, but without concentration you only get a glimpse of something, and then it's gone. That doesn't lead to very deep insight. Like just touching the sand with your hand does not leave an imprint; you have to press deeper; and without moving, otherwise it becomes to look more like a duck's imprint...

Therefore, seek much hearing on the three baskets as well as their commentaries – the basis upon which one engages in hearing, analyze again and again the meaning of what has been heard with the four types of reasoning, and generate an ascertaining consciousness (come to some conclusion about that). Put the entire path into practice by way of analytical and stabilizing meditation upon that very meaning which the wisdom arisen from contemplation has gained ascertainment of.

These are the assertions of the Great Trailblazers.

All meditation can be divided into analytical and stabilizing meditation. Is that right? What about tummo, nadis, deities? When you check you will see that everything does fit exactly into one of these two categories.

For instance, if you are visualizing Shakyamuni Buddha or some deity, first you have to analyze – the hands are like this, the face is like this – to get a mental image. Once you have found the object, you hold that single-pointedly and then you engage in stabilizing meditation. If the image begins to disappear after you try to hold it as long as you can, then you might have to re-analyze, engage in analytical meditation.

Analytical meditation doesn't have to be only on the lam-rim. If you are discursive, and your mind is analyzing something, it falls in that category. Stabilizing is, once you have analyzed and come to some conclusion, then holding that. Like if we have a problem with anger or attachment, we see the defects and analyze it well. If you don't stabilize on that, it's not going to leave much of an imprint on your mind or have much of an impact on your behavior. Once you have come to the conclusion through your analysis, you must hold the flavor of that, the conclusion you have come to, that you have ascertained – holding that single-pointedly is the stabilizing meditation.

Hence, those who are intelligent should engage in such a mode of path that pleases the Conquerors. If you discard much hearing, the excellent cause of wisdom of individual investigation, follow fools stupidly like a sheep, dwell in a relaxed and idle manner without contemplating anything whatsoever...

Yeshe Gyaltsen is criticizing certain kinds of practitioners, meaning certain people who fancy themselves yogis and yoginis, and then they go of, not having studied much, just have a kind of quiet, relaxed and idle dwelling of the mind – even in their meditation.

..., and yet wallow in the conceit of being good-hearted, practicing dharma, engaging in practice, and so forth, then you will waste your excellent support with its leisure, ruin others who are equal in fortune, and even become a serious condition contributing to the degeneration of the teachings.

So be careful!

Therefore, those of you who wish to do yourselves good should generate belief from your hearts regarding the modes of the wisdom of individual investigation as explained above. In this vein, the *Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines (Ratnagunasancayagatha)*

There are many perfection of wisdom sutras. Even the *Heart Sutra* is a perfection of wisdom sutra. One of the great sets of the perfection of wisdom sutras is called the Three Mothers, the small, the medium and the great. Mother, because the *Prajnaparamita* is called the mother of all the buddhas. In Buddhism wisdom is attributed the female attribute whereas method is attributed the male attribute; it doesn't mean that wisdom is only for ladies or method only for men, as one student wanted to interpret it. The mother of all the buddhas means that the wisdom realizing ultimate nature is something shared by all three vehicles.

In the Indian tradition the lineage of a person was determined by their fathers' family. If one woman were to have children from a king, they would be of the royal lineage, if she were to have children from a Brahmin lineage, they would be of the Brahmin lineage and so forth. So the 'mother of all the buddhas' means this is shared by all the lineages, whether Hinayana or Mahayana. What distinguishes the Mahayana from the Hinayana is the method: renunciation in the Hinayana, bodhicitta in the Mahayana.

There are some verse summaries throughout the small mother, the *Eight Thousand Lines Perfection of Wisdom*; it looks like very old language, probably preserved very much intact from some original expositions of the Buddha. So this is quoting some of that:

says:

How can millions and millions of blind men, without a guide,
Enter the city without even knowing the path?
Without wisdom, the five perfections are without sight;
Without a guide, they cannot contact enlightenment.
At such a time that they are strongly conjoined with wisdom,
Then eyes are acquired and this name is attained.

The Venerable Maitreya also says [in his *Sublime Continuum of the Great Vehicle (Uttaratantra)*] (stanza 5.14-15):

Conceptualizing the three spheres [of agent, action, and object]
Is asserted to be a knowledge obscuration.
Conceptualizations such as miserliness
Are asserted to be afflictive obscurations.

Apart from wisdom,
None other is a cause for abandoning these.
Therefore, wisdom is supreme. Its foundation is hearing.
Thus, hearing is supreme.

Is this the same as when we talk about dedicating in the emptiness of the three spheres? 'Conceptualizing the three spheres of agent, action and object' – what you call the three spheres depends on the context. Whatever actions the bodhisattvas engage in.

If for instance you were making charity of something, practicing the first perfection, of generosity. But if you are just conceptualizing 'I am giving **this** to **her**!', or conceptualizing, grasping, each of those spheres as being inherently, truly existent, then this would not be considered to be the perfection of generosity.

The whole point of it is that, whether it be the afflictive obscurations or the

obscurations to omniscience, the knowledge obscurations, wisdom is the cause for abandoning them. Method acts as a support, but wisdom is abandoning them.

How is this? Wouldn't bodhicitta be the cause for abandoning knowledge obscurations? It says: apart from wisdom, none other is a cause for abandoning the knowledge obscuration and afflictive obscurations. Isn't wisdom abandoning the afflictive obscurations, the delusions, and bodhicitta the way to eliminate the obscurations to omniscience? Because arhats[, who do not have bodhicitta,] can't abandon the knowledge obscurations, right?

I think the point is that method acts as a support, but it is still the wisdom that is [doing the] abandoning. It is in meditative equipoise on emptiness, supported by that accumulation of merit through developing bodhicitta, which allows the knowledge obscurations to be abandoned.

The knowledge obscurations are not abandoned when you are not in meditative equipoise. When you are on the path of seeing and on the path of meditation before the eighth bhumi [or ground], you are abandoning the afflictive obscurations, the delusions, ignorance and so forth, but they are only actually abandoned in meditative equipoise. You do more on those paths, when you arise from that meditative equipoise you engage in prostrations, generosity and the other perfections and you study and learn more about wisdom and contemplate it, but it is only during the actual direct realization of emptiness you are abandoning the afflictive obscurations.

It's similar with knowledge obscurations; even though you need to have that extra agent of the collection of merit that comes about not just through renunciation but through the bodhicitta motivation, it's not that alone that abandons the knowledge obscurations, it's still the wisdom itself, the actual abandoning only takes place in meditative equipoise. From among the three, this is the wisdom arisen from of meditation.

The wisdom of meditation arises from the wisdom of contemplation; the wisdom of contemplation comes from the wisdom of hearing – which we can also understand to mean reading, it does not mean only hearing.

Therefore, wisdom is supreme. Its foundation is hearing.
Thus, hearing is supreme.

And Acharya Aryasura says [in his *Compendium of the Perfections (Paramitasamasa)*]:

The blind ones of little hearing do not know the modes of meditation.
Lacking that, what are they to contemplate?
Therefore, you should put effort in hearing. Due to that cause,
Contemplate and meditate, whereby vast wisdom will arise.

The supreme scholar Vasubandhu also says [in his *Treasury of Knowledge*] (stanza 6.5ab):

By abiding in ethics, possessing hearing and contemplation,
There is strong application in meditation.

Aryasura I think also wrote the prayer of the general confession. He had the debate with Aryadeva, when Nagarjuna could not come, and was prophesied to write many Mahayana teachings. So not only those who do not have wisdom, as we usually say, even those with

little hearing are called blind ones here!

Let's take a little break.

We were talking in the break about the quote on page 40:

Conceptualizing the three spheres [of agent, action, and object]
Is asserted to be a knowledge obscuration.
Conceptualizations such as miserliness
Are asserted to be afflictive obscurations.

Conceptualizing of the three spheres is usually referring to conceiving them as truly existent, but that is not an obscuration to knowledge, that is an obscuration to liberation. If this is from the Uttaratantra, it is probably not from the Prasangika point of view, so I have to check what is meant by that in the commentary.

Let's look at the quote from Vasubandhu, from the sixth chapter of the *Abhidharmakosha*:

By abiding in ethics, possessing hearing and contemplation,
There is strong application in meditation.

In order to be successful in meditation it's not enough just to meditate, 'I'm going to be a meditator! I'm going to the mountains to meditate!' You need to have an accumulation of merit; that's another reason why the practice of ethics can act as a support, because that accumulates merit and allows you to be less distracted, to be content, satisfied and to have the merit to be successful. So abiding in ethics and in addition possessing hearing and contemplation – that is reading, study and then having contemplated it, studied it – makes everything clear in your mind. If you are going into retreat, you are going to meditate on something you haven't even thought about, you just read it, but you haven't contemplated it, you haven't come to a firm decision. You have all sorts of doubts about it, so that doesn't act as a firm foundation of meditation yet.

Such statements are made repeatedly in the scriptures as well as their commentaries.

So we have talked about faith, shame and embarrassment, then the three roots of virtue, so we have completed six of the eleven virtuous mental factors.

Effort or energy, or enthusiastic perseverance; sometimes these two words are put together, because it doesn't mean just perseverance or energy or effort. In general it means energy which is glad to engage in virtue. Just being a businessman or -woman is not enough. If it was, it would mean something like, 'Bill Gates has got this mental factor perfected! It's a virtuous mental factor so he must be a bodhisattva; he made billions of dollars.' No pervasion!

[C7] Effort (brtson 'grus)

Regarding effort, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is effort?

RESPONSE: It is a mind that is enthusiastic in regard to armoring, application, non-inferiority, irreversibility, and non-complacency. It has the function of fulfilling and accomplishing the class of virtue.

Just as it has been said above, the mind that is enthusiastic about virtue is effort. Thus the Acharya Vasubandhu says [in his *A Discussion of the Five Aggregates*]:

QUESTION: What is effort?

RESPONSE: It is the antidote for laziness and a mind that is enthusiastic about virtue.

The first fault of concentration was laziness, to which the antidotes were faith, giving rise to aspiration, giving rise to effort, which gives rise to the actual antidote, pliancy or flexibility. Effort is what brings this about.

That of course is only one kind of application of effort. If you need to develop effort, it comes from aspiration, which comes from faith. So if you feel yourself lazy – and this for us is probably one of the biggest obstacles to practice – develop faith!

There are different kinds of laziness, like the laziness of low self-esteem, which is of two kinds, one of them is to be in awe, intimidated by the vastness of what is to be done – ‘If a bodhisattva has to work for numberless eons in numberless world systems for one sentient being, and there are numberless sentient beings...., forget it!’ Or, ‘If I have to do this puja – that is all these pages – forget it!’

The other one is to be thinking, ‘Poor me! I have no qualities! How can I possibly practice!’ That’s what nowadays might be pretty close to low self-esteem, and this is one of the things that is counteracted by the practice of tantra, the developing of divine pride. It’s not just some imaginary generation but developed through wisdom, ‘I can! – the mind is empty – I can develop these things!’

In the *Prajnaparamita Sutras* that are studied in the monasteries, the antidote to all of the kinds of laziness involves a recognition of emptiness, applied in different ways; recognizing, if you are falling into that low, discouraged kind of mind, that these infinite things to be done are empty and by doing one after the other, they will eventually be finished. Meditating in that way one can overcome that laziness; and also the laziness attached to negative actions, which means being attached to feeling comfortable, ‘If I get out of my bed, I will be cold!’ The ultimate antidote to all of them is proper application [of emptiness], meditation on emptiness.

Vasubandhu says [in his *A Discussion of the Five Aggregates*]:

QUESTION: What is effort?

RESPONSE: It is the antidote for laziness and a mind that is enthusiastic about virtue.

So that is the deciding factor here. That’s why we sometimes translates tsondu or virya as enthusiastic perseverance, not just as perseverance or effort, because it means to be enthusiastic about virtue. From the *Bodhicaryavatara*:

Also, *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* (stanza 7.2) says:

What is effort? It is an enthusiasm for virtue.

Every kind of striving is called “making effort” in today's world, but the above passages indicate that exertion for the sake of this life alone, such as farming, is not effort, for effort is taught to be enthusiasm for virtue; exertion for the affairs of this life is the discordant class of effort, known as “adherence to unwholesomeness.”

Discordant means opposite to. Instead of farming we could say making a billion dollars; or often what is seen as having energy is for example for going out all night.

The *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* explains three types of effort:

- (1) effort of armoring
- (2) effort of gathering virtuous qualities
- (3) effort of enacting the welfare of sentient beings

The *Compendium of Knowledge* teaches five types:

- (1) effort of armoring
- (2) effort of application (putting it into practice)
- (3) effort of non-inferiority
- (4) effort of irreversibility
- (5) effort of non-complacency

(1) The effort of armoring is the donning of the great armor of preceding attitude, a mental enthusiasm prior to embarking on a virtuous activity. It is just as it has been said in [Aryasura's] *Compendium of the Perfections*:

Warriors put on their armor before going into battle. If you go into battle and try to put on your armor in the midst of fighting, it's going to be difficult. Nowadays we could use the example of some of us being drafted into the army, and in basic training, instead of reading the manuals and learning how to do things, we were watching videos, reading comic books and just having a good time; then when the war is starting and the enemy is coming, at that point it's too late to prepare for it.

A armor-like enthusiastic perseverance is the attitude you develop preceding something, that can prevent you from being defeated. Say, if you have a problem with social relations, maybe you are lonely, and you know that when you are going out somewhere you are going to be attracted to people, and your mind is going to go crazy. Then meditate beforehand! Remind yourself that nothing within cyclic existence is of the nature of happiness.

Consider a long long day and night that spans the past and future limits of cyclic existence,
A year made up of such days,
A very long eon [made up of such years] and
A number of such eons equaling the drops of water in the ocean.

Through cultivation [for such a period], I will generate but a single mind of enlightenment.
Even though it is necessary to practice in such a manner for each of the other collections,
Due to compassion, I will have no weariness;
Without indolence, I will achieve excellent enlightenment.

His Holiness says that you can have this attitude, ‘I’m going to attain enlightenment however long it takes! Whatever comes in this lifetime – no big deal! Even if there are hindrances, I’m not going to be frustrated and discouraged by that and develop the laziness that could prevent me from continuing!’ Having that long-term goal.

When in cyclic existence, give up thinking about one's own suffering,
And produce that infinite robust armor;
This is called the compassionate hero's first perfect adoption in conduct.

His Holiness says that having the attitude that you have to achieve enlightenment this lifetime is very popular in America right now, everything is instant, isn't it.

In Kopan the most popular book used to be *The Lazy Man's Guide to Enlightenment!* Teachers who tell them how to attain enlightenment very quickly are most appealing to people, but the great lamas, also His Holiness, say that the most effective thing to think, is to armor oneself with this kind of mind, 'How ever long it takes, I'm going to practice!'

(2) The effort of application is a mind that is enthusiastic when engaging in practice through application. It is of two types: constant application and respectful application.

I have to check with the Tibetan, I am not sure what this means.

(3) The effort of non-inferiority is a generation of enthusiasm when engaging in virtue without the mind being discouraged, thinking, "How could one such as I do this?"

[Aryasura's] *Garland of Birth Stories (Jatakamala)*, stanza 14.10-11) says:

Discouragement does not help one become free from deprivation.
Therefore, do not be tormented by sorrow.
If the skills for accomplishing the required goals are made firm,
With ease, you will be freed even from huge difficulties.

In other words the bodhisattva would think, 'Whatever obstacles there are, even if in this lifetime things seem insurmountable, I will accumulate the causes to accomplish what I want to do, even if it may be in future lives.' If you are lacking something, discouragement doesn't help you to be free from lacking of that.

Therefore, without being afraid or unhappy,
Achieve your purpose with an appropriate method.
If you are uplifted by the steadfast splendour of skill,
You have in your hand the accomplishment of all goals.

(4) The effort of irreversibility is an accomplished mental enthusiasm such that one cannot be diverted by other circumstances at the time of engaging in virtuous activities.
Furthermore, the Foremost Lama [Tsong-kha-pa] says [in his *A Song of Experience*] (stanza 18a-f):

When you don armor-like effort, steady and irreversible,
Your excellent qualities of scriptural [learning] and realization will increase like the waxing moon,

Like the waxing moon means naturally; when you have perseverance and you keep on practicing, your qualities will increase naturally, incrementally.

All your conduct will be meaningful,
And whatever actions are undertaken will be accomplished as desired.
Understanding this, the Conqueror's spiritual children embark on
Great waves of effort eliminating all laziness.

You notice this in the world too. It's not always the most intelligent people who do best and are most successful, it's often people who work really hard and have kind of a worldly enthusiastic perseverance. It's the same in the Dharma; we need to have that state of mind in order to achieve a transformation, and the obstacle to that is laziness. We need to develop our faith, seeing the good qualities of others, to develop aspiration, and to generate effort that can bring about the accomplishment of those things.

(5) The effort of non-complacency is exertion that does not just rest complacent with some trifling virtue, but seeks higher qualities.

Furthermore, taking a minute branch of the path as principal and discarding the others is a serious hindrance to depositing imprints of the path in its entirety. Therefore, it is crucial that you gain an overview of the entire path.

In Atisha's tradition there are three lineages: the Menngagpas, the Lamrim pas and the Chungbawas. The Menngagpas mainly followed the oral teachings – some precept of their teacher. This could be profound, but oftentimes would be people with no strong faculty of wisdom, who would be content with some small teaching, 'I received the teaching from Pabongka Rinpoche on how to meditate in the cave' – and then never studied anything else, but do just that. It could be something very profound.

The Lamrimpas, more than just some small precept would study the stages of the path. They would study the small, middling or great lam-rim.

The Chungbawas – this chung means highway – they were the ones who would maybe study for geshe etc., but not necessarily geshe studies, they were studying all Buddha's teachings in depth, everything.

So this effort here is not just taking some small branch of the teachings and not considering other precepts as teachings of the Buddha.

Considering what we said before about the *Three Mothers*, the three *Prajnaparamita Sutras*, the 8000 verse, 25.000 verse, 100.000 verse, they were all recited by different individuals who heard the same discourse. You might think, that 'the guy reciting the 8.000 verse obviously left something out', but what it means is that there are different ways of understanding. This person could be very wise, because he didn't have to say it in all of the elaboration. Sometimes short can be for a sharper intellect, but people studying the short version might as well be those who are less intelligent, or it can be a desire for brevity because of laziness. So there is no one-pointed definiteness about that. Those following just an oral precept from their lama might be very wise also.

In this vein, the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

Arya Asanga repeatedly taught that it is necessary to have two [qualities]: (1) not to be discouraged even though you might have understood well the method for training in the great vast [deeds], and (2) not to be complacent with merely some trifling good quality. Nowadays, the following appears to happen. Whether it be an imitation or an actual good quality, if one attains a mere portion of it one becomes complacent about one's familiarity with just that, thinking, "I have made great progress on the path!" Then, when an expert in the essential points of the path confronts one with the yardstick of scripture and reasoning, explaining, "Even though that is indeed some good quality, with that alone you have not gotten anywhere," understanding dawns, and one becomes totally discouraged.

If you have that kind of complacency you can be discouraged later, when you realize the enormity of what there is.

Although it is necessary to seek higher attributes without being complacent about a portion of some good quality and to train in the infinite objects of trainings, the absence of discouragement seems to be very rare.

The function of effort is specified as “thoroughly fulfilling and fully accomplishing the class of virtue,” because the entire class of virtue is contingent upon effort. Along these lines, the Exhortation to the Exceptional Resolve says:

By making effort, nothing whatsoever,
Whether created in this world or
Created beyond this world,
Is difficult to gain.

In the *Bodhisattvacaryavatara* Shantideva says again and again, ‘There is nothing that cannot be accomplished through familiarity.’

That being the case, through the force of effort, what wise person would become weary?
Those who are set on the enlightenment of buddhahood,
Having seen the faults of lethargy and sleep,
Constantly dwell in making effort.
This I have exhorted them to do.

What can cause that kind of effort? Sometimes fear – wisdom-fear. Once Lama Zopa Rinpoche in one of the meditation courses was sitting on the throne looking out, and said: ‘If you knew where you were going to be born in your next life, you wouldn’t sleep at night!’

[Maitreya's] *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras* (*Mahayanasutralamkarakarika*) (stanza 16.65-66) says:

Among the host of virtues, effort is supreme;
In dependence on it, one obtains [the other virtues].
Through effort, one obtains immediately a supreme state of happiness, and
The mundane and supramundane attainments.

Through effort, one obtains the desirable resources of [cyclic] existence;
Through effort, one possesses outstanding purity;
Through effort, one becomes freed by transcending the transitory collection;
Through effort, one awakens to supreme enlightenment.

Where does effort come from? From desire, aspiration. If you want to overcome laziness, you have to have the aspiration that can instigate the effort. To have that aspiration you need to have some hope or faith. Aspiration can also be instigated by fear – like Rinpoche said, ‘If you knew, where you were going to be reborn...’

Thus, since all excellent qualities follow upon effort, the method to generate effort is extremely important. In regard to this method, if you were to carefully analyze and understand the Knowledge passages cited above, the techniques for generating effort will appear very extensive. Nevertheless, it is difficult for those of inferior intellect such as I to understand [how to produce effort] in dependence on just those. Hence it is of utmost importance to know the following in accordance with the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-Kha-pa]’s *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*:

- the benefits of making effort;
- the disadvantages of not doing so;
- the way in which it stops its discordant class – the laziness of procrastination, the adherence to unwholesome activities, and indolence;

The attitude, ‘I can do it later!’ The best antidote to procrastination is meditation on impermanence and death, especially on the fact that the time of death is uncertain.

- the way to practice the favorable conditions for effort, the four powers – the power of belief, the power of steadfastness, the power of joy and the power of abandonment.

Since I cannot mention everything here, you should understand them by carefully perusing *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* and the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*.

The *Bodhisattvacaryavatara* is one of the great sources for all of the details of how to practice the perfections. One of the chapters is talking about how the bodhisattva develops, sustains and brings to culmination the practice of effort, of enthusiastic perseverance.

Pliancy is the actual antidote to laziness, the actual culmination, also translated as flexibility.

[C8] Pliancy (shin tu sbyangs pa)

Regarding pliancy, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is pliancy?

RESPONSE: It is a serviceability of body and mind due to severing the continuum of unfavorable states of body and mind. It has the function of eliminating all obscurations.

When you develop single-pointed concentration through the path of the nine abidings for attaining calm abiding or tranquil abiding, at a certain point you develop flexibility of body and mind – physical flexibility in which the airs are purified and you have no more problem sitting, or walking long distances; and you have a mental flexibility as though, if you were asked to, you could count every atom in the wall. It doesn't mean that you have clairvoyance, but whatever you are asked to do – like when someone gave you a big pile of hair and asked you to count all the hairs and separate them into piles at length, you would have no problem with that – obviously it refers to virtuous things.

Pliancy is a mental factor, a knower. It may sound as if it was just a state or some kind of physical thing, like you might think about contact, but it's actually a mental phenomenon.

Just as it has been said above, it is a knower that deposits an imprint so that the mind can be applied, however one wishes, to a virtuous object of observation, and that severs the continuum of unfavorable states of body and mind. When divided, pliancy is of two types:

- (1) physical pliancy
- (2) mental pliancy

Is physical pliancy also a mental factor? No, the mental factor pliancy is a knower, a consciousness, mental factors are clear and knowing.

(1) Physical pliancy is such that, through the power of meditative stabilization, unserviceability of the body is purified, whereupon the body is buoyant and light, like a ball of cotton, and can be applied to virtuous activity according to one's wish.

So this is not the mental factor pliancy, it is a physical serviceability of the body.

(2) Mental pliancy is such that, through the power of meditative stabilization, the mind becomes free of unserviceability, whereupon it becomes amenable to application to an object of observation without hindrance.

Whatever you want to concentrate on, when you have that factor, that flexibility, you are able to achieve the actual calm abiding.

Up till then you are on one of the stages before that, maybe even on the 8th or 9th stage. Until you actually develop these flexibilities; then no matter what, all of the little hindrances for the mind remaining on the object [are overcome], you have complete control over the mind then.

Moreover, the Foremost Lama [Tsong-kha-pa] says [in his *A Song of Experience*] (stanza 19a-d):

Concentration is a king ruling the mind;
When placed in it, [the mind] is as immovable as the king of mountains.
When employed, it engages all virtuous objects of observation, and
Induces the great bliss of serviceable body and mind.

The king of mountains is Mount Meru, or Mount Sumeru

When you develop pliancy, you also develop bliss, physical bliss and mental bliss; there is a sequence of their development. It is said that the bliss involved in developing pliancy is almost excruciating. Can you imagine that? Sounds interesting, doesn't it? And it has to first subside before you can actually attain the actual calm abiding, it becomes almost like a distraction.

Its function is specified as "eliminating all obscurations," because through the force of pliancy all unfavorable states of body and mind will be purified, and upon attaining pliancy, meditative stabilization, having been roused from within, will increase; simply through this increase, the bliss of pliancy will increase; due just to this increase, meditative stabilization will increase. Thereby, [the mind] will be empowered to overcome obscurations.

The next virtuous mental factor is conscientiousness, which is a little bit similar to shame and embarrassment, when we talked about similarity with conscience. Let's see:

[C9] Conscientiousness (bag yod)

Regarding conscientiousness, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is conscientiousness?

RESPONSE: It is a cultivation of virtuous qualities within abiding in non-attachment, non-hatred, non-ignorance, as well as effort, and guards the mind against contaminations. It has the function of thoroughly completing and fully establishing all mundane and supramundane success.

This mental factor exists while abiding in non-attachment, non-hatred, non-ignorance, as well as in effort. I think not necessarily all three roots of virtue, one of the three roots should be enough[, in combination with effort]. If those are missing, you don't have conscientiousness, but if, for instance, non-attachment is present in your mind along with enthusiastic perseverance, this mental factor can also be present.

Just as it has been said above, it is an awareness that accomplishes virtue within abiding in effort without coming under the influence of afflictions, and it guards the mind against contaminations.

Geshe Rabten: *Conscientiousness is a distinct mental factor that cherishes the accumulation of what is wholesome and guards the mind against that which gives rise to afflictions.*

We said that shame and embarrassment avoid non-virtue on the basis of self or others. Conscientiousness cherishes the accumulation of what is wholesome and can also be present when shame and embarrassment are there, but it has a slightly different function. Being conscientious means to know how not to put yourself in a position that could give rise to the afflictions. That's the meaning here.

Geshe Rabten: *It is a quality ascribed to a state of mind in which detachment, non-hatred, non-bewilderment and enthusiasm are present. It performs the function of bringing to fulfillment and forever maintaining all that is good both within and beyond this world.*

Afflictions can arise both from internal as well as external conditions. If someone makes you angry, is that an example of an external condition? Your kids for example – we often say 'you made me angry', but this still depends on our mind, right? Conscientiousness protects us from reacting in a negative way towards external conditions, and thus prevents us from being overwhelmed by attachment, hatred and so forth. If you have a tendency to be angry, conscientiousness activates and brings up these three roots of virtue. It makes the antidotes arise whenever anger, attachment, and so forth, come up. It is not getting rid of anger by letting it out or by repressing it.

When you are tense, you might think the only way to get rid of the anger would be to let it out! When the energy of anger arises inside, the two poles that we always go through are repression or expression. Also with attachment. We go through expressing the attachment – living it out – or repressing it. The Buddhist approach of a middle way is not just something like letting it out half way – to be just moderately attached, moderately angry; it's a completely different mind-set, a completely different paradigm. Applying these antidotes is like the sun of wisdom causing the rain-cloud of anger or attachment to dissipate within our mind. Then we no longer have to repress or express it.

Take the example of waiting in a long line to pay something. You waited a long time – are just getting up there and then someone comes along and pushes you out of the way as though there were trying to take your place, anger arises – you turn around and see it's your friend with a big smile on his face, he is just joking, just teasing.

One moment you had anger, the next moment, when you see it's your friend, the anger disappears – you don't have to repress it. When you see the actual situation, when you see reality, the anger disappears. In this sense the sun of wisdom acts as these antidotes. It's not asking for you to learn to repress your anger. If you try to repress your anger, it's going to come out some other way. It doesn't help just to say, 'I'm a Buddhist, I can't get angry!' You have to apply that wisdom – to see it's impermanent, 'This is due to my karma, the other person is not really an object to be harmed.' When we use these various logics,

temporal antidotes, eventually the wisdom of emptiness, then anger, attachment, all of the different negative states, can actually dissipate. They don't have to be repressed.

Geshe Rabten: *In guarding the mind it is similar in some ways to self respect and consideration for others, except that it is not based on a particular reason, rather it is a more fundamental protective quality. Also it is not just limited to simply refraining from non-virtue. It is also conscientiousness to create virtue. Shame and embarrassment are not talking about creating virtue. However much we try to develop wholesome and positive qualities, we will not succeed if we lack the quality of conscientiousness. Living an unconscientiousness existence is comparable to being spiritually dead, since any opportunity for cultivating virtue is automatically squandered. Living with conscientiousness, though is equivalent to having found immortality.*

There are four kinds of conscientiousness: conscientiousness in accumulating merit, conscientiousness in the attainment of liberation, conscientiousness in developing renunciation, and conscientiousness in cultivating uncontaminated virtue.

Next time we will finish the virtuous mental factors and begin the root delusions
I am sorry not to have the mid-term exam today, I know you are all distraught about that, I will try to email it to you. This will not be marked in a formal sense, it is just so that you know what kind of questions will come and we can go over it next time.

Regarding this, [Asanga's] *Bodhisattva Grounds (Bodhisattvabhūmi)* mentions five types:

- (1) conscientiousness with respect to the former
- (2) conscientiousness with respect to the latter
- (3) conscientiousness with respect to the middle
- (4) conscientiousness prior to activity
- (5) conscientiousness of concordant application

The Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa] explains [in his *Highway to Enlightenment, Explanation of the Ethics of Bodhisattvas*]:

Respectively, they are:

the correction of past faults in accordance with the dharma;

an earnest intention to do so in the future;

doing so without forgetfulness in the present;

a tightening of the mind, thinking, "How wonderful it would be if I could behave and abide in ways such that faults do not arise!";

in dependence on that, behaving and abiding accordingly.

Since it has been taught that it has the function of acting as a support for achieving all mundane and supramundane success, it is of utmost importance as the root of all paths and grounds. Thus, the Protector Nagarjuna also says in [his *Letter to a Friend*] (stanza 13):

The Muni taught that conscientiousness is the source of the nectar [of immortality] and non-conscientiousness that of death.

Therefore, for the sake of enhancing your virtuous qualities,

Respectfully, always be conscientious.

Dedication

Let's try to dedicate the merits; as is said, the three important times are the beginning, the middle and the end; in the beginning is the motivation; the middle is to do the virtuous activity with concentration and skill; the end is to dedicate the merits.

Recall the three spheres. The merits; the goal dedicated to, which can in our case simply be our spiritual development up to and including enlightenment for the welfare of others – to totally eradicate all of our harming others, to develop all of our good qualities to benefit them, to be patient, friendly, loving, compassionate for them; and the third sphere, the act of dedication, with is this aspiration that these merits ripen in that way.

‘Due to those merits may I quickly become a guru-buddha and lead each an every sentient being into that very state – due to these merits.’

Again try to seal that in the understanding of the emptiness of the three spheres. The merits, the goal dedicated to, the dedication itself.

Thank you.

DVD 10

Meditation

Sit comfortably. Relax your mind and body. Place your attention in front, on your respiration. Remembering, since this is an exercise we have done many times, to focus on one object and let go of everything else. See if you can cut the continuity of discursive thoughts by focusing on the respiration.

Then bring your attention further inward to your mental consciousness. It's useful to imagine what's called the heart chakra at the center of your chest, at about the level with your heart towards the spine. And as though withdrawing the attention away from your senses, see if you can bring your attention there, away from the cerebral region, and just observe your mental consciousness.

Behind the multitude of appearances and thoughts, sensations, feelings, ideas there is a nature, the clear light of the mind, like a vast sky – unobstructing, unobstructed.

At first seeing the space between thoughts, holding on to that, and eventually even if thoughts are present, to learn to disengage from them and sense the spaciousness of the mind within which they are arising. Focus on that alone, on that clear light nature, letting go of whatever conceptual construction arises.

Perhaps we have begun to respect and find these teachings that we have been engaging in beneficial for our minds. They were taught by the perfect Buddha from his own experience like the great medical doctor, the great physician prescribing the Dharma. Simply knowing about the Dharma but not practicing it would be like carrying a bag of medicine around on one's back even though the actual application might cure one. And you know that the Dharma itself, the medicine of the Dharma, is the remedy to overcome attachment to this life, to actually develop renunciation within our mind; that it can help us overcome our self-cherishing attitude, and let us work for our own liberation, and strive on the bodhisattva path.

The nectar of the Dharma is also infusing our mind, opening our wisdom eye, so that we can see the ultimate nature of the self as empty, all phenomena as empty; the ultimate nature of all phenomena. We can develop that wisdom through the nectar of the Dharma, the medicine of the Dharma.

Cognizant that the people who have practiced these teachings before, like the Sangha, like our fellow practitioners, who have put the teachings into practice – show that they can be accomplished; acting as our nurses in a sense.

With the thought to overcome our self-cherishing, our self-grasping, for the welfare of all living beings; for our own welfare also, to achieve the two aims, think, 'In order to achieve that, to better understand the mind, I'm going to listen to the teachings tonight,

participate, try to put into practice the medicine of the Dharma, so that I can quickly become enlightened, overcoming all my faults, developing all my good qualities, for the welfare of all.'

Then bring your attention back to the present.

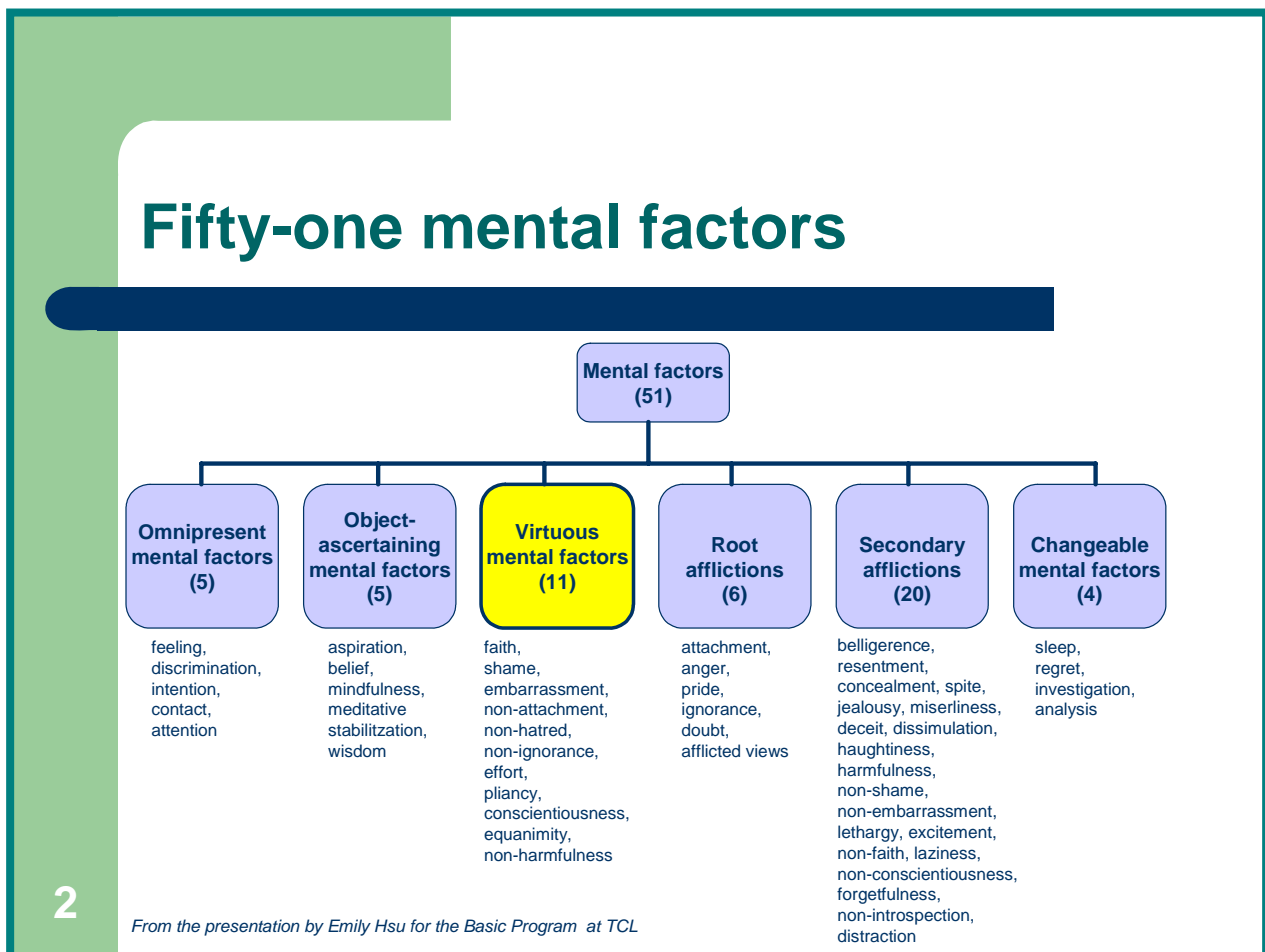
Teaching 10

How many mental factors are there, and how many virtuous ones?

Fifty-one and eleven, that's right. And what are they?

If you have to list them, it is good to put them in groups together and not just randomly. Like shame and embarrassment, preceded by faith, then the three roots of virtue, then effort, conscientiousness, which is somewhat similar to same and embarrassment but it does not take self and others as a reason, suppleness, non violence, and equanimity.

Not recollection or mindfulness, that is one of the object ascertaining mental factors.



So we have not yet talked about equanimity.

[C10] Equanimity (btang snyoms)

The most general meaning of equanimity, if you'd just ask somebody what it is they'd say: a big mind, to be equal to everyone, non-partisan – an even mind towards all beings. Is that this mental factor? No, it's not.

There are three meanings of equanimity. The first is the equanimity of friend, enemy and stranger.

Then there is the equanimity that is used in terms of one of the feelings, the neutral or unpredicted feeling – indifferent is not such a good term because it might have negative implications. Certain feelings can easily be recognized as unpleasant – you don't like them, you'd rather be free of them. Others make you think, 'It's not bad, I could do with some more of this!' – those are pleasurable feelings. And there are such feelings that if I ask you right now, 'How is the tip of your right ear feeling? You put your attention on it and think, 'not good, not bad' – and just have this feeling of equality. So this is another meaning of tangnyom, if you just see the word in the scriptures.

The third meaning is this virtuous mental factor that comes in its culmination when you develop single-pointed concentration, when you develop shinez, tranquil abiding.

At a certain point at the beginning [of developing concentration], if you don't apply the necessary antidotes, if your mind is beginning to sink, when you get tired or dark, then if you don't apply an antidote there, it's a big fault. You have to be alert! You have to have the mental factor alertness – introspection, the mental spy – to watch whether sinking or excitement is taking place. Excitement is another [main] fault of concentration, where instead of the mind sinking and becoming dull and losing its grip on the object, [the mind leaves the object for something attractive or scatters.]

Sinking in the extreme form could be when you are holding your rosary at night and it falls out of your hand and you just don't hold it with enough tightness or becomes unclear – you could even fall into sleep. That's at its initial point; [later] even subtle sinking is a fault. The other main fault, excitement, is when you leave the object of meditation, mainly because of something attractive; you could scatter, you could move for other reasons also, but the other kinds of scattering, when you might lose the object of concentration because you are angry or something else, are not as difficult to eliminate.

As soon as those faults arise, you have to be able to apply the antidotes; you have to have that mental spy. In meditation at first you have to be alert, whether your mind is losing its strength of clarity on the object – that's sinking – or whether it's scattering onto another object, mainly due to the mental factor excitement.

Later, when you get to the very high stages of the nine levels of [developing] shinez, your concentration is so good and you have applied antidotes to sinking and excitement to such an extent that they no longer will occur. At that point, if you still have this guard around, if some of your mental energy is going into watching whether there is excitement and sinking, when there is no excitement and sinking, you are not going to be able to use that energy to make the final step to achieve tranquil abiding.

So at a certain point you have to let go of that tendency to watch for sinking and excitement or any other kind of obstacle, and that particular state of mind that lets go is called equanimity – that is this virtuous mental factor. Without doing that, you won't be able to achieve single-pointed concentration, you won't be able to achieve tranquil abiding.

Let's see what the text says.

[C10] Equanimity (btang snyoms)

Regarding equanimity, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is equanimity?

RESPONSE: It is a discordance with afflictive states, an evenness of mind, a dwelling in a natural state, and a spontaneous abiding, within abiding in non-attachment, non-hatred, non-ignorance, as well as effort. It has the function of not allowing an opportunity for afflictions.

This precise definition may not connect so clearly with tranquil abiding, we will see more on that later. [Here it shows that] equanimity sort of coincides with non-attachment, non-hatred, and non-ignorance, which are those mental states that, similar to wisdom, prevent the arising of the delusions.

Just as it has been said above, in dependence on the techniques for internally setting the mind single-pointedly on an object of observation, the nine mental abidings are gradually accomplished.

The nine mental states can be differentiated by the various qualities of the concentration; [the first is] if you are able to keep your mind on the object only for a moment; and then, although you lose it, you've remembered enough to bring the mind back to it quickly, you kind of patch up the concentration quickly, that constitutes another level. Then at a certain level you are able to have a continuity on the object, but you might be afflicted by sinking; even though you've got the object, you lose your clarity of it. The nine states belong to the study of tranquil abiding; they are what is referred to here.

When the ninth is achieved, one no longer needs not strive to use the antidotes to laxity and excitement and one attains a spontaneous abiding of the mind (equanimity).

In the footnote here it says: the nine mental abidings are:

(1) setting the mind, (2) continuous setting, (3) re-setting, (4) close setting, (5) disciplining, (6) pacifying, (7) thorough pacifying, (8) making one-pointed, and (9) setting in equipoise.

In general, there are three types of equanimity:

- (1) compositional equanimity
- (2) equanimity which is feeling
- (3) immeasurable equanimity

From among these, this [mental factor here] is compositional equanimity. With regard to this, one should understand the following in detail from the *Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*:

- the system of setting the mind on the object of observation on the occasion of the first mental abiding,
- the system of relying upon the antidotes to laxity and excitement, up to the system of increasing abiding on the object of observation, ...

There are various antidotes to laxity and excitement, so you need to know those at first since if you don't apply them, those are the faults. Do you remember from Rinpoche's teachings what the five faults were?

(1) Laziness – with the four antidotes faith, giving rise to aspiration, giving rise to effort, giving rise to pliancy or flexibility.

The other four each have one antidote. So there are eight antidotes to the five faults.

(2) Forgetting the oral instruction; when you can't even remember your object. With its antidote of developing mindfulness of the object, that is, finding the object of observation and being mindful of it.

(3) Laxity and excitement.

(4) Non-application

(5) Over-application. Equanimity is the antidote to over-application, which is when you are applying some effort, even when you don't need to any longer.

<i>5 Faults</i>	<i>8 Antidotes</i>
Laziness	Faith
	Aspiration
	Effort
	Pliancy
Forgetting the advice (non-identification of)	Mindfulness
Laxity and excitement	Introspection
Non-application	Application
(Over-) Application	Equanimity

- at those times, the system of relying on the antidotes to laxity and excitement,
- finally, the system of achieving single-pointed abiding in meditative stabilization,
- the demarcation between whether or not it is necessary to be on the alert for laxity and excitement,
- the system for attaining equanimity, and so forth.

The function of equanimity is specified as “not allowing an opportunity for afflictions,” because upon attaining the ninth mental abiding, the manifest afflictions of the desire realm are easily overcome, and in particular, laxity and excitement do not arise during meditative equipoise.

If you have a lot of afflictions you can develop an aspiration to develop single-pointed concentration because even without realizing emptiness, just by developing single-pointed concentration, your mind is separated from the desire realm mind and from the delusions, of the desire realm; it's a much more subtle kind of mind. As said here, the desire realm afflictions are non-manifest at that point, when you were in that equipoise. All of your depression would be gone! It would be contradictory – you couldn't have that. If you are plagued by depression or strong desires, unfulfilled desires or anger – develop single-pointed concentration, which itself can act as an antidote to this.

[C11] Non-harmfulness (rnam par mi 'tshe ba)

Non-harmfulness – how else do we call this? Non-violence, ahimsa.

Regarding non-harmfulness, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is non-harmfulness?

RESPONSE: It is a mind of compassion and is involved with non-hatred. It has the function of not inflicting injury.

This is talking about the Buddhist meaning of the word. It's not talking about what you might think Gandhi or Martin Luther King meant by it. Non-harmfulness or non-violence is coincident with compassion. Non-hatred is coincident with love. These two minds are very similar but yet still different.

What is the difference between compassion and love, what do they mean in Buddhism?

Love and compassion don't have to take all living beings, all sentient beings as their object - great compassion or great love (mahakaruna and mahamaitry) would include all. And compassion is not just seeing the suffering of others, it is the desire to free others, or another, from some suffering. Like for instance when you see a child suffering, compassion would be the heartfelt wish to free them from that suffering. Love is the other side of the coin; if you have compassion, you will have the capacity for love, but it may not be manifest at the same time. Love is a state of mind perceiving the object and wanting it to be conjoined with happiness. Say, one moment you see the child and it is crying and you want it to be free of that suffering, and also you want it to be happy.

Can these be present at the same time, love and compassion? Or would they have to alternate, like hatred and compassion for example? [Take for example] if you realize something directly, you might also realize something else indirectly, although it's not appearing to you; similarly, if one of them is present, you might say the other one is implicit, but it may not be manifest. In that sense it maybe possible for both to be present at the same time. But can they be manifest simultaneously, when they have different aspects, different ways of looking at the object? Considering that there can only be one mode of apprehension - talking about minds and mental factors - one of them wants the object to be free of suffering, one wants the object to be endowed with happiness.

Non-violence is different from non-hatred. Non-hatred is specifically of the nature of love - wanting others to be happy. Non-violence hesitates and doesn't want others to suffer. They are very similar, I like to think of it like two sides of a coin showing different faces.

Just as it has been said above, non-harmfulness is a patience that, lacking malice,...

Malice is one of the ten non-virtuous actions of mind. You know it from the ten paths of non-virtue, it is one of the non-virtuous actions of mind: covetous, malice and wrong view. It is a state of intense hatred, which really made up its mind that someone else should suffer.

non-harmfulness is a patience that, lacking malice, observes suffering sentient beings, thinking, "May they be free of that [suffering]!" This abandoning harm to sentient beings, or non-harmfulness, is the essence of the meaning of the Conqueror's scriptures.

We come across many of the 'essences'. we could say all of the Buddha's teachings finally could be included in method and wisdom, and method is the Buddha's technique of how to deal with relative truth, the supreme methods being bodhicitta, renunciation - non-

attachment –, then also in tantra there are different kinds of methods, like bliss and illusory body. Wisdom talks about how to deal with ultimate reality; how one cognizes it, how one ascertains it and develops this coolness of mind.

Compassion is the starting point to develop bodhicitta and in the sutra system this is the ultimate kind of method. It's praised again and again; because even if you have a little inkling of bodhicitta, you have to increase that by cultivating and enhancing compassion for others. So it is like it says here, the essence of the meaning of the Conqueror's scriptures.

Here's a very famous quotation:

It is taught [in sutra]:

Patience is the supreme austerity.

the best of ascetic practices

The Buddha said, "Patience is supreme nirvana."
An ordained one who harms or injures another
Is not a trainee-in-virtue.

Even the Conqueror's teaching in the context of bestowing a water strainer in the Vinaya procedural rite is a fine distinction of compassion.

In the ritual of ordination one is given various things, at least symbolically; one of them is a strainer. The Buddha said, you should check the water before you drink it, at the top, in the middle and at the bottom – in the same way as checking before you sit down – to avoid harming little insects or worms that might be in the water. I remember when living in Nepal at Kopan in the water jugs, they were just big earthenware jugs outside, and there were sometimes little larvae and things floating around in them; so to avoid harming them to filter the water first of all. These days I have to put my glasses on in the kitchen to avoid harming ants when wiping the table top there; one has to be careful.

Since one must definitely turn away from harming others as well as their bases,

bases meaning their bodies, right? Is the person the body? Is it the mind then? If not, what is the person then? The person doesn't exist???? So you do not exist? Ultimately you do not exist, ok? But conventionally you do exist.? So are you conventionally your body?

If you say conventionally you are what's called the collection of the aggregates, then what tenets holder are you? That must be Vaibhasika, if you say that the person is the collection of aggregates, maybe you'd have to say the mere collection of aggregates.

If you would have the chance to study tenets, you'd see that all tenets say that the person is just imputed, is just the being imputed upon the five aggregates, especially in Prasangika, the highest philosophical school. So Mark does exist conventionally, you can say that, and Mark does not exist ultimately, that is true, but conventionally, how does Mark exist? He is not the body, not the mind, but the mere name that we impute on body and mind, [or] on the basis of the five aggregates.

Since one must definitely turn away from harming others as well as their bases, the necessity of equipping oneself with a strainer for the sake of abandoning harm to creatures in water has been taught. And on the occasion of giving the instructions, one is cautioned about the necessity to abide in the four qualities that makes one a trainee-in-virtue:

Even when derided, do not deride in return.
Even when someone gets angry at one, do not get angry in return.
Even when hit, do not hit back.
Even when one's faults are exposed, do not expose others' faults.

To deride in return is to get back at somebody who insults us

These are called the four activities of an ascetic, someone who is a trainee in virtue. Good advice, hm? This is very famous – worth remembering and trying to practice. Such as to hold your tongue when others criticize you, not to criticize back – which is easily done, between mothers and daughters. When someone hits you do you hit them back? when you are kids, for sure!

Therefore, if the intelligent ones

synonym for bodhisattvas; kind of means high faculty bodhisattvas

analyze and understand this well, they will be able to understand that abandoning harmfulness is the essence of the teachings.

[Discussion of the category of virtuous mental factors]

QUALM: With regard to virtue, are the eleven [virtuous mental factors] which have been explained here exhaustive ?

RESPONSE: In general, virtues are taught to be of five types:

- (1) virtues by way of entity
- (2) virtues by way of relation
- (3) virtues by way of subsequent relation
- (4) virtues by way of motivation
- (5) virtues by way of ultimacy

(1) The eleven explained above – faith and so forth – are specified as being virtues by way of entity because they are generated in the entity of virtue from their mere establishment without relying on other factors such as motivation. Hence, here I have indicated the eleven principal virtues.

By their entities they are virtuous; if they are present, virtue is present.

(2) “Virtues by way of relation” are minds and mental factors that are concomitant by way of the five similarities with the eleven – faith and so forth.

For instance the omnipresent mental factor *sempa*, intention, becomes virtuous in relationship to a virtuous mind.

- (3) “Virtues by way of subsequent relation” are imprints of virtue.
- (4) “Virtues by way of motivation” are, for instance, physical and verbal actions motivated by faith.

If you’ve motivated virtuously at the beginning of an activity, even if your concentration wavers, and during the activity you haven’t sustained that, still the action can be virtuous by the force of your motivation. That’s why we try to motivate at the beginning. Motivation is very, very important.

There are two factors that determine the virtue of an activity, they determine whether the entity of the mind is virtuous or not: the preceding motivation and the concomitant or temporal, which is during the activity.

Motivation is like the example of starting a car, and then it's rolling by the inertia of that, it keeps going in a certain direction. If you have started an activity with a virtuous motivation, even if your mind becomes a little bit distracted, like when you are making prostrations, trying to motivate at the beginning, even if your mind becomes distracted that whole activity, by the force of your motivation at the beginning, becomes virtuous.

Having set this firm motivation you might even get angry in the middle of the class, be distracted or whatever, but by the fact that [you motivated that] you are going to do that activity in order to clear your mind, to develop wisdom, to bring less harm to others, to be less needy, to have more time for others, to develop love and compassion, to ultimately attain enlightenment, thinking, 'For these reasons I'm going to do this now!' – by that motivation the whole activity can become virtuous.

This is very important. Everything is encompassed by, encapsulated by that motivation; it has that kind of flavor, that's what set it into motion.

For instance, when the bodhisattvas at the time of birth, even still in the bardo, says: 'I'm going to take rebirth in this fertilized egg for the welfare of sentient beings, I'm going to liberate the sentient beings.' Can you imagine how the whole life can become virtuous, encapsulated by that flavor, infused by that kind of motivation? To develop that strength of mind takes development of the mind over many lifetimes.

(5) "Virtues by way of ultimacy" are explained to be thusness, because all obscurations will be purified if one meditates within observation of thusness; therefore, they are designated as "virtues" but are not actual virtues.

When the virtues explained above are divided from the viewpoint of circumstances, there is:

- (1) virtue by way of attainment at birth
- (2) virtue by way of application
- (3) virtue by way of activity [directed] in front
- (4) virtue by way of benefiting
- (5) virtue by way of bearing
- (6) virtue by way of acting as an antidote
- (7) virtue by way of pacification
- (8) virtue by way of concordant cause

Let's take a little break.

Let's skip over the explanation of these eight virtues, which is quite simple and you can just read. We will begin the discussion of non-virtue – we are experts in non-virtue. You can also just read the discussion of non-virtues, this is quite easy to understand, and I'd like to start at page 53.

- (1) Virtue by way of attainment at birth is, for instance, the faith that arises through mere rebirth due to the imprints from past lives without depending on familiarization in this lifetime.
- (2) Virtue by way of application is, for instance, the generation of the wish to attain buddhahood in dependence on the four conditions – (i) relying on a virtuous spiritual guide, (ii) listening to the

excellent doctrine, (iii) properly taking such to mind, and (iv) practicing doctrines that are concordant with the attainment of nirvana.

(3) Virtue by way of activity [directed] in front is, for instance, actions of making prostrations and making offerings within observation of the special field of accumulation.

(4) Virtue by way of benefiting is, for instance, actions such as ripening sentient beings by way of the four means of gathering disciples¹⁶

(5) Virtue by way of bearing is, for instance, special wholesome actions which act as the means for attaining high status and definite goodness.

(6) Virtue by way of acting as an antidote is, for instance, virtuous actions that possess the special power to directly destroy the objects of abandonment and the discordant class.

(7) Virtue by way of pacification is explained to be, for instance, true cessations, just as it is said [in a stanza of homage to the Dharma]:

Purity separating from attachment,
Virtue liberating from the bad migrations,
Unique, ultimate, supreme -
Pacifying dharma...

(8) Virtue by way of concordant cause is, for instance, the five clairvoyances¹⁷ and the ten powers¹⁸ that arise though the force of attaining true cessations.

These virtues explained above are either actual or designated.

[Discussion of non-virtues]

Similarly, non-virtues are also taught to be of five types:

- (1) non-virtues by way of entity
- (2) non-virtues by way of relation
- (3) non-virtues by way of subsequent relation
- (4) non-virtues by way of motivation
- (5) non-virtues by way of ultimacy

(1) Non-virtues by way of entity are mostly the [root] afflictions and the secondary afflictions.

(2) Non-virtues by way of relation are minds and mental factors that are concomitant with those afflictions.

(3) Non-virtues by way of subsequent relation are imprints of non-virtue.

(4) Non-virtues by way of motivation are the physical and verbal actions motivated by those afflictions.

(5) Non-virtues by way of ultimacy are [phenomena] included within cyclic existence. Since these are the sources from which superiors generate despondency, they are called "non-virtues by way of ultimacy." Nonetheless, it is not definite that everything included in cyclic existence is an actual non-virtue.

Also, it appears that in regard to the non-virtues explained above, there are many distinctions to be made between actual and designated, and regarding their divisions and functions.

When non-virtues are divided in terms of circumstances, there are:

- (1) non-virtue by way of attainment at birth
- (2) non-virtue by way of application
- (3) non-virtue by way of activity [directed] in front
- (4) non-virtue by way of harming
- (5) non-virtue by way of bearing
- (6) non-virtue by way of discordant class
- (7) non-virtue by way of interference

(1) non-virtue by way of attainment at birth is, for instance, instinctively engaging in murder through mere rebirth due to the imprints from past lives. At the time of debating on words such as these, the action of killing, for instance, is posited as a non-virtue; if the engagement in killing is accepted to be a non-virtue, then debate ensues. However, the classification of virtue and non-virtue here is not presented as debate material for today's new-minded [beginners]. Rather, it is presented as an essential branch for introducing the virtuous and non-virtuous objects of observation. Therefore, without clinging to mere words you should turn your minds inwards and reflect upon how to put it into practice.

- (2) Non-virtue by way of application is, for instance, misconduct of the three doors that arises in dependence on relying on a non-virtuous spiritual guide, listening to a counterfeit doctrine, familiarizing oneself with it through improper attention, and so forth.
- (3) Non-virtue by way of activity [directed] in front is, for instance, offering a blood sacrifice to an image due to adhering to harmfulness as the doctrine in dependence on being deceived by a perverse spiritual guide.
- (4) Non-virtue by way of harming is, for instance, actions harming sentient beings by way of body, speech and mind.
- (5) Non-virtue by way of bearing is, for instance, projecting and completing actions which yield only suffering results.
- (6) Non-virtue by way of discordant class is, for instance, bad views that hinder the generation of uncontaminated paths.
- (7) Non-virtue by way of interference is, for instance, bad views that interfere with all classes of virtue.

Similarly, in regard to the unspecified, there are the divisions of the unspecified by way of entity, and so forth, up to the unspecified by way of concordant cause. Moreover, there is much to be explained with regard to virtues and non-virtues, such as the aspect which appears to be virtue but is not, and the aspect which appears to be non-virtue but is not. However, I will not elaborate on them here. If you wish to understand them in detail, you should look at the Knowledge texts.

At this point I shall utter a few intermediary stanzas:

Despite having encountered the Seven Jewels of Superiors¹⁹
That, when found, bestow all excellent collections in this life and the next,
One discards them and strives instead for the meaningless,
Like the toils of someone winnowing husks, oh how silly!

While one's eye of awareness distinguishing paths from non-paths
Is obscured by the filthy water of foolish misleading words,
One wishes to traverse the paths and grounds
In reliance upon the walking stick of counterfeit doctrine – what a joke!

Hey, hey! Intelligent and eager friends!
If you seek the jewel enhancing the intention to accomplish the two purposes,
Then, following the supreme helmsman, Lo-sang [i.e., Tsong-kha-pa],
You should dive into the wish-granting ocean of the Muni's teachings.

[D] The Six Root afflictions (rtsa nyon)

The six root afflictions are:

- (1) attachment
- (2) anger
- (3) pride
- (4) ignorance
- (5) doubt
- (6) afflicted views

Non-virtue is mainly created by the root afflictions.

The virtuous mental factors are all by nature, by entity, virtuous. How about the root delusions, are they non-virtuous by entity? Why not? Are they not non-virtuous? so they could be virtuous? Let's take a vote. Who thinks they are necessarily non-virtuous? Who thinks they are not necessarily non-virtuous – am I the only one? Who thinks they could be virtuous? Doubt here is deluded doubt, not the doubt in the seven ways of knowing that could be virtuous – this one is definitely the one leaning in the wrong direction.

Actually, they are not necessarily non-virtuous. Two in particular, ignorance and the wrong view of the transitory collection, will be present even in virtuous actions, let alone neutral actions. Any actions we do conjoined or held with ignorance are called

contaminated, or afflictive actions. We talk about contaminated virtue, and the contaminated happiness that we experience.

Talking about the four noble truths we said there are three kinds of sufferings: (1) Suffering of suffering, (2) changeable suffering and (3) all-pervasive, compounded suffering. The first is the ripening effect of negative karma; the second is the ripening effect of contaminated virtue. Changeable suffering is what we ordinarily call happiness, pleasure – but contaminated because the cause of it was contaminated virtue, in the sense that it was created while some of these afflicted minds were active. Not anger and attachment, those are necessarily non-virtuous, but you could create virtue and still have a sense of ego-grasping, ‘I’m doing good’, ‘I’m this real person doing this real action’, ‘I’m so great!’ Ordinarily the virtue we create is just contaminated virtue and therefore only will ripen within samsara. We can dedicate it so it becomes a cause of our continued practice, eliminating obstacles on our path, it can be channeled toward enlightenment, but the virtue itself is still contaminated.

The six root afflictions are not called the non-virtuous mental factors, in contrast to the eleven virtuous mental factors that are virtuous by entity. These are not non-virtuous by entity; some of them are: attachment, anger, pride, doubt and four of the views I think are non-virtuous by entity. Let’s check.

[D] The Six Root afflictions (rtsa nyon)

The six root afflictions are:

- (1) attachment
- (2) anger
- (3) pride
- (4) ignorance
- (5) doubt
- (6) afflicted views

Besides the six root afflictions there are twenty secondary afflictions as a kind of offshoot to those.

Sometimes the sixth one, afflicted views, is separated off and then we talk about ten delusions; five afflictions are non-views and five are afflicted views, because there are five types of afflicted views. We say afflicted or deluded views; we do not call them wrong views, because one of the five afflicted views is called wrong view.

The root of all of them is the ignorance from among the non-views, marigpa, avidya.

[Ignorance here] doesn’t mean not knowing; it’s like a wisdom looking in the wrong way, an improperly discriminating mind. This root affliction is actually perceiving things in the wrong way – is perceiving things to be truly existent as though findable within the basis of designation. It’s the kind of mind that is grasping to the self that is appearing to our mental consciousness as though it really existed the way it’s appearing; it assents to that, grasps to that, adheres to that. That is a kind of pro-active or active kind of ignorance.

When we talk about the lower tenets especially, there is a subsidiary kind of ignorance just not knowing the law of cause and effect – not knowing that one’s negative actions can bring negative results, and because of that kind of ignorance you can engage in negative

actions. Like when someone asks, 'Kill the chicken for me!' and you think, 'no problem!' – not knowing that this action creates negative karma. That's a cause of creating negative actions but not the primal cause; the real cause is this more fundamental kind of ignorance, which is a misapprehension, actively misapprehending things and not just being unaware of them. That is sometimes called the root of samsara.

Nagarjuna mentions in his *Fundamental Wisdom* avidya as the root of samsara, from where all the rest of delusions come.

Chandrakirti, who is a commentator of Nagarjuna's texts, said that a particular one from among these views is the root of samsara, the view of the transitory collection. In Tibetan we call it jigtsog la tawa. So let's talk about this one first.

This view has the same name in the lower tenets, but according to them it means viewing the aggregates, which are changeable, and conceiving them to be a self; this is not the meaning given in the highest philosophical school of Prasangika. The wrong view of the transitory collection [for them] is referring to a self-grasping of persons.

In fact, there are two kinds of self-grasping of persons. Either I can grasp and believe in the existence of my own self-identity, my own ego or my own self; or I can grasp at someone else's self (although I'd probably get kicked!), thinking, 'this person really exist! He really works so hard! He is really so intelligent, so handsome!' or thinking, 'Oh, my friend', 'I love them so much!' – as if there was a real entity out there; that's also a self-grasping of persons.

This wrong view of the transitory collection – the first of the afflicted views – from between those two is [the one that is] only viewing your own self. Your own self which, as we now know, does exist; it exists conventionally, as a mere name, a mere concept that we impute to your body and mind. So perceiving the conventionally existing person that is yourself, that's the referent object, the thing you are referring to, but conceiving it as truly existent. In your own continuum; if Greg was to think of Marcy and conceive of Marcy to be truly existent, that is not what's meant here. For Greg it would have to be if he refers to himself, which is conventionally existing, merely imputed to his own aggregates – it doesn't mean that he thinks of that or has to know that, it just means that that's what he is referring to – so he refers to the conventionally existing Greg but he is conceiving it to be truly existent. That would be the wrong view of the transitory collection in his continuum.

So Chandrakirti said that this is the root of samsara. It sounds like completely different from marigpa, ignorance, over here [among the non-views], that was conceiving of phenomena to be truly existent.

This afflicted view is a kind of a subset of this kind of ignorance. The particular ignorance that conceives phenomena to be truly existent. It is an active thing.

This wrong view conceives a particular phenomenon, the self of your own continuum, to be truly existent. From among the Madhyamika schools, the Middle Way schools, this is

meaning according to the view of the Prasangika school.

The lower tenets say that the name of this afflicted view comes about because it's observing the transitory collection, which refers to the five aggregates, and conceives that to be a self-supporting substantially existing person. Here the referent object would be the collection of the aggregates. The collection of the aggregates is not the same as the conventionally existent person. They are what is labeled, they are not the person. They are the basis of designation of the person, from the Prasangika point of view. The five aggregates is the basis upon we give the name Carrie; on the basis of the five aggregates we can label the person.

Is the person not identical with the five aggregates? No. Is it inherently different from the five aggregates? No. Is it conventionally different? Yes, it's nominally different from the five aggregates; it's not the same as the five aggregates. But it is not **truly** different from the five aggregates; because it is related, it is imputed upon them.

An illustration of the person is not the same. For the lower schools there can always be found an illustration of the person within the basis of designation, within your five aggregates we can point to something, either to the collection itself or the mental continuum, [according to them]. Or in the Cittamatra system, when they talk about a subtle eighth kind of consciousness, the root or foundation consciousness, the alaya-vijnana, we could say that that might be the illustration of the person or the consciousness [for them].

No one says that the body is the illustration of the person, but some say that the continuum of the mental consciousness is. But the Prasangika says: none of those are the illustration of the person. The illustration of Leo is the mere I, the mere Leo imputed upon the five aggregates. You can't find anything within the basis of designation which is an illustration of Leo. That's quite radical!

'View' in general is a particular kind of conceptual mind. For instance 'right view' from the eight-fold noble path doesn't mean single-pointed concentration on emptiness, [while elsewhere] it means to have the right intellectual understanding about emptiness; sometimes the word view is used casually, but it also has a precise meaning in the scriptures. I will check a little bit more, I may not be able to explain it exactly correctly right now. But there is a in nature between the five views and the five non-views, a way of differentiating between them.

But let me just say this bit more about ignorance and the view of the transitory collection.

You have to say all these words together: 'view of the transitory collection'.

If you would just say 'transitory collection' that would not be a view, would it...

And if you would say 'wrong view', that also is not this one. The view of the transitory collection is one afflicted view, and [another] one of the afflicted views is called 'wrong

view’.

Wrong view is what we think of in the ten non-virtuous actions, the ten paths of non-virtue, [where it is one of the three negative actions of mind].

This afflicted view, the view of the transitory collection, and the ignorance [from among the non-views], they themselves are not necessarily non-virtuous. They are present in all of our minds, because we haven’t realized emptiness. They are present in all of our virtuous actions. All of our virtuous actions are contaminated virtues bringing about contaminated pleasures within cyclic existence, which is of the nature of suffering – you are never really satisfied!

There is no real contradiction between Chandrakirti and Nagarjuna. Western scholars tend to want to know which one is right. But they just have slightly different contexts and meanings. If you look in your own mind, what we have previously learned of in the lower tenets, the grasping to a self-supporting substantially existent person, from the lower tenets’ point of view that’s the major cause preventing us from attaining liberation, nirvana. [Liberation according to them is attained] by realizing the emptiness of a self-supporting substantially existent person. The sense of an ego which is the controller, just the sense of being not a completely different entity from the aggregates, not completely identical with the aggregates, like the head salesman/woman; recognizing that that sense of I is empty and doesn’t exist at all, it’s an illusion to one’s mind. Like a mirage, that appears, but is empty of what our mind is attributing to it – some kind of reality. Recognizing that, is in the lower tenets said to be the key leading to nirvana; they don’t mention the emptiness of phenomena. And here as well, the realization of the selflessness of the person is talking about the selflessness of your own person.

Having become familiar with that – that’s why in Tenets we [gradually] build a basis for these things – then here we are talking about the view of the transitory collection, and it is very similar to that. It’s not referring to the aggregates and conceiving those aggregates as a self-supporting substantially existent person; it’s referring to the person imputed onto the aggregates. That’s why it is called the view of the transitory collection, it is referring to the person that is imputed on that transitory collection, takes that as the referent object, and conceives that person to be truly existent.

The ignorance does conceive all phenomena to be truly existent, but the view of the transitory collection is a particular variant of that that is just conceiving the self-identity to be truly existent.

If you look at your own mind and get familiar with the lower view, the sense of ego that seems to be the taster, the experiencer, the controller, me, and then refine your view over time, develop tranquil abiding, calm abiding, and you can see that more clearly, you see it’s appearing in a subtle way as though it appears from its own side without being imputed. It really seems to have an inherent existence, a true existence, an existence from its own side.

That's how it seems! Then to understand its emptiness you have to use logical reasoning, like, 'If it did exist that way, it would have to be findable'; or, 'It would have to be either one with the aggregates or different from the aggregates.'

Didn't we talk about this? If something truly exists, it has to be truly one with the aggregates or truly different from the aggregates.

And the main point is to recognize this self. There after, it's said that within a week you can develop these other points, it is not difficult. That if it existed, it would have to be truly one with the aggregates or truly different. That is called the principal of pervasion. Rilbur Rinpoche will explain this when he talks about the vipashyana section [of the Lamrim Chenmo]. Then you can see that the I is not truly one with the aggregates - if it were truly one with the aggregates, then when this body was destroyed, the self would be destroyed; and there are many other faults too. And it's not truly different from the aggregates, because if it were, then when someone cuts you, you wouldn't say, 'Oh, I'm cut!' - because you are truly different then the aggregates.

So in a short time one can realize the emptiness of that; of what is appearing to your mind, seemingly so real, that view, the [conceived] object of the view of the transitory collection.

There are two things, right - there is the object which is the appearance of the truly existent I, and there is also the subjective aspect that is apprehending that, conceiving it to be true: 'I **do** exist. It's real me! You've hurt real me!' or, '**I**, real **I**, love real **you**!' We never think, 'Imputedly existent I loves imputedly existent you'.

There is an appearance, but like a mirage, it's empty of what it seems to be. The grasping mind, the wrong view of the transitory collection, is the view perceiving that and conceiving it to be truly existent, going along with that [appearance].

When you realize emptiness, what is overcome, is this object itself overcome? Is what it refers to overcome, or is the grasping to it overcome?

The object remains? So when you meditate on emptiness, does the I still appear? When you realize emptiness, what disappears?

First of all, what is happening when you realize emptiness? You are developing another state of mind, which is an antidote to this ignorance. This ignorance, this grasping to the transitory collection is an erroneous mind, right? It's an affliction; it is not necessarily non-virtuous, remember, because it could be the motivating factor for our virtue. But it's a wrong mind, it is an erroneous mind, it is a klesha; and as you develop wisdom, this is going to be eroded, you are no longer going to be believing this. As you are starting to develop a little bit of wisdom that realizes that this is empty of what it appears to be, that it is not really a truly existent self the way it appears, that it's not existing from its own side, you will alternate that in post-meditation by recognizing, 'I'm just merely imputed; I can still function.' As this wisdom grows, this ignorance decreases.

When in a meditative session you develop an understanding conceptually, of a reasoning such as: this self that appears to be truly existent, is not truly existent, because it

arises in dependence upon a mind, on the five aggregates – the basis of designation –, and a name given to that; it's a dependent-arising. The self is not truly existent because it is a dependent-arising. Then – once you have ascertained all of the factors of that logical reasoning, the three modes and so forth – that wisdom can dawn where a moment ago still some ignorance was grasping to a self being really true.

A moment ago you were grasping this to be really true, ignorance was there! Then with this line of reasoning you might have had doubts, or – what comes beyond doubt tending towards the fact? correct belief, [or correct assumption] – you might even have had a belief that it is empty, but that is not yet a realization, right? Once that realization dawns that this is empty, at that moment this ignorance lets go, and you perceive a mere vacuity, 'Ah, it's empty!' At that point all you focus on single-pointedly, is on the emptiness, the mere non-existence of that which was previously taken to exist. Nothing comes in its place; it is called a non-affirming negation.

If Lama Zopa Rinpoche was giving this course, he would now say, 'This finishes the six root delusions.' This is really the basis of all of the delusions, including all of the secondary delusions also, because they all come from the root of samsara; you may call it either ignorance or the view of the transitory collection.

So over the next week you can see who you want to side with, Nagarjuna or Chandrakirti. What is the root of samsara, is it ignorance or is it the view of the transitory collection? – you can think about it for a week.

What does klesha mean? Here we are translating it as affliction, we have said delusion before. Sometimes people translate non-ignorance, what I would call bewilderment, moha, as delusion. Affliction is a good word for klesha.

Regarding the general defining characteristic of afflictions, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

The definition of an affliction is a phenomenon such that when it arises, the characteristic of being very unpeaceful arises, and due to its arising, the mental continuum arises as being very unpeaceful.

The kleshas are disturbing states of mind. What peace there was before that, or is capable of being in the mind, is prevented by the occurrence of the afflictions. The klesha itself is un-peaceful, is agitated; when the afflictions are present, the clarity of the mind is lost. Illustrated by the example of the king's horses running through the mountain stream, which was before that crystal clear, and afterwards all of the mud and rocks and stuff were agitated, the surface was agitated. This would be similar to the afflictions being injected into the mind. When the afflictions are rising in the mind, it becomes solid; the mind becomes unclear, and then, for example, when anger is there, it's very difficult to make the right decision; even though you think, to strike out is the best thing to do, 'nuke them'. Or when attachment is there, 'oh, boy'; it's very difficult to make the correct decision, because that causes the mind to become unclear, un-peaceful and agitated. That is a general characteristic of all of the afflictions.

The Buddha said, 'Nirvana is peace, nirvana is a place where all of the afflictions are abandoned from the root.'

Just as it has been said above, it is an awareness that causes the mental continuum to be very unpeaceful when it arises. The individual entities are as follows.

Attachment. Some people think attachment to be something good. They may concede anger to be a problem, but what about attachment for your loved ones, your mum and dad, your dog or parakeet, and so forth? Or what if we are attached to our guru?

Somebody is asking whether the motivation for an attachment could be virtuous...Is attachment for the guru virtuous? We have to identify what attachment means. When we are just using the word, this is unclear; that's why we are studying in depth like this.

Attachment is a particular mental state, which upon perceiving something which has arisen due to your individual karma as attractive to your aggregates, to your mind and either your mental continuum or your tongue – on the basis of referring to something attractive like chocolate, or tofu, or whatever is attractive – the mind is exaggerating qualities that are not really there; then because of that inappropriate attention you think, 'oh, this is good!', 'oh, this is really good!', 'If I had this, I'd always be happy!' Perceiving something as pleasant, then because of inappropriate attention, attending to it in the wrong way, not thinking of it as in the nature of suffering, impermanent, selfless and so forth, but thinking of it as real pleasure, permanent etc.; 'If I had this I'd always be happy', 'I wouldn't be missing anything, I would leave everything behind!' On the basis of that exaggeration the mind then becomes attached to that, that is when the mental factor attachment comes in. Then either wanting it, or, if you do have it, not wanting to get rid of it.

I have mentioned many times what I think the root phrase of all blues music is: 'My baby left me'. 'I lost my tractor down at the diner... lost my job...my money', whatever – whatever you are attached to, if its lost, that's the blues ensuing, right? That's where the suffering comes, because of the attachment. If you had no attachment, if you didn't exaggerate the qualities, and you recognized that it was impermanent, that you would have to be parted from it eventually, then, when your baby left you, you would be like the Taoist master, who lived with his wife in a hermitage for many, many years, and everyone knew they were very loving of one another, and when the villagers heard that his wife had died and they thought 'oh, my god, lets go up and console him, he's probably grieving,' so they went up, and he was playing the drums, drinking and having a party, and at first they thought, 'how callous, how unloving; he's not grieving!' – but actually he was showing them, you don't have to grieve! We think, even Western psychologists think, that if you don't grieve when there is a loss, when your baby leaves you, if you then don't have a period of grieving, that's unhealthy. Certainly, if you have no idea about the mind, you need some kind of remedial treatment like that, some sense of grieving; but someone like this master could even celebrate what happened to him, recognizing reality when change takes place.

Like the Dalai Lama mentioned, talking also about his own life, if a person was not spiritually advanced but holding a position of reverence, of being, for instance, a king of this country, and then this was taken away from him that could be totally destructive for some people. Like in the case of our dear Richard Nixon, who, when they attempted to impeach him and then he resigned, right, even though he gave the victory sign but became incredibly depressed; he got psychosomatically sick; it affected him very much.

It's said to be one of the greatest sufferings of the gods, when in the weeks before their death – the devas have a limited clairvoyance to see where they are going to be reborn in their next life – they start to perspire, what they never did before; their flower garlands begin to fade; the other gods try to avoid them. It's almost like what happens in the world in certain social circles when you are no longer hip, no longer cool. The mental suffering of the devas at that time is greater than the greatest physical suffering of the avici hell, because they have experienced this realm for such a long time. The gods of the desire realm still have desire realm attachment, they have pride etc., so they experience incredible suffering.

Question: Rilbur Rinpoche answered, upon being asked if we'd see all beings as our mothers but then that would induce attachment, what about that – he said 'that's great!'

Answer: OK! What do we have attachment for? We have attachment for things appearing to us as pleasurable. If you could have attachment for all, the ugly, the poor, the people that are angry at you, that would be great! Even if you still had delusion or attachment, that would be far better than these other states of mind. I think what Rinpoche said had some deep meaning. But let's investigate again looking at what attachment does.

Attachment, based on experiencing something as pleasant, exaggerating its qualities, then either wants us to get it or to keep us from losing it. That's the basic nature of attachment. Anger on the other hand, perceives something as unattractive or unpleasant, exaggerates the faults of that, and wants either to eliminate it or prevent its occurrence again; that can then motivate other things like malicious behavior, spite and other kinds of things. It can cause you to physically – out of anger – to kill, steal, lie.

So attachment is not just feeling sympathy for someone, or wanting to be close to your lama. If you had attachment for you lama, that's is different from having respect and veneration for them. It's a different mental factor. You can have respect and veneration and be very attached to them, or you can have respect and veneration and have no attachment, have the mental factor of non-attachment, which is an antidote to attachment. Oftentimes we think it to be very inhuman not to have attachment.

Still, if you could have attachment for all beings, that would be quite remarkable. We only have attachment based on somebody saying something nice to you, 'oh, they like me' 'they may do something for me' 'I find them pleasant somehow'. We do not have attachment for everyone.

[D1] Attachment ('dod chags)

Regarding attachment, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is attachment?

RESPONSE: It is clinging of the three realms. It has the function of producing suffering.

Like Yoda says. Next time when you watch Star Wars you can check.

Just as it has been said above, it is a mental factor that perceives a contaminated thing to be attractive by way of its own entity and thereupon seeks it.

If phenomena have qualities, they exist merely as imputations; they don't exist by the nature of the object. Some people find Richard Gere incredibly, naturally, by nature attractive – especially in Japan, when I said 'Imagine embracing Richard Gere' and then in the back I heard somebody going 'ahhhhh'. But other people may find him totally unattractive. Same for a work of art.

A friend of mine in Switzerland, after a meditation course that I taught, was a little bit offended because I mentioned that all of the things we call samsaric happiness are of the nature of suffering, they can't really satisfy you, they are not real happiness, right? Talking about contaminated happiness...Her husband owns one of the great art galleries, and she said, 'Oh George, you do not understand, that is **real** pleasure!'

So to see great art, or to listen to great music, these, compared to the ordinary pleasures of the senses – the pleasure people get from hooting for their football-team or eating or sexual pleasure, which obviously can be attractive to intellectuals also – but compared to these, it is almost like the form realm. Like the form realm gods; or if develop single-pointed concentration and remove our mind from the desire realm, even sexual attraction can be diminished, because it's more aesthetic, more intellectual, there is not the same kind of lust, the same kind of attraction in the form realm. So you could almost imagine the pleasures in the form realm to be like playing chess, or listening to music or whatever; that's a little closer to that. But still, if you brought a great work of art or played a great piece of music before a native, who had never encountered these things before, they might find this Rembrandt painting a perfect thing to have their meals on, to mix their dough on or something, and it would be an amazing dog that goes to a gallery and took pleasure in seeing a Rembrandt or a Renoir.

Let's stop there and continue next time. Why don't you try to read this section on the afflictions and the afflicted views, and try to become familiar with this and we continue next time. all of these take as their root, from the Prasangika point of view, ignorance or the view of the transitory collection.

I think this is good, the discussion that we had, that we can have a discussion at this level, with some back ground; if you would have sat in to this discussion that we just had a year ago, or six months ago, for some of you who have studied, I think your understanding would have been quite different, so you can start to appreciate.

Dedication

Recognizing that we did create a virtuous motivation at the beginning – sort of the envelope that colored and encapsulated this activity of listening to the teachings – so that we created some roots of virtue. We might even have had temporal moments of virtuous thoughts independent of that, and some insights during the teachings created virtue.

Due to these virtuous deeds, the karmic imprints left on my mind, which will definitely ripen within cyclic existence as contaminated pleasure, let me dedicate them, so they are not simply exhausted as ordinary virtues might be upon their ripening, but dedicate them in such a way that they may become the cause, cumulatively, over time, of my achieving the two bodhicittas. The conventional mind of bodhicitta, the altruistic mind wishing to set all living beings in happiness, the mind wishing to achieve buddhahood for the sake of all living beings; and the ultimate bodhicitta, may these become the cause of my realizing emptiness, the emptiness of true existence overcoming ignorance, marigpa, overcoming the view of the transitory collection grasping to the I, which is the most sort of sensitive thing that creates our delusions. It's that which gives rise immediately to anger, to attachment – the I, the sense of I.

Due to these merits may it become causes of developing those realizations and achieving enlightenment thereby for the sake of all sentient beings.

Try to seal that within the emptiness of the three spheres.

These merits that have been created are only nominally existent, only imputed. They cannot be found anywhere in what I think of as the basis of designation of the merits.

The activity of dedicating cannot be found anywhere among any of its parts; the act of dedicating, thinking, 'may these merits ripen in this way!' is merely a name.

As is the state of enlightenment, developing these two bodhicittas, bringing about my enlightenment. Although these can arise as dependent-arising, they have no existence as they appear to our minds now, conceptually, they have no existence from their own side. The only existence that is valid is their conventional existence, as being mere imputations. They are empty of any true existence. But still, they function.

DVD 11

Meditation

Relax your body. Relax your mind. Whatever fears, whatever worries there are, recall that from the viewpoint of the Buddha's mind that is realizing reality, they are actually empty, they are empty of the attributes we are projecting upon them.

Place your attention on the breathing.

Just as the great worries of our youth when looked upon years later seem very unworrisome, right now, even the things that we may be so concerned about, desires, doubts, fears, anger, depression, the causes of them, the objective causes, when we think about them later, at another time, will seem much different, they won't cause that same reaction.

Thinking like that, extricate yourself from discursive thoughts, and just focus on the breathing a little bit longer.

When sufficiently calmed, bring your attention further inward as though you are withdrawing from outside, away from the sense organs, to your heart. Place your attention now on the nature of the mind that you begin to recognize as clear light; unobstructing, unobstructed.

Let go of the objects of thought. Try to place your attention on observing the subject mind. Use the mental factor alertness like the mental spy to watch whether you have lost that object. With mindfulness try to bring it back, hold it.

Recognize that we are on a long journey to enlightenment, that's our desire destination, for the welfare of all. Many people whose faith is depending on our achievement of enlightenment, are waiting. Think, 'However long it takes, I will work to eliminate my afflictive states and their seeds, the imprints and develop all of the good qualities, virtuous mental states, the bodhisattva's perfections. In so doing I will overcome my own suffering, find peace of mind, but also in being less needy, less harmful, I will not only be able to avoid hurting others, I will actually have the space and time to help them, and the qualities, the knowledge to be able to help them meaningfully. With merit collected for their benefit I will have resources; with good mind, with patience, I will be attractive and both mentally and physically, be able to exercise some charisma to influence them in the Dharma.

So to be able to fulfill these goals, to achieve enlightenment for the welfare of sentient beings, I have to be able to understand the mind, to overcome the negative states of mind, especially the ignorance grasping to a truly existent self of phenomena in general, and also the very intimate wrong view of the transitory collection that grasps to the conventionally existing I as truly existing.

The wisdom states that act as antidotes to those kinds of deluded states, afflicted states, are hard to generate at first, so I'm going to learn about the six root- and twenty secondary afflictions in order to overcome them. For that purpose I'm going to listen to the teachings, participate, for the welfare of all sentient beings in order to achieve this goal of enlightenment, accumulating merit to develop the two bodhicittas.'

Then bring your attention back to the present.

Teaching 11

What are the six root afflictions? Attachment, anger, ignorance, pride, doubt, afflicted views. OK. And last time we spoke of Nagarjuna and Chandrakirti differing on what the root of cyclic existence is. So what do you think?

It could be the view of the transitory collection, which takes only oneself as the referent object. Amongst the klesha, there is something that acts as the root of all the other afflictions.

We will continue with attachment.

Attachment basically takes an object, and afflicted object, in other words an object that is arisen because of karma and delusion, and perceives it as attractive, because of karma one is experiencing some pleasure when observing that, and because of the habit-energy of attachment – not everyone perceiving something as attractive would generate attachment for it – but when the mind is lacking proper attention, inappropriately attending to that; 'If I had that friends I would always be happy' – exaggerating the qualities of the object in various ways with wrong attention. And then wanting to get it if you don't have it and wanting to keep it if you already have it; those are the main qualities of attachment.

Attachment continued

Regarding attachment, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is attachment?

RESPONSE: It is clinging of the three realms. It has the function of producing suffering.

So that is important to recognize, that attachment is actually an enemy, although it seems to be our friend. In fact we often cultivate it and are upset when others don't have attachment for us.

If your kids or your friends, people you have cultivated as companions, did not have attachment for you, would you be happy? Okay, if you have already experienced the suffering of others' attachment, you could feel relieved, that's true!

What are the antidotes to attachment, the temporal antidotes? Of course the ultimate antidote is realizing emptiness. Meditation on death and impermanence could work.

Knowing it is in the nature of suffering, finally, also.

Atisha brought an oral tradition to Tibet about dealing with anger, and we could think of similar things for attachment. Basically attachment is superimposing qualities on something that it does not have. We could take the four wrong conceptions:

- (1) misconceiving impermanent phenomena to be permanent
- (2) thinking of what is actually in the nature of suffering as pleasurable
- (3) conceiving actually repulsive and unattractive things to be attractive
- (4) seeing things that are selfless and empty of true existence as if they had a self

These four wrong conceptions are a little bit like the misconceptions about the first noble truth. There are four aspects of the first noble truth that bodhisattvas, hearers, and solitary realizers have to recognize – the antidotes for four aspects of, [or wrong conceptions related with] suffering are: (1) impermanence, (2) suffering, (3) repulsive or unattractive, (4) empty and selfless.

In the lower schools empty doesn't mean emptiness [as in the higher schools]. Empty here means empty of being partless in the sense of when we talk of a person who is permanent partless and independent, or when we see something that might be attractive, it just seems like it's just one thing. So to analyze its parts, and see that they are not congruent with that, but discordant with that idea of attractiveness; with the scalpel of the mind opening up the body, seeing the lymph and the feces, the blood and the bones, and recognizing that what your mind has just thought of as attractive is actually the opposite! Even just the skin, if you look at it from the outside, as Shantideva says in the *Bodhisattvacaryavatara*, 'If you are so intent upon lying with your sweetheart, why not get their skin and use it as your pillowcase?' – obviously that's not the same; the mind thinks, 'it's not just that which I find so attractive.' You might think many different parts to be attractive, but analyzing, you will find even those parts not to be attractive the way your mind thought of them. To the ordinary mind this acts as an antidote to an exaggerating mind, so although not inherently repulsive, these parts are not what your mind thinks of in an exaggerated sense.

If you don't have a problem with attachment, as a Buddhist you are not suppose to go around looking at others with disgust or developing repulsiveness toward beings, but if you do have attachment, this kind of analysis acts as an antidote, you would then recognize that they do have a factor, you normally are oblivious of. Think about how the person, who looks so young and attractive now, will eventually get old; this will happen to us as well as to other beings. Imagine the person transforming, becoming unattractive, and so forth. This reasoning acts as cold water to the hot mind of attachment.

Just as it has been said above, it is a mental factor that perceives a contaminated thing to be attractive by way of its own entity and thereupon seeks it.

This here means it is seen as 'that's just its nature'; this is thinking that things are finally in their real entity, their real nature, attractive. It does not mean holding things to be existent by their own entity in the sense of emptiness here.

Regarding this, the Foremost Omniscient [Tsong-kha-pa] says in [his *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*]:

Attachment observes an external or internal object that is beautiful and attractive and then becomes attached to it. For example, just as oil that has soaked into a piece of cloth is difficult to remove, likewise [attachment] spreads on and adheres to its object of observation, making it difficult to tear oneself away from it.

That's an interesting quality of attachment; compared to attachment anger is said to be much more immediately destructive, you create much more negative karma with anger, and it also actually destroys the virtue you've created before. Yet attachment is more pernicious over the long run, because it has a tendency of sinking into the object and being very difficult to eradicate. Anger can be eradicated more quickly, even though you might feel you are an angry personality and it is difficult to overcome that. Actually attachment is much more difficult to overcome. Just look at addicted personalities – that's a manifestation of it. All addictive personalities – whether addicted to drugs, chocolate, ice-cream, sex, love – are manifestations of attachment. Until you recognize the shortcomings of attachment, you are not going to be motivated to overcome it.

First of all you have to recognize the afflictions. You have to identify what is attachment and what is not. Just to like something is not necessarily attachment; finding something attractive is not necessarily attachment. You shouldn't feel guilty and think, 'Oh – I find that attractive!' That's not attachment! Attachment is only arising when you exaggerate the qualities of something, having experienced something as attractive, having inappropriately attended to that – then attachment can arise, wanting to get it and keep it.

The second step in overcoming the delusions is to see the shortcomings and then to apply the antidote. If you are an addicted personality, until you realize really thoroughly the defects of your addiction, you are not going to be really motivated to overcome it. You can do this program and that program, nine steps or twelve steps, no matter how many steps you take, you will not overcome your addiction and attachment. Also if you are pushed into something or have the wrong motivation, if you haven't really seen the defects of your addiction, it won't work.

There are various ways our mind projects exaggerated qualities onto something otherwise neutral. A cat sees something we find attractive and doesn't necessarily find it attractive. A dog might find excrement very attractive, but we don't.

The different stages in overcoming all of the afflictions, if you sincerely think, 'how can I – temporarily – overcome attachment, hatred, pride, doubt and bewilderment?' – first of all I have to see them as enemies. I have to see their shortcomings. Otherwise, if I see them as friends, I have a problem, and attachment is very easy to see as a friend. We are often happy when others are attached to us; and of our own attachment we think, 'that's what drives me!'

It takes a long time to identify the target and see its defects. We need to see it from experience. We are all addicted and attached to various kinds of things, and even if we

actually we have the experience but are not attending to it in the right way, we haven't recognized its ill effects. When we are attached to something, we get some pleasure back, so we don't recognize yet the shortcomings of that. In that sense attachment is quite insidious. We usually see the defects of anger more quickly. So compared to attachment anger is easier to remove on the short term, episodes of anger don't last for long periods of time; attachment can last a long time, because it's like oil sunk into the tablecloth, you can't just sweep it off, like you could do with salt. The example sometimes given is that anger is like sand or salt falling on a cloth, that can be easily eliminated– it is very destructive but can be eliminated more quickly –attachment is more insidious. In the Theravada tradition desire, longing, longing to take rebirth, longing not to be annihilated – that kind of desire is the is said to be root of cyclic existence. Of course when you look further you see there is something more fundamental than that.

Attachment is of three types:

- (1) attachment of the desire realm
- (2) attachment of the form realm
- (3) a attachment of the formless realm

When you've achieved calm abiding, have you abandoned the attachment of the desire realm?

It's not actual abandonment in the sense of a cessation; that you've ceased attachment when you achieve tranquil abiding, because you can fall from tranquil abiding. If you really had abandoned attachment to the desire realm from the root, then it would not come back again, even if you fell from the tranquil abiding, when you no longer had calm abiding. Even if you got involved in worldly activities again and then lost your concentration, [that attachment would not come back if it was abandoned in the sense of a real cessation].

That's called a separation of attachment or abandonment in the sense of a separation from attachment to the desire realm; that's why a person who has achieved tranquil abiding might seem completely – compared to us – peaceful and unaffected by the things causing us to be buffeted around, the objects of attachment. There is attachment to the form realm though, even if one has achieved tranquil abiding, or the first concentration, or the concentrations or absorptions of the formless realm; there is still attachment of the formless realm.

The *Treasury of Knowledge* divides it into two:

- (1) attachment of the desire realm
- (2) attachment for [cyclic] existence

[The *Treasury of Knowledge*] condenses the attachment of the two upper realms [i.e., form realm and formless realm] into one, and takes that to be the attachment for [cyclic] existence.

After the Buddha left home he had two vedic teachers, one who taught him how to achieve the concentrations of the form realm and the other who taught him how to achieve the concentrations, the absorptions, of the formless realm. But still those states or realms are only separated from attachment; they are achieved through concentration, through mundane vipashyana.

Once you have developed tranquil abiding, on the basis of that you can develop

penetrative insight or vipashyana, which is of two kinds: mundane vipashyana and supramundane vipashyana. Mundane vipashyana allows you to achieve the concentrations and the absorptions, the formless absorptions; in Pali these are called the dhyanas. Early translators sometimes called them the trances, the trance states.

Even if you achieve the dhyanas, the concentrations of the form realm or the formless realm absorptions, all you have done is to separate from attachment to the lower realms. But you still have the attachment of the form realm and the formless realm within your mind if you are in the form realm [only having separated from attachment of the desire realm]. And if you are in the formless realm you still have the attachment of the formless realm.

[The *Treasury of Knowledge*] condenses the attachment of the two upper realms [i.e., form realm and formless realm] into one, and takes that to be the attachment for [cyclic] existence.

- (1) Attachment of the desire realm is aspiration for and attachment to the five qualities of the desire realm – form, sound, and so forth – within observation of them.
- (2) The attachment of the two upper realms is condensed into one, known as the “attachment for [cyclic] existence,” because the two upper realms are referred to as “[cyclic] existence” in order to overcome the mistake of taking the meditative absorptions of the form and formless realms as a path of liberation.

If, once you have achieved calm abiding, instead of following the supramundane path – supramundane vipashyana which takes emptiness or selflessness as its object, analyzing that – if instead you were to analyze the grossness of the desire realm and the better quality of the form realm – which is called mundane vipashyana –, you can achieve those various dhyanas, but that itself is not alone a path of liberation, although in some of the non-Buddhist schools it was considered to be moksha. Moksha means liberation; tharpa in Tibetan.

The mundane vipashyana takes the grossness of the realm you are presently in, compared to the realm you are trying to achieve. If you are still a desire realm mind but want to separate from attachment to the desire realm, you think about this short life in the desire realm, about the relative inadequacies of the desire realm compared to the form realm. The pleasures are more gross, the life-spans are shorter; and you think of the qualities of the upper realm. By analyzing in this way, with that very concentrated mind and special insight you can actually separate from attachment to the desire realm, the delusions of the desire realm. We have examples of this in our own life. Once you’ve really seen the shortcomings of something, like when you are in a relationship and you have experienced something unsuitable and you thought about it again and again, then at some point you can easily leave the person who previously had seemed so attractive to you, that you were attached to. ‘Good bye...’ Maybe you can see some analogy that way.

The function of attachment is specified as “producing suffering” for the purpose of making us understand that the root of all suffering within the three realms of cyclic existence is rebirth which connects us to cyclic existence, and the principal cause for rebirth within cyclic existence is attachment, craving itself.

Craving, grasping, becoming – that’s the craving for the next life, for continued life. That’s why in the Theravada, I believe, the cause of cyclic existence is said to be craving. Tanha in

Pali means thirst; it's like thirsting for continued existence, not wanting to be annihilated so to speak.

[D2] Anger (khong khro)

The second of the root delusions is anger. The reason it arises is a similar reason as attachment in that it observes something, but in this case it observes something which is experienced on your aggregates as unattractive due to your karma. It might be someone saying harsh words, or your suitcase has been lost, or your baby left you, or whatever. Having perceived that, you project upon it faults – instead of good qualities – that it does not have, thereby intensifying the underlying feeling of unease about this, until the mind becomes disturbed, and anger ensues, that wants to strike out.

There are various kinds of objects of anger: other beings, suffering – you can be angry at the suffering itself, because that's unpleasant, the toothache or the migraine – or you can get angry at the causes of your suffering. Sometimes people break things that have caused them some suffering, the computer maybe. Of course sentient beings can be perceived as the causes for your suffering too.

Anger is much more harmful. Anger is not just a state in which you feel unpleasant. Anger is actually, when your mind has exaggerated the unpleasant nature of that beyond what is reasonable, and wants to strike out and eliminate that.

That's the identification of anger.

You have to recognize the many shortcomings of anger. You might think you need anger, because otherwise people could take advantage of you. Or that you become clearer and sharper. Or that, when you get angry, you become able to overcome your inhibitions to do or say things you might not otherwise say, and then maybe you feel a certain release. Because when anger arises, you feel a certain tension within you, and the alternatives to letting it out seem unattractive – just repressing it. This is why our society is always going through periods of either repression or expression, also of attachment. The Victorian age was a repressive age in terms of attachment. And the sixties was the decade when people in California just let attachment out. Also anger, we go through periods in our own development where we express anger, then again we become disciplined and repress what feels uncomfortable, and then we feel unnatural. Sometimes if you repress things, they come out some other way.

The Buddhist approach is completely different. It doesn't say, it's good to repress your anger. Sometimes when monks or nuns get angry, lay people who don't know much about Buddhism say, 'Really, monks are not supposed to get angry!' or 'Nuns are not supposed to have attachment!' Of course no one ideally should have anger or attachment, but it's not so much that it would be our vow not to have these mental states, our vows are not to have

the physical and verbal manifestations of these things. Buddhism takes a completely different view of how to deal with anger and attachment; not repressing, not expressing – but a middle way. Rather than needing to hold it in, or needing to let it out, the alternative is to get rid of it completely. It's like the storm clouds in the sky where you might think, 'Either it's going to rain, or the clouds are going to stay there!' – but there are other alternatives, the sun can come and evaporate them, or the wind can come and blow them away. The sun of wisdom – this example is given in the scriptures – in our mind causes the anger to dissipate, it's no longer there if you apply the antidotes through wisdom.

If we eliminate anger, it doesn't mean that we can't be resolute, we can't be decisive, we can't act actively. I don't believe anger makes the mind clear at all. Usually when you are angry, because anger is an affliction, the mind is shaken; you don't really see things clearly and do things you later regret, 'Why did I do that? I know I shouldn't have done that!' You can say words out of anger that in an instant can destroy a relationship or trust that was built up over decades, such that even if you apologize afterwards, it's not the same.

If for instance you have to act decisively, wouldn't it be better to be able to act decisively without anger clouding your judgment? You see injustice, you see that something has to be done, and you can be activated to do that, but if you get angry about it that is actually going to prevent you from really doing a good job.

This is the first point, identifying anger. Being resolute is okay. Let's say for the hundred dollar bill you gave the taxi-driver for the nine dollar ride, he gives you one dollar back, as though you gave him a ten dollar bill; then you don't have to think, 'I'm a Buddhist, I can't get angry.' You can say, 'Excuse me that was a hundred dollar bill I just gave you.' You can be resolute, but if you get angry about it, you can destroy virtuous karma that you have created over a long period of time, that's one of the great shortcomings of anger. Besides creating negative karma for yourself to experience aggression of others, you destroy virtuous karma that you have created over a long period of time.

We don't need to think that anger gives us strength or energy; you can think of bodhisattvas who feel compassion for others, how being motivated by that they develop a certain strength and enthusiastic perseverance to do things. There are examples of old mums, grandmas, who held up cars in order to let their jammed child get out from underneath; they are not angry at that moment but energized out of compassion.

I do not think we need anger to give us energy, but we can use some energy instead from tea and cookies – so let's take a little break.

[D2] Anger (khong khro)

Regarding anger, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is anger?

RESPONSE: It is a malice towards sentient beings, suffering, and phenomena that are sources of suffering. It has the function of acting as a support for not abiding in contact and for misconduct.

Just as it has been said above, anger is a malice that, upon observing the three objects of observation of anger, cannot tolerate them and wishes to harm them. The three objects of observation of anger are:

- (1) sentient beings,
- (2) one's own sufferings, and
- (3) the sources from which these sufferings arise

Regarding the teachings on "the nine bases of malice"²², the *Precious Garland* (stanza 5.31) says:

Harmful intent arises from nine causes
Of intending to harm others:
Bearing senseless misgivings in the three times
With regard to oneself, one's friends and one's enemies.

You might get confused with the three objects of observation and the nine bases of malice: the nine are: in the past someone harmed me, they harmed my friends or they helped my enemies; in the present they are harming me, they are harming my friends, my nation or they are helping my enemies, and in the future there is the fear that they are going to harm me, harm my friends or help my enemies.

These three objects of the three times are called the nine bases of malice. That's a little bit different from the objects of observation of anger, these are different enumerations.

This is just as it has been said in the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*:

Anger is malice, a harsh mind that observes sentient beings, suffering, and the sources of suffering such as weapons and thorns, and intends to harm those objects.

Observes means taking them as the referent object. Sources of suffering in addition to weapons and thorns could be loud noises, thunderstorms, computers...

It has the function of causing one not to abide in happiness in this lifetime, and produces immeasurable suffering in future lives. In this vein, *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* says (stanza 6.3-5):

If one maintains a painful mind of hatred,
mind does not experience peace,
Nor obtain joy and happiness;
Sleep does not come and there is no stability.

He saddens his friends.
He gathers them with generosity but is not served.
In brief, joy does not exist in one
Where anger abides comfortably.

There are really many defects of anger. When you get angry, even if someone prepares the most pleasurable experience for you, sauna, favorite food, when the mind is angry you can't even enjoy those things. When you get angry your expression changes; you look unattractive; you are unappealing to be around, people shun you; you become a type-A personality, which is more prone to high blood pressure, ulcers.

You might think this is good, because there might be a demand for you in the big corporations in Silicon Valley, who could want to hire you for the position of a 'henchman', chief financial officer or in charge of human resources, HRD, who without hesitation or consideration cuts down the staff just before they will qualify for their pension

or something like that.

There are more defects, like anger makes you ruin loving relationships that you have engendered over long periods of time and so forth. But the worst defects of anger are the hidden ones, because you create karma, just as you do with all the klesha, in particular you create the negative karma of feeling the aggression of others, which is very unpleasant, but even more so, like a double-edged sword, not only you create negative karma, but expressing anger destroys the virtue you created in the past. Anger is like a fire creating the causes to destroy the roots of virtue. Either they are destroyed, so they don't ripen at all – it's very hard to have that kind of situation – or usually you postpone their ripening or diminish the intensity of the virtue you have created. Even bodhisattvas, who have not yet attained the path of seeing might have moments of anger that can postpone their realization of spiritual insights and accomplishments. So it's a heavy duty thing!

The *Garland of Birth Stories* (stanza 21.29-33) also says:

Due to the fire of anger, one colors unflatteringly,
Even adorned with ornaments, one does not look good.
Even though one may lie on a comfortable bed,
One's mind suffers due to the agony of anger.

Forgetful of the benefits one has enjoyed,
Tormented by anger, one proceeds on a bad path.
One's reputation and achievements degenerate,
Like the waning moon, one's glory fades.

Although supported by friends,
Due to anger, one plummets senselessly into the abyss.
One's contemplation of benefit and harm degenerates;
One becomes erratic and confused.

Due to anger, one becomes habituated to misdeeds,
And will experience suffering for hundreds of years in the bad migrations.
Even an enemy who goes to great lengths to inflict great harm cannot
manage more than this.

What are the antidotes of anger? Meditate on karma, how does that diminish your anger? You cannot just say, 'that's your karma!', that might make them even more angry.

According to the oral tradition by Atisha, carried on by the Kadampa geshe, there are four methods. In the same sense we project qualities on things exacerbating our attachment, causing our attachment to flare, in the same way we project upon things faults that are not really there and thereby are causing our anger to get larger.

One of these methods was called the arrow and the target, which has to do with karma, based on recognizing that one of the things that causes anger to arise is the thought that it is someone else's fault, not recognizing the karmic causation.

Even though there are targets, even though there are conditions for unpleasantness, unless you created the karma in the past – which is like an arrow that's been going some distance – so even though there is the target of the conditions, you would not experience it, unless you were the one who shot the arrow, unless you created the cause. You can use the meditation on karma to help understand the situation that might be irritating to you, in order to recognize this to be the fruit of your own karma. If you want to be happy, you have

to avoid creating the causes of suffering. By getting angry you are not only going to create more causes of suffering, you are also going to eliminate the causes of happiness.

Also, the other beings are not the principal cause of your suffering, they are only cooperative causes, and by getting angry at them, you are harming them needlessly, they don't have to be harmed.

So this is one of the antidotes, to overcome the idea that the other person or the other thing is the real cause.

Another of our projections holds suffering to be permanent. Like when the fly is flying around your head, buzzing, and you are getting angry about it. One of the things acting to instigate the anger – because as several of you thought, from among the different causes of anger – one thing that causes irritation to arise, is the thought that this unpleasantness will remain. In that case, just think of impermanence, 'This will pass!' – recognize that whatever experience of suffering you have, it will pass!

I remember in Lebanon, my friend Steve and I read a lot of Sufi literature and from it we liked the expression, 'This too will pass'. My friend had invited a friend of his from South Carolina, because his name was Fireball; they wanted to export pigeons back to the States – which seemed totally stupid to me, but they wanted to smuggle hashish and Fireball thought the smell of the pigeons would keep the guards away, but unfortunately the Muslim carpenter they got to prepare the cages told the police and the house was raided and Steve and Fireball went to prison, and I tried to intercede on Steve's behalf with some sleazy lawyer etc. Anyway, I went to the prison, where he by then was in a holding cell outside, with big those bars, and I asked 'how are you doing, how is it going?' And he looked at me and said, 'This too will pass.'

So somehow this understanding had been a great solace, it helped his mind from getting depressed or angry. So to recognize that whatever suffering we have, it will pass. That is also a method.

The third method helps to overcome the situation where we think, 'Excuse me, I don't need this!' Do your children say this? Ah, you say it to them!

Often we think, 'I don't need this suffering!' – as though life owes us a living, as my father used to say, 'I did not promise you a rose garden'. Scott Peck, a Christian psychoanalyst, mentions in his bestseller *The Road Less Traveled* that many problems people have are due to the fact that they expect life not to bring any problems, and when any problem arises, it seems to be insurmountable, like a surprise to them. If you recognize, as we find in the lam-rim teachings, in all the Buddha's teachings, that it is the nature of cyclic existence to be suffering. Instead of thinking, 'I don't need this!' when suffering occurs, to think, 'I need this!' – to recognize the suffering as your guru. It's said in Atisha's oral transmission: recognizing the adverse conditions as your guru, giving you the opportunity to develop renunciation, to develop patience, to recognize the suffering nature of samsara. Rather than thinking, 'There is nothing good about this at all! I don't need this!' – actually

to think, 'I need this!' This is not to be mistaken for what some modern philosophies say, that before you take rebirth you decide where you are going to take rebirth, because you know there are certain lessons you have to learn. From a Buddhist perspective, that's not it – you are thrown by our karma. But maybe in a similar way, there are lessons we have to learn, and we are going to experience that suffering again and again until we stop responding to them in karmically potent ways that create the causes for them to rise again, creating that circle, cyclic existence.

So to recognize the cause of your anger as your guru – this other person who is bating you, insulting you, abused you with faults you don't have at all, you did something good and they actually criticize you: they are your guru! That's very, very powerful!

Because – how does the guru act? The guru is not always the one who goes, 'Oh – you are so wonderful! I'm going to lead you on the peaceful path to enlightenment!' We think that the guru always has to be the loving one, and if someone is wrathful with us we think, 'They are not a guru, they are wrathful!' Take for instance my teacher Lama Yeshe. People used to think, 'Oh, Lama is so loving!' – but to the disciples who were with Lama for a long time, who were close disciples, Lama could be very wrathful. An intelligent teacher, wanting to help students, feeling so much compassion for them dawdling along, sometimes out of compassion has to kick them. You have to be wrathful with them, not out of anger but out of compassion.

So to think of this untoward occurrence to you as your guru! Rather than 'I don't need this', to think, 'I need this!'

The fourth method is compassion, which is the antidote to the projection thinking, 'The other person is suitable to be harmed'. 'They needed it!'

Actually, if you think, other sentient beings are exactly the same as yourself; do you like to be criticized? Maybe if you are seeing the wrathful guru as your aid, maybe you relish criticism, but usually we don't like to be criticized at all. Even if I spill ink on your Persian carpet, or break your Ming vase, I would like you to say, 'Don't worry', 'It needed to be cleaned anyway.'

We want to be loved; we want to feel secure. Other sentient beings are exactly the same. To develop compassion is an exact antidote to the violent mind; remember, non-violence is of the nature of compassion, wanting to preclude harming others. Instead of the mind that's ready to think, 'They really deserve it!', ready to engage in harm, we must develop the mind always hesitating to engage in harm, because we know what harm is like for ourselves.

This is the fruit of meditating. When you experience suffering – meditate, 'This is due to my karma; this is unpleasant while I'm in cyclic existence, and all sentient beings are experiencing this. I wish they could be free of it!' When you think of their suffering, think of how unpleasant it would be for you to feel that, then you develop some energy to feel compassion for them, wanting them to have wisdom, wanting them to get rid of that unclarity of mind causing them to act in such a way.

So these are some of the antidotes:

- (1) The arrow and the target – karma which then will also relate with compassion. Because if you get angry with someone else, if you harm someone else, you create a cooperative condition for them to create negative karma; or you yourself are the cooperative condition for them originally to steal from you or to harm you or to say these things, because you created the karma in the past. You are the cause of their suffering.
- (2) Impermanence – you could extend to the wisdom of emptiness also, basically the higher wisdoms of impermanence and emptiness.
- (3) To see the situation as your guru – guru-devotion in all its multifaceted sense. To see the situation as something that's teaching you; while you are in cyclic existence, this is the nature of things. Like Milarepa you should be aware of how everything happening can become a lesson. When Milarepa once brought his clay bowl, his only possession that had been encrusted with nettles, down to get some water, it fell on a rock, broke and all that was left was sort of the imprint of the nettles shaped like the bowl. And instead of being upset, he immediately felt joy, because this was teaching him: when the gross body is gone, still the subtle body continues. So as you get familiar with the Dharma, everything you encounter becomes a lesson, like when you see a dead sparrow and think, 'Like that I'm going to die!' – or you see the leaves falling and think of impermanence, or you see other people suffering and this becomes a cause for you to develop compassion.
- (4) Finally to meditate on compassion to overcome the tendency to strike out and think that sentient beings need that suffering. They don't need it like we don't need it!

We have to understand that we can't just mentally decide for the change, and effect that immediately. We need to have strength of mind supported by a collection of merit; it takes time. But even while you are getting angry, to be recognizing, 'I shouldn't be doing this!' and to be aware of the evolution of what's happening. Or you fall prey to lust and you follow it, to recognize 'it's not real happiness'; at that point the karma you are creating, as you are not relishing it, you are not rejoicing in the activity, it is not a fully fletched karma; it's not going to have all of the ramifications it would have had otherwise. It makes it much easier to purify later, like, for instance, a boulder which already has a crack in it is much easier to get off the road than one big whole boulder; the crack has already made it more manageable.

We should not be heavy with ourselves, but recognize that even a little candle flame of wisdom generated through some practice is easily blown out – completely blown out by the winds of karma, and we have to regenerate it with effort. Regenerating it with effort again and again will make it become stable and will, as the winds of our karma begin to subside and our flame of wisdom gets bigger, become indestructible.

It's a different paradigm, when we talk about the middle way; it's not a matter of repressing, thinking, 'I'm a Buddhist, I can't get angry!' – or even if you have a rational, 'I can't get angry, because then I will create negative karma!' – and you are holding it in, that's

not the whole thing. You have to use wisdom to look at the situation and see what's instigating the anger. For instance, to understand that it's wrong to think, 'I'm being abused without cause. I've done right, and the people are criticizing me,' because there is no way you could be criticized, unless you created the karma for it in the past. At that moment it takes on a whole different tenor, sort of like looking at it marveling, 'Wow! Look at that. This is karma in action. If I want to avoid this, I have to avoid harming others verbally. I have to avoid all of these things in the future. And this is my guru helping me purify that negative karma. Now that karma is gone. If I don't respond with anger I'm ahead!' Now you can use your businessman's mind, calculating, 'Negative karma gone, no creation of new negative karma, I'm ahead!' If you do this with some good virtuous motivation for the benefit of others, you create a vast store of virtue.

[D3] Pride (nga rgyal)

The literal meaning of the Tibetan is: I'm great

Sometimes people think the five root delusions, when we talk about the five non-views, are ignorance, attachment, anger, pride and jealousy, but it's not jealousy, it's afflicted doubt. The idea that the fifth one is jealousy comes about because of tantra, when we talk about the five aggregates; they are associated with that.

Regarding pride, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is pride?

RESPONSE: It is a puffing up of the mind in dependence on the view of the transitory collection. It has the function of acting as a support for disrespect and suffering.

Some of the lamas talk of pride as one of the greatest obstacles to making realizations. Maybe Rinpoche said recently, 'In the spring when the grass first begins to grow, it grows in the valley, and as the summer progresses it grows along the sides of the hills, but the grass never grows on the snowy peaks.' Meaning that realization grows first in the humble mind, the low mind. Only later, after a long period of time, it grows in the mind of someone who has got a little bit of pride he hasn't eliminated yet. But it never grows in the haughty mind. In general pride is an obstacle that makes you unreceptive for the teachings, and pride also puts yourself in a situation where you are creating negative karma with pride acting as a barrier between yourself and others. It makes it very difficult for you to develop compassion etc.

Just as it has been said above, it is a mental factor that has the aspect of a puffing up of the mind upon observing the basis for puffing up – one's own wealth, qualities

Puffing up or inflated. One can be proud of one's wealth, beauty, intelligence, education, one's lineage, religion, nation etc

and so forth.

Because of being instigated by the wrong view of the transitory collection – a real sense of

I, viewing the conventionally existent I as truly existent – whatever qualities one attributes to that causes one’s opinion of oneself to be inflated like a big balloon. Nose in the air.

Here the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

Pride is based on the view of the transitory collection and is a puffing up of the mind upon observing an external or internal phenomenon that is high or low, good or bad; it involves an aspect of loftiness.

You can actually have pride in being low, in some cases. The view of the transitory collection observes I or mine, never you. That would be a case of a self of persons, observing someone else.

“In dependence on the view of the transitory collection” is specified because all pride is generated in dependence on the innate conception which thinks “I”. Pride is of seven types:

- (1) pride
- (2) exceeding pride
- (3) pride beyond pride
- (4) pride of thinking “I”
- (5) pride of vanity
- (6) pride of slight inferiority
- (7) wrongful pride

- (1) Pride is a puffing up of the mind, thinking that one is superior to lower persons.
- (2) Exceeding pride is a puffing up of the mind, thinking that one is superior to peers.
- (3) Pride beyond pride is a puffing up of the mind, thinking that one is greatly superior even to other superior persons.
- (4) Pride of thinking “I” is a puffing up of the mind, thinking “I” within observing the appropriated aggregates.
- (5) Pride of vanity is a puffing up of the mind, thinking that one has attained what has not been attained.
- (6) Pride of slight inferiority is a puffing up of the mind, thinking that one is just slightly lower than others who are actually greatly superior.
- (7) Wrongful pride is a puffing up of the mind, thinking that one has attained excellent qualities when one has actually gone astray.

Some people are proud of things that are without good qualities even in a conventional sense.

An example would be conceit about having attained excellent qualities, when one has actually been possessed by a spirit. Also, the *Scripture on Discipline* states, “to be made conceited by what is actually a branch of shame...” Just as it has been said, [this pride] is, for example, [an ordained person], having neglected the stipulated boundaries of the Vinaya code as if he is a lay person, conceitedly thinking that he is benefitting others out of his attachment to gain and honor.

These [definitions] are arranged according to what is taught in the *Treasury of Knowledge*. However, the *Precious Garland* explains them as follows (stanza 5.6cd-12):

Pride is of seven types;
I shall explain each of them.

Regarding these, being conceited that one is lower than the lowly,
Or equal with the equal,
Or greater than or equal to the lowly
Is called the {1} pride of selfhood.

Being conceited that one is equal to those
Who by some quality are superior to oneself
Is {2} exceeding pride.
Being conceited that one is superior to the superior,

Thinking that one is higher than the very high,
Is {3} pride beyond pride;
Like sores on an abscess,
It is exceedingly virulent.

Conceiving through obscuration an "I"
In the five empty [aggregates]
Which are called "the appropriated"
Is explained to be the {4} pride of thinking "I."

Thinking that one has attained fruits not yet attained
Is the {5} pride of vanity.
Praising oneself for committing negative actions
Is known by the wise as {6} wrongful pride.

Deriding oneself, saying,
"I am useless," is called
The {7} pride of lowliness.
Such is a brief description of them.

Pride has the function of obscuring any new attainment of the dharma of scriptures and realization due to its disrespect for those who possess excellent qualities, causes rebirth in bad migrations in future lives, and even when reborn as a human, acts as the cause for rebirth in a low caste, as a servant and the like.

People who serve others don't have the full control of their life. They might be happy, but they don't have in the worldly sense, optimum conditions. The karmic results of being proud are to be born in low status, not being respected by others; the cause of being held in high esteem by others is your own humility in past lives. So if you want to have that kind of quality to be able to benefit others, some of these ripening qualities as taught in the lam-rim, allowing you to help sentient beings, to be held in esteem by others, so that your words and actions are noticed, you should practice humility now, for the welfare of others, thinking, 'I'm doing this to be able to help others in the future.'

There are many ways to overcome pride. Once you have identified, what pride is and seen its defects – if you notice that in your own mind, 'Oh! My mind is getting a little bit inflated!' – then you must apply the antidotes. In the lam-rim, in the Buddha's scriptures, it says that the antidote to pride is to meditate on the aggregates, the entrances and the dathus in all of the various combinations in the various realms. These things are very complicated, and if you start to meditate on them, your pride goes down, because you can't understand them well. Although – in a more practical sense – I asked Lama Yeshe once, 'What's the best antidote to pride?' Lama said, 'Heartwarming love!' Why? Because, say for instance, can you feel pride with respect to your mum, can you feel better than your mum if you love her? No! If you want others to be happy, if you feel closeness and affection for them, how can you feel proud of some little minor accomplishment you have.

Therefore, it produces the undesirable in both this and future lives. In this way, the *Precious Garland* (stanza 1.17cd-18) says:

Through being inflated comes a bad lineage,
Through jealousy little magnificence.

Through anger comes a discolored face, and
Through not questioning the wise, stupidity.
These are the results for humans,
But prior to all of them there is a bad migration.

The *Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* says:

Since pride is the greatest hindrance in developing the path in this life, and is the cause for becoming a servant and the like in future lives, abandon it.

When trying to think about the pride of slight inferiority in relation to self-deprecation, it is good to be aware that sometimes words used in one culture are difficult to be expressed in another culture. His Holiness did not quite understand what low self-esteem was about; low self-esteem is not something that was socially prominent in Tibet.

But in a deeper sense – when we are talking about the root of samsara being ignorance or the wrong view of the transitory collection, the klesha etc. – in tantra there is another flavor of what the causes of our cyclic existence are: it's impure view and grasping to that. Impure view is overcome by divine pride. Impure view is part of deprecation, low self-esteem – we all have that. Lama Yeshe used to call this one of the special features of tantra, developing divine pride to see your buddhanature and then to spend a long time meditating on what you can become – on what you are already, instead of identifying with what you are erroneously, conceiving yourself as – that is self-deprecation.

We are completely brainwashed by our advertising industry, or we believe it when our parents say, 'You are dumb, you are a jerk, you are this, you are that', and we tell ourselves that. The antidote to that kind of self-deprecating mind, low self-esteem, is to recognize one's own potential, even while being realistic, seeing that right now I have certain faults, I'm not Einstein, I'm not wealthy, or have the karma to be loved by others, or to be seen as attractive, or to be successful. 'That's my karma, but that can change. I have the potential!' To recognize that within oneself, and imagining oneself in a divine form is the supreme antidote to low self-esteem. Low self-esteem is one of the main obstacles to the practice of higher paths.

[D4] Ignorance (ma rig pa)

There are two kinds of ignorance. One is kind of passive, which is just unknowing and one is actively misperceiving, being erroneous. In general the higher tenets, the Prasangika, not just the Madhyamika in general, would say it is this active ignorance that is the main ignorance. The subsidiary ignorance is not-knowing, the main ignorance there is not knowing the law of cause and effect, which can cause you to engage in negative actions.

The first link of the twelve-links is the ignorance giving rise to karmic formations. According to some of the tenets the ignorance not knowing the law of cause and effect is what gives rise to karmic formations and lets you engage in negative actions. But that only refers to negative actions. This kind of karmic formation means any kind of contaminated actions, virtuous or non-virtuous. Even virtuous actions cause you to circle in cyclic existence. So the real ignorance, which is the twelve-link ignorance, is a misperception of true existence – viewing oneself as truly existent, misunderstanding, grasping to true

existence.

If you really investigate – and some of you might investigate more if you hear this – twelve-link ignorance is said to be not even the innate but just the intellectually formed ignorance, because on the path of seeing you eradicate that and no longer create the same kind of causes to be born in the lower realms. After the path of seeing you no longer create karma to be born in the lower realms.

Regarding ignorance, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is ignorance?

RESPONSE: It is unknowing of the three realms. It has the function of acting as a support for the arising of wrong ascertainment, doubt and afflictions with respect to phenomena.

Just as it has been said above, it is the mental factor of unknowing that is obscured regarding the mode of abiding of all phenomena. It is of two types:

- (1) obscuration that is the mental factor of unknowing
- (2) an awareness that apprehends erroneously

From among these two, the explicit indication in the *Compendium of Knowledge* explains [ignorance] to be the mental factor of unknowing. Since Acharya Vasubandhu also explained it in this way in his *A Discussion of the Five Aggregates*, the assertions of both Asanga and his brother agree. However, Acharya Dharmakirti asserts [ignorance] to be an awareness that apprehends erroneously. In this way, although there are two types of assertions with regard to ignorance – (1) the assertion that it is a wrong conception and (2) the assertion that it is an awareness that does not realize – [both] are alike in asserting that the principal antidote to ignorance is the wisdom realizing selflessness.

Ignorance is of two types:

- (1) ignorance that is obscuration with respect to actions and their results
- (2) ignorance that is obscuration with respect to the meaning of suchness

- (1) The ignorance that is obscuration with respect to actions and their results causes one to accumulate actions for rebirth in the lower realms.

If you were to say that was the first link of the twelve links, the meaning would be very limited, because then in the twelve links it would not be talking about how you circle in cyclic existence, only about how you go to the lower realms.

- (2) The ignorance that is obscuration with respect to the meaning of suchness causes one to accumulate actions for circling in the good migrations.

Also in the bad migrations...In our tenets system, for instance, some people say, you can escape from samsara by realizing that the person is empty of being self-supporting substantial existent, that you don't have to realize the nature of reality, you don't have to realize suchness to escape from samsara. For them this kind of dichotomy would work, because for them to eliminate the causes to create contaminated virtuous karma, you would have to realize emptiness. But for the Madhyamika that one ignorance is the cause for both, the creation of negative karma – only in a very distant sense it's not knowing karma and its result, the unknowing that is the cause to create negative karma – but the immediate cause of creating negative karma is the sense of ego, and the cause of creating contaminated virtue is also the grasping to one self as truly existent.

Its function is specified as “acting as a support for the arising of wrong ascertainment, doubt and afflictions with respect to phenomena,” because other afflictions arise in dependence on ignorance; in

dependence on them [i.e., afflictions] actions arise; in dependence on actions all sufferings of cyclic existence arise. Therefore, all afflictions and faults arise in dependence on ignorance.

To me one of the most powerful quotations in that regard comes from Aryadeva's *Four Hundred Stanzas*, 'Just as the body sense pervades the whole body – meaning it pervades all the other faculties – ignorance pervades all!' – meaning that it pervades all the other afflictions. Either it is concomitant with them, or it precedes them, in causes that instigates those delusions to rise. So it is like the main cause.

It is just as it has been said in the *Commentary on (Dignaga's) 'Compendium of Valid Cognition'*:

One who sees the self
Will constantly adhere to it as "I."
Due to this adherence, one will crave for happiness,
And due to that craving, faults will be hidden [from view].

And:

All faults have as their root
The view of the transitory collection.
That is ignorance.
From it, attachment arises;
From it, hatred and so forth arises.
[The Buddha] himself taught that
The cause of these faults is ignorance.

And:

All faults have it as their root:
The view of the transitory collection.

The Foremost Lama [Tsong-kha-pa] says [in his *Essence of Excellent Explanations, Praise of the Lord Mun*] (stanza 2):

The root of all misery
In the world is ignorance.
That is overcome by seeing
The dependent-arising that you have taught.

In brief, this ignorance is the root of circling in the three realms of cyclic existence. Since it is the basis for all actions and afflictions, ignorance is taught at the beginning of the twelve links of dependent-arising²⁶.

[D5] Doubt (the tshom)

One of the [seven] ways of knowing is doubt, and there are two different views here. Some of the tenets take doubt to mean the mental factor doubt, whereas other tenets say, it doesn't have to be the mental factor doubt. In fact there is a major argument about it. When we here talk about the root delusion doubt – can it be equal balanced doubt? Can it be doubt leaning in the right direction?

Regarding doubt, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is doubt?

RESPONSE: This is being two-minded with regard to the truths. It has the function of acting as a support for not engaging in the class of virtue.

Just as it has been said above, it is a mental factor that wavers between two points within observation of the four truths, cause and result, and so forth. This doubt hinders all virtuous activities and especially hinders the seeing of the truth. Since it will be overcome when one sees the truth, it is said to be a thorough entanglement that is an object of abandonment of the path of seeing.

Although many things are abandoned on the path of seeing, the Buddha mentioned these three in particular: (1) the thorough entanglement, the view of the transitory collection, (2) holding bad morality and conduct as supreme, and (3) doubt.

As Lama Tsongkhapa mentions in his text, it's like when you are trying to get to a destination, there are three kinds of impediments to that: not wanting to go – then you don't even start the journey –, mistaking the path, and uncertainty which path to take. These impediments are related with these three views.

Rinpoche mentioned that even just having doubt about emptiness shakes the foundation of samsara. That does not mean doubting emptiness in the sense, 'Oh! I doubt it!' – but in the sense, 'Maybe emptiness exists! I don't know.' Even to have that kind of doubt – not even leaning in the right direction – just to have an equal balanced doubt shakes the root of your cyclic existence, provides the foundation for you to be able to escape from cyclic existence later, so let alone to have confidence, correct belief and actively trying to understand that.

I doubt we can finish in just one more class. If you could please try to read the section on the afflicted views for next time, and I will try to give a brief exposition and discussion of the twenty secondary mental factors, and then if we meet again in March for the practice day, we will have two sessions and I will have a little time to go over these and how they are related to ignorance, anger, and attachment. So we will talk about that later. I wish we had more time but this is how it has worked out. But there will be a full presentation of everything.

Dedication

If we had moments tonight when we had some kind of a mini-epiphany thinking, 'I don't have to be angry. All these bad things are my guru!' – or some virtuous karma we have created due to the force of our motivation. We have created roots of virtue this evening – for sure. Even if we reminded ourselves that doubt – even doubt – about emptiness can shake the roots of samsara. Rejoicing about that for an instant, when you think about those roots of virtue, creates more virtue. Dedicate this – so that it is not exhausted in just some samsaric episode of happiness in the future.

We dedicate it to the goal in the future – our own enlightenment. In that state, having overcome all knowledge, all compassion, all of our problems, we will be able to effortlessly know what is best for sentient beings. We will be of no harm to them. We will effortlessly be able to effect their welfare, bring happiness, guide them out of samsara. For that reason think, 'May these merits actually ripen in such a way that it brings that about; may they become contributing causes, may these merits contribute to

that goal – my own enlightenment for the welfare of sentient beings, to become a better person, less harmful, less needy, more loving!

Then preserve that in the emptiness of the three spheres, dedicate in the emptiness of the three spheres, to seal that.

The merits themselves are empty, merely labeled, have no inherent existence as they appear to our minds.

Nor does the goal, our own enlightenment for the welfare of sentient beings effortlessly effecting their welfare.

Nor does the dedication have any inherent existence, although right now we are meditating thinking, 'I am dedicating!' Without checking there seems to be an inherently existing act of dedication. That too is merely labeled.

So letting go of those, rededicating within the emptiness of the three spheres, seals the karma, so the collection of wisdom is also created, so this karma cannot even be destroyed by anger. It's almost like making the virtuous karma we created insubstantial, so that even the fires of anger no longer can destroy them.

Conventional dedication is mainly preventing the karma from being exhausted by just ripening in some way the future, they will only be exhausted in enlightenment, if they are not destroyed first. But sealing it in the emptiness of the three spheres prevents them from even being destroyed by anger, wrong view, abandoning the Dharma and so forth.

DVD 12

Meditation

Sit comfortably. Relax your body. Get in the comfortable position. Relax your mind. Place your attention on the breathing.

While watching the breathing, try to apply the mental factor alertness or introspection, watching whether the mind wandered of the object, whether subtle excitement might be present, whether part of your mind is watching the breathing and part of it is engaging in other objects.

Then bring your attention inward to your heart-chakra, away from your five senses. If you are familiar with the object we are looking for – the nature of the mind, the conventional nature, the clear light nature of the mind – if you are familiar with that, the remembering consciousness of that can be easily generated. If not, with a little bit of analysis, remind yourself that the mind is formless, un-obstructing, unobstructed, allowing the different thoughts, different appearances, to pass through it; and rather than focusing on the objective thoughts, focus just on that nature of the mind behind them. Even when the thoughts are fretting through your mind, just defocus on them and focus on the nature behind them; let the objective thoughts and the emotions, responses, just dissipate. Let go again and again of any thoughts.

Within this clear light nature there will always be the five omnipresent mental factors in any consciousness that's activated, awake – feelings, and so forth.

When we understand something, ascertain something, there will also be the five object-ascertaining mental factors, aspiration, and so forth.

By their nature virtuous, the eleven virtuous mental factors are present, some all the time in virtuous states of mind, some of them in groups; but in our minds often we are buffeted by the six root-afflictions, the twenty secondary afflictions, arising out of grasping at true existence, especially at the true existence of our self, and of phenomena.

All sentient beings who have been like our mother numberless times, depthlessly kind, are under the influence of these afflictions if they are still within cyclic existence. No matter what their fortune is right now, whether they are experiencing good fortune, good health, they are attractive and popular, perhaps wealthy, influential, still these mental factors arise, unless they are consciously acted upon by their antidotes. Therefore sentient beings are creating the causes for their future samsara, usually samsara of the lower realms, due to the afflictions. All our mothers who want to be well, mean well, want to be happy, are creating the causes of suffering for themselves.

'With an intention to be able to help them overcome these negative inclinations, to lead them to out of suffering into everlasting blissful happiness, I'm going to participate in

the study of the minds and mental factors – especially the afflictions – tonight, to be able to identify these, to know their antidotes.’

Knowing their shortcomings motivates us to apply the antidotes, so that our self becomes less harmful to others, less harmful to ourselves, less needy. We have the space then to develop good qualities, the proper ground to develop qualities in our mind for the benefit of others, so that we can actually awaken our buddhalineage, develop great compassion, purify our buddhalineage, our buddhapotential, become enlightened for the sake of all sentient beings. ‘For that purpose I’m going to participate in the class tonight!’

Then relax. Bring your attention back.

Teaching 12

There is a question concerning the choice of the mental factors – why are specifically these factors listed? The lamas often answer to this: you have to ask the Buddha. Because it wasn’t the scholars for example who designed this list, it is found in the Buddha’s teachings. In general are these not the only afflicted states of minds but the main ones. People who study this often say that there is one missing that should be here; that’s fear. It’s a state of mind that we experience a lot, and people in the west talk a lot about.

So why isn’t fear one of mental factors mentioned? I think there are lots of mental states – when we talk about the seven ways of knowing, doubting consciousness is one of them, but depending on the tenets that might be either the mental factor doubt or it might be a general state of having a two-pointed mind, having a not-certain mind. Fear might be somewhat similar to those, in that it can have many kinds of manifestations. It can be a state of mind that has arisen because of uncertainty, or certainty. Maybe it’s just not as precise a mental factor as these. In the Buddhist teachings fear is mentioned in what we call one of the two causes of refuge; so it’s not unknown in Buddhism, but it’s not pointed out as a mental factor even in that case, it’s talked about as a general state of mind.

There are some other things like that you might want to investigate. Why these eleven virtuous mental factors? You have to ask the Buddha or maybe today you have to ask Lama Tsongkhapa, because this is the special day of Lama Tsongkhapa. Before you go to sleep tonight you can make some special prayers. One of my teachers, Geshe Jampa Gyatso, from Italy, said that when he was at Sera, when he had doubts about various things he would make prayers to Manjushri before he went to bed, and sometimes things were cleared up the next day! So, we can try!

Doubt continued

Here we are talking about afflicted doubt. Doubt can also be virtuous. Like, even if you are not absolutely certain that things are empty of true existence, but you are leaning in that direction, having that doubt, ‘Maybe – I’m not quite sure, but maybe they are empty of true existence.’ Even if you have that doubt, let alone certainty or correct belief, let alone a realization, an inference, let alone a direct realization! – even just having that doubt can

shake our cyclic existence

QUESTION: What is doubt?

RESPONSE: This is being two-minded with regard to the truths. It has the function of acting as a support for not engaging in the class of virtue.

Just as it has been said above, it is a mental factor that wavers between two points within observation of the four truths, cause and result, and so forth.

Having doubts about spiritual qualities conducive to our spiritual development, conducive toward enlightenment. Just doubting whether or not you will get a parking space in front of the movie theater is not considered afflicted doubt.

This doubt hinders all virtuous activities and especially hinders the seeing of the truth. Since it will be overcome when one sees the truth, it is said to be a thorough entanglement that is an object of abandonment of the path of seeing.

The [three] entanglements mentioned in the Buddha's teachings are abandoned on the path of seeing; in general the intellectually formed afflictions are abandoned, and these are part of that.

As mentioned in the footnote here, the three thorough entanglements are, first the view of the transitory collection, that is to say the intellectually formed form of that. Because the view of the transitory collection is grasping at the true existence of the self, right? Is that going to be abandoned completely on the path of seeing? No. Because the subtle levels of that are abandoned gradually on the path of meditation, all the way up until the end of the seventh bhumi, according to the Prasangikas. But the intellectually formed part of it is abandoned here.

[Then the second is] the view holding [bad] morality and conduct as supreme, and doubt, afflicted doubt.

Sometimes in the Buddha's teachings it says that these three are abandoned on the path of seeing, as though that is all that is abandoned there. There are different explanations as to why those three are chosen out of all of the afflictions that are abandoned at there.

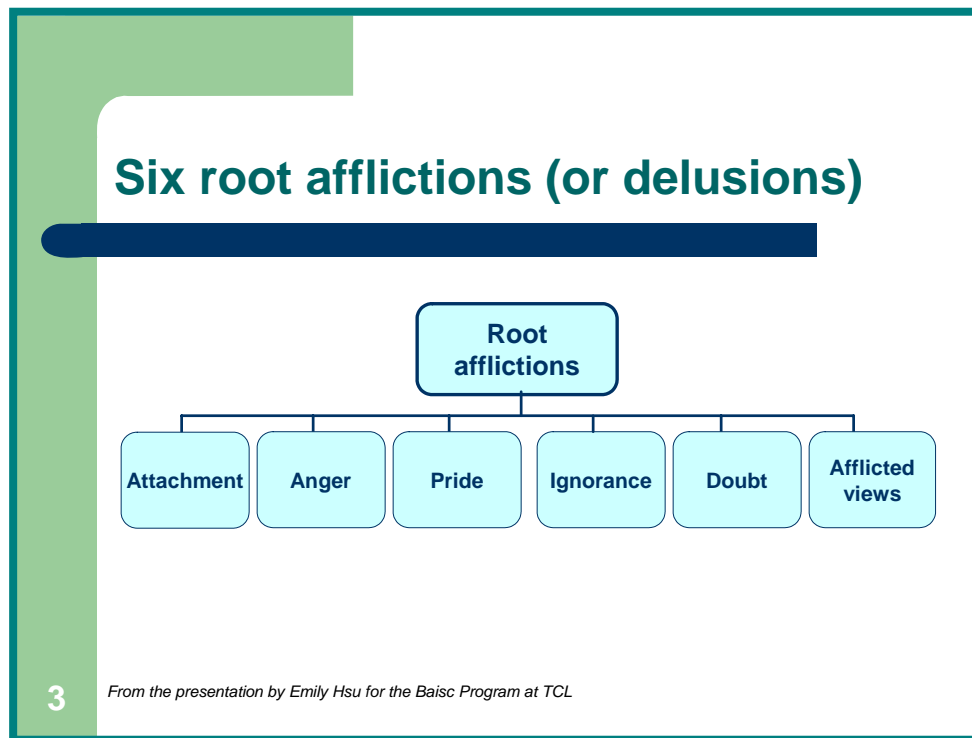
Lama Tsongkhapa praised the explanation, I think it is found in the *Abhidharma*, or in Asanga's texts, that uses the analogy of trying to go to an important destination – there are three states of mind that will prevent you from going there: not wanting to go, going the wrong way, and having doubt which way to go.

The view of the transitory collection is likened to not wanting to go: because of grasping at the self, you do not even feel like you want to attain liberation, you don't want to go on this journey.

And the view holding wrong morality and conduct as supreme is likened to going the wrong way, and doubt is being unsure which way to go. We will encounter that again in other teachings, so maybe it is nice to have heard it for who wants to think about it.

In the Theravada teachings you might have heard the criticism of the Mahayana or the Tibetans, or tantra, because they say grasping to rites and rituals is an object of

abandonment; that is actually this one that we called the view holding wrong morality and conduct as supreme. They take it in a different way, like adhering to certain rituals, like in the Hindu tradition where rituals like bathing in the Ganges etc. are considered to be supreme paths to moksha, to liberation. Sometimes when you read older translations of the Theravada teachings it says that the Tibetans doing all these kind of rituals, that has to be abandoned.



We have talked about the first five root afflictions, which are called the afflicted non-views. The sixth affliction is called view, afflicted view – not wrong view – and it has five divisions. So in a sense we could talk about ten afflictions.

[D6] Afflicted views (lta ba nyon mongs can)

Afflicted views are of five types:

- (1) view of the transitory collection
- (2) view holding to an extreme
- (3) conception of a [bad] view as supreme
- (4) conception of [bad] ethics and modes of conduct as supreme
- (5) wrong view

[D6.1] View of the transitory collection ('jig lta)

This is the principal one of the views. This is the monster – the bogey man!

When I was a kid there was this passage way in my grandpa's house where you'd hide and then come out with this big devil's mask on. They pronounce it slightly different in England. I remember in Manjushri Institute, when we were all together there, there was a comic book, a big bound volume, that was the story of the bogey man – this happy go lucky

guy, grey colored, and he had his bogey wife and his bogey children, and would go off to work at night, his wife making his provisions, and his job was to squeak the doors, and to make the floors squeak, and during rainstorms to make the shutters shake. He was completely benign though – that was just his job, he was just doing his job! I thought this was brilliant, because if kids read that, and if they jumped into bed being scared, their mums could say, ‘it’s just the bogey man, he is doing his job’, taking all of the fear out.

Because we project onto things faults and qualities which are not there, and due to that we develop various of these afflictions. One of the projections is of course the sense of true existence; it seems to be appearing, it arises due to our karma. If you can begin to recognize that – like the bogey man – it is not really there would be very helpful.

So what is the view of the transitory collection? The name means viewing the collection which is subject to destruction. The five aggregates are that collection that is subject to destruction.

The lower tenets, as mentioned before, take the referent object of this afflicted view as being the five aggregates; according to them you are actually observing the five aggregates and conceiving them to be a self-supported substantial existent person. According to the Prasangika that’s not the case; subtly, what’s happening is that you are observing the conventionally existing person, observing your own I – for me to observe Carl and conceiving him to be truly existent would not be this view of the transitory collection, right? – but in Carl’s own mind, observing the sense of a self, which conventionally exists, just Carl, but conceiving that self to be truly existent. That’s called the view of the transitory collection. And according to Prasangika, why it is called transitory is because the self, the referent object, is imputed upon a transitory collection of the five aggregates, but the five aggregates are not the object you are observing. You are observing the self itself and conceiving it to be truly existent.

So let’s see what Asanga said in the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*:

Regarding the view of the transitory collection, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is the view of the transitory collection?

RESPONSE: It is any endurance, desire, intelligence, conception, or view which views the five appropriated aggregates as a real I and mine. It has the function of acting as a support for all views.

All the other views are based on this. There are two points here to talk about a bit more.

Here in this definition it’s not the highest Prasangika presentation, because it says it views the five appropriated aggregates as a real I or mine. Here it’s taking the aggregates themselves as the observed object; in Prasangika that’s not the actual object of observation. So this is not the final definition.

And then, it talks about taking these to be ‘a real I or mine’; what does ‘mine’ mean? Have we talked about this before? It’s interesting, it is something that has to be thought about for quite some time, what is meant by ‘mine’.

'Mine' seems to be the aggregates. For instance, if you are observing the self or you are observing the sense of I within the mind – there are two different states of mind that arise. There is a sense of grasping to the self – to just self itself, and then there is also a sense of mine-ness which is still considered ego-grasping. That state of mind is not observing the aggregates – otherwise it wouldn't be a view of the transitory collection – that's still viewing the sense of my.

If you are asked what the objects of my or of mine are, in general, the close things, then yes, they are your aggregates; your feelings, your discrimination, your wisdom, qualities or faults that you may be sensing to be your own.

There are two kinds of self-grasping within our own mind: grasping to the self of a person and grasping to the sense of 'my'. Actually the sense of my is a subjective mind that has a sense of ownership; it's not observing the things it's owning at this point but just the sense of my.

It is not observing 'my experience' either – sort of 'this is my life'; nor is it observing the 'exaggeration' that we impute on the aggregates. Grasping the form aggregate or the feeling aggregate as truly existent would be an instance of ignorance, the main one that Nagarjuna pointed out [to be the root of samsara]. There is also the other kind of ignorance that is just ignorant about the law of cause and effect etc., based on which one may engage in negative actions; that is not the principle ignorance. The principal ignorance is grasping at true existence, so also grasping at the true existence of the aggregates. This view of the transitory collection is in a sense a subset of that. It is a particular form of that one, which views your own sense of self, or own sense of my, mine, and conceives that to be truly existent.

There is a conventional self – there is a conventional Carl, there is a conventional Frank, there is a conventional Darcy – but [in your own mind] conceiving that to be truly existent would be the first kind of instance of this. The other one is the conventional sense of my: 'who's watch is this? It's mine' 'who's book is this? it's mine'. Conventionally speaking you can talk about merely imputed my – the owner, but when the mind conceives of that sense of mine-ness to be truly existent, then that is part of this view of the transitory collection. So it's not observing the objects of my. If asked to give illustrations of mine in the sense of what are things that are mine? You can say, 'the nose, the eye, the feelings, maybe my life'. It's usually things that are closely related; it is not exactly clear to me whether it includes other things, like your actual physical possessions, your money, your house, your car.... The sense of my arises with them too, but usually in the scriptures it mentions things that are part of your own continuum, that are given as instances of that. So that may be something you want to investigate over the years as you study.

Appropriated means taken closely, intimately. The aggregates are called appropriated for various reasons. Before we entered into this life, when we were in the bardo our mind-stream was not connected with these aggregates yet, but because of our karma we entered the fertilized egg and appropriated that and the ensuing gross consciousness to be our own. In one sense it says 'appropriated aggregates' because this is what we have taken up this

lifetime.

RESPONSE: It is any endurance, desire, intelligence, conception, or view which views the five appropriated aggregates as a real I and mine. It has the function of acting as a support for all views.

So the Prasangikas would say that it does not view the five appropriated aggregates, it views the conventional I or mine imputed on the five appropriated aggregates, as a real or truly existent I and mine.

Just as it has been said above, it is an afflicted wisdom

Remember when we were talking about ignorance, similarly, although there are some kinds of ignorance that are just a kind of unknowing, the main ignorance, avidya, marigpa, was actually a kind of afflicted wisdom, looking at things the wrong way – and the same for the view of the transitory collection

it is an afflicted wisdom that observes the appropriated aggregates and apprehends them to be a real I and mine. What is the reason for calling this view the “view of the transitory collection”? It is just as it has been said in the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*:

Regarding this, since the “transitory” is impermanent and a “collection” is manifold, the basis which it views is simply phenomena that are impermanent and manifold. However, one designates the name “view of the transitory collection” in order to indicate that “a permanent and unitary person does not exist.”

In the *Lamrim Chenmo* it’s probably in the section of the person of intermediate scope.

A person of initial scope is aiming to try at least to avoid suffering of the lower realms in future and trying to find high status, avoiding negativity and creating virtue for that purpose. The person of intermediate scope is a real practitioner, a serious practitioner, someone who is trying to attain nirvana. The person of higher scope has realized that even attaining nirvana is not ‘what it’s cracked up to be’, recognizing that one must attain enlightenment.

In the *Lamrim Chenmo* most of the explanation of the afflictions comes in the description of the person of intermediate scope. Because of the way Lama Tsongkhapa wrote it, it mainly is talking about it from the point of view of lower tenets. Although lama Tsongkhapa explains the view of the transitory collection later, in the lhagtong [special insight] section, when he talks about innate grasping etc., here he says: it takes as its basis ‘simply phenomena that are impermanent and manifold’, as if one is actually observing the five aggregates.

Here, the *Compendium of Knowledge* explains the synonyms – “endurance” and so forth [in the citation above]:

- Since it does not fear the erroneous meaning, it is called an “endurance”;

Endurance is sort of an afflicted patience, being able to put up with this which is not really existent.

- since it seeks the erroneous object, it is called a “desire”;

- since it thoroughly discriminates that object, it is called an “intelligence”;

or wisdom, it is an afflicted wisdom

- since it strongly adheres to that object, it is called a "conception";
- since it observes that object, it is called a "view."

The view of the transitory collection has the function of acting as a support for all bad views. Thus, [Guhyadatta's] *Expression of Realization of the Seven Maidens (Saptakumarikavadana)* says:

When will we eradicate
The view of the transitory collection,
The mother of all views,
And no longer desire the enjoyments of [cyclic] existence?

That's a nice thought to have. When will we get rid of this mother of the 'invention' – remember Frank Zappa, the mothers of invention – of all of our samsara?

Sometimes due to having the good fortune of the proximity of my gurus, or coming into contact with the relics, some good karma ripening, I have some momentary thought, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to be rid of desire rather than always seeking the objects of desire to satisfy!'

Some people might think it would be boring to no longer desire the enjoyments of cyclic existence. 'Excuse me – that's what life is about, the enjoyments, if you didn't desire them you would never get them, and if you didn't get them, what would life be worth?' So even to have this kind of thought I think is quite sublime, 'Wouldn't that be wonderful! When will it happen! What will it be like when I overcome this, and no longer will have that itch that has to be scratched.'

When this view of the transitory collection is divided, there are twenty types of view of the transitory collection:

- (1) view of forms as a self

The twenty here is not so bad because it is just four times five. Most of these are intellectually formed types of the view of the transitory collection, because the innate view of the transitory collection would not view forms as the self. It views the self as truly existent. These are still grosser levels, in accord with the earlier definition.

- (2) view of the self as possessing forms
- (3) view of forms as mine
- (4) view of the self as abiding in forms

Viewing form as self is slightly different from viewing form as mine.

Thinking, 'This is me, this body!' – or if this particular moment you are attractive, thinking, 'I'm attractive!' – or if you are particularly unattractive, someone points at you and says, 'you don't look so good to day!' or 'You are getting old!' – suddenly identifying with that form.

Or to view the form as mine, 'my body!' – that sort of sensing the sense of my
Or viewing the self as abiding in form.
These are the four main categories.

Similarly, due to the divisions into four each with respect to feelings,

Can you imagine viewing the feelings as self? Sometimes you identify with the form, right? How about viewing feelings as self, do you ever have that sense?

So there are the three kinds of feeling: pleasure, unpleasant and neutral. I do not think one would easily identify with a neutral feeling, maybe somebody in the formless realm. But in the same way that you can identify yourself as the body, viewing the body as the self, if pleasure is arising, just to identify with that. Or for us in the desire realm it may be easier for some of us anyway, to identify with pain, 'This is me!' This is an intellectually formed type of the view of the transitory collection, not the innate type.

discriminations, compositional factors, and consciousness [i.e., the remaining four of the five aggregates], there are twenty views [altogether].

Viewing discriminations – you have to check what that might be like.

Viewing compositional factors as the self, so that includes all of the other mental factors.

If someone praises your intelligence, for instance. And viewing consciousness as the self – there is some view like that, isn't it, intellectually formed: the continuum of clarity and knowing, just viewing that as 'that's me, this is me'.

[i.e.,

- (5) view of feelings as a self
- (6) view of the self as possessing feelings
- (7) view of feelings as mine
- (8) view of the self as abiding in feelings
- (9) view of discriminations as a self
- (10) view of the self as possessing discriminations
- (11) view of discriminations as mine
- (12) view of the self as abiding in discriminations
- (13) view of compositional factors as a self
- (14) view of the self as possessing compositional factors
- (15) view of compositional factors as mine
- (16) view of the self as abiding in compositional factors
- (17) view of consciousness as a self
- (18) view of the self as possessing consciousness
- (19) view of consciousness as mine
- (20) view of the self as abiding in consciousness]

Thus, the *Letter to a Friend* (stanza 49) also says:

Nagarjuna had one king as a friend, who he wrote a long teaching to, a very famous text called *Letter to a Friend*; if you have that text you can check a different translation:

It is taught that form is not the self,
The self does not possess form, the self does not abide in form, and
Form does not abide in the self.
Realize likewise that the remaining four aggregates are also empty.

So this refers to those twenty types of the view of the transitory collection, right? Does this make sense?

Furthermore, the *Supplement to the Middle Way* (stanza 6.144-145) says:

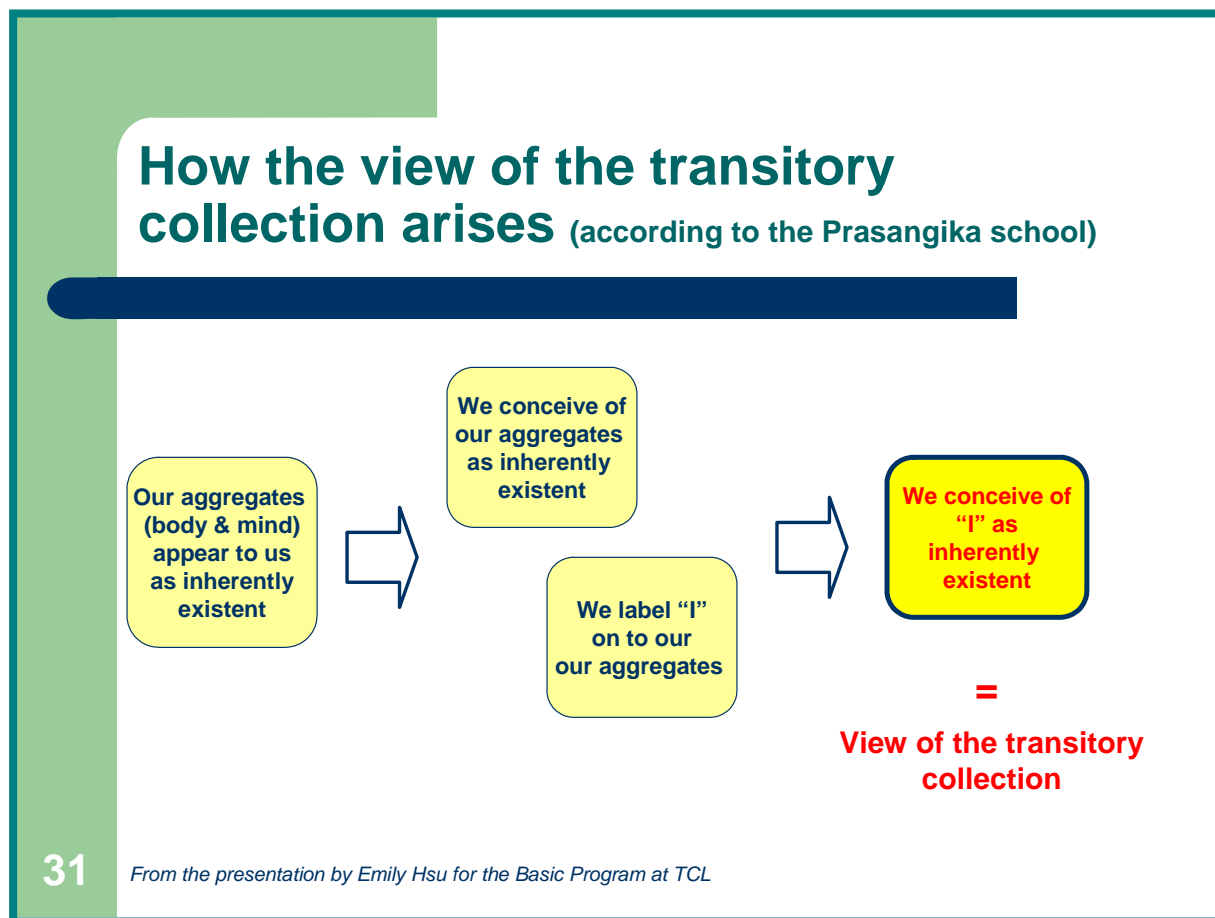
Form is not the self; the self does not possess form;
The self is not in form, and form also is not in the self.
Thus all aggregates should be known in these four ways.
These are asserted to be the twenty views of the self.

The vajra realizing selflessness destroys the mountain of views;
These high peaks in the huge mountain range
Of the view of the transitory collection
Are destroyed together with the self.

These twenty views of the transitory collection are said to be subsumed into the two – the conceptions of I and of mine. If you wish to understand their identities in detail, you should know them from the root text and self-commentary of the *Compendium of Knowledge* as well as [Tsong-kha-pa's] *Illumination of the Thought, Explanation of the Supplement to the Middle Way*.

Concerning the view of the transitory collection we should try not to think of just the definition from the *Abhidharmasamuchchaya*, which is kind of from the Cittamatra point of view, a lower tenet, but from the Prasangika point of view. It is a mind that views the conventionally existent I or mine and conceives them to be inherently existent I and mine. It's called transitory collection because the I and mine are based, or imputed upon the five aggregates which are themselves impermanent. Also the I and mine are transitory, but they are not called the collection. Here the collection refers to the basis of the imputation.

We have a break here.



The second of the afflicted views is the view holding extremes.

[D6.2] View holding to an extreme (mthar Ita)

Regarding the view holding to an extreme, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is the view holding to an extreme?

RESPONSE: It is any endurance, desire, intelligence, conception, or view which views the five appropriated aggregates as being either permanent or annihilated. It has the function of hindering definite emergence by means of the middle path.

Basically a misdirected wisdom.

Definite emergence is renunciation, or the fruit of renunciation. Renunciation could be called definite emergence because it has made up the resolution to definitely get out, definitely emerge from samsara.

Uta Namshe, one of the five texts by Maitreya, – u means center, ta means extreme, namshe means discriminating; in Sanskrit: *Madhyantavibhanga* – is discriminating the middle way from the extremes. Extreme views are not like when you for example think it's good to eat too much. It's talking about a view of phenomena.

The correct view of emptiness recognizes how phenomena conventionally exist as dependent arisings within the scope of not being truly existent, not being findable from their own side. That might be called a middle way, and an extreme view would then be anything erring on either side of that.

One side, giving too much credence to the validity of phenomena, thinking there really is something there. Let's say the Svatantrika view – for those of you who are studying Tenets – that says that even though there is no true existence, there is some inherent existence from the side of the object; from the Prasangika point of view that would be an extreme view. Not the fullest extreme, but it would be on that side, erring on the side of permanence, the side of attributing more than is really there.

Permanence here doesn't mean only permanent, it means erring on that side. We might call this eternalism; the other side or extreme might be nihilism. It says permanence, but it doesn't necessarily mean that the thing will exist eternally; it's just erring on the side of a greater amount of either permanence or validity or existence than is actually there.

The other extreme, erring on the side of nihilism would be saying that 'phenomena do not exist at all, they are just illusions'. Actually, what did the Buddha say? That phenomena are just illusions? No, he said that phenomena are **like** illusions. Phenomena are **like** illusions in that they appear one way and exist in another way; but phenomena **are not** illusions, they do have some conventional validity. So you can err on the side of annihilation or nihilism, negating too much. Like 'there is no cause and effect, there is no need to practice virtue!' or, 'whether they are white clouds or black clouds, they still obscure the sun.' This quotation is attributed to a Chinese monk, Hashan Mahayana, who debated at Samye with Kamalashila, the famous debate at Samye.

So there are different levels of this view. It also refers to a situation where the Buddha

was asked at the time of his teachings: 'When the Buddha passes away, passes into paranirvana, does he continue to exist or is he annihilated?' The Buddha did not answer. He remained silent. This was one of the fourteen questions where the Buddha remained silent and didn't answer, called the fourteen unanswered questions.

So why didn't the Buddha say anything? Because there is a middle way, there is a way of saying what happens. But you have to understand that the Buddha, knowing a person's mind, saw that they could only see these two alternatives. Then it's like the question, 'Do you still beat your wife? Yes or no?' Yes would imply you beat your wife, no that you did beat her in the past but no longer – so you cannot really answer that question. 'Do you still walk to school or do you carry your lunch...' What can you say, if you only have those two alternatives...

So extreme views, from a Prasangika point of view have to do with something more subtle, it has to do with the correct view of reality. If you would think that things, although not truly existent, were inherently existent, which extreme would that be? That's on the material side or the permanent side or eternal side, right? If you thought that because phenomena do not truly exist, there is no law of cause and effect, so there is no need to practice and observe abstention from negative actions – that would be a nihilistic extreme.

Just as it has been said above, it is an afflicted wisdom, which observes the self that is held by the view of the transitory collection and apprehends it to be either permanent or annihilated.

In this presentation it's taking the referent object to be the self, it's not just as when we talked about extreme views in general [above, where the appropriated aggregates were mentioned to be the referent object].

How does it hold [that self] to be either permanent or annihilated? *The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

The view holding to an extreme is an afflicted wisdom which, observing the self that is held by the view of the transitory collection, views it as either being permanent in the sense of being unchanging, or being annihilated in the sense of not transmigrating to a future life after this life.

Is the nihilistic view in terms of a self a common view in the world today? 'After this lifetime – kaput', right? A lot of people say, 'There is just this life.'

Maybe spiritual traditions believing in a soul are erring on the other side, thinking, 'Your self continues to exist! You are going to meet up in heaven with your husband or wife, your loved ones'.

Therefore, since this bad view causes one to fall to the extremes of permanence and annihilation, it is the principal obstacle to progressing on the middle path free from these extremes.

[D6.3] Conception of a [bad] view as supreme (lta ba mchog 'dzin)

The Tibetan chog means supreme, and dzin means holding. Sze gee translates conception, but it means to hold certain of the views as supreme.

Regarding the conception of a [bad] view as supreme, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is the conception of a [bad] view as supreme?

RESPONSE: It is any endurance, desire, intelligence, conception, or view which views:

- views and
- the locus of the views, that is, the five appropriated aggregates, to be supreme, to be chief, to be superior, and to be excellent. It has the function of acting as a support for strongly adhering to bad views.

Just as it has been said above, it is an afflicted wisdom that observes other bad views and the aggregates, the locus in dependence on which they arise, and holds them to be supreme. Here, the synonyms – “supreme” and so forth [in the citation above] – are explained as follows:

- since it is conceited about them being marvelous, it holds them to be supreme,
- since it holds that there is none more outstanding than them, it holds them to be chief,
- it holds them to be superior to others,
- and since it holds that there is none equal to them, it holds them to be excellent.

Geshe Rabten: *A view of superiority is an afflicted state of intelligence that regards either other negative views or the aggregates of body and mind as being supreme, exalted, principal or sacred. It has the function of causing the attachment to false views to increase. Such a view would be the thought, “there is nothing superior in the belief in a self-existent person that is eternal and unchanging”. This kind of thinking only exaggerates and strengthens our false opinions.*

I am not sure; I seem to remember that it does not view all the other four views but only three of them as supreme. I thought it did not take wrong view....I am not sure. I will try to check.

In this context the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

The conception of a [bad] view as supreme is an afflicted wisdom which observes:

- any of the three – the view of the transitory collection, the conception of a [bad] view as supreme or wrong view – and
- the aggregates of the viewer in dependence on which they [i.e., the above three views] arise, and holds them to be supreme.

It does not take the extreme view as supreme.

Its function is specified as acting as a support for strongly adhering to wrong views, because it deposits the imprints for not separating from bad views in this life and future lives.

Why is that? Because it thinks, ‘It’s not only okay to think this way, it’s right! It’s the **best** view! The self **does** exist!’ The self **is** truly existent’ – the view of the transitory collection – ‘This is supreme – this is the correct view.’

[D6.4] Conception of [bad] ethics and modes of conduct as supreme (tshul khriims dang brtul zhugs mchog 'dzin)

In the Theravada tradition this is called grasping to rites and rituals. when it says modes of conduct, this means ascetic conduct. Tsultrim is like my name, Thubten Tsultrim, and it means morality, or ethics. Dang is and. Tulzhug means ascetic practices, here it says ‘mode of conduct’; chog means supreme and dzin is holding. It means to hold certain kinds of ethical systems evolved by beings without any great realization as supreme, something that will actually lead you in the wrong direction. The Buddha referred to different teachers of other times, other universes or very distant times, who wrote treaties about how it was right to sleep with one’s children – because of attachment wanting to have intercourse with their

own daughter, or different kinds of things like this. Having imposed that system, then if one were to follow that and believing this to be correct, would be an example of holding bad ethics as supreme. Does it make sense to you or is my example too bizarre? It is actually mentioned in the sutras and I think Chandrakirti refers to that particular incident also in the *Madhyamakavatara*. Here modes of conduct or ascetic behavior means for instance the sadhus in India who might spend years standing on one leg, or holding their arm up in the sky, or sitting between the nine fires, putting fires in the four cardinal directions and intermediate directions and then sitting as the sun goes above, and enduring that, thinking that these various kinds of conduct eliminate their negative karma, because they are experiencing this pain, and that therefore this is the way to attain nirvana. sounds liek a good idea, right? To get all the pain you can get.

Holding such to be a supreme kind of conduct is this particular kind of wrong view.

Regarding the conception of [bad] ethics and modes of conduct as supreme, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is the conception of [bad] ethics and modes of conduct as supreme?

RESPONSE: It is any endurance, desire, intelligence, conception, or view, which views:

- [bad] ethics and modes of conduct and
- the locus of the [bad] ethics and modes of conduct, that is, the five appropriated aggregates, to be purifying, liberating, and delivering.

It doesn't mean viewing correct ethics and modes of conduct, but viewing the erroneous ones as being purifying, liberating and that what brings about deliverance, or escape from cyclic existence.

It has the function of acting as a support for fruitless fatigue.

Just as it has been said above, it is an afflicted wisdom that observes:

- [bad] ethics motivated by bad views,
- [bad] modes of conduct that prescribe physical and mental activities such as wearing animal skins, and
- the abode of [bad] ethics and modes of conduct – the five appropriated aggregates – to be purifying and liberating.

Here, the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

The conception of [bad] ethics and modes of conduct as supreme is an afflicted wisdom which observes:

- [bad] ethics which [supposedly] abandon immorality,
- [bad] modes of conduct which prescribe attire, behavior, physical and verbal activities and
- the aggregates of the viewer in dependence on which they [i.e., the above two – bad ethics and modes of conduct] arise, and views them as purifying misdeeds, liberating one from afflictions, and definitely delivering one from cyclic existence.

It is simply to be understood that its function is “[acting as a support for] fruitless fatigue.”

If you read about Indian sadhus or maybe you have seen in India, these different kinds of beings engaging in such activities; from a Buddhist perspective, when the Buddha talked about this view, that was what he was referring to, that kind of behavior. Sometimes in the Theravada they might say: the Mahayanists doing pujas and different kinds of rituals is the

same thing – fruitless fatigue; you should just meditate on the four noble truths. But from the Mahayana point of view to be successful in meditation you have to have an accumulation of merit and purify negative karma. The various kinds of rituals we do – praises to Tara etc. – usually are for that purpose.

All of the pujas we do revolve around what's called the seven-limbed puja. The first limb is doing prostrations – bowing – the purpose of that is to accumulate merit, the merit to be an universal emperor as many times as there are atoms under our body; so if you make a long prostrations you accumulate much more merit. It does not mean that if you make one prostration you are going to be a universal king next life; it means you have the karma, you have accumulated that amount of merit, which then could be dedicated towards getting realizations. Can you imagine how difficult it is to be borne as a universal king, having complete regency over the whole universe, or world? You create an incredible amount of karma! By bowing to the Buddha one time, whatever number of atoms are under your body on the earth – in the sutras it says 'down to the golden ground', one has to understand what that means maybe, in the context of Abdhidharma – as many times as there are atoms under your body you create the karma to be reborn as a universal king, bowing to the Buddha once. So it is incredibly meritorious! In conjunction with the *Confession to the Thirty-five Buddhas*, the *Three Heaps Sutra*, making prostrations, by the force of applying the four opponent forces, especially regret and the antidote of reciting the buddhas' names, actually making prostrations is said to be incredibly powerful; that's why it's often done in the preliminary practices. The Buddha, with his omniscient mind, said this. It was not said by lama so and so, the Buddha himself said that in bowing to the Buddha you create this karma as many times as there are atoms under your body.

The second limb is offering – creating the karma of making offerings, visualized and actual physically.

The third limb is confession or revealing the negative karma – feeling remorse, applying the four opponent forces to purify negative karma.

The fourth limb is rejoicing – one of the quickest ways to accumulate merit very easily. When we dedicate our merits at the end of each session, to rejoice in the merits created sort of multiplies that and then to dedicate all of that together. Rejoicing in the virtuous activities of others creates as much virtue as they have, if you are at the same spiritual level as them.

The fifth limb is entreating the buddhas, our gurus, to remain until samsara ends and turn the wheel of Dharma; not just to remain as an icon that we can sit before and darshan and admire, but to remain in order to teach and turn the wheel of the Dharma.

The seventh limb is dedication, which helps prevent the karma, the merit that you've created, from being exhausted.

Of course you can have a wrong view thinking that all the rituals, the drums and the blowing of trumpets, the thighbones and everything, thinking, 'This is the way to liberation! These Theravada monks just walk around with their bowls; we are ringing bells!' That would maybe be that wrong view.

When Yangsi Rinpoche was a little boy he was enthroned in Kopan and when he was growing up at Kopan he asked Lama Zopa or Lama Yeshe, ‘When the Buddha was sitting under the bodhi-tree, was he ringing the bell and playing the damaru?’ Because oftentimes, at every Tibetan puja when you see these lamas ringing these bells very quickly and vigorously, you might think, ‘That’s really important!’, that that in itself is a means of liberation, but you would have to investigate. If you are really offering, thinking that the ringing of the bell is reminding you of emptiness and the damaru is reminding you of bliss, maybe even inciting that, maybe then there is some purpose; but just mindlessly doing those things, maybe there is some benefit, but if you are holding that as supreme perhaps that is very similar to this view.

[D6.5] Wrong view (log ita)

This is familiar to all of us, not just because we have these, but because it’s one of the three actions of mind in the ten paths of negative actions [of body, speech and mind], the ten paths of non-virtue. This is usually considered the tenth [of those].

Regarding wrong view, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is wrong view?

RESPONSE: It is any endurance, desire, intelligence, conception, or view, which deprecates cause, result or functionality, and wrongly conceives existent disintegrating things. It has the functions of severing roots of virtue, holding tightly to roots of non-virtue, and acting as a support for engaging in non-virtue and not engaging in virtue.

Although it is not very literal I like the translation opinionatedness. It does not mean just being opinionated about Al Gore is better than George Bush, or Macs are better than PCs, this means holding very strong views or opinions like: ‘there is no law of cause and effect’; ‘there are no future lives, why are you making charity to this beggar, that is not going to bring any results’ and so forth.

Of the negative states of mind that can eliminate roots of virtue, one that we talked about before is anger, and here is another one. Holding wrong views very strongly can act as a mechanism to actually destroy your roots of virtue. Another one mentioned in the scriptures is abandoning the Dharma. So anger, wrong view and abandoning the Dharma are things to avoid.

Just as it has been said above, it is an afflicted wisdom which views the cause and result of actions, past and future lives, and so forth as non-existent. *The Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* says:

Wrong view is an afflicted wisdom which:

- deprecates, stating, “Past and future lives, actions and their results, and so forth do not exist,” and
- holds that Ishvara, the fundamental nature, and the like to be the cause of migrating beings.

Ishvara, or the Lord, the Powerful One. The fundamental nature is a concept of a non-Buddhist philosophical school that holds that everything arises from some kind of nature, called the fundamental nature.

Here it says viewing things that do exist as nonexistent. How about holding things that do not exist as existing? Would that stop you from achieving liberation? Like the concept of God in Christianity and in Judaism for example. From a Buddhist perspective, although great saints exist in Christianity, but if one were very opinionated and holding very strongly that sentient beings, migrating beings, were caused by God, holding that God created the heavens and the earth and the souls of sentient beings, might be very close to this kind of wrong view; if you were holding it very strongly and in such a way that it prevented you from actualizing other kinds of higher paths. It doesn't mean you couldn't practice virtue on the basis of that, but from the point of view of practicing the Buddhist path it would be damaging.

When wrong view is divided, there are four:

- (1) wrong view that deprecates causes,
- (2) wrong view that deprecates results,
- (3) wrong view that deprecates functionality, and
- (4) wrong view that deprecates existent things.

(1) The wrong view that deprecates causes is the view that good behavior and bad behavior and so forth do not exist.

(2) The wrong view that deprecates results is the view that the fruition of virtuous actions and misdeeds does not exist.

(3) The wrong view that deprecates functionality is the view that one's parents, past and future worlds [i.e., rebirths] and so forth do not exist.

(4) The wrong view that deprecates existent things is the view that the attainment of foe-destroyer and so forth do not exist.

Although in general there are many wrong views, since the wrong view which deprecates actions and their results, past and future worlds [i.e., rebirths], and so forth severs all roots of virtue, it is taught to be the most serious among all wrong views.

Not all wrong views – like holding God to be the creator of sentient beings, that would not have the same effect as the wrong views such as holding the law of cause and effect, or past and future lives, as non-existent – holding those views would sever the roots of virtue, which not all of the wrong views necessarily do. There is some debate as to whether wrong views always deprecate, or, like here, can also hold something that is non-existent as existent.

Geshe Rabten: *A mistaken view is an afflicted state of intelligence that denies the existence of something which in fact exists.* So Geshela's definition is just taking it as depreciation, that is the major form. So there is some debate about that, whether believing things that in fact do not exist, believing them to exist, that is not as detrimental. *It acts as a basis for the obstruction of any wholesome conduct.* An example of a mistaken view would be the denial of any causal relationship between actions and their results; a refusal to believe that happiness is the outcome of virtue and suffering the outcome of evil. Likewise, to deny that a state of freedom from suffering exists would also constitute a mistaken view. In addition to mistaken views that deny the existence of something existent, we can also speak of mistaken views that ascribe existence to that which is non-existent. So that is a kind of subsidiary. The main mistaken view is to deny that what does exist and is conducive to the path to enlightenment.

[Discussion of the category of afflicted views]

Furthermore, when the five types of views are condensed, they can be subsumed into two views:

- (1) views that superimpose
- (2) views that deprecate

When the five are divided, there are infinite divisions – the twenty views of the transitory collection, the sixty-two bad views, the fourteen unspecified views, and so forth.

Unspecified means unpredicted – the fourteen questions the Buddha did not answer, where he remained silent. I remember once being in the jeep with Lama Zopa Rinpoche on a pilgrimage, and I asked Rinpoche some question, and Rinpoche just carried on reciting his mantras – so I realized I had to check up. We expect an answer all the time, but maybe the way our mind is functioning at a given time, maybe it can't be answered to us at that time, because we are holding very strongly that it's one way or the other.

The sixty-two bad views are taught in the *Net of Brahma Sutra (Brahmajalasutra)*. Fearing wordiness if I were to set forth the individual identities in detail I shall not mention them here.

The *Brahmajalasutra*, originating from the Pali canon, is very famous for some ideas also of western scholars who think the meaning of dependent-arising, or co-dependent arising, is that everything is dependent on everything else. Like nowadays in the chaos theory that when a butterfly flaps its wings in South America, as a result of that storms start in Germany. In the *Brahmajalasutra* there is given the example of an intricate lattice of crystals, all of which are reflecting each other, but that is not the general meaning of dependent origination.

There are different levels of the meaning of dependent origination: that phenomena arise in dependence of causes and conditions; the twelve links of dependent origination; that phenomena exists in dependence on their parts – the main meaning in the Svatantrika system; and in the Prasangika system – the most subtle view – that phenomena arise in dependence upon three things, on the basis of designation, the imputing consciousness and the imputation or name, the conception that is given. Those are like three legs of a tripod, all of them are depending upon one another. The imputed phenomenon depends on the basis of designation and the imputing consciousness; the imputing consciousness depends on the basis of designation, because it can't impute unless it perceives the basis of designation. That's said to be the fine view of dependent arising, dependent arising from the Prasangika point of view.

So in the *Brahmajalasutra*, you can read it in the Pali canon – it's published by Wisdom Publications – and also in the Mahayana sutras I believe there is a version of this –, so in there is another section talking about the sixty-two wrong views, prevalent in various times:

The fourteen unspecified views are:

- (1-4) the four views which are based upon the past limit,
- (5-8) the four which are based upon the future limit,
- (9-12) the four based upon nirvana, and
- (13-14) the two views which are based on the body and life-force.

(1-4) The four which are based upon the past limit are the views that the self and the world are permanent, are impermanent, are both, and are neither.

(5-8) The four which are based upon the future limit are the views that the self and the world have a limit, do not have a limit, have both, and have neither.

(9-12) The four that are based upon nirvana are the views that a tathagata will arise after passing away, will not arise, [will do] both, and [will do] neither.

(13-14) The two based upon the body and life-force are the views that the body and life-force are one or different substances.

These views are asserted by the Samkhyas (Enumerators), Charvakas (Hedonists), Nirgranthas (Naked Ones), and Vatsiputriyas (a sub-school of the Particularists). Here, I have merely mentioned the names of these views. If you wish to understand in detail their individual identities as well as the manner in which they arose, then you should consult the precious sutras and the Middle Way texts that comment upon their intention.

Why are these views called “unspecified”? They are called “unspecified” not because they are neither posited as virtue nor as non-virtue. Rather, when these Samkhyas and so forth, proceeding from [the assumption of] a self of persons, questioned whether the self and the world are permanent, impermanent, and so forth, [the Buddha], deeming them to be unsuitable vessels for the time being, did not teach the selflessness of the person, and with the thought that in the absence of a qualified basis a qualifying attribute is inappropriate, [the Buddha] did not respond to these questions. Hence they are called “unspecified” questions. In this way, the *Precious Garland* (stanza 1.73cd-74) says:

When asked whether the world has an end,
The Conqueror remained silent.

Because he did not teach to non-vessels

Not everyone is a suitable vessel, receptacle to the Dharma, suitable to receive the teachings right now.

The profound dharma,
The wise understand that
The Omniscient One is indeed omniscient.

So called scholars, western scholars debate about all of the things the Buddha supposedly didn’t know, because they say when they asked him these fourteen things, he was perplexed, he didn’t answer. But here it says the wise understand that the Omniscient One is indeed omniscient and knows when to speak and when not.

Let’s finish with a brief overview of the twenty secondary afflictions. We will look at them again next time, but now to have a brief overview of them:

[E] The Twenty Secondary Afflictions (nye nyon)

The twenty secondary afflictions are:

(1) belligerence

or wrath

(2) resentment

or grudge or vengeance

(3) concealment

(4) spite

a verbal manifestation of anger

(5) jealousy

or envy – is there a difference in English between envy and jealousy?

(6) miserliness

or avarice

(7) deceit

(8) dissimulation

or dishonesty; dissimulation means not to tell the truth. It is pretending not to have faults that you do have. Deceit is pretending to have qualities that you do not have. One is hiding faults and one is pretending qualities.

(9) haughtiness – similar to pride

(10) harmfulness

or cruelty

(11) non-shame

(12) non-embarrassment

the opposite of the roots of virtue

(13) lethargy

this can result from sinking, but it is not sinking itself

(14) excitement

(15) non-faith

(16) laziness

(17) non-conscientiousness

some of these are the exact opposite of the virtuous mental factors

(18) forgetfulness

(19) non-wisdom

(20) distraction

what is the difference between excitement and distraction? Excitement is to an object of attachment, while distraction is general.

[F] The four changeable mental factors (gzhan 'gyur)

The four changeable mental factors are neither by nature virtuous nor non-virtuous; they change according to the situation. They are:

(1) sleep

(2) regret

(3) investigation

(4) analysis

Sleep doesn't sound like a mental factor at first, like with contact; but if you investigate

what sleep is, it is actually a mental factor causing the mind to be drawn inward. That state can be virtuous or non-virtuous depending on your motivation.

If you regret giving money to the Buddha or to a beggar thinking, 'If I hadn't done that, I now would have had enough change for the bus!' – that regret would be negative. If you regret your virtuous actions that becomes non-virtuous. If you regret non-virtue that's one of the four-pointed forces; that's actually a virtuous action. So it depends, it can change.

Investigation, analysis – if you investigate how to cheat on your income-tax or how to hurt others, how to make better bombs to blow people up, if you do that kind of analysis, it becomes non-virtuous. Investigation and analysis only differ in their degree of subtlety. They can be virtuous or non-virtuous.

So this to bring a bit of closure, to use some contemporary Californian terminology. And let's dedicate and also get some closure for today's merit...

Dedication

We will dedicate the merit we have created that has not yet ripened, even the merit we will create in the future. Think, 'Due to this merit may I quickly achieve the state of a guru-buddha, and by so doing may I be able to alleviate the suffering of all sentient beings and lead them to that very same state – set them in that very same state.'

You can alternate them, try to meditate on the emptiness of the three spheres to let go of your tendency to view these three things, the merits, the goal and the dedication, as truly existent, and then to dedicate again conventionally within that sense, within that understanding of non-true existence.

Although the merits only exist as designations, as imputations, they still function, they still exist conventionally, and they will have results, but they don't exist inherently or truly, as the mind perceives.

Also the goal of our achievement of enlightenment can come about, it's a dependent arising. It doesn't exist truly, inherently, from its own side, but still functions.

And this act of dedication, strongly wishing that these merits ripen in that way, can't be found anywhere, doesn't exist truly, or from its own side, but still functions to bring about the result of causing these merits to ripen, to be drawn in that particular direction of the goals that we dedicate them toward.

And the dedicator is not truly existent.

Thank you very much.

DVD 13

Meditation

Let's begin this practice day with some meditation.

Sit comfortably. With your mind and body comfortable, relaxed. Place your attention on the respiration to begin with.

Then withdraw your attention further inside to your mental consciousness, a subtler object; withdraw it away from the senses as much as possible. With the component of wisdom, the mental factor of wisdom, try to perceive the clear light nature of your mind.

Your mind does not obstruct the occurrence of thought, nor is it obstructed by the presence of thoughts. The actual occurrence of images, ideas, thoughts to your mind, instead of thinking of them as obstacles, they can reinforce that understanding, because the mind allows their presence.

Let go again and again of your attention to outside objects.

In other words draw your attention away from your sense consciousnesses and don't be drawn to external objects via thinking about them, about the various qualities of our world.

Think, 'This is what might be called the conventional buddha nature. All living beings are sharing the same conventional nature of the mind, and like us, exactly equal to us, they want to be happy, they want to be free of suffering. They have the capacity for both of those. They have the right!' Right now, due to ego-grasping, we conceive ourselves sometimes intellectually, conceptually, through a sense of who we are, 'I'm a man, I'm a woman, I'm this person, that person!' and innately we grasp at our self as somehow findable. These two conceptions grasping to a self-identity that doesn't really exist, the way our mind conceives, prevents us from understanding our fluidity in numberless lifetimes. In the past we have been in every position in cyclic existence, every station, high to low. We have been blissfully happy for lives, we have been abysmally unhappy, suffering, tortured. There is nothing we have not experienced, no gender, no appearance, no rebirth-state. All other sentient beings, although they are appearing now in different states of suffering or happiness or attractive or unattractive, virtuous or non-virtuous, all of them have gone through, are going through, the same cyclic existence. Developing a wish for ourselves to be free of this constant poisonous mind of self-grasping, that is the cause of all of our dissatisfaction, the cause of our creating negative karma, the cause of our creating contaminated virtue, not perceiving ultimate reality. The itch that always wants to be scratched, not allowing us to cure it. All sentient beings are experiencing this same dilemma.

Out of a fear or concern that we would not be able on our own to escape from cyclic existence without guidance, without refuge, out of a fear or concern that we would not be able to help all of these living beings eliminate their sufferings and find everlasting happiness without guidance and refuge, turning the mind to our own abilities, our own intelligence, books in the west about science or teachers that teach worldly paths – none of which can really protect us. They might tell us how to better invest our money, find physical happiness this lifetime, find physical health, but all of that has to be left behind. The only real refuge to escape from cyclic existence, to help lead us to buddhahood to help others escape from cyclic existence, the only real refuge is the Buddha himself who taught the Dharma out of his own experience, and the arya beings, the Sangha who put it into practice to the extent of realizing emptiness.

Knowing that their Dharma, that the Buddha taught and the Sangha practices, that this involves both conventional and ultimate manifestations; that to get to the realization of emptiness we need to control our mind, understand it, so for that purpose, in order to get closer to buddhahood for the sake of all of these mother sentient beings, who like us are cycling in samsara, I'm going to participate in the practice-day today, to better understand my mind, to overcome my negative states, develop the virtuous ones, to put myself in a position to ultimately develop the two bodhicittas for the sake of all sentient beings.

Then bring your attention back to the present.

Concluding teaching

The Twenty Secondary Afflictions

I will talk a little bit about the twenty secondary afflictions, I will mention a bit about them and then we will do some meditation.

It's not so apparent in the text by Yeshe Gyaltsen how the secondary afflictions are connected with the root afflictions, but in Geshe Rabten's *The Mind and its Functions*, drawing from some other sources, he actually divides them up into how they are related with the other afflictions. We could say that all the afflictive mental states are related with the root-delusions. Some of them are predominantly associated with anger, some with attachment, some with bewilderment, and some are related with combinations of negative states – say of bewilderment and anger or bewilderment and attachment.

The terms are sometimes translated differently so you could make notes in your root text maybe. Some of you have this book, it's on page 151:

Afflictions derived from anger

Wrath or belligerence, vengeance or grudge, spite, jealousy or envy, cruelty or harmfulness.

1. Belligerence (Wrath)

Wrath, or better, belligerence as in our text, because wrath can also be without anger. Wrath can be virtuous; to Buddhist understanding there is something positive called wrath, like in the wrathful protectors. The term belligerence is pretty good. It's associated with anger; it's an intense state of anger in which the anger is increased and wishes to cause immediate harm. It is sort of like losing your temper – not being in control, you are ready to act out something immediately; this would be this mental factor.

2. Resentment (Vengeance)

Vengeance, or grudge, or resentment, or revenge (best served cold, meaning that if you're going to take revenge on someone, if you've got a grudge and you want to hurt them, it's best if you keep silent about it for a long time until they are unaware, and their defenses will be down.) That's one aspect. Geshe Rabten says, it's like a knot in the mind, that means you are holding something tightly in the mind and not letting it go; like when we say I hold a grudge.

Geshe Rabten: *Vengeance is a knot in the mind that, without forgetting holds on to the fact that in the past one was harmed by a particular person. It intends to find an opportunity whereby to return the harm.*

We want to avenge our ancestors. Different civilizations on earth hold grudges from generation to generation: 'Our ancestors were slaughtered by your people five-hundred years ago, so we are going to harm you now!' This also derives from anger. The first one, belligerence or wrath, was something that was ready to act out, like having lost your temper. This is more like holding something in, but being ready to use it, not letting go, not forgiving and not forgetting.

3. Spite

The third one connected to anger is spite. *Spite is a mental factor that, when preceded by wrath or vengeance and as an outcome of malice, motivates one to utter harsh speech in reply to unpleasant words said by others.*

What do we mean by spite? Do we say we act out of spite or speak out of spite? Out of a real malice...getting back at somebody.

Sometimes we say, 'They speak spitefully!' This is not talking about the meaning of spite in general, like when we think of a spiteful person as someone who is just malicious, but it means someone being unable to control harsh speech in response to some harm received or unpleasant speech heard.

It's pretty clear how these three all arise out of anger.

4. Jealousy (Envy)

Jealousy or envy is also said to derive out of anger. This is interesting, because it seems to be

connected with attachment also, but while the jealousy mind is present in the mind, the main factor present while jealousy or envy are in the mind would be its connection to anger. It's motivated out of attachment to some kind of pleasure. You want something and are attached to that, either to your friends or qualities or wealth or reputation. When others find what you have been seeking it is unbearable, because you can't get that. Does that sound familiar? We all have that! So this is not placed in the category of attachment but in the category of the afflictions derived from anger.

Do you think there is a difference between jealousy and envy? When we use the word envy, do we in the west always think of this mental factor as only negative? We can praise someone saying, 'I'm really envious of you!' – meaning, 'I would like to have your qualities!' Although it doesn't always connote the flavor of this state that is consumed by some unhappiness; sometimes we would say someone is consumed by envy. The connection to anger seems not as obvious.

The main thing here is always to go back and remember, as we have learned in different contexts, how names are completely arbitrary. When we talk about words, it's always like trying to find a word that can connote that well in our own mind, maybe to be able to share it with others without a lot of confusion. It's not as if we are trying to figure out an entity called envy; that we know there is something out there called envy, and we are trying to investigate it. We have pointed out a particular state of mind with certain attributes, and now we are trying to see if this word envy, the way we usually think of the word envy, is well descriptive of that state.

Geshe Rabten: *Envy is a distinct mental factor that, out of attachment to respect and material gain – to my understanding it also includes other things – is unable to bear the good things others have.* And our text says:

Regarding jealousy, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is jealousy?

RESPONSE: It is a deep disturbance of mind that cannot tolerate another's marvelous attributes due to excessive attachment to gain and honor, and is involved with hatred. It has the function of [causing] mental unhappiness and of not abiding in contact [with happiness].

To tolerate is to be patient – it says: it cannot tolerate; that's why it's associated with, derived from anger.

Just as it has been said above, it is a deep disturbance of mind that cannot bear another's success due to attachment to gain and honor.

The way it's phrased here, it almost seems limited. If you were jealous of your companions, if someone you fancy to have a relationship with starts to spend time with someone else, does this fit the definition? It seems rather to be if other people have a reputation or have material gain that you may be envious of; that could be a direct cause according to this definition. Or maybe you could say you're jealous of the other person getting affection, that could possibly be seen as some form of gain. Otherwise, it seems to be limited in this sense.

So this is also connected with anger.

5. Harmfulness (Cruelty)

The mental factor cruelty or harmfulness is directly arisen from hatred alone. We had ahimsa – non-harmfulness or non-cruelty – in the virtuous mental factors. This is the opposite. Geshe Rabten: *Cruelty is a mental factor that, with a malicious intention devoid of compassion or kindness, desires to belittle and disregard others. It has the function of harming the good qualities of oneself and others, acting as a basis for turmoil and physically harming the lives of others.*

Generally cruelty is aimed towards beings you are superior to in some way, either you have power over them or you consider them inferior to yourself. It's hard to be cruel or harmful to those more powerful or higher than oneself, although you can have a grudge toward them. If you temporarily are in a situation where you can't be cruel, maybe you hold the grudge, you have the sense of revenge.

These five are all derived from the root poison of hatred. In Geshe Rabten's text it says anger. Generally when we talk about the three poisonous minds, we would say hatred, attachment and bewilderment. If we were to say that they were derived out of the root-afflictions, we say anger instead of hatred, and attachment, and ignorance instead of bewilderment. Bewilderment can be a bit more general than ignorance, a fogginess of mind.

So keep these in mind:

Wrath or belligerence is an extension of anger, an increase...*wishing to cause immediate harm. It has the function of directly connecting the person who intends to cause harm with the actual means to do so.* Like picking up something and throwing it against the wall, or like the people who shoot their computers, or throw them out of the window. I think of that as losing your temper.

Vengeance is another response to anger in the mind. You hold the grudge, you keep it quiet, but you don't let it go. You are keeping it in mind; it's like tying a string around your finger not to forget something, or note writing – and wishing, intending, to do harm some time in the future.

Spite motivates one to utter harsh speech in reply to unpleasant words.

Envy or jealousy, it that one is unable to bear, unable to tolerate – that's the sense of its relationship with the entity of anger – the happiness of others, or if someone else gets something you want, reputation or material, and I think it can also refer to other qualities such as affection.

Cruelty or harmfulness which is a state of mind that imputes upon others that they are suitable to get hurt. It doesn't have to actually act out some violent action but can be just kind of condescending. In Yeshe Gyaltsen's text, since we need to try and get at the actual meaning:

Regarding harmfulness, the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

QUESTION: What is harmfulness?

RESPONSE: It is involved with anger. It is non-benevolence, non-compassion and non-mercy. It has the function of harming others.

Just as it has been said above, it is a wish, bereft of benevolence, to harm sentient beings.

It could be condescension – out of pride, not even wishing or knowing that you are harming others. If it were condescendence it would be a situation, for instance, where you try to put the other person down.

Here the synonyms – non-benevolent and so forth [in the citation above] – are explained in the commentaries as follows:

- since it is a wish to harm by oneself, it is non-benevolence,
- since it is a wish to engage others in harming, it is non-compassion, and
- since it is a rejoicing upon seeing or hearing others acting [to harm], it is non-mercy.

It is simply to be understood that its function [is as stated above].

All of these five derive from anger.

Anger is a mental factor perceiving some phenomenon to be unattractive for some reason; perhaps because it directly causes some suffering to us or it causes our mind to be unhappy. We can get angry about things that aren't causing us actual physical suffering, right? Much of our anger derives of when someone says something about us. To some people it's like water of a duck's back, words will not affect them at all; other people, when they hear those words, unhappiness arises in their mind. One of the main causes of the root affliction anger is when we experience something we find unattractive and by inappropriately attending to that, we become unhappy. We then exaggerate the qualities of that, that's the projective quality of anger, the conceptual quality, so that it intensifies in our mind to the extent where we find it unbearable, and we might want to strike out, or it can lead to these other secondary factors. That's the main quality of anger. Here, in Geshe Rabten's text it says of anger: *Anger is a distinct mental factor that, in reference to one of the three objects, agitates the mind through being unable to bear or through intending to cause harm to the object.*

It has a stage of being impatient, of not being able to bear something. Are we able to bear suffering? If you are not able to bear suffering that itself indicates that there is some semblance of anger in the mind. We might not think of that as anger. Let's say a bee stings you. You have no choice at that moment, your feeling is pain. If you allow your mind to not be able to bear that, if your mind becomes agitated (that's the distinctive quality of a delusion, right – it disturbs the mind) – so not being able to bear may not be enough to qualify it as anger. It becomes anger when that state causes the mind to be disturbed.

Geshe Rabten: *It has the function of disturbing and roughening the mind. It acts as a basis for tormenting both oneself and others and is a contributory condition for the increase of suffering and its causes.*

So what are the three objects: *When we become angry it is usually with regard to one of three objects: the being or object by whom we are being harmed, the suffering that occurs through our being harmed, or the reasons or causes why we are being harmed.*

Basically, and this is one of our great demons, anger and the belligerence or harmfulness, the vengeance or grudge, the spite we might generate from it, the envy, allowing that state of unbearability to be in our mind and the cruelty or the harmfulness, all of these arise from that state of mind.

How does cruelty arise from anger then, if anger is unable to bear some suffering and agitating the mind? ... *with a malicious intention devoid of compassion or kindness, desires to belittle and disregard others.* So devoid of compassion and kindness. It is deriving from anger, so it is unable to bear something. Perhaps others' ignorance? Do you know the expression 'I don't suffer fools gladly!' What does that mean? If you can't bear the foolishness of others, might be fitting to a person having that state of mind at any particular time, because we all have it at various times. That might be a manifestation of this mental factor, cruelty, that wants to belittle and disregard others.

Meditation

Let's do a meditation on the antidotes to anger, try to recognize it in our own mind.

First quiet the mind. Focus on the breathing for a few respirations.

Then bring your attention to your consciousness as a subtler object.

Try to imagine – in the controlled setting of our meditative session – some anger-provoking situation. We have been harmed, we have been abused, someone has hurt us in some way, we feel others disregard us, or whatever.

We find that unable to be borne without agitating the mind. We can't just accept its presence while the mind remains calm. As it evolves, we begin to conceptualize. We start to think of reasons, 'They did it, because they don't respect me', 'They don't like me'; 'They did it for their own interest'; 'They are disregarding me', or, 'They are disregarding others'; 'They are harming society.'

Here, as we have motivated this kind of investigation, this conceptualizing what the cause of our unhappiness is, having been motivated by this disturbance, unable to just bear the suffering – this is called inappropriate attention. Attending to the object inappropriately. And in so doing we begin to exacerbate, making the mind more agitated, till anger actually takes root in our mind and we are angry about something.

It's going to be associated often with something unhappy. It arises out of an unhappy mind. Like all living beings we want to be free of unhappiness and out of unskillfulness, rather than being able to bear with that unhappiness for a short time, we want to do something, either keep a grudge or act out, plan to hurt the other person or ignore them or whatever in the future.

Seeing this is identifying this state in our own mind. See if you can identify that angry state and even allow it – if you still have moments of it – allow it to be present in this controlled setting of your meditative session.

Now think of the disadvantages of this state, the obvious disadvantages to the world. We become unlovable to others when we are angry. We are unattractive; our face turns red; we say violent things; we are unpleasant to be with; our reputation is destroyed. From our own side, our mind becomes more agitated, uncomfortable for a long period of time. It is not easy to relax, we need to immediately have someone to massage our shoulder blades, give us a neck-rub, we are all tense. Our stomach gets in knots, the stomach-acid begins to pump, we become kind of a type-A personality over a long period of time, where we totally accept anger; it raises our blood pressure. But the subtle most destructive faults are the danger, the damage anger does on the level of our future continuity. We create negative karma by allowing our mind to be disturbed when we are unhappy, by wishing to harm. Anger creates negative karma in such a way that it will be reflected upon us in the future; we will be harmed by others. Even just the mental action of anger, even not acting it out, but holding the grudge or holding very strong anger not only creates negative karma for ourselves to be harmed in the future, but also destroys, weakens, postpones our roots of virtue that otherwise might bring some relief within cyclic existence, roots of virtue that might support our realizations along the path. Through the fire of anger those realizations are put off, postponed, or the causes of them are eradicated for the time being.

So seeing these disadvantages, wanting to apply the antidotes of anger thinking, 'I should be patient'. And understanding here would mean a state of mind which is able to bear what is uncomfortable, not retaliating towards sentient beings when we are harmed, bearing discomfort for the sake of practicing the Dharma – having faith in that.

How can we develop this kind of patience? What antidotes can we use to overcome the anger? Think of the methods Atisha brought to Tibet, enshrined in the Kadampa tradition.

Thinking first of all of the arrow and the target. Rather than thinking that this harm has mainly arisen from some outer situation, unrelated to oneself, that one doesn't deserve this, think, 'I have created the cause for this in the past, it is as though I have shot the arrow in the past. If I had not shot the arrow, even if the present condition arose I would not experience this unhappiness; even though the present target is being

there, if there was no arrow shot in the past, there would be nothing to hit the target. This is a manifestation, a ripening of my negative action. There is no way I could be experiencing this discomfort, unhappiness, lack of love, lack of attention, disrespect, having my things stolen, being held in contempt by others or actually harmed, tortured, the way I could be hit by the car or be imprisoned, unless I created the cause in the past.'

Now go back to the situation you have been using as an example in your laboratory experiment of anger. Something causes the mind to be unhappy; your mind becomes agitated, unable to bear that. Now look at it from the point of view of karma. Instead of inappropriately attending to the action, thinking that it has arisen without any personal responsibility, think, 'This is the result of my negative karma in the past.'

This is a completely different way of looking at it; rather than attending to it, paying attention to it as if it was unjustified, has no relationship to oneself, as if one was blameless, here [one sees that] there is no way one can experience this discomfort unless one has created the cause in the past. So how much more skilful it would be to bear this now, recognizing it as eliminating this fruit of our negative action in the past, exhausting our negative karma, and resolving thereby to create the causes in the future for happiness, instead of creating the causes for this kind of misfortune.

If we are dictated to, we have dictated to others in the past. If we are not loved, we have been unloving to others in the past. If we have things stolen, we have stolen in the past...etc.

This one reason alone might be a very potent antidote for certain actions, certain karmas, whereas it might not be applicable to everything, it might not leave a very deep impact on other kinds of anger. Therefore, now think of another antidote - the one overcoming the projection that this is unbearable, because it's going to constantly be there. So the antidote is understanding impermanence, knowing, 'This will change. Every moment the situation is changing. As my wisdom perceives it differently I maybe able to accept even the continuity of the suffering, but even the suffering itself will end as the karma ripens. It's not eternal.'

Go back to the anger-provoking experiment, the situation causing anger in the mind and see if understanding this situation as impermanent, seeing that this too will pass, helps to overcome that agitation of the mind. Being able to bear with it because it has a limited duration, changing every moment. And in a few moments it may be different if our mind is not holding on to it as being the same.

This leaves open the possibility of again experiencing someone who is causing us harm as a friend in the future. Otherwise we can easily hold the grudge thinking, 'They are always

going to be my enemy, and we are going to get back at them!’ Think how the tragedies of our youth, in retrospect, when we look back at them over time, how they seem so trivial. They were tragic only because we were attending to them at that point as so monumental – one aspect of which might have been the sense of their permanence.

Now see how this antidote affects the intensity of the anger.

So relax your mind. Bring your attention back to the present.

We will take a break and then later meditate some more on this, apply some other antidotes.

Discussion

Do we have to repeat these meditative episodes? When we try to meditate on the antidotes to delusion, do we have to do them again and again and again? Are they accumulative or should we expect a break-through right away?

As mentioned, you have to have some supporting factors. You have to have an accumulation of merits and a period of purification in your life, constant purification of negative karmic seeds obscuring you, preventing you from making the realizations. The accumulation of merit acts as a support for making the realizations; then there is some chance the meditation can become more successful. And the third factor that Manjushri told Lama Tsongkhapa to be necessary to make realizations is to pray to the guru as oneness with the deity. If you are in some isolated place, and you don’t have, or did never have contact with a physical guru, to think, ‘Buddha is my guru’ or ‘Dalai Lama is my guru’, or whoever’s writings one is reading is your guru.

I remember reading in India some years ago a text called ‘Jesus is my guru’. Some Christian kids had gone to an ashram and had realized the need for a guru, and they realized that Jesus was their guru, they had read the bible. This was actually Christ’s injunction to them, and they had very rich spiritual experiences based on that.

When you have these other [supporting] factors and you meditate, then, rather than just allowing the mind to mull over unhappiness, depression, angry states, jealous states, you know, if we find ourselves being condescending or cruel or spiteful, jealous or holding a grudge, just being angry in general, then, rather than just allowing that, you should try to apply the antidotes. These antidotes, depending on our karma, don’t function necessarily immediately to eradicate the problem so that it never arises again. Because first of all, these are temporal antidotes, functioning like the cutting off the weeds at ground level – the roots are still there.

How can we eradicate the roots? You need to have the wisdom of emptiness, selflessness.

When that realization is developed we have a direct perception, and that's ultimately the antidote that can uproot them. Until then we cut them off at ground level, we apply these temporary antidotes. Because of the force of the imprints in our mind there will be other episodes in our life, when anger and attachment arise, but then, because of having practiced the antidote in the past, we can apply the temporal antidote very quickly, and in general we won't be so plagued by that for a long period of time. It doesn't mean we have eradicated it from the mind. We eventually have to use that calmer and calmer state derived through applying the temporal antidotes to be able to practice Dharma, to learn more about emptiness, to develop the supreme method of bodhicitta, to accumulate merit and purify negative karma most effectively and thereby be able to realize emptiness, so that we can eradicate them from the root.

It takes time! His Holiness the Dalai Lama has said, 'You shouldn't judge your progress over a short period of time. At least you should think of it in years: 'Am I much different from what I was last year, or two years ago, or five years ago?' if you've practiced Dharma that long. Rather than judging, 'I got angry yesterday, I got angry again today!', as though you should have conquered it in one day or so. These are states of mind we have habituated to since beginningless time! We are experts in anger and attachment and jealousy, low self-esteem, and so forth. It would be foolish to think that in a short period of time we would eradicate them, or even to have the expectation that in a short period of time by meditating, you can experience a great transformation.

Try to be satisfied! Dharma happiness arises small! Part of Dharma happiness is the diminishing of our irritation. If you have a bad itch irritating you, causing suffering, even when you put some salve on it, and you just notice it's a little bit better, maybe actually it's curing the underlying causes. To a person who has a long-term view that would be very reassuring; there would be a certain contentment in that. So to be content as we are meditating that we are making progress and not aspect instant gratification. That is always our American tendency, right, to expect instant gratification.

Question: The chance of creating negativity seems to be so big, that one's chance of practice could easily fall apart.

Answer: Song Rinpoche, a great yogi scholar, incredible being and guru, once said that according to the scriptures, even though we might be generating many, many negativities and our negative energy is very strong, just like even a small child by throwing one small stone can scare away a huge flock of crows, with the right wisdom and the right activity we can eliminate an incredible negative karma. If we notice that negative energy in us, we have to try to purify and accumulate in the most powerful way. and a skillful person, as Shantideva says in the *Bodhisattvacharyavatara*, 'Which skilful person with intelligence would not try to generate bodhicitta', knowing how much merit it accumulates to be able to create the causes to bring about a rebirth within cyclic existence in the higher realms. To purify negative karma that otherwise throws us in the lower realms is one of the most

powerful things we can do; also guru devotion, to devote oneself to the spiritual guide. Lama Zopa Rinpoche often extols, when you think about the perfect human rebirth, how it can be valuable even in the shortest instant, what we have right now, by those two methods, guru devotion and bodhicitta, ultimate bodhicitta also, meditation on emptiness. In the shortest instant of time you can accumulate merit and purify negativity that even a hearer and solitary-realizer might not be able to generate over eons, let alone ordinary beings. We have to find the right stone to throw, to get rid of the crows.

So how was your meditation, any thought about that?

Question: could it be that we are not actually applying Dharma but putting the problems aside somewhere for them to collect and some time to explode?

Answer: Yes, if we do not, attend to the actual problem we might think to be practicing Dharma, and be actually ignoring something. That's why it takes a certain amount of wisdom. It says in the various teachings, 'First attend to your main problem'; first look at what the main problem is in terms of your life. Sometimes we need the guidance of a guru or spiritual friends, because we may not know, we might not recognize what's really bothering us. All of these antidotes are found in the lam-rim. All of these things that we are mentioning now are found in the *Stages of the Path*.

Use a daily glance at the lam-rim; that's like being familiar and to see, this is what I want to develop, this is where I'm going, to the end-state of enlightenment. If we don't have a chance to be guided, to be around other spiritual friends all the time, there might be the tendency of thinking we are practicing Dharma but we may be ignoring the actual thing.

Now we are trying to recognize these states within our mind. We take the mind within the controlled laboratory of our meditative session. With this purpose it's okay to allow yourself to bring up the state of anger or depression or whatever is present there and watch what's happening. How is it occurring? What are the causes? Why are we depressed? Because we expected something to last forever, we expected someone to live forever. Western society believes it's important to grieve when we have loss; modern psychology also thinks it's unhealthy not to grieve when you have loss. That might be very much the case if you don't already have an accumulation of familiarity with impermanence, that is a resource of understanding we can already have.

Even if we apply a temporal antidote now and it eliminates the problem temporarily or reduces it, if the problem arises later again we may think, 'It was useless what I did.' But no, it wasn't useless! The temporal antidote is now more easily accessible, and the continuity of anger or depression begins to decrease.

If we allow ourselves to remain in an unhappy state for a long period of time, we start to develop some inertia to stay there. So it's important to take time out and come and see spiritual friends, to do some meditation so you don't stay in that state for a long period of time, and you start to see it in a different light. It's inevitable! Change!

We have been meditating on this: besides seeing the misfortune as being a

manifestation of your karma, also this is something that not only will change, it came about because of change! We couldn't expect to be in contact with our friends and family and loved ones forever. Inevitably, from the moment we met them, from the moment there was contact, actually from the moment we were approaching meeting them and having contact, in that moment it was set up that we would have to separate. there is nothing remains; within cyclic existence, any compounded phenomena, friendships, family, relationships, there is nothing that remains constant.

So I would suggest seeing Lord of the Rings – there is some wisdom in it, that inevitably things change, friendships etc. Has everyone seen it? I won't spoil anything but I especially like the daughter of the king – she sneaks into war with them, she is supposed to stay back and rule the kingdom if he dies. She goes into battle anyway, she has this helmet on so they can't see she is a woman, and at some point she comes across this huge negative energy that has previously stabbed Frodo, one of those shadow creatures, wearing terrible armour, indestructible, and he says 'No man can kill me' and she takes off her helmet and her long hair comes down and says 'I'm not a man, I'm a woman!' and she stabs him, and we all go 'Yeah!' OK. Excuse me. This maybe somewhat dated if somebody watches this DVD twenty years from now....

Question: Does Buddhism differentiate organic, physiological depression as opposed to, say, sociological?

Answer: Well, illnesses, everything, happens to us as a result of our karma. Some of the karma may just be to have the condition there, so by eliminating this condition or by some other condition, taking food supplement or medication or whatever, that can be changed. Other kinds of illness, physical illness might be the result of karma on a deeper level, for instance, if you have a particular imbalance in your body or in your mind. Until you purify that karma, it's going to remain there. If, for example, you have a cause for untimely death ripening now, whatever medication you may take is not going to prevent that, in fact it may be that you choke on the medication, that the very thing that you think of as a cause of life becomes a cause of death.

In terms of depression, some may be due to outer conditions, and when that changes, like you lost a friendship and then you meet another friend and that depression can be overcome. There are other kinds of depression that may be due to imprints of harming others or such in past lives – seemingly without any cause. You wonder what's wrong in your life; you've got your family and all of these things, and still you are unhappy. Basically depression is a form of unhappiness, right? It's the mental feeling of unhappiness, an unpleasurable feeling of mind. Usually that arises because of inappropriately attending to something; you perceive something and you become unhappy. But sometimes unhappiness can arise as a result of having made others unhappy in the past, maybe because of making your gurus unhappy, making your spiritual friends unhappy, disappointing them or whatever. That can arise as a karmic result now. I'm not sure that's the cause of all the

depression of people, that unexplained depression that's prevalent nowadays – what do they call it clinically? Arising without any apparent outer condition, often in later life. Maybe it's because of other things people are not attending to, sometimes just the fact of getting older.

If you have that kind of recurrent unhappiness coming, you have to think about it, because that can become the cause of thinking that way for a long period of time; you could be depressed thinking, 'I'm depressed. I will remain this way forever. That is just my fate.' But actually it's impermanent! Think about it and try to recognize it as a result of karma; try to use it for the benefit of others. Like that expression: If life gives you a lemon, make lemonade! If someone dumps excrement on your lawn, you would think: fertilizer! Even the garbage of your life, the excrement, the harm, you can use as fertilizer for your Dharma realizations.

The warriors of the past actually cherished their scars; they became an emblem of their courage – something they were proud of. Here you don't want to be proud in a negative sense, but all of the negative things happening to you, you can use for your Dharma realizations. To meditate. 'This is the result of karma. Wow! Other people don't realize this! If I want to be happy, I have to create the cause to be happy, the opposite causes for this that I have created in the past! I've got to purify these and I can use this situation to sympathize with others, who are experiencing the same kind of suffering.'

Let's do a meditation on the other two antidotes to anger

Meditation

Again, sit comfortably, watch your breathing.

Then bring your attention to the laboratory of your mind, and let it become uncluttered by just looking at its clear light nature.

At first it's just an intuitive sense of openness of the mind. By focusing on that, you prevent the continuity of thoughts from continuing, their frequency being less, their intensity being less.

Now again, think of something that has instigated the state of anger in your mind with perhaps some of its attendant secondary mental factors such as wrath and grudge and spite and envy, etc., cruelty – something that caused you to be unhappy, maybe harsh words, someone left you, your baby left you, someone told lies about you, harmed you, harming others, your friends, helping your enemies.

See how that mind feels, disturbing the clarity of your mind, disturbing the ability of wisdom to function properly. Pent up energy that perhaps wants to strike out, wants to not bear the discomfort, because it seems to have become greater through exaggerating,

inappropriately attending. Seeing, by remembering karma, that this suffering is justified, it's the result of our past karma and something we can actually feel some satisfaction in bearing with this suffering, tolerating it, because it's exhausting our negative karma. Even the loss of a loved one when we feel very strong depression, it's exhausting our negative karma. Remembering impermanence that this present suffering will change. Separation is the result of the inevitability of change. Some time from now you will look back at this situation and wonder why it was such a big bother for you.

Then think of another misconception of the mind that increases the anger inappropriately by thinking that we don't need this situation, that it is nothing for us, only seeing it as a problem. Instead, this situation, the loss, the harsh words, is our guru manifesting, reminding us of the nature of cyclic existence; even our aging, reminding us of cyclic existence, we have to leave this life, reminding us to practice patience, reminding us to practice compassion. Rather than having the inappropriate thought, 'I don't need this right now. I'm fed up, I don't need this!' – to be patient, to open up your mind, to bear with this by thinking, 'This is my teacher communicating, my guru. The Dharma is manifesting before my mind if I think in the right way. By experiencing this with equanimity without disturbing the mind into anger, bearing with it, seeing it as exhausting my negative karma, I will actually profit. This is something I do need!' 'This is what life within cyclic existence is actually about – practicing the Dharma. It's not simply being comfortable all the time, being right, being successful in a worldly sense, always being loved, never losing one's friendships or companions or loved ones.'

The fact that your mind is reacting in this way indicates that this is something to be attended to that has to be remedied. This situation has awakened you to that fact – it's your guru.

Infestation of your kitchen with ants, causing your mind to be unhappy, maybe even cruel, stepping on them, washing them down the drain, getting rid of them quickly, thoughts like that, this is actually a manifestation of your guru showing that this tendency to disregard others is there, this secondary mental factor, the affliction associated with anger, cruelty or harmfulness.

In showing us this we need to meditate on the antidote. When the guru has given us some advice, it's like giving us the medicine; if we don't take it, we just carry it in our pocket or in a sack over our shoulder, it won't help us. We have to take the medicine of the Dharma – to do what the guru has proposed now, showing us the problem – we have to apply the antidote.

It may involve incredible opening of the mind, to be patient with others, to be tolerant, to really think, 'I must be tolerant! I must learn how to be tolerant, patient – not to get angry'. 'I must develop bodhicitta, to actually think of the welfare of others.'

Then we apply the fourth temporal antidote to counteract the particular thought of cruelty, the particular thought of thinking others deserve to be harmed, that there is nothing wrong with that – that they need that, my harsh words, my discipline, my correcting their errors, pointing out their errors. That state of mind can easily contribute to anger, especially to cruelty, spite, maybe grudge and this could contribute in the sense that we think, ‘I will have to show them eventually. I have to harm them eventually. Put them in their place!’ The antidote to this is compassion, bodhicitta.

Just as we do not desire to be unhappy, to be criticized, to be minimized, to be unloved, to be unhappy, we don’t desire any of those, likewise others are exactly the same. They want to be loved, they want to be successful, happy. They don’t want to be criticized, harmed, stolen from, cheated.

Starting to look at other living beings with warmth is the first step, developing what we call heartwarming or affectionate love for them, seeing them as endearing and as suitable recipients of our compassion or care or love. Because they have been our mothers in past lives, they have been our friends, numberless times, depthlessly kind to us – recalling that again and again. A person with sharp intellect, sharp faculties, can understand that they are exactly equal to us now in wanting these, ‘There is no difference between myself and others because there is no inherent existent self, so I can start to identify with the welfare of all beings.’

Then to have the mind of non-harmfulness, that virtuous mental factor obviously acting as a direct antidote to harmfulness, cruelty, also an antidote to anger in general – one aspect of it – to help to overcome the thought to retaliate out of belligerence or wrath. Belligerence being a very harmful, malicious mind, because other living beings don’t deserve to be unhappy.

Now again look at this anger provoking thought in your mind, and again review the antidotes: karma, impermanence, guru, compassion.

See if that causes the angry mind to decrease, the turmoil in the mind, the agitated mind, which is a hallmark of the afflictions disturbing the mind. See if that begins to calm, and by actually attending to the referent object that before was inappropriately attended to, by now attending to it appropriately, understanding the nature of the object, see if this anger begins to disappear temporarily.

Then relax your mind. Bring your attention back to the present.

Concluding teaching continued

How did you find this meditation? Any observations or questions?

Question: Unrelated to our subject, about the Tibetan calendar, what would be best to do on certain inauspicious days?

Answer: Stay in bed all day, would that help? No, it does not mean you can not do virtuous actions.

Afflictions derived from attachment

Let's look at the mental factors associated with attachment.

6. Miserliness (Avarice)

Avarice or miserliness arises from attachment. Scrooge!

Miserliness is a state of mind not wanting to part with what one already has – not wanting to share it with others. There can be a miserliness of physical, material things, your wealth and so forth, but there can also be miserliness of Dharma and knowledge. Let's say you have certain intellectual qualities or power, that you don't want to share with others. That can arise also from pride; pride can be involved in that. In some of the esoteric teachings it says, the naval chakra can be blocked because of miserliness and pride. So what's the relationship between pride and miserliness? Actually out of pride, out of an inflated sense of oneself, one is hesitant to share one's knowledge, one's qualities that one senses as being a source of one's highness. And that tends to block the navel chakra.

Geshe Rabten: *Avarice is a mental factor that, out of attachment to respect and material gain, firmly holds on to one's possessions with no wish to give them away.*

The most generous people that I found around the world are usually the poor. They will give you literally the shirt of their back! when I was teaching in Russia, there were very poor people and they can give you the most sumptuous breakfast, black tea, I think they were able to find a little bit of sugar, because it was rationed at the time, and these little tine robin eggs that they had bought (sounds inappropriate but anyway) and some bread, they did not have butter, but there was some bread. They had gone pout of their way to give me that breakfast, it was incredible. Whereas sometimes, when I visited very wealthy people, for them to give you a glass of water sometimes would be a big deal. Our mind thinking of becoming wealthy can fall into avarice, because we think one of the causes of being wealthy is keeping and not sharing, not dispersing, keeping.

Geshe Rabten: *This mental factor causes us pain whenever the possibility arises of being separated from that what we own and regard as dear to us. That could also be our reputation and so forth. In addition to occurring with regard to material objects, it can also develop with regard to our inner understanding of the Dharma. It is thus the greatest obstacle to giving away our possessions to and sharing our understanding with others. Sometimes there is a tendency of not teaching or sharing knowledge out of that miserliness, which is related also with attachment and pride.*

Geshe Rabten: *In the future it is a cause for both material and spiritual poverty.* Then it mentions that *There are two kinds of avarice: the intention to never give something away and the intention to not give something away for the time being.*

Do you ever have this, never wanting to give something away? Maybe you can be miserly with your companions, ‘I want their attention.’ With the attitude, ‘I will never allow...’ – that can be related with jealousy also. The more attachment you have, the more difficulty you have in letting go of it and sharing it with others.

The antidotes to miserliness would be a mind of generosity. It doesn’t mean just the physical action but also the thought to give. It says in the scriptures: ‘The mind thinking, “If I give this, what will I have left to use?” is the mind of pretas or hungry ghosts; the mind that thinks, “If I use this, what will have left I give?” is the mind of gods’, of devas, the sublime – that’s a divine mind.

So to think of the benefits of generosity can help to overcome miserliness, to recognize the impermanence of the objects you are attached to – you will have to separate from them anyway! Has it ever been the case with you that maybe out of miserliness, maybe not wanting to share it with others but wanting to keep something for yourself, you even kept something until it was spoiled? Does that ring a bell with anyone? Maybe that’s just me. You keep it in your closet and then do not even use it! Even though others could use it, it rusts, or becomes outmoded. These things could have been used by others but are kept out of miserliness.

So to think of the benefits of charity, of giving, of how it creates the causes for future resources. The cause for resources now is not just to keep the resources you have, it’s to disperse them. You have to give in order to receive, you have to love in order to be loved. Didn’t Christ say something like that, ‘Give and you shall receive’ – or is that just the old testament?

Miserliness is a very big obstacle to our spiritual practice. This is why in the seven-limb puja one of the limbs is generosity – to make offerings in many different ways, both physical, actually manifested offerings, and things you imagine.

7. Haughtiness (Self-satisfaction)

The next mental factor derived from attachment is self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction or haughtiness is similar to pride, because pride is an inflated state of mind.

Geshe Rabten: *Self-satisfaction is a mental factor that, being attentive to the marks of good fortune one possesses, brings the mind under its influence and produces a false sense of confidence. It has the function of giving rise to and being in accordance with all other afflictions as well as interfering with the attainment of any higher qualities. Self-satisfaction produces a false sense of haughtiness through considering the superiority of our race, physical appearance, learning, youth or authority over others. However, it is not necessarily unwholesome to be aware of the good qualities we may have. Self-satisfaction is when the mind becomes inflated about that. It doesn’t mean that you shouldn’t pay attention, and know that you have good qualities. What must be avoided is to*

overvalue them and conceitedly boast about them. This mental factor is very liable to give rise to self-importance. This seems to arise out of attachment; it's related with attachment and a precursor of full-blown pride.

8. Excitement

The third one connected with attachment is excitement. Excitement doesn't mean just being excited, like when the kids are excited about Christmas, Santa Claus coming. Excitement is a particular kind of scattering mind, a mind wandering onto an object of attachment, something one finds attractive within one's meditation.

Geshe Rabten: Excitement is a mental factor that, through the force of attachment, does not allow the mind to rest solely upon a wholesome object but scatters it here and there to many other objects. It has the principal function of obstructing mental quiescence. Calm abiding, shamatha Also it causes the mind to engage in uncontrolled fantasy and frivolity.

Let's have a short dedication and then we break for lunch and will continue after lunch. We will meditate some more on the antidotes.

Dedication

Think, 'I have created roots of virtue this morning' – through positive motivation – through perhaps temporal motivation – those moments during the discourse if you were moved, if you had one of those aha moments and resolved to change your behavior in some way. Through the general tenor of our session, molded by our initial motivation we have created virtuous karma. Let's dedicate this, and the karma we have created during this course. Let it not be ripening just in some intellectual knowledge in the future, some pleasure within cyclic existence that can be experienced once and then lost, like the ripening of a plant or flower, that just ripens once and then dies. May we perennially receive the benefits of this, until we achieve enlightenment. Dedicate this to enlightenment in that way, 'May this ripen in such a way, this karma, in my own attainment of enlightenment, full awakening, however long that might take!'

Developing the two bodhicittas, compassionately and effortlessly working with skill and wisdom, manifesting for the sake of all living beings, eliminating their suffering, bringing them happiness, due to this merit.

Then try to seal this within the emptiness of the three spheres, as you understand.

DVD 14

Meditation

Sit comfortably.

Try to move your attention to the subtler object of the clear light nature of your mind.

Whatever appearances occur, discursive sounds, thought patterns whatever, recognize them as arising within the clarity of the mind and let go of your attention to the particular phenomena other than the nature of the mind. Just concentrate on that clear light unobstructed, un-obstructing.

Then, within the quiet of your mind, within the laboratory of your mind, see if you can produce a thought of attachment, one of the root afflictions; something you have been or are very involved with. Attachment to your appearance perhaps, growing old or being underweight or overweight or the nose too big, nose too small, attachment to possessions, to friends, to companions, even attached to well-being – everything quote going right, attachment to respect.

Particularly, for most of us attachment to the feeling of happiness, the feeling of pleasure, whether it be mental or physical bliss, sexual bliss, the happiness or mental bliss of hearing the words, 'I love you!' Feelings occur. Attachment is a mental factor that on the basis of experiencing something pleasurable, unlike anger which is based on feeling something unpleasurable, an unhappy mind, on the basis of some happiness the mind inappropriately attends to that, and projects qualities either to the object we think of as the happiness or the happiness itself, it projects qualities, it doesn't really have. Thereby inculcating this mind of attachment that either wants to obtain what is not obtained or to keep, without losing, what we already have and are attached to, like glue sinking into the object.

Because it is associated with a certain kind of pleasure or anticipation of pleasure, it's very difficult to be motivated at first – without knowing – to eliminate it.

This attachment causes our mind to be disturbed. See if you can notice that if you go back to the object of attachment, although it may be experiencing some pleasure on some level or anticipation of pleasure – sometimes not even pleasure, just anticipation of it – it's being grasped in such a way, unskillfully, that the mind is disturbed. It's preventing our wisdom from seeing the object or the pleasure itself as it actually exists.

Finally this state of mind is based, if we check deeply, if we go down to the deepest level, it's based on our sense of self, grasping to the subject me, to the I who wants, desires or is attached to something. So as an ultimate antidote, there is the wisdom of selflessness, the wisdom of emptiness; also, [to recognize] the sense of a truly existing object or truly

existing happiness as a resource that we could be experiencing. But before we can get to the level of actually working with that subtle antidote, final antidote, we need to train in the temporal antidotes.

So first think – as similar to the meditation in the context of anger – of impermanence.

The objects or beings we are attached to or the pleasure itself that we are attached to are impermanent, changing moment by moment. What we think of as the resources of pleasure, which are merely cooperative conditions for them – they are impermanent also. Inevitably we would have to separate from objects of attachment, our cherished ring, our friends, our life, our youth, our clarity of mind, our possessions – all of them are impermanent. They can't be relied on as the mind supposes, as the mind projects as constant, perhaps even eternal sources of pleasure. They are unreliable in that sense, because they are impermanent.

You might say, in the same way as with anger, 'This too will pass!' – when the mind becomes fascinated with something and begins to develop attachment to it. To imagine the beings we feel attached to are changing over time, as they inevitable will, aging, having different interests, personality changing.

The material objects of our attachment becoming older, scratched, or worthless, bonds, the money we put in the bank losing its purchasing value during different periodic financial cycles.

If an element of our attachment is the projection that this would be something stable, long-lasting, permanent, then meditation on impermanence can help to eradicate that component stimulating the attachment, that particular projection exaggerating the qualities of it. You too are changing moment by moment! You too will die! You will have to separate from the objects of attachment eventually; if not sooner definitely later. And just as you can't take the possessions of this life into the future life, once separated from the pleasures of this life you can't elongate them, you can't bring them to the future time. All you have left, are memories fuelled by the sense of some truly existent, permanent pleasure that seems to have existed before – causing confusion, sorrow, grieving.

So even if this pleasure was lost now, and there is not a great deal of difference between it being lost now than being lost later. Inevitably it would have to be lost later; it's changing every moment. Even the gross change would take place. The source of our pleasure, the pleasure itself, all arises because of dependent arising, because of karma.

Now think of a second reason to overcome this attachment that the nature of the objects of our attachment. What we fancy as the sources of our pleasure and the nature of the

pleasure itself, is contaminated; it's not real happiness but of the nature of suffering. We can't say that happiness is suffering, but it is of an unsatisfactory or suffering nature. Even the moment we are experiencing it, it's no more than relief, it's not some positive attribute that coming in contact with the object of attachment will always bring pleasure. If it did, the longer we were in contact with the object of attachment, the more pleasure we would feel. Even if I had the object of my desire, my attachment, even if I were somehow able to obtain that, would I really be happy? What I would find was samsaric happiness, if I was lucky to find the object and I still had the karma to experience it as pleasure, the most I would experience would be samsaric happiness, relief, contaminated happiness.

To recognize even the experience of happiness in our own mind as unsatisfactory is something the human is able to do, it's very difficult for the animal realm to recognize what the Buddha called changeable suffering, this contaminated happiness. It's very difficult for an animal or another being other than human to recognize it as the nature of suffering. That the very things we think of as sources of happiness, if engaged in enough, if contacted enough, actually turn into the experience of suffering of suffering. If we really want eternal happiness, real peace of mind, we should look for the Dharma happiness the Buddha talked about, the blissful happiness of nirvana, the blissful happiness, eternal happiness of enlightenment.

Imagine fulfilling all of your desires that might be nagging, so that there perhaps is some component of attachment in them, fantasizing how wonderful it would be, if I had this. Even having met the objects of attachment, keeping them, inevitably you would have to leave them at the end of this life. You could not take them with you. Every episode of pleasure you would have to leave behind, you can't elongate. It doesn't continue to satisfy once having been tasted. It's a little bit like drinking salted water, seeming to quench the thirst only to cause the continuity for greater attachment in the future

When our attachment is not fulfilled, our wishes are not fulfilled, dissatisfaction arises, unhappiness, which is then the condition to give rise to anger, jealousy and so forth. Like the leper, who feels some pleasure at first, being ignorant, putting their leprous limb in a fire even though it's searing the flesh, can cause incredible destruction. Oblivious of that at first, even if someone would try to prevent them from putting their limb in the fire, to feel that momentary relief from the itching, they would fight to stop that person from preventing them from their pleasure. They are so attached to it. Later, if they learn how destructive that is, and that by taking medication one can actually eventually, slowly at first, eliminate the itch completely, once they understand that, no way you could put their limb back into the fire. They would fight to avoid it. Like that, when we understand the defects of attachment – understand that this is the deeper problem than anger, deeper in the sense that it's longer lasting, because it's associated with pleasure.

It's what keeps us in a sense of variation of it attached to cyclic existence, grasping toward it – not wanting to give up our ordinary, negative, contaminated, suffering state.

How wonderful it would be, to be free of attachment – not to have this itch at all, to be free of this thirst completely. That would be much better than always being satisfied again and again, only finding some kind of happiness in scratching that itch or the inferior kind of pleasure I can find in cyclic existence like this.

Think also, the object of your attachment that your mind fantasizes as a source of pleasure, beauty, whatever, if broken up into its component parts the beauty we impute upon it, the sense of purity and cleanliness, that's gone, that's understood not to reside anywhere. If you open up the body you are attached to, you can't find the pure beautiful thing you impute upon it. If you open up the wristwatch or the automobile, take it apart, you can't find the beauty you sense there in its totality. You can't find the object of pleasure on any of the syllables 'I love you', it is something we impute, some pleasure, as though that was a source of pleasure.

Deep down, there is no experiencer of this pleasure the way our mind is conceiving, an experiencer different than the actual experience of pleasure; [appearing] as an appropriator of that pleasure, the experiencer of the pleasure, as self existing, self supporting, truly, however. There is merely the experience of pleasure; the mere experience of mere pleasure, contaminated happiness.

So, looking back at the experience of attachment to something, see if these temporal antidotes help to control that, to diminish, make un-manifest that attachment.

Now relax and bring your attention back!

Concluding teaching continued

Geshe Dhargye used to say, 'All of the delusions, all of the afflictions, are interrelated'. They all can instigate and effect one another. Because we have attachment, that can give rise to unhappy mind when our attachment is not fulfilled, and that can give rise to anger, because that arises from unhappy mind. When you meditate on it, you can think of that.

'I have to start somewhere!' A skillful thing to do is to start with your biggest problem, because that's the thing instigating the most problems for you, whether it be anger or attachment. It doesn't mean it's your only problem or that it will always be your biggest problem. If you think of a strategy like this, using that kind of methodology, first identifying what attachment is. It's not just feeling pleasure, there is nothing wrong with feeling pleasure. You shouldn't think, 'I just felt good – that must be attachment!' That's not necessarily attachment. Attachment is based on something pleasurable, and due to exaggerating the qualities of this, the mind becomes disturbed and wants to get that. When

we say attachment, it has the quality of being stuck to, attached to, 'I'm attached to you! I'm attached to pleasure! I'm attached to ease!'

What you might encounter in your practice: if you are too tough on yourself, you can be unrealistic. You have to have the ability to laugh at your own mistakes and still love yourself, not narcissistically, but in the same way you can love others even if they make mistakes. Your kids or your companions make mistakes, and sometimes you might be unhappy with them for some time, but if you really love them, you can accept those mistakes and still love them. So you have to be able to do that with yourself also, to see your warts and carbuncles and bulge or whatever, and still to view yourself as lovable. In the meditations in order to develop love toward others, sometimes you have to start with yourself. If you don't have a feeling of esteem and that you are worthy of happiness, how could others be worthy of happiness?

So let's continue. So these were the three [secondary afflictions] based on attachment. [miserliness (avarice), haughtiness (self-satisfaction) and excitement.]

In particular for miserliness you could apply a further way of thinking, analyzing to see the disadvantages of miserliness and the advantages of giving. That can help you to overcome that particular kind of manifestation of attachment. Sometimes when people start hearing the advantages of turning the mani-wheel or reciting sutras, they have so much merit that they can overcome their laziness and actually spend a lot of time doing that. [Similarly], if you start to recognize the advantages of giving that can help energize you. Do you remember what the cause of perseverance is? Aspiration, aspiring for something, and that comes about from some understanding, at least faith, if not wisdom, some faith. So if you have faith that there is benefit from practicing generosity or some understanding of the karmic results of that, then thinking about that again and again, that can give rise to the aspiration to receive those benefits, to attain that quality. Because through giving you can have unlimited resources, both for your own continued practice within cyclic existence, without having all sorts of obstacles, and also you can have the resources to be able to share with others, to follow the bodhisattva path.

Self-satisfaction is a precursor of pride that's being satisfied with, attached to, some superficial qualities. Again, the antidotes are to recognize the suffering nature of cyclic existence: whatever qualities you might have, they are impermanent, are not the real pleasurable nature.

Excitement is a mental factor that, when you are concentrating on a virtuous object, allows you to lose your mindfulness of the object, because it focuses out of attachment to some other object, to something you imagine as pleasurable. What are the antidotes to excitement? When we did calm abiding meditation, we talked about the five faults and the eight antidotes, and two of the faults are excitement and sinking. The supposed antidote to

that is alertness, but in the text it says, alertness is not the actual antidote, but it's what allows you to know the fault is present; you need to have some sort of mental spy to notice that you have lost the object. The actual antidote is not applying the antidote, the next one of the five faults. So in the case of excitement one of the antidotes might be meditating on death and impermanence, something that causes the mind to become a little more sober.

You could actually think – as we did here – ‘This object I’m being excited about, I’m scattering toward, even if I had that, I wouldn’t be really happy. Even if I was thinking of it continuously, I wouldn’t really be happy; it’s in the nature of suffering; it’s impermanent.’ For me, maybe because of the way my mind works at present, meditating on the fact that things are not of the nature of happiness, that they are actually dukkha, suffering nature, is very powerful.

If you can’t sober the mind by meditating on death and impermanence, then in order to cause the mind to be less excited you can also analyze the object of attachment, thinking of it as impermanent, as suffering, as repulsive; opening it up with the scalpel of your mind and seeing the various components. (Even your car, even a new Mercedes – did you visualize your car? oh dear, I should not have brought that up!)

So these are the classic meditations to overcome attachment, to analyze this way.

With respect to excitement, the particular thing to quell that at first – because you should be doing this other kind of analysis in between session: that it is of suffering nature; that it is impermanent, that it’s not pure the way your mind thinks, that it’s actually selfless – but the actual antidote to excitement is to help to calm down the mind, because if the mind is too tight or too excited it tends to jump to these other objects. So just to sober the mind, by thinking about death and impermanence. Think, ‘This is my one chance to practice. If I don’t do it now, when am I ever going to find the time. I’m certainly not going to be able to develop tranquil abiding, when I’m born the god realm; because there will be so many pleasures there, my mind will be even more excited!’

Afflictions derived from bewilderment

Afflictions that derive from bewilderment. Why does it say bewilderment here and not ignorance? We are talking about the ones deriving from the three poisons; bewilderment is the translation of *timug*, which is an unclarity of the mind that also includes ignorance, *ma rig pa*. *Ma rig pa* is an active misapprehension about things, a misdirected wisdom.

9. Concealment

The first one is called concealment. In our root text it is number three.

Geshe Rabten: *Concealment is a mental factor that wishes to hide one’s unwholesome qualities whenever another person, with a benevolent intention free from either an unwholesome aspiration, bewilderment, hatred or fear, talks about such negative qualities.* In other words, if someone is

giving you advice, in a Dharma lecture or in general, if they tell you that you shouldn't do this or that, if you then conceal or hide your unwholesome qualities, this is basically done out of bewilderment, out of this kind of ignorance. This is called concealment.

We will come to pretension (deceit) a bit later, which is a little bit similar to concealment. But concealment is talking about your own faults – it is a mental factor that is detrimental to ourselves. As a lawyer, concealing a client's fault might be something that is actually necessary. *This occurs when someone genuinely tries to help us by pointing out a certain shortcoming we may have.* This is talking about when others out of a good intention point out something and you do not want to hear it; usually we don't want to hear criticism, we are very sensitive to criticism. We do not want to hear anything about our faults, and that can instigate this kind of mind concealing it, sort of ignoring it and not revealing it to others.

10. Lethargy (Dullness)

Dullness or lethargy. This gives you an idea about the range of terminology that can be used for something. Geshe Rabten: *Dullness is a mental factor that, having caused the mind to lapse into darkness and thereby become insensitive, does not comprehend its object clearly, as it is. It has the function of making the mind and body heavy and inflexible and of increasing sleepiness and sinking.*

Dullness is not the main fault in tranquil abiding, which is mental sinking. Sinking itself is when you either lose the clarity of the object, it sort of becomes dull, it doesn't become clear, or you lose the grasp of that, you lose the intensity of the clarity. That's sinking, the main fault. Dullness is a little bit grosser and can induce sinking. Sleepiness is different from sinking also. Lethargy, *mug pa*, makes the mind kind of dull. *Mugpa* means dark or cloudy.

Geshe Rabten: *Dullness should not be confused with sinking. The latter only occurs in the more advanced states of mental quiescence meditation and is not necessarily an affliction.* How can that be? What is an affliction? Is an affliction necessarily creating negative karma? Then it [would] follow that self-grasping in the retinue of a virtuous mind creates negative karma because it's an affliction. So not all the afflictions, such as for instance the ignorance grasping to true existence and the view of the transitory collection, are necessarily by nature non-virtuous. They are actually present in contaminated virtue also. But the general characteristic of a *klesha*, of a disturbing state of mind, an affliction or a delusion, is that it disturbs the mind. It's based on ignorance, so it's not a correctly knowing mind. If it's a wisdom at all, it's a distorted wisdom or if it's not a wisdom, if it has some other function, it is unclear and it is disturbed.

So dullness, which is an unwholesome mental factor – all of these twenty secondary afflictions are by nature negative, non-virtuous – this should not be confused with sinking.

Geshe Rabten: *When the body and mind are light and joyful, sinking manifests as a decrease in one's mental energy, somewhat akin to air escaping through a tiny hole in a balloon. There are two kinds of dullness: one gross and one subtle.*

11. Non-faith (Faithlessness)

Geshe Rabten: *Faithlessness is a mental factor that, since it causes one to have no belief in or respect for that which is worthy of confidence – such as the law of actions and their results – is the complete opposite of faith. It has the function of acting as the basis for laziness...* The first fault of shinez, tranquil abiding, is laziness, and one of the antidotes to laziness is faith, giving rise to aspiration, giving rise to effort, giving rise to pliancy. Here faithlessness is said to have the function of serving as the basis for laziness, because without faith you are not going to develop aspiration to overcome it.... *and of causing the power of faith to decrease. In addition it makes one disbelieve, disrespect and have no desire for that which is positive, thus severing the roots of any wholesome development. There are two forms of faithlessness: that which simply does not see the need for or the fruits of virtue, and that which regards virtue either mistakenly or as non-existent.*

One of them is like the passive kind of ignorance – not knowing something; the other one is actively mistaking something. Do you ever experience this?

Faithlessness is connected with bewilderment. These last three mental factors are all due to a kind of darkness of mind, either actively misconceiving something or the passively not-knowing something.

12. Laziness

Laziness, in Tibetan: le lo. It doesn't mean when someone is just sitting around; it doesn't refer to the physical manifestation but to a mental state. *Laziness is a mental factor that, having firmly grasped an object offering temporary happiness, either does not want to do anything wholesome or, although wanting to, is faint-hearted.*

This includes several of the different kinds of laziness. We talked about laziness before in the context of how to counter different kinds of laziness by enthusiastic perseverance. There is a laziness of being attached to samsaric pleasure. For a lot of us that might be one of the major obstacles to practicing the Dharma. Laziness of being attached to samsaric pleasures – how could that be called laziness? In fact, in some cases it looks like it could even be called perseverance, for example if being motivated to make a million dollars....??

Then there is the laziness of being discouraged, thinking, 'If I have to put up with this to practice Dharma and the bodhisattva path, I can't do it. I'm just not capable!' Laziness also can derive basically from bewilderment, but I think also from attachment.

This negative mental factor is what is overcome by enthusiasm.

13. Forgetfulness

Forgetfulness – the translation is the same as in Sze Gee's, number 18 – is the exact opposite of mindfulness. It's a mental factor bringing about that, even if you were to think of some virtuous object, you would lose it very, very quickly.

For instance, if somebody is saying 'I'm getting very forgetful', if they are getting alzheimer, or old age – does that mean they are creating negative karma, because they are forgetful? Since these are all non-virtuous, right? Or when you say, 'oh, where are my keys, oh I forgot them...'. Does that mean that you create negative karma? It can't be, right! So this forgetfulness that is a non-virtuous mental factor is: *a mental factor that, having caused the apprehension of a wholesome referent to be lost, induces recollection of and distraction towards a disturbing referent*. So it refers to a particular state of mind that, when you are observing something that is wholesome, loses that object.

14. Non-introspection (Inattentiveness)

Inattentiveness – the opposite of attentiveness – or non-introspection is a kind of non-wisdom. She zhin means attentiveness or introspection, the state of mind watching, like the mental spy; so this is the opposite of that. Geshe Rabten: *Inattentiveness is a mental factor that, being an afflicted state of intelligence which has made no or only a rough analysis, is not fully aware of the conduct of one's body, speech and mind...*

Afflictions derived from both attachment and bewilderment

15. Deceit (Pretension)

16. Dissimulation (Dishonesty)

Pretension, or deceit (gyu) and dishonesty, or dissimulation (gyo) – pretension or deceit is to pretend to have qualities that you don't have, whereas dishonesty is to confuse others to keep one's faults unknown from them. These are little bit different from concealment. These two afflictions are related with both attachment and bewilderment, because you are attached to respect and material gain, and you don't want others to know that you have faults.

Afflictions derived from all three mental poisons

17. Non-shame (Shamelessness)

18. Non-embarrassment (Inconsideration for others)

19. Non-conscientiousness (Unconscientiousness)

The last section is those deriving from all three mental poisons. Shamelessness, inconsideration for others, unconscientiousness are the opposites of the mental factors we talked about in detail before.

20. Distraction

Finally distraction, which in general is not excitement; this is a general losing of an object due to any of the three poisonous minds.

It is tea-time. So let's take time for tea.

In terms of antidotes to those things that are connected to anger we mentioned some we before, some of the temporal antidotes such as Atisha mentioned. Understanding [the cause of anger] it as karma, the arrow and the target; impermanence – which is a kind of wisdom, actually if you extended that one you could also talk about the wisdom of emptiness; as the guru, – understanding the situation, that it is something you need, it is teaching you something, rather than thinking, ‘I don’t need this!'; and [applying] compassion, which helps overcome the cruel condescending mind that thinks other people deserve their suffering, ‘t doesn’t matter, if I harm them!’ .

Those cover a lot of the antidotes to anger, particularly if you include it in the wisdom of impermanence as the other sort of facet of that, the wisdom of emptiness. Of course it’s not a subset of the wisdom of impermanence because it is another kind of wisdom, a deeper kind of wisdom. That is the ultimate antidote to anger, because anger arises from a sense of self and of a truly existent harm or truly existent suffering, a truly existing unhappiness. So meditating on that [is an antidote].

Also, purifying negative karma. You know what the four opponent powers are, do you? Or are there maybe five?!

The four opponent forces are: the first, regret – once you regret, you have to make a decision not to do it again. That’s the second, the resolve. The third is reliance – in the Gelugpa tradition we say: relying on sentient beings to purify negative karma created with respect to sentient beings – so that means developing compassion, especially bodhicitta –, and relying on the Triple Gem to overcome negativities with respect to them – that would include taking refuge. The fourth is the power of the remedy.

So the four are: the powers of regret, resolve, reliance and remedy.

The power of the remedy, in the case of the *Thirty-five Confession Buddhas Sutra* would mean reciting the names, that is the virtuous action you can do as remedy, or making prostrations, or reciting sutras, or saying mantras; all done for the particular purpose of compensating for the negative action you have done. Or, in particular, you can try to link [the kind of remedy to the action that needs purifying]; if you have been miserly it could be to actually go out and give to the poor, or to teach those in need of teaching. If you feel that you have abandoned others or ignored others, maybe because you yourself are being ignored or unloved, then to love others, to work at the hospice to help others, to give guidance to them – that can help to purify that. Or if you have killed, or if you don’t know that you have killed but you notice the effect of having killed in past lives so your own life is in danger, your lifespan is endangered, you have cancer, then to liberate living beings that are imprisoned or to free animals who are going to be eaten or used as bate. Those are examples of remedies, creating virtuous karma to help compensate for the negative actions.

In this context, when we talk about purification, one of the strongest kinds of purification

is meditation on emptiness. In particular if you can recall some negative action you have done, and you might feel regret about. If you regret and still are holding that action, the object etc. to be truly existing, like, 'I, truly existent George, truly got angry at truly existent Buddha.' – if you are holding that kind of mind, even that kind of regret won't be as powerful as meditating on the emptiness of that.

So to meditate on the emptiness of what you've conceived of as the agent, yourself, if you are regretting your own negative actions. There was never a truly existent self. Even though at the moment of creating the action, it was created out of the conception of a truly existent self – 'I've got to get out of this problem! I've got to get rid of this fly! I've got to say these words! I've got to take that money!' etc.

And the action now regretted, that you think of and grasp to as truly existent, is also not truly existent. So to meditate on the emptiness of the action.

Remember when we meditate on the emptiness of the three spheres? We start with the agent, then the action, and then the recipient of the action, in the cases where there is a recipient. For example in the case of stealing, or harm, saying harsh words, lying to someone – the person you might have offended or hurt or stolen from or abused, does not truly exist the way your mind conceives, the one you said those harsh words to.

So meditating on emptiness like that.

And also meditating on bodhicitta. This is one of the four opponent powers, it is mentioned under reliance; but also meditating on bodhicitta within the power of remedy, because it's a great accumulation of merit. All of these things can help to purify the negative karma very powerfully.

Let's say a little more about the difference between pretension and dishonesty. I like that translation a little bit better than deceit and dissimulation [as in our text].

Let's say first of all, what is the difference between dishonesty and concealment?

Concealment is connected with bewilderment alone, whereas dishonesty is connected with all three root-delusions, so it is also based on attachment to respect and material gain, whereas concealment is kind of just ignorant, it doesn't want others to know one's faults.

When we talk about the eight-fold noble Path, there is something called right livelihood. It involves obtaining the resources for life, without – amongst other things – pretension or deceit, dishonesty. It might be that you obtain your livelihood by pretending to be something you are not, you are putting on airs of being an expert or something like that. Also through dissimulation or dishonesty.

Do you know the story of Geshe Bengungyal? There are many anecdotes about him. Like when he was meditating in a cave and he heard that his patrons were coming. Usually his cave was very messy and he did not have his altar set up, but then, thinking that they would be impressed by seeing the altar and maybe would make more offerings, and also that they might be disappointed if he didn't have an altar, he cleaned up the room, set up all the offering bowls with water and got everything ready. But then he realized that this was

wrong livelihood, and that he, was essentially involving himself in these two, pretension and dishonesty. Then what he did was that he took ashes from the fireplace and threw it all over the place, on the altar etc. And then some lama in the area with clairvoyance smiled and said, 'Bengungyal has created a peerless offering just now!' – because he was practicing Dharma like that.

So these two, arising from attachment and bewilderment, can be causes of wrong livelihood.

Geshe Rabten: Both pretension and dishonesty are similar in that they wish to convey a false image of bewilderment of oneself to others. Superficially they seem to cheat and deceive others, but in reality they only cheat and deceive oneself. There are two aspects of dishonesty: one that arises out of attachment and one that arises one out of bewilderment.

In a sense, the one that arises out of attachment is just sort of derived from attachment. so you could put it in two places, under attachment and under bewilderment. Same thing with pretension.

Then the three that derive from all three mental poisons. First the difference between shamelessness and inconsideration for others. Shamelessness – 'that's a shameless action!'

Remember when we talked about shame and consideration for others? How did we translate it in the root text? Shame and embarrassment (drel yodpa). Shame is the avoidance of a negative action taking oneself mainly as a reason, either because the karmic consequences maybe bad for oneself, or whatever. And embarrassment or consideration for others is avoiding non-virtue taking others into consideration, whether it be our gurus or other Dharma practitioners, or other living beings, who by knowing that I'm a Buddhist might loose faith in Buddhism by this action. That kind of positive mind. Lacking either of those, actively acting opposite to that, is shamelessness and inconsideration for others.

Geshe Rabten: Shamelessness is a distinct mental factor that does not avoid the unwholesome either for reasons of personal conscience or for the sake of the Dharma. so it does not avoid it, that means it does it, it engages in it, right? Without taking these things into consideration.

So it seems like shamelessness would be present as an adjunct, as a mental factor in almost all non-virtuous mental actions. Is that possible? Can you have shamelessness and anger at the same time, or can you have only one delusion at a time? No, there is no contradiction in having several of the afflictions present at the same time. You can't have a virtuous state of mind and a non-virtuous state of mind present simultaneously, because they are contradictory, but shamelessness is not contradictory to anger. The very fact that you are not avoiding getting angry, or not avoiding being attached, can be an example of shamelessness.

It acts as a supportive condition for all root and proximate afflictions and as a basis for spoiling the guarding of one's vows. If you are shameless; if you don't have that sense of avoiding things, you are not able to guard your vows.

Inconsideration for others is a mental factor that, without taking others or their spiritual traditions into account either your gurus or the Mahayana or Buddhism in general wishes to behave in a manner that does not avoid negative behavior. It means 'Just do what you want! To let go, which can be positive, but to let go completely without a sense of avoiding negative actions. One part of it can arise from bewilderment, not knowing that the actions you are doing or engaging in are negative. For instance, if the psychologist tells you to retch up these memories of having been abused by father O'Flannery in Catholic school or that your uncle or auntie had abused you, when you were a child, often as far as I know - correct me if wrong - they advice people to feel the anger, to let that anger out. Not just to identify it - which would be okay from a Buddhist perspective, that there was something one had been repressing; but actually saying that it's good to be angry would be a sense of shamelessness, not avoiding the negative action of anger. Because anger itself is something that creates a great deal of negative karma and in so doing destroys one's roots of virtue.

Along with shamelessness and inconsideration for others there is unconscientiousness. Conscientiousness is somewhat akin to shame and consideration for others. So what is the difference with shamelessness and inconsideration for others?

Geshe Rabten: *Unconscientiousness is a mental factor that, when one is affected by laziness, wishes to freely act in an unrestrained manner without cultivating virtue or guarding the mind against contaminated phenomena. That would be like hanging out - not guarding the mind. It's a quality a fault! ascribed to any of the three mental poisons when they are accompanied by laziness.*

So if the three poisonous minds are accompanied by laziness, unconscientiousness will also be present. Because the three poisonous minds predispose one to create negative karma, and if one is affected by laziness and wishes to freely act in an unrestrained manner, then even if you know these things are negative, and the negative mind is there, if you have a certain amount of conscientiousness, you don't have to follow that negative mind completely. You could be aware of it and try to create an antidote to it.

Distraction or wandering, *nampar yengwa* in Tibetan, is a general kind of wandering of the mind. *Distraction is a mental factor that, unable to direct the mind towards a wholesome object, disperses it to a variety of other objects.* Talking about distraction or wandering as negative, as this unwholesome mental factor, it is when you are focusing on a wholesome object, like love, or your guru, or meditating on death and impermanence or emptiness, and you are unable to keep that in mind because of wandering onto something else, either because of hatred or bewilderment or attachment.

One of the texts mentions that there is a difference between distraction in general and

what we called excitement. Geshe Rabten says about excitement: *This mental factor is often with us, but its presence only becomes truly felt when we start to concentrate the mind in meditation. Not all forms of mental distraction are caused by excitement, only those that are brought about by our attachment to desire for an agreeable contaminated object.* So a subset of excitement in general might be distraction due to attachment.

Geshe Rabten mentions different kinds of distractions, inherent distraction, internal distraction, external distraction. What would be the difference between those last two, what do you think, before checking the actual meaning? Distraction toward something external and internal your own thoughts – that’s what I would have thought also. But actually your thoughts about external objects are also called external distraction. But internal distraction is if you are distracted to the pleasure of the bliss of meditation or some internal quality like that.

Geshe Rabten: *All wholesome states of mind within the realm of desire, such as learning, reflection and so forth, have this quality. If you haven’t attained calm abiding yet, your mind is still of the desire realm. So there will always be distraction – even in a wholesome mind – because it is not single-pointed yet. It arises whenever the mind is unable to remain directed towards a wholesome referent for a sustained period of time. Within the realm of desire, wholesome states of mind are constantly subject to being dispersed from one object to another.*

Internal distraction is: *The excitement and sinking that occur during concentrated equipoise as well as the craving for the taste of absorption...* You can have a craving, a clinging, an attachment to the bliss arising from meditation, which is not yet unattached. So that can be this kind of inner distraction.

The four changeable mental factors: regret, sleep, investigation, analysis.

I just want to mention and re-iterate the changeable mental factors before we do one more meditation. There are four. Do you remember what they are? Regret, sleep, investigation and analysis.

[Let’s look into what changeable actually means.] Wisdom for example, what kind of mental factor is that? It is an object-ascertaining mental factor, which is by nature neutral, unpredicted. So it can become virtuous or non-virtuous by the presence of another virtuous mental factor or a non-virtuous mental factor, an affliction, in the mind. By its own nature it does not have that quality. For example a wisdom that is analyzing how to make a plutonium bomb in order to blow up peaceful people – wouldn’t that be negative by nature? Are the texts wrong? Can wisdom in fact be by nature negative? Probably not, the texts are not wrong; it depends on the motivation and even on the temporal state of mind.

What’s the difference between that kind of mind, which could be virtuous or non-virtuous and, for instance, the mental factor regret that could be virtuous or non-virtuous? Wisdom could be virtuous and non-virtuous, but it is classified as an object ascertaining mental factor, whereas now we hear the same of regret, and that is called a changeable

mental factor. Well, let me ask you this: is regret by nature either virtuous or non-virtuous? Yes. When there is regret about a virtuous action, the regret itself becomes non-virtuous. Regretting something non-virtuous you did – that’s like one of the opponent powers – that regret becomes virtuous. Whereas wisdom is not virtuous or non-virtuous by its own nature.

How about the other two? Investigation and analysis can be virtuous or non-virtuous; it depends upon what you are investigating. These are often mentioned when we talk about the qualities of the form realm, the various concentrations, because as you progress among the subtler and subtler minds, at first all you can do is sort of a gross investigation, a coarser kind of checking, then later you lose that ability, as the mind becomes very subtle, to do investigation, and only have the ability for fine analysis and so forth.

The main antidote to ignorance or bewilderment is not just understanding the law of cause and effect, which overcomes the bewilderment which is unknowing of certain things. But the main antidote to ignorance and bewilderment is the wisdom seeing reality as it is, understanding the ultimate nature of phenomena to be empty of true existence. So maybe it is fitting if we finish up with a meditation on that, which is the antidote to all of our kinds of ignorance, and it becomes the ultimate antidote to our anger, our attachment, our jealousy, our pride, doubt, to all of the mental afflictions, our depression, everything.

In the lam-rim classes we talked mainly and first of all about meditating on the emptiness of the person – seeking the object of negation. You can do the same thing also, from the beginning, with external phenomena.

One of the classic examples in the sutras is to think, ‘What is my cart or chariot? Or, more modern, to think, ‘What is my car – my Lexus, my Toyota?’ It could be an object of attachment, especially if it’s concretized as something truly existent; it could be an object of frustration and anger also, when it runs out of gas... So what is the car we are conceiving of? We are referring to a conventionally existing car – a conventionally existing Toyota – as my car. It’s a name we impute to that collection of parts. It can’t be found in the collection or separate from the collection. It’s not the configuration of the parts; the Toyota doesn’t possess the parts and is not possessed by the parts. If one analyses in these various ways, it’s said to be the seven-fold analysis; perhaps Rikzin Rinpoche will mention that when talking [in the lam rim] about the emptiness of phenomena. You can use a similar kind of analysis that we do for the selflessness of persons also for phenomena, but in general [for phenomena] there are some other reasonings that are used.

Meditation

Let’s sit comfortably. Try to collect your thoughts again, to calm your minds, watch our breathing.

Then bring your attention to your mental consciousness; being just aware with your mental consciousness of this substratum of the mind, its clear light nature, regardless of the content that might appear, and you might wander or be distracted to.

Having had some, at least, introduction to the selflessness of the person, try to recall that now. 'The self appears to my mind, to my mental consciousness, when I observe or refer to the conventionally existent self. Here is the appearance of a truly existent self to my mind, my mental consciousness, and there is a grasping to that, an assent, an agreement with that - grasping that it's true.' The same thing holds for all other phenomena. All other phenomena, like the self, merely exist as imputations, whether it be a mountain, road, fence, house, institution... also money, a very good example, just imputed to a piece of paper: value! All phenomena, including the self, all phenomena have an existence which is only nominal, [existing] by convention, having a certain consistency with the law of cause and effect. But going beyond that, assenting to an appearance which occurs due to familiarization from beginningless time, as soon as we impute a phenomena, giving it a name or concept, it appears to us as existing from its own side. From its own side existing or truly existing would mean the sense that it can be found there somewhere, residing outside, within, around - somehow attached to the basis of designation as though we could find it, if we searched.

Findability within the basis of designation. Not just a mere findability that John is in the gompa, and you can find him there, but looking within the basis of designation of John - the five aggregates, the sense that you can find a soul or John-ness there or that you can actually find Land of Medicine Buddha within its parts.

Where is Land of Medicine Buddha? What is Land of Medicine Buddha? Is it the board of directors? Is it the houses? The roads? The red-woods?

If we search within the basis of designation of Land of Medicine Buddha, for instance, the actual infrastructure, the houses and roads and so forth, the governing authorities, the board of directors etc., all of them could in a sense be considered to be bases of designation of Land of Medicine Buddha. You can't find Land of Medicine Buddha anywhere within that; it's just a concept that we attribute to that collection.

Likewise the self is just a concept we attribute to, designate, impute, to the collection of five aggregates. Any sense of the self as abiding other than that, some kind of solid feeling in your body - the self - or some sort of solid concrete findable feeling of I - the recipient, the controller within the mind - these are examples of a truly existing I.

Like the self, all phenomena are empty of true existence.

The only conventional existence that is valid, is that which is ascribed by a conventional naming designating mind to a basis of designation - via consciousness. We see phenomena conventionally exist as dependent arisings. They have no inherent, true

existence from their own side, no existence findable within their basis of designation. Why? Because they are dependent arisings.

If you have a sense that the self is a dependent arising, that the self arises in dependence on the basis of designation, the five aggregates, a name and a consciousness designating that name, simply apply that now to all phenomena, to anything we perceive, that we can think of.

Any phenomenon can be said to exist to the conventional mind merely as an imputation. There is nothing that can be found from its own side. Why? Because it's dependent arising; it's empty of any kind of inherent or true existence, because it arises in dependence on consciousness, basis of designation and the concept or name given by that consciousness.

So if you can in a sense imagine taking as your referent object all phenomena – you can think of the general category of phenomena. Anything that exist, pleasure, pain, objects of sight, sounds, smell, objects of the mind, they are only conventional existence, that is ascribed, designated by the mind – conceptually or verbally. There is nothing existing from their own side, the way it appears to our mind.

Perceiving just that non-existence of what was previously apprehended to exist, truly existent phenomena, findable phenomena – that non-appearance dawning upon the mind is an apprehension of the space-like emptiness.

All of our past actions, the sense of our self or ego when we created negative actions out of attachment, anger and ignorance, there has never been, since beginningless time, a truly existent self. There was no one truly, who did those actions. There were no truly existing actions done; those actions existed, and are existing, merely as imputations, conventionally ascribed to successive moments of something. The recipients of those actions, if there were recipients or objects of those actions, also do not truly exist, did not truly exist in the past. There was no truly existing person that we harmed or that we desired, that we lied to, that we stole from. There is no truly existing I, who did these actions – not in the past or now.

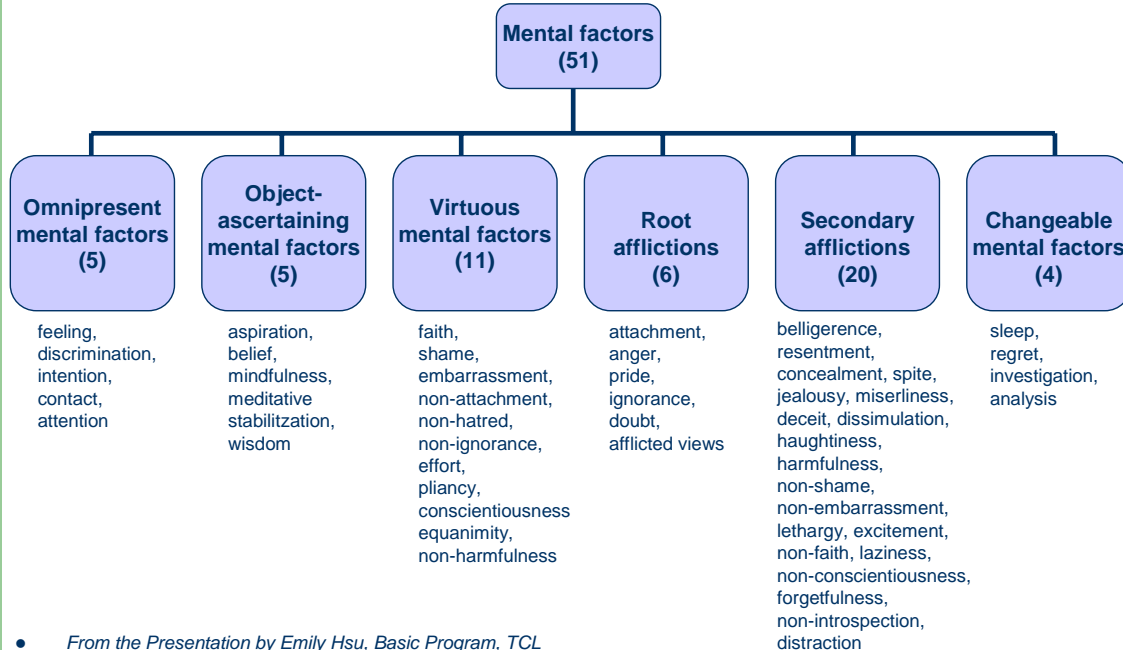
Dedication

So dedicate the merits we have created this term of studying, also the merits we have created other times in the past that still reside in our continuum, you can even dedicate the merits that we will create in the future. Within the emptiness of the three spheres, due to this karma, due to this merit may I quickly become enlightened for the sake of sentient beings, passing through all the stages necessary, whatever time it takes. Due to this karma may those beings showing floorless paths to enlightenment have long lives, may their Dharma wishes be fulfilled spontaneously, effortlessly. Due to this merit may

the Dharma spread, where it has never spread before, the minds and places. Where it has spread but degenerated, may it be revived due to this karma, due to this merit.

Within the state of some recollection of emptiness, dedicating like this: especially due to these merits, may the two bodhicittas that have not yet arisen in my own and others' continua arise due to this merit, and as a result of this merit may whatever small semblance of bodhicitta, whether it be thinking about bodhicitta or having some small insight or aspiration toward it, whatever has arisen, may it not decline but continue to grow ever bigger.

Divisions of mental factors



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