

FPMT BASIC PROGRAM ONLINE
STAGES OF THE PATH
Middle Length Lamrim

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at
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Open Book
Study Questions
with
Answer Keys

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Open Book Study Questions

Chapter 1

Introduction

1. What does the title of the text, *Stages of the Path*, indicate about the subject matter explained in the *Middle Length Lam-rim*?
2. Which preliminaries did the Vikramaśīla Monastery scholars consider necessary to commence the explanation of a text?
3. Describe the first two preliminaries.
4. Name the authors and texts that are the source of these teachings.
5. Briefly explain the four greatneses of the instructions contained in this text.
6. Why are the three faults of a vessel mistaken?
7. List the ten qualities ideally found in a spiritual friend.
8. What are the medium qualities of a spiritual guide, as mentioned by Geshe Potowa?
9. Explain the minimum characteristics we should settle for in relying on a teacher.
10. Why is it necessary for a disciple to have any characteristics?
11. What are the main benefits of relying on the spiritual teacher?
12. Why is it necessary to accumulate merit and purify negativities?
13. What are the 7 parts of the seven-limb prayer, and what are their main function and benefits?
14. Which topics of the stages of the path require analytical meditation in order to cultivate them?
15. Explain how to apply both analytical and stabilizing meditation for meditation on selflessness.
16. How are the ten endowments of a precious human rebirth indicated?
17. How should one think if wishing to take the essence of the precious human rebirth?
18. What are the four thoughts regarding the Dharma that are necessary for the generating a fully-qualified wish to take the essence of our perfect human rebirth?
19. What are the three ways to contemplate the precious human rebirth?
20. How does the *Middle Length Lam-rim* teach the actual way of taking the essence of a perfect human rebirth?
21. Since the teachings for the purposes of lesser and intermediate beings are the preparatory practices of great beings, why are they not just called “the stages of the path of great beings”, but rather, “the stages of the path *in common* to lesser and intermediate beings?”

Chapter 2

The Stages of the Path Common to Lesser Beings

1. What are the two main steps of training the mind in the stages of the path common to lesser beings?
2. How does one generate a mental attitude of interest in future lives?
3. What are the methods to rely on for the happiness of future lives?
4. What are the five main disadvantages of not cultivating mindfulness of death?
5. What are the three thoughts and the nine reasons and the concluding decisions of the contemplation that cultivates our mindfulness of death?
6. If we simply think of two possibilities for future lives - what are they?
7. Why is thinking about suffering a vital point?
8. What are the three main categories of suffering of the lower realms?
9. How are we advised to meditate on these; how will fear of the lower realms help us?
10. In brief, why are the Three Jewels worthy of refuge?
11. How are the positive qualities of the Buddha presented? How are we advised to use these in meditation?
12. What are the precepts of having taken refuge in the Three Jewels?
13. What are the four general characteristics of karma?
14. What are the ten non-virtuous paths of action and how are they related to the three doors of body speech and mind?
15. A complete path of action is described as having four aspects – what are they?
16. What are the three kinds of effects we can experience of a complete path of action?
17. List the four opponent powers that are to be applied to purify negative karma.
18. What is the measure of having developed the small scope motivation?
19. Why is it not inappropriate for those who strive for liberation and for enlightenment to develop an aspiration for high status in future lives?

Chapter 3

The Stages of the Path Common to Intermediate Beings

- 1. Why do we need to train our mind in the stages of the path common to intermediate beings ?**
- 2. Liberation is freedom from bondage. What does bondage mean?**
- 3. Why do we need to actually generate the mind striving for liberation, isn't it a natural wish?**
- 4. In which order have the four noble truths been taught and why?**
- 5. List the eight sufferings and the six sufferings that illustrate the faults of cyclic existence.**
- 6. List the three sufferings.**
- 7. How is the suffering of change explained?**
- 8. What does pervasive or compounding suffering refer to?**
- 9. Among karma and mental afflictions, why are the afflictions stated as the most important?**
- 10. List the root mental afflictions or delusions – as six and as ten.**
- 11. Taking the view of the transitory collection to be the root, how do the remaining root mental afflictions and views arise?**
- 12. What is the measure of the attitude of renunciation, or the thought to definitely emerge from cyclic existence, having arisen purely? Why is it necessary for attaining enlightenment?**
- 13. What are the three trainings to avert cyclic existence, and at what point are they explained in the text?**

Chapter 4

The Stages of the Path of Great Beings

1. Why is it necessary to train the mind in the stages of the path of great beings and what is the entrance way for doing so?
2. What are the common and uncommon causes of the three enlightenments? How are the two vehicles distinguished in this context?
3. What are the stages for training the mind by means of the sevenfold instruction on cause and effect?
4. Name the important preliminary that we need to engage in before the actual bodhicitta meditations, and what are the two thoughts that can be generated to achieve it?
5. What is the origin of the method for developing the mind of enlightenment through equalizing and exchanging oneself and others, and what are its essential steps?
6. Why is it important to consolidate our aspiring mind of enlightenment by means of ritual?
7. What are the four points of training to protect the aspiring mind from degenerating in this life?
8. What are the four white dharmas and the four black dharmas that we train to uphold and to avoid in order to prevent us from being separated from the mind generation in future lives?
9. How does the *Cloud of Jewels Sutra* encourage us to protect our aspiring mind of enlightenment in all future lives??
10. What is the method for restoring the vow of aspiring mind generation if the training is transgressed?
11. What constitutes the training in the bodhisattva way after having generated the mind of enlightenment?
12. How does the practice of the six perfections include the entire Mahayana?
13. Explain how the six perfections are defined, and what their subdivisions are.
14. Describe the four means of gathering disciples.

Chapter 5

1. Calm Abiding

1. How are calm abiding and special insight distinguished in terms of their entity?
2. Are calm abiding and special insight distinguished in terms of the object they observe?
3. Is the arising of bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality an indication of realization of emptiness?
4. Why do we need to cultivate both calm abiding and special insight?
5. The order in which the two, calm abiding and special insight, are to be generated, is definite: calm abiding is a prerequisite for special insight. Does this mean one can not have a correct understanding of emptiness before having achieved calm abiding?
6. What are the conditions mentioned in the text that are prerequisites for training in calm abiding?
7. What are the preparations in terms of practice?
8. Complete the two charts on the next page that illustrate the training in calm abiding, indicating the five faults that arise and the antidotes to be applied, and the nine stages, six powers and four attentions.
9. What are the two main features of a faultless meditative stabilization?
10. Why is it necessary to develop special insight after attaining calm abiding?

The Five Faults & Eight Antidotes

8 Applied antidotes	faith	aspiration	effort	pliancy	mindfulness	introspection	intention	equanimity
5 Faults								

The Nine Mental Abidings, Six Powers & Four Mental Attentions

Enumeration of the mental abidings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Names of the mental abidings				closely setting	disciplining	pacifying	thoroughly pacifying		setting in equipoise
Experiences of the mental abidings		the conceptions ease off	the conceptions are weakened when adverse conditions are encountered	having gathered [the conceptions] inward from the vast, they are made subtle	the excellent qualities of meditative stabilization are enjoyed	through knowing the disadvantages of distractions, they are stopped	the afflictions, an attached mind and so forth, are abandoned with effort	meditative stabilization is continuously achieved	
6 Powers									
4 Mental attentions	forceful engaging		interrupted engaging						

Chapter 5

2. Special Insight & Vajrayana

1. What exactly is afflicted ignorance? What is its manner of superimposition? In what way does the superimposition of mistaking a rope as a snake differ from mistaking a snake as inherently existent?
2. What is meant by the apprehension of the two selves?
3. What is the observed object of the innate view of the transitory collection apprehending I?
4. Give an example of a self of a person that is not the view of the transitory collection.
5. What is the observed object of the view of the transitory collection apprehending mine?
Give examples of the self of phenomena that are not the view of the transitory collection apprehending mine.
6. Is the innate or the artificial afflicted ignorance the root of cyclic existence, or are these both the root of cyclic existence?
7. What is the order of the two selves arising, and the order in which their emptiness is realized? Does this order imply a difference in subtlety between the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena?
8. Is the merely imputed person the same as the aggregates, its basis of imputation?
9. How do you differentiate between the existent person or self, and the non-existent person or self?
10. What are the four essential points of the four-point-analysis?
11. What is the intended meaning of “persons appear like illusions”?
12. How does the practice of seeing things as illusion-like appearances help to correctly establish both their emptiness of inherent existence, and the validity of their conventional existence?
13. How do you establish the selflessness of phenomena?
14. What is the King of Reasonings, dependent arising, and how it is used to establish the emptiness of both self and phenomena?
15. What is the basis of the division (what is being divided) into ultimate and conventional truths? What does this mean?
16. Why are the two truths one entity but different isolates?

- 17. Why is a conventional truth also called a truth for a concealer?**
- 18. How is valid cognition possible before realizing emptiness, if conventional truths are truths for a concealer?**
- 19. In what way is an ultimate truth said to be true? How does this differ from the way in which a conventional truth is true?**
- 20. What is mundane special insight and what is supramundane special insight?**
- 21. What is the indication that fully-qualified special insight has been achieved?**
- 22. Why should we engage in the practice of tantra?**

ANSWER KEY

For the Open Book Study Questions

Chapter 1 Introduction

1. What does the title of the text, *Stages of the Path*, indicate about the subject matter explained in the *Middle Length Lam-rim*?

1C. *Identification of the Dharma to be explained in the context of what the title means*

The teachings to be explained here consist in how the fortunate are led to the level of buddhahood through the stages of the path to enlightenment. They summarize all the points of the Victor's scriptures, following the tradition of the two great trail-blazers Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga; {2} they constitute the Dharma system of supreme beings who progress to the state of omniscience; and they contain all the stages without omission that the three types of beings need to practice.

2. Which preliminaries did the Vikramaśīla Monastery scholars consider necessary to commence the explanation of a text?

2A. Scholars of glorious Vikramaśīla Monastery considered it vital to start off with three preliminaries: the greatness of the author of the teachings, the greatness of the teachings, and the way to explain and listen to them.

3. Describe the first two preliminaries.

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

2B2. *The greatness of the teachings for the sake of generating respect for the instructions* is explained in three points:

A. *Identifying the teachings.*

B. *Presenting this text as possessing the three: being fully complete, easily applicable, and a particularly noble system.*

C. *Presenting this text as possessing the four greatneses.*

4. Name the authors and texts that are the source of these teachings.

2B1A. Generally speaking, the present instructions are the ones that the venerable protector Maitreya gives in his *Ornament for Clear Realization*. (*Abhisamayālaṃkāra*). As they are based in particular on *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* (*Bodhipathapradīpa*), its author is also the author of the present text. Other than under the name of Great Master Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, he is also widely known as the glorious Atiśa.

5. Briefly explain the four greatneses of the instructions contained in this text.

2B2C. *Presenting this text as possessing the four greatneses*

The greatness of the instructions contained in this text has four points:

1 *The greatness of recognizing all the teachings as being non-contradictory*

2 The greatness of all the Buddha's teachings occurring to you as instructions

3 The greatness of allowing you to easily discover the Victor's intentions

4 The greatness of a great misdeed stopping by itself

- The greatness of recognizing all the teachings as being non-contradictory means all the Buddha's teachings come to be understood as a single person's path to buddhahood, that is to say some are primary points of the path, others are appropriate secondary points - different advice was given for different types of disciples' minds so they can train in their respective paths. This it also avoids the faults of sectarianism.

- The greatness of all the Buddha's teachings occurring to you as instructions means one avoids the mistake of thinking the meaning of the essential points of practice exists separately from the teachings. One understands all the scriptures as useful personal instructions and as they are all condensed into stages of practical application in terms of performing stabilizing meditation and analytical meditation then the certainty develops that they should be understood as supreme advice, and the misconception that they should be understood as mere background knowledge for the Dharma rather than as actual instructions is completely averted.

- The greatness of allowing you to easily discover the Victor's intentions indicates the scriptures meaning is to be found more easily, clearly and thoroughly with a teacher.

- The greatness of a great misdeed stopping by itself stops one abandoning the Dharma where one decides some teachings are good and others are not meant to be practiced due to ignorance of the Dharma. By understanding the previous points we avoid this fault.

6. Why are the three faults of a vessel mistaken?

2B3A-3A1. *Giving up the three faults of a vessel*

If a vessel is turned upside down, is unclean, or has the bottom leaking, then liquid cannot enter, will be polluted or leak out. In the same way there is no great need to hear the Dharma if you sit in a place where it is being explained but do not listen well, or listen, but take it wrong—with a faulty motivation and the like—or if, even in case these faults are not present, the words and the meaning you grasped at the time of hearing are not consolidated and get lost through forgetfulness and so forth. Therefore one should be free from these faults. The antidotes to these three are set forth in three phrases in the sūtras: "Listen well—intently—and keep it in mind!"

7. List the ten qualities ideally found in a spiritual friend.

2B4A-1B1B-1. *Highest characteristics*

In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras (Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra)* it says that students need to rely on a spiritual teacher endowed with ten properties:

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

8. What are the medium qualities of a spiritual guide, as mentioned by Geshe Potowa?

2B4A-1B1B-2. *Middling characteristics*

The three trainings, realization of suchness, and a loving heart

9. Explain the minimum characteristics we should settle for in relying on a teacher.

2B4A-1B1B-3. *Minimum characteristics*

One should not rely on anyone whose faults are greater than their qualities or whose faults and

positive qualities are equal but on someone whose positive qualities exceed their faults. As we are looking to improve our own qualities then this is the minimum we could look for in order to do that.

10. Why is it necessary for a disciple to have any characteristics?

2B4A-1B2. *Explaining the characteristics of the one who relies, the student*

Impartial, intelligent, full of endeavor—

Thus is explained a vessel for teachings.

Otherwise qualities of the teacher,

Have no effect—there's no change in the listener.

As it says in the commentaries, someone endowed with the three characteristics is a suitable vessel for listening. If all three are complete, the positive qualities of the one expounding the Dharma appear as positive qualities and do not appear as faults.

If the characteristics of a vessel are not complete, the listener, under the power of his faults, will classify even a great, perfectly pure spiritual teacher who expounds the Dharma among those who have faults and perceive an exponent's faults as qualities.

In this regard "impartial" means without bias. If you have a bias, it will make you obscured, you will not perceive positive qualities, and therefore you will fail to find the meaning of excellent explanations.

To be biased means to be attached to one's own approach and to hate others' approach.

If someone does not have the intelligence to distinguish between good ways of explaining and faulty ways of explaining that seem the same, he is not a suitable vessel, even though impartial. Therefore one needs to have the intelligence that understands those two.

.....Even if one has the two, impartiality and intelligence, someone who is just like the listener to the Dharma in a lifeless picture is not a suitable vessel. Therefore one also needs to have great endeavor.

In summary: it is necessary to be unbiased to avoid a closed or fixed view and so not understand the meaning of the explanations. One needs intelligence to be able to discriminate correctly in terms of what is good and faulty explanation and have great effort in order to progress. Additionally respect for the Dharma and the expounder of the Dharma as well as an attentive mind, are added as with such characteristics one will find it easier to understand the teachings and put them into practice.

11 What are the main benefits of relying on the spiritual teacher?

The main benefits are that you will approach the state of a buddha, that the Victors will rejoice, that you will not be deprived of virtuous spiritual friends, that you will not fall to the lower realms, and that you will not easily succumb to bad karma and afflictions. Since you will not transgress the conduct of bodhisattvas and will remain mindful of it, your accumulation of positive qualities will grow higher and higher and all your temporary and ultimate goals will be accomplished.

Lastly the karma for experiencing the lower realms is exhausted directly in this lifetime through only slight harm to body and mind or else through experiences in dreams. It is said that there are enormous benefits that outshine the roots of virtue of making offerings and the like to innumerable buddhas.

12. Why is it necessary to accumulate merit and purify negativities?

2B4A-2A1A-5A. *The reason why it is necessary to accumulate merit and purify negativities*

It is exceedingly difficult for paths to arise in your continuum if the favorable conditions for their arising, the collections, have not been accumulated, and their adverse conditions, the obscurations, have not been purified. Therefore you need to purify the mind by means of the seven-limb practice, which brings together the key points of accumulation and purification.

13. What are the 7 parts of the seven-limb prayer, and what are their main function and benefits ?

2B4A-2A1A-5B1. *The actual detailed explanation has seven points:*

- A. Prostration
- B. Offerings
- C. Confession of negativities
- D. Rejoicing
- E. Requesting the wheel of Dharma to be turned
- F. Supplication
- G. Dedication

2B4A-2A1A-5C. *Categorization of the individual elements*

Accordingly five limbs, prostrating, offering, requesting, supplicating, and rejoicing, constitute the accumulation of the collection of merit. Confessing purifies obscurations. One aspect of rejoicing, the cultivation of joy in one's own virtue, multiplies the virtue. By means of dedicating, the virtues of accumulating, purifying, and multiplying, however small, are multiplied manifold, and what would come to an end after producing a temporary effect is made inexhaustible.

In brief, there are the three: accumulation, purification, as well as multiplication and making inexhaustible.

14. Which topics of the stages of the path require analytical meditation in order to cultivate them?

2B4A-2B1B. *Identification of analysis and stabilization*

For meditations such as the cultivation of faith in the spiritual teacher, the preciousness of the freedoms and endowments and how difficult it is to find them, death and impermanence, actions and their effects, the faults of cyclic existence, and the cultivation of bodhicitta, analytical meditation is necessary. the generation of these minds depends on nothing but the meditation repeatedly analyzing them through individual investigation.

15. Explain how to apply both analytical and stabilizing meditation for meditation on selflessness.

For example, analysis should be used to investigate the mode of existence of the self, and through analysis one reaches the certainty that the apprehended object of the mind conceiving the self doesn't exist at all, but since we have been following the opposite "certainty" since beginningless time we need to stabilise this new certainty in the mind, which through repeated practice will lead to a realisation of selflessness.

16. How are the ten endowments of a precious human rebirth indicated?

2B4B-1A2A. *The five personal endowments*

The five personal endowments are said to be :

- Human birth in the center, unimpaired senses,
- No perverted deeds and faith in the basis.

2B4B-1A2B. *The five endowments conditioned by others*

The five endowments conditioned by others are said to be :

- A buddha arrived and taught the holy Dharma,

The teachings are abiding and being followed,
There are hearts with loving concern for others.

17. How should one think if wishing to take the essence of the precious human rebirth?

2B4B-1B 3. *How to train in the wish to take the essence, having brought to mind those two objectives*

“Consequently, why would I act in such a way that an excellent base like the one that I have gained does not have a result? If I do not make it meaningful, could there be a greater self-betrayal and a bigger stupidity? Having passed through many perilous places of unfreedom such as the lower realms, again and again, if I were to go back to those places, forsaking this one-off liberation as meaningless, it would be like turning mindless as though stupefied by a magic spell.” By way of thoughts like these you should meditate again and again.

18. What are the four thoughts regarding the Dharma that are necessary for the generating a fully-qualified wish to take the essence of our perfect human rebirth?

2B4B-1C5. *The method of meditation with four special features*

- A. The need to accomplish the Dharma—because all sentient beings only want happiness and do not want suffering, and attaining happiness and eliminating suffering only depends on the holy Dharma.
- B. The ability to accomplish the Dharma—because you have the external condition, a spiritual teacher, and the internal condition, the leisure and endowments.
- C. The need, also, to accomplish the Dharma in this life—because if you do not accomplish it within this life, it will be difficult to find the leisure and endowments in many future lives.
- D. The need to accomplish the Dharma right now—because the time of death is uncertain.

19. What are the three ways to contemplate the precious human rebirth?

2B4B-1C6A. *How to contemplate the leisure and endowments from various points of view*

.....you should subsume them under the three:

- 1. what the essence of the leisure and endowments is,
- 2. the manner in which they are greatly meaningful from a temporary and ultimate point of view,
- 3. how difficult they are to find from the point of view of cause and effect.

20. How does the *Middle Length Lam-rim* teach the actual way of taking the essence of a perfect human rebirth?

2B4B-2A2. *The actual way of taking its essence*

This has three points:

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

21. Since the teachings for the purposes of lesser and intermediate beings are the preparatory practices of great beings, why are they not just called “the stages of the path of great beings”, but rather, “the stages of the path *in common* to lesser and intermediate beings?”

2B4B-2A1B-2B1B.

- 1. in this way the conceit of claiming oneself to be a great being, while the mental attitudes common to lesser and intermediate beings have not even arisen, is overcome, and
- 2. all three—the highest, intermediate, and least mental attitudes—have great benefits.

Chapter 2

The Stages of the Path Common to Lesser Beings

1 What are the two main steps of training the mind in the stages of the path common to lesser beings?

2B4B-2A2A-1. The actual training in the attitude of lesser beings

This has two points:

- A. Generating a mental attitude of interest in future worlds
- B. Relying on the methods for the happiness of future worlds

2. How does one generate a mental attitude of interest in future lives?

2B4B-2A2A-1A. *Developing a mental attitude of interest in future worlds*

This has two points:

- 1 Being mindful of death: contemplating that one will not stay in this world for long
- 2 What will become of you in future existences: contemplating the happiness and suffering of the two types of migrating beings

3. What are the methods to rely on for the happiness of future lives?

2B4B-2A2A-1B. *Explanation of how to rely on the methods for the happiness of future worlds*

This has two points:

- 1 The holy gateway for entering the teachings: training in taking refuge
- 2 The root of all well-being: generating the faith of conviction in actions and their effects.

4. What are the five main disadvantages of not cultivating mindfulness of death?

2B4B-2A2A-1A1A. *The disadvantages of not cultivating mindfulness of death*

- A. Demonstration that the mind's bias towards the idea that one is not going to die is the gateway of harm
- B. How this prevents us from even taking an interest in future lives
- C. How this results in meaningful endeavors also having little power
- D. How this results in long-term goals also being postponed
- E. How holding to permanence induces attachment, aversion, and so forth and how they induce faulty behavior

Alternatively they may be remembered more easily as:

- A. One will not remember dharma
- B. If one remembers dharma, one does not practice it
- C. If one practices, one does not do so properly
- D. If one practices properly, one does not do so continually
- E. One increases afflictions and makes mistakes

5. What are the three thoughts and the nine reasons and the concluding decisions of the contemplation that cultivates our mindfulness of death?

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D. *How to cultivate mindfulness of death*

The three root thoughts are:

- 1. It is certain that we will die

2. It is uncertain when we will die
3. At the time of death nothing except the Dharma will be of benefit

The three reasons for each of the three root thought are:

It is certain that we will die because:

- 1 The Lord of Death will certainly come and there are no conditions for warding him off
- 2 Your lifespan cannot be increased and diminishes incessantly
- 3 You die without having had time to practice the Dharma while alive

It is uncertain when we will die because:

- 1 There is no certainty with regard to the lifespan in Jambudvīpa, which is why the time of death is uncertain
- 2 There are many conditions that lead to death and few conditions that promote life
- 3 The body is extremely vulnerable and the time of death therefore uncertain

At the time of death nothing except the Dharma will be of benefit because:

- 1 You cannot take your friends and relatives along
- 2 You cannot take your possessions along
- 3 You cannot take your body along

The concluding decisions are: to practice the Dharma, to practice it now, and to practice it purely.

6. If we simply think of two possibilities for future lives - what are they?

2B4B-2A2A-1A2. *What will become of you in future existences: contemplating the happiness and suffering of the two types of migrating beings*

.....Since apart from the two realms there is no other place of birth, you will be born in either the happy realms or the lower realms. In addition, since you are not under your own control but under the control of other— karma—, you will be reborn according to the wholesome and unwholesome karma that impels you.

7. Why is thinking about suffering a vital point?

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B. *From among the happiness and suffering of two types of migrating beings, considerations about suffering*

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

8. What are the three main categories of suffering of the lower realms?

The sufferings of the hell beings, the hungry ghosts, and of animals.

9. How are we advised to meditate on these, how will fear of the lower realms help us?

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

sufferings we develop strong faith in the Three Jewels as our refuge, and a strong interest in purifying and avoiding their causes.

10. In brief, why are the Three Jewels worthy of refuge?

2B4B-2A2A-1B1B-2. *The reasons why they are worthy to be refuges*

Someone who is free from all fear, skilled in the means of liberating others from fear, steeped in great compassion toward everyone without closeness and distance, and who works for the welfare of all those who help him or do not help him, such a one is worthy to be a refuge. As only the Buddha has those qualifications, while Īśvara and the like do not, he is a refuge. For that reason, the Dharma taught by him, as well as the Saṅgha of hearers, are also worthy to be refuges.

11. How are the positive qualities of the Buddha presented? How are we advised to use these in meditation?

The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted body, speech, mind, and activities are explained.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A2C. *Insistent advice to achieve certainty*

Therefore think about the Buddha's positive qualities again and again, and strive to achieve as much certainty in them as possible. If it develops, you will have reached the main point of taking refuge. If it develops, you will have reached the main point of taking refuge because a similar certainty will come concerning the Dharma that you have received from him and the Saṅgha of those who have accomplished that Dharma.

12. What are the precepts of having taken refuge in the Three Jewels?

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B. *Common precepts for all three objects of refuge*

- 1 Remembering the differences and positive qualities of the Three Jewels and, due to that, taking refuge in them again and again
- 2 Remembering their great kindness and, due to that, exerting yourself at all times to make offerings to them and offering them even the first portion of your food and drink
- 3 Remembering their great compassion and, due to that, establishing other migrating beings in such a mode of behavior
- 4 Whatever you do and whatever you need, worshipping the Three Jewels, supplicating them, and abandoning all other worldly methods
- 5 Aware of the benefits, taking refuge three times a day and three times at night
- 6 Not giving up the Three Jewels even for the sake of your life or a laugh and guarding against this

13. What are the four general characteristics of karma?

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-1. *The actual way to consider karma and its effects in general*

This has four points:

- A How karma is certain
- B The great increase of karma
- C You do not meet with karma you have not created
- D Karma you have created does not dissipate

14. What are the ten non-virtuous paths of action and how are they related to the three doors of body, speech and mind?

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1. *The actual paths of action*

They ten non-virtuous paths of actions related to the three doors are:

- the three created by the body – killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct,

- the four created by speech – lying, divisive speech, harsh words, and idle talk,
- the three created by mind – covetousness, malice, and wrong view.

15. A complete path of action is described as having four aspects – what are they?

Basis; attitude (discrimination; mental affliction; motivation); performance (the performer; The entity of the performance) and completion

16. What are the three kinds of effects we can experience of a complete path of action?

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1C. *Indication of their effects*

- 1 The fully ripened effect
- 2 The effect in conformity with the cause
- 3 The conditioning or empowering effect

17. List the four opponent powers that are to be applied to purify negative karma.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2 *Specifically how to purify non-virtues by means of the four powers*

C. Negativities should be redressed by means of the four powers:

- 1 The power of remorse
- 2 The power of thorough application of antidotes
- 3 The power of preventing faults in future
- 4 The power of the support

18. What is the measure of having developed the small scope motivation?

2B4B-2A2A-2. *The measure of the attitude of lesser beings having arisen*

The measure of the attitude of a small being having arisen is that one comes to think that future lives are more important than this life, and one mainly engages in practice for the sake of future lives.

19. Why is it not inappropriate for those who strive for liberation and for enlightenment to develop an aspiration for high status in future lives?

With respect to that which is to be striven for, there are both temporary and ultimate goals to strive for. Even those who strive for liberation from the excellences of a body and so forth associated with cyclic existence need to temporarily strive for them since certain goodness is to be gained in the end from a continuous succession of such supports.

Chapter 3

The Stages of the Path Common to Intermediate Beings

1. Why do we need to train our mind in the stages of the path common to intermediate beings ?

2B4B-2A2B. *Training the mind in the stages of the path common to intermediate beings*

Thus, having become mindful of death and reflected on the way in which you will fall into the lower realms after death, you turn your mind away from this world, and develop a striving for the happy migrations. Then, through the common way of taking refuge and certainty regarding wholesome and unwholesome karma¹²⁷ and its effects, you give up negativities, and by putting effort into accomplishing virtue you will indeed attain the state of the happy migrations. However, that is not held to be sufficient here. Rather, once the attitude common to lesser beings has been developed, you need to develop the attitude common to intermediate beings which counteracts adherence to cyclic existence as a whole, and then, based on that, you need to develop the mind of enlightenment and be led into the path of great beings.

2. Liberation is freedom from bondage. What does bondage mean?

2B4B-2A2B-2A1A. *Identification of liberation*

Liberation is freedom from bondage. Specifically, there are two things binding one in cyclic existence: karma and mental afflictions. Through the power of these two, the aggregates join. From the point of view of the realms, they do so in the three realms, the desire realm and so forth, when divided by way of migrating beings, as the five or six gods and so forth, and in terms of birthplaces, a womb and so on. This is the entity of bondage, therefore freedom from this is liberation.

3. Why do we need to actually generate the mind striving for liberation, isn't it a natural wish?

If we are in prison we would generate the wish to get out based on the understanding of the drawbacks of being in prison. Similarly, in order to generate the mind that strives for liberation from samsara one must contemplate the shortcomings of samsara. The wish to be free from samsara does not come automatically because in general we think of suffering as merely being the suffering of suffering.- when we are sick we wish to get better, if cold we seek warmth, etc.-The happiness attained in this way is merely the suffering of change. Besides this, we do not recognize compounded suffering of the appropriated aggregates. We need to recognise what suffering is and what happiness is, and that it doesn't come about just randomly.

4. In which order have the four noble truths been taught and why?

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1A2B1. *The need to teach true sufferings, origins, cessations, and paths one after the other in accordance with the scriptures*

Thus, many aspects of suffering having been taught saying "This, in reality, is not happiness but rather suffering," it is necessary to develop disenchantment, which is why the truth of suffering was stated first. Then, having seen that you yourself have fallen into the ocean of suffering, if you want to be liberated from it, you see the need to ward off suffering. Having come to understand that unless you ward off its cause, you will not avert it, thinking "What is the cause?" you come to understand the truth of the origins. That is why the truth of the origins was stated next. Then, once an understanding of the truth of the origins has arisen—that the suffering of cyclic existence is produced by contaminated actions, that those actions are produced by mental afflictions, and that the root of the latter is the apprehension of a self—and you see that the apprehension of a self can be opposed, you vow to

actualize the cessation that puts a stop to suffering. Therefore the truth of cessation was taught next. (When there is an interest in achieving cessation you seek a way to do so and so the true path was taught last).

5. List the eight sufferings and the six sufferings that illustrate the faults of cyclic existence.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A. *Considering the eight types of suffering*

- 1 The suffering of birth
- 2 The suffering of aging
- 3 The suffering of illness
- 4 The suffering of death
- 5 The suffering of meeting with the unpleasant
- 6 The suffering of separation from the pleasant
- 7 The suffering of seeking what you desire and not getting it
- 8 "In brief, the five appropriated aggregates are suffering"

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1B. *Considering the six types of suffering*

1. lack of certainty,
2. insatiability,
3. discarding one's body again and again,
4. being reborn again and again,
5. changing from high to low again and again,
6. lacking companions.

6. List the three sufferings.

Suffering of suffering
Suffering of change
Pervasive (compounding) suffering

7. How is the suffering of change explained?

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1B-3. *How there is nothing in contaminated feelings that is of the entity of happiness*

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

8. What does pervasive or compounding suffering refer to?

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4H. *Considering the meaning of the statement "In brief, the five appropriated aggregates are suffering"*

1. the five appropriated aggregates are a vessel of suffering that will become manifest,
2. they are a vessel of suffering based on what has already become manifest,
3. they are a vessel for the suffering of suffering,

4. they are a vessel for the suffering of change, and
5. they are in the nature of compounding suffering.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4H2 *Extensive explanation*

1. In dependence on taking these appropriated aggregates, the sufferings of the next rebirth onward are induced.
2. The aggregates that have already been established become the basis of illness, aging, and so forth which depend on them.
- 3-4. The aggregates give rise to these two types of suffering due to their relationship with the negative tendencies of the two.
5. Due to the mere establishment of the appropriated aggregates, they arise in the nature of compounding suffering, for all compounded phenomena under the control of other— previous karma and mental afflictions—are compounding suffering.

9. Among karma and mental afflictions, why are the afflictions stated as the most important?

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A1. *How the mental afflictions are chief*

Although both karma and mental afflictions are necessary as causes that establish cyclic existence, the mental afflictions are chief. This is because if there are no mental afflictions, even though there is karma beyond counting accumulated previously, since the cooperative conditions for karma are absent, the sprout of suffering is not established—just like a sprout is not established from a seed that lacks humidity, soil, and so forth. It is also because if there are mental afflictions, even without any karma accumulated previously, it is immediately accumulated anew, and future aggregates will be taken.

10. List the root mental afflictions or delusions – as six and as ten.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A2A. *The actual identification of the mental afflictions*

If they are counted as six, they are: desirous attachment, anger, pride, ignorance, doubt and deluded view.

If they are counted as ten, deluded view is divided into five: the view of the transitory collection, the view holding to an extreme, the view holding a bad view to be the best, the view holding bad ethics and ascetic practice to be best, and wrong view.

11. Taking the view of the transitory collection to be the root, how do the remaining root mental afflictions and views arise?

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A2B. *The stages by which the mental afflictions arise*

When the view of the transitory collection apprehends a self, an arbitrary distinction is made between self and other. Once that is made, attachment to one's own side and hatred for the other side arise. Also conceit arises upon observing that self; that very self is held to be permanent or annihilated and is viewed as the self and so forth, and the bad activities connected with it are held to be the best. Likewise, wrong views that think "The Teacher who taught selflessness, the actions and effects he taught, the four truths, the Three Jewels, and so forth, do not exist" are generated, or, alternatively, the doubt that thinks "Do they exist or not? Are they... or are they not...?" is generated.

12. What is the measure of the attitude of renunciation, or the thought to definitely emerge from cyclic existence, having arisen purely? Why is it necessary for attaining enlightenment?

2B4B-2A2B-2B. *The measure of the attitude having been developed*

When you have come to understand the characteristics of cyclic existence in detail from the point of view of the two, sufferings and their origins, just the desire to abandon them and the desire that arises to attain their complete pacification is indeed the thought to definitely emerge. However, that alone is not sufficient. Therefore you should generate that mind to the same extent as the mind of someone who does not want to be stuck in a house ablaze with fire or stay locked up in prison and to the same extent that it desires liberation from them. Then it will still be necessary to increase it.

If this thought.... is no more than mediocre also the view that does not want the causes of cyclic existence—the origins—will not become more than that. Accordingly, one's striving for liberation, the cessation that is the ceasing of sufferings and origins, will be the same. Because of that, the desire to accomplish the path of liberation will be mere words, and also, there will be no basis for the compassion that cannot bear the suffering of other beings who wander in cyclic existence. Since the uncontrived mind of unsurpassed enlightenment that has the power to arouse the mind will not arise, you become a Mahāyānist only in your understanding that follows words. For that reason you should cultivate that thought again and again.

13. What are the three trainings to avert cyclic existence, and at what point are they explained in the text?

The three trainings are: the higher training in ethics, in concentration, and in wisdom.

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B-2. *Indication that the other trainings will be explained further on*

..... the training in wisdom, special insight, and the training of the mind, the way to generate calm abiding, will be explained in the context of great beings.

Chapter 4

The Stages of the Path of Great Beings

1. Why is it necessary to train the mind in the stages of the path of great beings and what is the entrance way for doing so?

2B4B-2A2C *Training the mind in the path of great beings*

1A *Even for the achievement of one's own entire welfare it is inappropriate to disregard the welfare of others, therefore it is necessary to enter the Mahāyāna from the start*

Through meditating in this manner on the disadvantages of cyclic existence from different perspectives over a long time, you will see all existence as a pit of blazing fire, and your mind will be thoroughly overcome by the wish to attain the liberation that completely pacifies suffering. If, due to that, you train in the three trainings, you will attain liberation from cyclic existence and, moreover, you will not indeed turn back again even to look at the glory of high status. Nonetheless, since extinguishing one's own faults and achieving positive qualities is limited, your own welfare will not be complete. For that very reason, the welfare of others will also be temporarily neglected, and in the end, having been urged to do so by the buddhas, you will have to enter the Mahāyāna. Therefore it is appropriate for the intelligent to enter the Mahāyāna from the start.

1D. *Having generated delight that there exists an entrance to the path that accomplishes all one's own and others' welfare, it is necessary to enter it*

There exists an entrance to the Mahāyāna—the source of all your own and others' excellence, the medicine removing all problems, the great path traveled by all wise beings that nurtures and nourishes all beings through seeing, hearing, remembering, and touching—that possesses the great skillful means that by working for the welfare of others, by the way, you accomplish your own welfare without any incompleteness. Thinking “Oh, I have found exactly what I was looking for!” you should engage in this best of vehicles with whatever ability of a great being you have.

2. What are the common and uncommon causes of the three enlightenments? How are the two vehicles distinguished in this context?

2B4B-2A2C-2A. *Demonstrating that generating the mind of enlightenment is the only gateway to the Mahāyāna*

6. Similarly, among the causes for a buddha sprout, **the mind of unsurpassed enlightenment**, like the seed, **is the uncommon cause**, whereas **the wisdom realizing emptiness**, like the water, manure and so forth, **is the common cause** of the three enlightenments.

7 *The Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna are also distinguished in terms of conduct, the generation of the mind and the like, and are not distinguished in terms of the view*

.....the perfection of wisdom is also said to be the mother. Since it is the mother of the sons of both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna, it is not the wisdom realizing emptiness that distinguishes the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna. {160} Rather it is the mind of enlightenment and the vast conduct that distinguishes them.

3. What are the stages for training the mind by means of the sevenfold instruction on cause and effect?

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A. *The sevenfold instruction on cause and effect transmitted from the Great Elder*

The sevenfold cause and effect is the seven: a complete buddha is born from the mind of enlightenment; this mind from the extraordinary attitude; this attitude from compassion; compassion from love; love from the wish to repay the kindness; the wish to repay the kindness from remembering the kindness; and remembering the kindness from seeing beings as one's mother.

4. Name the important preliminary that we need to engage in before the actual bodhicitta meditations, and what are the two thoughts that can be generated to achieve it?

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A-1. *Producing an equanimous mind toward sentient beings*

To start with, if you do not accomplish an equanimous mind, having stopped the bias of attachment toward some sentient beings and hatred toward others, any love and compassion that arise will arise with partiality. As they do not arise if you observe them without impartiality, you should cultivate equanimity.

Moreover, the following two thoughts are taught in Kamalaśīla's *Stages of Meditation II*: "Since from their side all sentient beings are the same in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering, it would be inappropriate for me to benefit some whom I consider close and harm or fail to benefit others whom I consider distant," and "Since from my own side there is not any sentient being who in beginningless cyclic existence has not been my relative hundreds of times, who should I have attachment for and who should I have hatred for?" As was explained above in the context of the fault of uncertainty, you should think about the way in which friends and enemies quickly change. In this manner you will avert both anger and attachment.

5. What is the origin of the method for developing the mind of enlightenment through equalizing and exchanging oneself and others, and what are its essential steps?

2B4B-2A2C-2B1B. *The training based on that which occurs in the texts by Śāntideva*

Training the mind through equalizing and exchanging oneself and others occurs by thinking about the disadvantages of cherishing oneself and the advantages of cherishing others; removing obstacles to exchanging self and others; regarding self-cherishing as an enemy; generating the mind cherishing others; and realizing that you can generate the mind of this exchange if you familiarize yourself with it.

6. Why is it important to consolidate our aspiring mind of enlightenment by means of ritual?

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3B. *The actual ritual*

1. In front of the master,...with palms joined, he should generate the mind of enlightenment.

2 The mind generation here is not the mere mind generation that thinks "I will attain buddhahood for the welfare of others." Rather, it is the promise that, observing the mind that has been generated, thinks, "I shall not give it up as long as I have not attained enlightenment." This is why that attitude should be generated in dependence on a ritual.

7. What are the four points of training to protect the aspiring mind from degenerating in this life?

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1. *Training in the cause of the mind generation not degenerating in this life*

A. Training in remembering the advantages, so that the strength of one's delight in the mind generation increases

B. Training in generating it six times, so that the actual mind generation increases

C. Training in not mentally abandoning any sentient being for whose welfare the mind has been generated

D. Training in accumulating the collections of merit and wisdom

8. What are the four white dharmas and the four black dharmas that we train to uphold and to avoid in order to prevent us from being separated from the mind generation in future lives? How does the *Cloud of Jewels Sutra* encourage us to protect our aspiring mind of enlightenment in all future lives?

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2A. *Training in abandoning the four black dharmas that cause it to degenerate*

- 1 Deceiving one's abbot, master, guru, or those worthy of offerings
- 2 Causing others to regret virtues that they do not regret
- 3 Saying something uncomplimentary and the like about a sentient being who has entered the Mahāyāna
- 4 Acting out of deceit and shiftiness but without the extraordinary attitude

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B. *Training in adopting the four white dharmas that do not allow it to degenerate*

- 1 Abandoning lying knowingly
- 2 Abiding with the extraordinary attitude without deceit or shiftiness
- 3 Generating the discrimination that bodhisattvas are like the Teacher and praising them
- 4 Ripening sentient beings

9. How does the *Cloud of Jewels Sutra* encourage us to protect our aspiring mind of enlightenment in all future lives?

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B4B-3 *If all actions and conduct are done conjoined with the mind generation, one will not be separated from the mind of enlightenment in all lives*

This is clearly taught in the *Cloud of Jewels of Sūtra*:

If you train in the mind of enlightenment in all behaviors and generate the mind of enlightenment before starting any virtuous activity, you will not be separated from this precious mind in other lives either.

10. What is the method for restoring the vow of aspiring mind generation if the training is transgressed?

2B4B-2A2C-2B3C. *The method for restoring the vow if it has degenerated*

If you transgress the trainings, excluding the two transgressions of giving up the aspiring mind and mentally giving up sentient beings, as long as you do not have bodhisattva vows, there is no downfall from the point of view of a bodhisattva. However, since it transgresses the trainings of the promise of intermediate virtue, it becomes faulty conduct and therefore should be confessed by means of the four powers.

11. What constitutes the training in the bodhisattva way after having generated the mind of enlightenment?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3A. *What the foundation of the trainings is*

Although there are infinite clear divisions, when grouped together by type, all the trainings of bodhisattvas are contained in the six perfections. Therefore, the six perfections constitute the great synopsis that condenses all the essential points of the bodhisattva path.

12. How does the practice of the six perfections include the entire Mahayana?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-4. *The number is definite from the point of view of comprising the entire Mahāyāna*

Thus you will not be attached to resources you have acquired, and you will not view resources that you have not acquired with interest. When that is present, you will be able to guard the trainings, whereby you will take up ethics and respect it. Due to patience with sufferings that arise in dependence on sentient beings and non-sentient phenomena, you will not be discouraged. Due to applying yourself to and delighting in any kind of virtuous activities, you will not be discouraged by

them. You will cultivate the non-conceptual yoga of calm abiding and special insight. These six encompass the entire Mahāyāna of migrating beings, for that is sequentially accomplished through the six perfections and nothing more than those six is necessary.

13. Explain how the six perfections are defined, and what their subdivisions are.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1. *Training in the perfections that ripen one's own buddha qualities*

The entity of generosity is a virtuous intention to give and the actions of body and speech motivated by it. It is the intention at the time the body and speech engage in generosity. Subdivisions of the entity of generosity itself are: the generosity of the Dharma, the generosity of fearlessness, and the generosity of material things

Ethics is the mind of abandonment that is a mind turned away from harming others together with its basis. This is mainly from the point of view of the ethics of restraint. Its subdivisions are: the ethics of restraint, the ethics of accumulating virtuous qualities, and the ethics of bringing about the welfare of sentient beings.

The entity of patience is the mind abiding at ease without being overwhelmed by harm and the occurrence of suffering, as well as very abiding dedication to the Dharma. Its opposites are hatred, disheartenment, lack of appreciation, and lack of desire. There is the patience of not paying heed to harm by others, the patience of accepting the suffering that arises in one's own continuum, and the patience of a mind certain with respect to the Dharma.

In *Bodhisattva Levels* joyous effort is explained as a mind that delights strongly for the sake of gathering virtue and working for the welfare of sentient beings, as well as the actions of the three doors motivated by it. Its subdivisions: armor-like joyous effort, the joyous effort of gathering virtuous dharmas, and the joyous effort of working for the welfare of sentient beings.

The entity of concentration is a mind that abides single-pointedly on any suitable virtuous object. In terms of its entity, there are the two: mundane and supramundane.

In general wisdom is that which very thoroughly distinguishes the qualities in the thing that is being investigated. Here it is the wisdom that is skilled in the five sciences and so forth. There are three: the wisdom realizing the ultimate, the wisdom realizing conventionalities, and the wisdom realizing the welfare of sentient beings.

14. Describe the four means of gathering disciples

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-2. *Training in the four means of gathering disciples that ripen the continua of others*

Generosity is the same as explained in the context of the perfection of generosity.

Pleasant speech is to teach the perfections to disciples.

Meaningful conduct is to make the disciples engage in the meanings that were taught or to make them engage in adopting them correctly.

To act in accordance with the meaning is to abide in whatever meaning one has brought others into contact with and train in accordance with it.

Chapter 5

1. Calm Abiding

1. How are calm abiding and special insight distinguished in terms of their entity?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-3. *The entities of calm abiding and special insight*

- A. The entity of calm abiding:

The meaning of this is that if the mind, having attended to it continuously without distraction, stays on the object by itself so that the joyful bliss of physical and mental pliancy arises, that meditative stabilization becomes calm abiding. This will arise from merely keeping the mind inward undistracted; it does not depend on internalizing the suchness of things.

-B. The entity of special insight

Having achieved physical pliancy and mental pliancy, he abides in them, abandons the aspects of the mind, and devotes himself to the individual investigation of the images within, the objects of meditative stabilization, the very phenomena he has likewise reflected on.

-In the *Cloud of Jewels Sūtra* it says:

Calm abiding is one-pointed mind,
Special insight is investigation.

2. Are calm abiding and special insight distinguished in terms of the object they observe?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-3B4. *Therefore calm abiding and special insight are not distinguished by way of the observed object*

.....each of them, calm abiding and special insight, can have both the mode and the varieties as its object. Therefore calm abiding and special insight are not differentiated by way of their objects. There is calm abiding that realizes emptiness, and there is also special insight that does not realize emptiness. In fact it is because the rush to external objects has calmed down and the mind is abiding on internal objects that something is called *calm abiding*, and it is because of a special, that is, distinguished, insight that something is called *special insight*

3. Is the arising of bliss, clarity and non-conceptuality an indication of realization of emptiness?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-3B6 *The need to differentiate between the realization of emptiness and blissful lucid non-conceptuality*

if the mind is held for a long time, through the power of the mind being held, a workability of vital energies will arise. Since it is natural for joyful bliss to arise in the body and the mind when that has arisen, it is not contradictory for bliss to arise. Once that has arisen, through the power of one's vivid sensation of joyful bliss, the factor of clarity arises. Therefore it cannot be posited that all blissful, clear, non-conceptual meditative stabilizations realize suchness. Consequently, since bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality arise in meditative stabilizations that realize emptiness, and since there are also many meditative stabilizations in which the mind is not directed at emptiness yet bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality still occur, it is necessary to distinguish between the two.

4. Why do we need to cultivate both calm abiding and special insight?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-4 *The reason why both calm abiding and special insight need to be cultivated*

Likewise, with respect to viewing the profound meaning, if you have both the wisdom unmistakably ascertaining the meaning of suchness and the imperturbability of a mind that stays on its object at will,

you will see suchness clearly. However, if you do not have the wisdom realizing the mode of being, despite your non-conceptual meditative stabilization in which your mind remains unscattered, you will not be able to realize the mode of being, however much you familiarize yourself with meditative stabilization. On the other hand, if you have the view that understands selflessness but lack the firm meditative stabilization in which the mind remains single-pointed, you will not be able to clearly see the meaning of the mode of being. Therefore both calm abiding and special insight are necessary.

5. The order in which the two, calm abiding and special insight, are to be generated, is definite: calm abiding is a prerequisite for special insight. Does this mean one can not have a correct understanding of emptiness before having achieved calm abiding?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-5B2A. *For an understanding of emptiness and a mere experience of mental transformation to arise, prior calm abiding is not necessary*

For an understanding of the view realizing selflessness to arise, prior calm abiding is not necessary because the view is also seen to arise in the absence of calm abiding. For an experience of mental transformation concerning that view to arise, prior calm abiding is not necessary either because even without calm abiding there is nothing contradictory in an experience of mental transformation arising through familiarization with repeated analysis by means of individual investigation. If it were contradictory, it would absurdly follow from the same reason that the experience of mental transformation arising with respect to impermanence, the faults of cyclic existence, or the training in the mind of enlightenment also depends on calm abiding.

6. What are the conditions mentioned in the text that are prerequisites for training in calm abiding?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A. *Attending to the prerequisites of calm abiding*

To stay in a favorable place; few desires; contentment; to completely abandon many activities ; pure ethics; to completely abandon discursive thoughts of desire

7. What are the preparations in terms of practice?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2. *How to cultivate calm abiding in dependence on the prerequisites*

You should long cultivate the six preparatory practices explained earlier as well as the mind of enlightenment and, as part of that, also train in the core meditation topics shared with lesser and intermediate beings.

8. Complete the two charts that illustrate the training in calm abiding, indicating the five faults that arise and the antidotes to be applied, and the nine stages, six powers and four attentions

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2. *Explanation of the stages of meditation themselves*

In most expositions of the stages of the path it says that calm abiding is accomplished by way of the eight factors set forth in Separation of the Middle from the Extremes (Madhyāntavibhāga) that abandon the five faults. The instructions from Geshe Lagsorwa's lineage explain that on top of that, the six powers, the four attentions, and the nine minds explained in Śrāvaka Levels need to be accomplished.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1. *How to generate flawless meditative stabilization*

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1A. *What to do before focusing the mind on the object*

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B. *What to do while focusing the mind on the object*

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C. *What to do after focusing the mind on the object*

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2A. *The actual stages of quiescence that arise*

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2B. *The method for accomplishing them by means of the six powers*

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2C. *How they involve the four types of attention*

The Five Faults & Eight Antidotes

8 Applied antidotes	faith	aspiration	effort	pliancy	mindfulness	introspection	intention	equanimity
5 Faults	laziness				forgetfulness	laxity and excitement	non-application	[over] application

The Nine Mental Abidings, Six Powers & Four Mental Attentions

Enumeration of the mental abidings	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Names of the mental abidings	setting the mind	continuous setting	resetting	closely setting	disciplining	pacifying	thoroughly pacifying	making single-pointed	setting in equipoise
Experiences of the mental abidings	many conceptions arise	the conceptions ease off	the conceptions are weakened when adverse conditions are encountered	having gathered [the conceptions] inward from the vast, they are made subtle	the excellent qualities of meditative stabilization are enjoyed	through knowing the disadvantages of distractions, they are stopped	the afflictions, an attached mind and so forth, are abandoned with effort	meditative stabilization is continuously achieved	spontaneous engagement without effort
6 Powers	hearing	thinking	mindfulness		introspection		effort		familiarity
4 Mental attentions	forceful engaging		interrupted engaging					uninterrupted engaging	spontaneous engaging

9. What are the two main features of a faultless meditative stabilization?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A1. *Indication that faultless meditative stabilization has two features*

The meditative stabilization to be accomplished here has two features; it has the factor of intense clarity of an extremely clear mind, and it has the factor of non-conceptual stability of a mind abiding single-pointedly on its object.

10. Why is it necessary to develop special insight after attaining calm abiding?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3B-1. *How it is of great importance to cultivate special insight in dependence on it*

Such meditative stabilization having been generated in the mental continuum is for the sake of generating special insight that destroys the mental afflictions. Therefore, if special insight does not arise in dependence on it, however much you familiarize yourself with meditative stabilization, you will not even be able to abandon the mental afflictions of the desire realm, not to mention the mental afflictions as a whole. For that reason it is necessary to cultivate special insight.

Chapter 5

2. Special Insight & Vajrayana

1. What exactly is afflicted ignorance? What is its manner of superimposition? In what way does the superimposition of mistaking a rope as a snake differ from mistaking a snake as inherently existent?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1B. *Although in general ignorance is posited as the mere opposite of knowledge, here it is the opposite of the knowledge realizing the absence of true existence*

It is the superimposition of a self and, more specifically, the two superimpositions of a self of phenomena and of persons. So both the apprehension of a self of phenomena and the apprehension of a self of persons are ignorance.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1D. *How ignorance superimposes what inherent existence*

The manner of superimposition is to apprehend that phenomena exist by way of their own entity, by way of their own character, or inherently.

Things that exist only through the existence of conception and do not exist without conception are without doubt ascertained to be unestablished by way of their own entity, like a snake imputed to a rope.

This statement explains that from the point of view of being imputed while not being established by way of their own entities, attachment and so forth resemble a snake imputed to a rope. Yet the latter is not the same as attachment and so forth in terms of whether or not they conventionally exist.

Transcript, page 4: *So, if on the basis of imputation of “snake” we cannot find “snake”, just like we cannot find it on the coiled rope, what is the difference between apprehending a snake to be a snake and a rope to be a snake? The difference is that it is incorrect to think a rope is a snake, but it is correct or valid to say “snake” about the snake's aggregates. What is different? This is explained according to the Prasangika school by way of the Three Characteristics:*

- 1) Renown: for something to be valid it has to be renowned among conventional valid cognitions.*
- 2) Conventionally valid: it should not be contradicted or damaged by other conventional valid cognitions. This is the case when one calls a rope a snake, as other valid cognitions will contradict this, for example seeing there is no snake on that rope.*
- 3) Ultimately valid: not being damaged by a cognizer analysing the ultimate / ultimate analysis.*

2. What is meant by the apprehension of the two selves?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1E1. *Explanation that the apprehension of a self is twofold*

In the *Commentary on the “Four Hundred Stanzas”* it says:

In this regard the so-called *self* is an entity of things that does not depend on anything else—*inherent existence*. Its non-existence is *selflessness*. Owing to the division of phenomena and persons, it is understood as twofold: a selflessness of phenomena and a selflessness of persons.

3. What is the observed object of the innate view of the transitory collection apprehending I?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1E2A. *The apprehension of an I, the view of the transitory collection, has a person as its observed object*

With respect to the innate view of the transitory collection which is an apprehension of a self, the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* refutes that the aggregates are its observed object, and in the

commentary it is said to have **the dependently imputed self** as its observed object. It is said that even the mere collection of aggregates is not the conventional self, so neither the collection of aggregates at one time nor the collection which is the continuum of the aggregates from an earlier to a later moment are its observed object. Rather, **the mere I which is the observed object of the mere thought “I” arising, or the mere person**, should be taken as its observed object.

4. Give an example of a self of a persons that is not the view of the transitory collection.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1E2 *Distinctions between the apprehension of a self and the view of the transitory collection*

..... although the innate apprehension of the self of a person that apprehends **the person associated with someone else’s continuum** to be established by way of his own character is innate, it is not the innate view of the transitory collection of that person.

5. What is the observed object of the view of the transitory collection apprehending mine?

Give examples of the self of phenomena that are not the view of the transitory collection apprehending mine.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1E2B. *The difference between observed objects of the two apprehensions of true existence*

The observed object of the innate view of the transitory collection apprehending mine is the mine itself, the observed object of the innate mind thinking “mine.”

Its aspect is to observe that object of observation and apprehend the mine to be established by way of its own character.

Transcript p.7: *It should not be held that one’s own eyes and so forth are the observed object. inherently existent. When thinking “mine”, “my eyes, my ears” etc., here this does not refer to the object that is mine, this is not the view of the transitory collection because it is a conception of a self of phenomena. Rather the view conceiving “mine”, is a conception of oneself in the aspect of a possessor of eyes, ears etc.*

The objects of the innate apprehension of a self of phenomena are the form aggregate and so forth, the eyes, ears, and so forth associated with one’s own or someone else’s continuum, as well as the environments and so forth which are not included in a continuum.

6. Is the innate or the artificial afflicted ignorance the root of cyclic existence, or are these both the root of cyclic existence?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-2. *Demonstration that afflicted ignorance is the root of revolving in cyclic existence*

A. *Whereas the innate apprehension of a self must be posited as the root of cyclic existence, artificial ones are not suitable to be posited so*

.... it is the two innate apprehensions of a self that all those whose minds are or are not affected by tenets have in common and that have operated beginninglessly without depending on the minds’ being affected by tenets. Just that is held to be the root of cyclic existence here.

.... what binds all sentient beings in cyclic existence is innate ignorance, and since artificial ignorance is only present in proponents of tenets, it is inadmissible as the root of cyclic existence.

7. What is the order of the two selves arising, and the order in which their emptiness is realized? Does this order imply a difference in subtlety between the selflessness of persons and the selflessness of phenomena?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B1. *The stages of generating the two views of selflessness*

As for the stages in which the two apprehensions of a self arise, the apprehension of a self of phenomena generates the apprehension of a self of persons. Still, when you engage in the suchness of selflessness, you must first generate the view of the selflessness of persons and then, after that, generate the view realizing the selflessness of phenomena .

It is as stated: first the person and then the basis it is imputed to, the elements such as earth, are said to lack inherent existence

....there is no difference in subtlety with regard to the selflessness to be ascertained on the basis of persons and phenomena, due to essentials of the substratum it is easier to ascertain it on the basis of persons and more difficult to ascertain it on the basis of phenomena.

8. Is the merely imputed person the same as the aggregates, its basis of imputation?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-1C. *How to posit that person, the imputed phenomenon, as the object of observation of the innate apprehension of I*

....the collection of aggregates is the basis of imputation of the person, and the basis of imputation is not admissible as the imputed phenomenon. The collection of aggregates must be understood as both the collection of aggregates at a given moment and the collection of aggregates over earlier and later ones. Therefore it is inadmissible to posit the continuum of the collection of aggregates as the person

9. How do you differentiate between the existent person or self, and the non-existent person or self?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-1D. *Hence the need to differentiate between the self that exists and the self that does not exist*

....you should differentiate between statements that the mere I, referred to as self, conventionally exists and statements that an inherently established person, referred to as self, does not exist even conventionally

10. What are the four essential points of the four-point-analysis?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A. *Settling that the I does not inherently exist*

1. The essential point of ascertaining the object of negation
2. The essential point of ascertaining the pervasion
3. The essential point of seeing that the person and the aggregates are not one inherently established entity
4. The essential point of seeing that the person and the aggregates are not established as essentially distinct

11. What is the intended meaning of “persons appear like illusions”?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C. *Showing how, in dependence on that, persons appear like an illusion*

Transcript, page 23:

1. Indicating the meaning of saying like an illusion

A. The unmistakable manner of appearing like an illusion

1. How all phenomena are ultimately illusion-like without signs

These are different examples to illustrate the absence of inherent existence, they are very striking examples and very poetic. The first is that of a mirage: from very far away and if it is very hot, it can look as though there is water in the distance. And sentient beings whose minds are obscured see water and go there in search of it, but as they get nearer they find there is no mirage and no water. It is really exactly like that, things appear as inherently existent but if you actually go

looking for them you cannot find anything at all. Therefore you can conclude that there is no such thing as inherently existing phenomena, and that the mind apprehending those is only a liar. Taking the example of a dream, there is the example of a young lady who longs for a child, then in her dream she is giving birth to a son and so is extremely happy, but later in the dream the son dies and so she is extremely sad. Such dream experiences feel completely real, but then you wake up and feel “oh it's completely bullshit! It was just a dream!” and it does not affect you so much. This is to show that all these experiences of happiness and sadness come from grasping at appearances. If one realises that phenomena are not established by way of their own nature the way they appear, then phenomena can be seen as dream-like, and such strong suffering experiences do not occur.

12. How does the practice of seeing things as illusion-like appearances help to correctly establish both their emptiness of inherent existence, and the validity of their conventional existence?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C5. *Such an emptiness is not a nihilistic emptiness, or a mentally fabricated emptiness, or a limited emptiness, or the like*

That being so, the appearances as a god, a human, and so forth are posited as persons and the objects that appear as form, sound, and so forth are posited as phenomena. Therefore, although persons and phenomena do not have even a mere particle of inherent existence established by way of their own character, the accumulators of karma and so forth, the actions of seeing and hearing and so forth, all the interdependent actions and agents are valid. All actions and agents are valid; therefore emptiness is not nihilistic. Since phenomena have primordially always been empty like that and are merely understood as empty, it is not a mentally fabricated emptiness either, and since all objects of knowledge are asserted in this manner, it is not a limited emptiness either.

Transcript, page 24: *Both persons and phenomena are empty of inherent existence, there is not one atom that is truly established. This is why it is possible or correct to say that there are accumulators of actions, agents, etc. and that this whole presentation is correct and valid. Because if such phenomena are empty it does not mean they do not exist at all. Actually all phenomena since forever have been free of independent existence, this is the actual mode of abiding of phenomena; emptiness of inherent existence is just the way things are, not something which was created or invented by the mind. This does not mean phenomena do not exist, so it is not nihilistic, and this emptiness is true of all phenomena, so it is not limited.*

13. How do you establish the selflessness of phenomena?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2A. *Refutation transferring the reasoning explained earlier*

Among the things that are aggregates, elements, and sense bases, there are two types. With **physical phenomena**, you investigate both their parts in the various cardinal directions, such as east, and that which possesses the parts. With **consciousnesses**, you investigate their temporal parts such as earlier and later ones and that which possesses the parts. Having investigated whether they are established by way of their entities as one or different, you refute them in the above fashion.

14. What is the King of Reasonings, dependent arising, and how it is used to establish the emptiness of both self and phenomena?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B. *Refutation by means of another reasoning not explained earlier*

Those which originate interdependently

Do not exist by way of their entity.

Transcript, page 30: *All phenomena are established in dependence or relatively, there is not one phenomenon that lacks relative existence, rather all phenomena lack independent existence. They are void of independent existence, this lack or this absence is what we call emptiness; all*

phenomena that exist without exception are completely free of having such independent establishment.

There are three manners of apprehending dependent-arising:

1) Meeting: is positing phenomena as arising due to the coming together or meeting of causes and conditions.

2) Relating: is to be posited by being related to another phenomenon, such as pleasant unpleasant, good and bad. These are dependently existent, posited in relationship with another phenomenon. In the same way as we posit long and short, we can only conceive of something long in comparison with something short. We can only posit Buddhas in relation with unenlightened sentient beings. In terms of uncompounded phenomena it is the same: we can only conceive of uncompounded space in relationship with that which is free from obstruction which we label uncompounded space; or another uncompounded phenomenon for example emptiness is the mere refutation of the object of negation, in relation with this mere refutation we posit emptiness; in the same way true cessation is posited in relationship with the abandonment of its object of abandonment – of course there are different objects of abandonment corresponding to the ten bhumis etc. – but in general terms, the full fledged truth of cessation is posited in relation to the object of abandonment of afflicted obscurations together with their seeds.

3) Depending: we take for example a chariot or car or plane, in order to conceive of these phenomena different parts and causes and conditions need to be assembled together, and in dependence on all these being assembled we posit chariot or car or plane.

Thinking along those lines you come to understand that whatever is an established base, which is synonymous with existent, is necessarily a dependent-arising.

15. What is the basis of the division (what is being divided) into ultimate and conventional truths? What does this mean?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3A. *The basis from which the two truths are divided*

....here, objects of knowledge are the basis of division....

Transcript, page 34: *.... all phenomena are subsumed by the two truths, this is an exhaustive division of objects of knowledge.*

[This means that existents, or objects of knowledge, are divided into ultimate truths and conventional truths. Any existent is either an ultimate or a conventional truth.]

16. Why are the two truths one entity but different isolates?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3C. *The meaning of dividing them in that way*

Two aspects of the own entity of all things are taught: they are the conventional and the ultimate. Thus, with regard to the entity of each and every object, there is both a conventional and an ultimate entity.

If a sprout, for instance, were a different entity from its own ultimate entity, it would also be a different entity from its emptiness of true existence; so the sprout would be truly established. Therefore, since it is not a different entity, it is one entity. Although a sprout is empty of its own true existence, it is not its own ultimate truth.

Transcript, page 32: *In our own system, the two truths are one entity but different isolates. Just as it says in the Heart Sutra: "Form is empty, emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form, form is also not other than emptiness." What is to be ascertained here is that ultimate truths exist on the basis of form, they are not of a different entity than form itself, they exist together, just as the basis to be*

qualified and its characteristics exist together on that basis. Take for example a pen as the basis to be qualified and its qualities and characteristics, such as colour, shape or its function to write. All of these qualities or characteristics do not exist separately from the pen, in the same way the pen's emptiness does not exist separately from the pen.

17. Why is a conventional truth also called a truth for a concealer?

Transcript, page 33: *A conventional truth is what is true from the point of view of the apprehension of true existence, the obscured mind of self-grasping ignorance. The Tibetan term kun-dzob means something that is false or a lie, a concealer, so it is something which is not concordant with the actual mode of abiding of phenomena.*

18. How is valid cognition possible before realizing emptiness, if conventional truths are truths for a concealer?

Transcript, page 33-34: *However, although phenomena such as pot and cotton are conventional truths, in order to apprehend them it is not necessary to realise pot or cotton as being conventional truths, since they are realised directly by a conventional valid cognizer. In the same way, although pot lacks inherent existence, it is not necessary to realise that pot lacks inherent existence in order to realise pot. However, it is necessary to understand the lack of true existence of the basis in order to know a conventional truth to be a conventional truth, but in order to know a conventional truth such as pot and cotton it is not necessary to know its lack of true existence.*

19. In what way is an ultimate truth said to be true? How does this differ from the way in which a conventional truth is true?

Transcript, page 35: *In the case of conventional truth, “truth” means that it is true from the point of view of self-grasping ignorance, the apprehension of inherent existence, but in actuality it is not true because the mode of appearing and abiding are not concordant. Therefore it is deceptive, however it is said to be true from the perspective of a wrong consciousness. With respect to ultimate truth it is quite different, since the mode of appearing and abiding of ultimate truths are concordant. Therefore they are true from the perspective of a perfect mind, the pristine awareness of meditative equipoise in an arya being's continuum, which through investigation has found this ultimate truth to be true.*

20. What is mundane special insight and what is supramundane special insight?

Transcript, p. 43: *There are two types of special insight: mundane and supramundane. Mundane is that which meditates on the faults and drawbacks of lower spheres of existence and thus attains higher spheres. Meaning, for example, investigating the faults of the desire realm, in terms of short lifespan, sickness etc., and seeing the advantages of higher states, and in this way progressing along the Four Concentrations. Supramundane special insight observes the meaning of selflessness, understanding all phenomena are deprived of being established by way of their own nature; this kind of special insight is a powerful tool or mind to ascertain those topics. It is very useful to engage in the second type, since we have engaged in the first type many times over since beginningless time.*

21. What is the indication that fully-qualified special insight has been achieved?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B4. *The measure of having achieved special insight through meditation*

As long as you analyze with the wisdom of individual investigation and the pliancy explained above does not arise in your meditation, it is a similitude of special insight. When pliancy has arisen, it is fully-qualified special insight.

Yet since the calm abiding already accomplished has not deteriorated and also induces pliancy, the measure for having accomplished special insight is not the mere presence of pliancy. Well then, what is it? When the power of analytical meditation itself is able to induce pliancy, then there is special insight.

22. Why should we engage in the practice of tantra?

2B4B-2B3B-3C2. *Explanation of how to train in the uncommon vehicle, the Vajrayana*

Having thus trained in the paths that the two, sūtra and mantra, have in common, you should doubtlessly engage in mantra because that path is extremely rare compared with other Dharma teachings and makes you complete the two collections quickly.