

Explaining the Three Types of Virtues:

<p>The verse one usually recites before class that says: “ <i>Do not commit any non-virtuous actions, perform only virtuous actions, subdue your mind thoroughly, this is the teaching of Buddha.</i>”</p>
<p>Simple put, this is saying that, one should <i>abandon all nonvirtues, strive in cultivating virtue and disciplining one’s mind.</i> In essence, this is the summary of Buddha’s teachings.</p>
<p>The reason one should abandon committing any nonvirtues, even if it is something that is a mere insignificant small nonvirtue is that, one does not like suffering. The only result that will arise from any nonvirtue is suffering.</p>
<p>One needs to perform perfect virtuous actions. This is because, even though everyone wishes for happiness, but one is not merely satisfied with a mere little happiness. If it is possible, one would wish for a real, permanent and everlasting happiness that does not change. Since that is the case, then one has to engage in perfect virtuous actions.</p>
<p>What then, constitutes a perfect virtuous action? A perfect virtuous action is something that is done not motivated either by the attachment to the happiness to this life or even to future lives. It has to be a virtue that seeks for the happiness of nirvana, being liberated from samsara.</p>
<p>If one wishes for real permanent everlasting happiness, the freedom from samsara, then one needs to create the cause that engages in perfect virtuous actions.</p>
<p>In not committing nonvirtues and committing perfect virtuous actions, that is where there is the presentation of karma and its effects in that, whatever actions one accumulates, it will never be wasted on its own. When one accumulates nonvirtue, one will definitely experience its result, suffering. When one engages in virtue, one will experience its result, happiness.</p>
<p>To understand the workings of karma and its effects, especially its intricacies, is extremely difficult. However, this does not mean that one cannot derive an understanding on this through reflection, analysis, the employment of reason and logic.</p>
<p>One can derive quite a good understanding of the validity through these, particularly, if one understands what an enlightened being is. [If one understands that] Buddha is the Omniscient One, then one would be able to trust His proclamations and explanations on the workings of karma and its effects.</p>
<p>Through such a practice, even if one manages to achieve permanent everlasting happiness for oneself, freeing oneself from the cycles of deaths and rebirths through achieving nirvana, this is still not the end of [one’s spiritual] journey. This is because, one still lacks the full capacity to do work for the welfare and benefit of all sentient beings.</p>
<p>Merely achieving a permanent everlasting happiness for oneself alone is not appropriate. Hence, one must also strive to gain the full capacity and the ability to perform perfect work for all sentient beings. To do so, one has to overcome one’s self cherishing attitude. In terms of the obscurations to be abandon, one needs to overcome the knowledge obscurations.</p>
<p>Even if one achieves a permanent everlasting happiness for oneself, the peace of nirvana, one’s own purposes have not been brought to culmination. One has yet to achieve one’s highest potential. If one has not done so, then it goes without saying that one will not be able to perform perfect work for others and fulfill the welfare of sentient beings.</p>
<p>One’s mind is also not completely separated from every single defilement or obscuration. There is still something that obscures one’s mind, called knowledge obscuration, that which prevents one from being omniscient.</p>
<p>While one has the potential to be fully omniscient, even if one has achieved liberation, one has yet to remove such an obscuration. Hence, it is said that, one would not have fulfilled one’s fullest potential.</p>
<p>If there is an obscuration that clouds one’s mind, then there is no way one can perfectly work for sentient beings. Hence, one needs to enter the Mahayana path, the path to enlightenment.</p>
<p>One then conjoins this altruistic intention to achieve enlightenment for all sentient beings with the wisdom realizing emptiness. Upon that, one then develops it further to its fullest capacity. This is when one achieves enlightenment.</p>
<p>Hence, the verse says: “<i>Subdue your mind thoroughly, this is the teaching of Buddha.</i>” This is a short verse which many of you recite everyday. It is something that one can commit to memory and recite daily as a way to remind oneself the essential points being explained here.</p>

Recognizing all problems come from within is the foundation for all Dharma practice:

<p>The next verse that comes after this is from the <i>Vajra Cutter Sutra</i>: <i>“A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a lamp, an illusion, a drop of dew, a bubble, a dream, a flash of lightning, a cloud, see conditioned things as such.”</i></p>

If one has some idea of the meaning of this verse and then reflect on it on a daily basis, then it can be very helpful, especially when one meets with challenges in one's life.
Take the earlier verse as an example which says: <i>"Do not commit any non-virtuous actions."</i> Whenever one meets with problems, difficulties, challenges in one's life, if one can remember this, then one can be reminded that, all the problems one meets with, are essentially the results of not having abandoned nonvirtues in the past. One failed to follow Buddha's advice.
Whenever such situations cause one to develop an unhappy mind, one can also remind oneself that, this is the result of having an undisciplined mind. Hence, an unhappy mind comes from an undisciplined and unsubdued mind.
It is very clear about such a reality and truth in that, the reason one is unhappy is due to one's mind being undisciplined, unsubdued and untrained. All of one's unhappiness comes from that.
If one's mind is more subdued and disciplined, then the less unhappiness and problems one will experience. Perhaps, if one's mind is completely trained, disciplined and subdued, then it does not matter what happens externally, there is really no way for one to be unhappy.
Hence, whether one becomes affected by challenges or problems, all these depend on whether one's mind is subdued or not. This is clearly and obviously evident.
Hence, if one understands this and is really convinced that the main cause of suffering is not external but internal, then this will make a huge difference to one's perspective. Many situations then become easy to manage, which is the reality.
However, this is not how one sees the world. Whenever one experiences a problem or challenge, instinctively, one would always think that there is something out there [and assigns blame] outside oneself. [All such problems have] nothing to do with one as it is not one's fault. It is always due to this situation, that external circumstance or person.
One never thinks that the source and origin of one's problem comes from one's own undisciplined mind. One will never even think that one is at fault, [all such problems are] always due to someone or something outside of one.
When one has such a perspective, then one can see whether the unhappiness that one experiences has become more or less intense. Not only does the problem not diminish, [due to one's way of thinking,] it has become even more intense.
When one [assigns] blame on all of one's problems externally, be it big or small, a situation or another person, one can notice that one's problems and unhappiness have not become lesser or gone away. In fact, sometimes it has become more intense.
This is an obvious sign that [one's way of thinking] is wrong, that one's belief that the problem is external to one is a wrong belief. Such [behaviors are] essentially due to not following Buddha's advice. One did not subdue one's mind.
If one is able to see for oneself and become really convinced, that the cause of one's suffering is not something external but is internal, that whatever problems one experiences:
<i>Firstly, are the results of some non-virtuous karma accumulated by oneself in the past, and Secondly, a heartfelt admission that the way one deals with problems with an unhappy mind is all due to one's own unsubdued and undisciplined mind,</i>
Then when one combines these two understanding together, this would make a huge difference [in one's dealing with the situation.] This is the very foundation of one's practice to achieve happiness in living one's life.
It does not matter if one is able to perform extensive profound and complicated studies or whether one is not able to study a lot about the Buddhadharma. Such a recognition that one's problem does not come externally but internally is the foundation [and success for all of one's other Dharma studies and practices].

Explaining the verse from the Vajra Cutter Sutra – A star showing the two truths existing on any base:

In the verse which starts with: <i>"A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a lamp..."</i> and so forth, 'a star' is an introduction to what constitutes reality. There are two facets of reality, a superficial and the deepest level, [constituting] the two truths, the conventional and ultimate truths [respectively].
In the minds of ordinary beings like oneself, one does possess many different valid states of mind that are able to understand the superficial [conventional] levels of reality. Such minds are called valid cognizers, specifically conventional valid cognizers . Examples are one's mind that realizes a table, flower and all other general [objects].
Such minds are able to realize objects based on the appearance of such phenomena to it. Hence, the objects realized by a conventional valid cognizer are called conventional truths. Therefore, one possesses many such conventional valid cognizers/awarenesses that do realize objects like fruits, flowers and so on. Hence, there is an object that appears to such a mind.
In accordance with the appearance to this mind, one has to say that the object [itself] exists. Hence, the way an object exists is therefore based on its appearing to the mind that realizes it, here, the conventional valid cognizer. So, whether it is a fruit or a flower, it appears to a conventional valid cognizer. As it appears, one can say that it is known to exist.
However, is there something more to the appearance of a flower that is appearing to a conventional valid cognizer, a deeper level of reality to it? Or is the [nature of the] flower just this mere appearance?

A vast majority of people like oneself would not see anything other than what appears to one. A flower appears to one in a certain way. One thinks that such an appearance is what constitutes a flower and nothing more beyond that. It is merely such a single dimension of reality. One does not think, see nor know that there is something deeper than such a mere appearance.
One merely interacts with the appearance of the flower at the most. Beyond such an appearance, one does not see that there is another dimension to it, a deepest level of reality, even though it is there.
This is because, one's mind is obscured due to it being polluted by the predispositions/ imprints of ignorance. So long as one's mind is obscured by such an obscuration/ defilement, one will not be able to see the deepest truth of reality.
To such conventional states of mind in one's continuum, all sorts of objects like forms, sounds, smells, tastes and touch appear to it. These are the objects that exist that appear to such conventional awarenesses.
However, even objects that do not exist, the fabrications of reality, also appear to the perspective of such conventional awarenesses. Hence, there are a mixture of [valid and non-valid/ existent and non-existent objects] that can appear to a conventional awareness.
Whether it is an existent or a non-existent [that appears to] the conventional awareness, [such an awareness] is simultaneously polluted by the stains of the latencies/ imprints of ignorance.
It is said that, to the mind that is polluted by the latencies of ignorance, all sorts of objects can appear. An analogy is given in this verse that shows how, the stars that appear at night, the dark night is then likened to the darkness of ignorance.
Just as all the stars appear in the darkness of night, likewise, a whole variety of appearances can appear to the consciousness that is stained/ polluted by the latencies of ignorance.
Each object/ phenomenon itself has two levels of reality to it, a superficial and the deepest level. When the mind is separated from the latencies of ignorance, when one is able to separate one's defilement/ ignorance from one's mind, then the mind will be able to see the final nature, the deepest level of reality of whatever object/ phenomenon in question.
The object that is seen/ ascertained by such a mind is therefore called the ultimate truth. It is said that, as long as it is an existent/ phenomenon, it has two facets/ levels of reality, a superficial and a deepest/ ultimate level/ nature.
The superficial level of reality of any phenomenon that appears to a conventional awareness is called a conventional truth, while its deepest, ultimate nature of reality, which appears to the mind that ascertains it, is called the ultimate truth.
Hence, these two truths are realized/ found by their <i>respective</i> valid cognizers: A valid cognizer distinguishing a conventionality/ conventional truth and a valid cognizer distinguishing an ultimate/ ultimate truth.
At night, one can see all the stars in the sky. This is the analogy for the conventional truth. In the daytime, what one sees is merely an emptiness-like vacuity of space of the sky. One does not see stars during the day. This is an analogy of the experience of the person who has directly realized the ultimate nature of all phenomena.
This is because, in the perspective of the mind directly perceiving the ultimate nature of all phenomena, no conventional truths appear. Essentially, to such a perspective, nothing appears except emptiness.
Although a conventional valid cognizer is a mistaken consciousness, nevertheless, it is valid with respect to the object that it is realizing, like a flower and so forth. Nevertheless, conventional valid cognizers are still considered to be mistaken in that, whatever that appears, like a flower, appears as truly/ inherently existent, while it is not. Hence, it is mistaken in this regard.
Even though not all conventional states of mind are valid, but conventional valid cognizers are conventional states of mind which are valid/ correct. Although such minds are valid with respect to what they are realizing, but they are mistaken in that, whatever they realize [validly], at the same time, such a realization comes with an appearance of the fabrication of reality.
An apple appears as truly existent while it is not truly existent. Hence, in this sense, such a mind is considered as mistaken.
That is why, according the Consequence Middle Way School, although conventional valid cognizers are valid cognizers, but such minds are [also] mistaken due to the reasons stated.
The wisdom directly realizing emptiness [will never be a] mistaken consciousness. This is because, in the perspective of such a wisdom, a superior's meditative equipoise, only emptiness appears. There are no conventional truths/ conventionalities that appear. This is because, such a mind is not affected by any stains of the predispositions of ignorance.

A visual aberration showing the disparity between the object that appears and the object that exists:

To a conventional mind, all sorts of objects can appear, whether it exists or do not exist. However, for a conventional valid cognizer, phenomenon can appear to it and it realizes the phenomenon that appears as it is. Hence, it is able to posit the existence of such a phenomenon.
This is the reason one needs to deepen one's understanding of the workings of one's mind. This is because, one only possesses conventional awarenesses [for the time being]. But conventional awareness/ conventional minds include both valid/ correct/ right states of mind and invalid/ incorrect/ perverse/ wrong states of minds.

For example, a wrong/ perverse consciousness is also a conventional awareness. It is wrong because, the object that such a wrong consciousness believes in actually does not exist. Whereas, there is a conventional awareness that is a valid cognizer, hence, it is called a conventional valid cognizer.
Based on the appearance of the phenomenon that appears to a conventional valid cognizer, it is able to posit and ascertain its existence. Hence, the phenomenon that appears to a conventional valid cognizer does exist.
The mind that sees the myriad objects like flowers and so forth is valid in that, as the flower appears to, for example, the eye consciousness, here being a conventional valid cognizer, the flower also exists and functions.
Whereas the mind thinking: “The horns of a rabbit,” is essentially [a wrong consciousness]. Although in the perspective of this wrong consciousness, there is a rabbit with horns, but it does not matter what it believes in. In reality, there is no rabbit that has horns. Hence, the mind apprehending a rabbit’s horns is a wrong, perverse consciousness.
Even though it is a conventional awareness, it is not a conventional valid cognizer because it is a wrong consciousness.
A conventional valid cognizer realizing a flower is valid with respect to the flower as it realizes and posits flower. Nevertheless, the flower appears as truly existent while there is nothing such as a truly existent phenomenon. Yet, whatever appears to a conventional valid cognizer appears as truly existent.
Hence, even though it is a valid cognizer, still there is a portion of the experience that is mistaken.
To the conventional valid cognizer apprehending a flower, the flower appears as truly existent. In reality, the flower does not exist as truly existent from its own side inherently. Still, the flower appears as truly existent to the conventional valid cognizer [validly] realizing flower.
To the conventional valid cognizer realizing a flower, the flower appears as truly/ inherently existent, while it is not inherently existent. For if the flower is indeed truly existent, existing in the way it appears inherently, then this would be the deepest final nature of the flower.
If that is the case, then such a truly existent flower would have to appear to the mind that directly perceives the ultimate nature of the flower. But to such a wisdom directly perceiving the ultimate nature of the flower, the flower does not appear. In the perspective of the wisdom directly perceiving the ultimate nature of the flower, the flower does not appear at all.
Hence, if it is an appearance to a conventional valid cognizer, it is not necessarily an existent. To illustrate that, the next example is shown: <i>A visual aberration</i> , like a mirage or falling hairs: While there is no water or falling hairs there, one [has an appearance of] such objects there.
Although there are no falling hairs, but someone with a medical condition does see falling hairs. This shows that, whatever appears to a conventional valid cognizer is not necessarily an existent. This is because, if whatever appears necessarily exists, then even to those whose eyes are not affected by a medical condition should also see falling hairs or a mirage.
Under certain conditions, a mirage can appear that leads one to believe that there is a body of water over there while there is not. Likewise, although everything that appears to a conventional valid cognizer appears as truly existent, it does not mean that the object that appears are necessarily truly existent.
Although objects are posited by a conventional valid cognizer, but when these objects appear to such a conventional valid cognizer, they appear as truly existent. Although they appear as truly existent, they do not exist as truly existent.

A flame of a lamp showing objects exist as mere appearances:

That said, it does not mean that objects do not exist just because they are not truly existent. One still has to account for, to posit and establish its existence. Hence, ultimately, one has to posit objects to exist as <i>mere appearances</i> .
One still has to account for the existence of objects like tables, chairs, flowers, fruits and so forth as these things do exist. Of course, these do exist, but the question is: How do they exist?
Essentially, they [exist] as dependent-arising in that, through the gathering of their respective causes and conditions, they come into existence, which are nothing more than <i>mere appearances</i> . To illustrate this, <i>A flame of a lamp</i> is shown:
A flame of a butter lamp does not exist on its own in and of itself, rather, through the gathering of many of such conditions like the oil, wick and so forth, a flame then comes into being.
Both samsara, all the problems and sufferings that one seeks to free oneself from, and nirvana, the permanent everlasting peace one seeks to achieve, are equal in that, they have never existed in and of themselves.
The cyclic existence of samsara that one should seek to free oneself from, has never and will never exist in and of itself, does not exist from its own side under its own power. Rather, one’s cyclic existence is the result of one’s karma and afflictions.
The liberation from all the suffering, the nirvana that one wishes to accomplish, has also never and will never exist in and of itself. Hence, one needs to gather all the [conducive] conditions before one can achieve liberation.
[This means that,] one needs to exhaust and abandon one’s karma and afflictions before one’s nirvana can be achieved.

<p>This is a presentation of dependent-arising. Anything and everything that exists, exists as dependently-arisen. That which is dependently-arisen is completely contradictory with existence in and of itself. Dependent-arising and independent existence are directly contradictory. Something which is dependently-arisen cannot exist in and of itself.</p>
<p>Although phenomena appear to exist in and of themselves, but they do not exist that way. For, if phenomena exist in and of themselves, when one looks for it, one should be able to find and indicate something that is the imputed/ designated object.</p>
<p>Hence, anything and everything that exist, do not exist in and of themselves inherently. This is because, they are dependently-arisen. The way they exist is in mere name, as mere appearances.</p>
<p>Eventually, [how phenomena exist] is a matter of eliminating all the possibilities:</p>
<p><i>While objects obviously and indisputably exist and function, yet they do not exist in and of themselves independently. Since objects do exist but not independently, then the only alternative left [to posit its existence] is existence in mere name.</i></p>
<p>For any object in question, there is a superficial level of reality and the deepest level of reality. The part of phenomenon which is a mere appearance, the superficial level of reality, is thus called the conventional truth, whereas its deepest, ultimate and final nature that is being devoid/ empty of inherent/ true existence is thus called the ultimate truth.</p>
<p>How the star, visual aberration and flame of lamp show the nature of the two truths:</p>
<p>Hence, on any basis, there exist these two levels of reality. This short explanation of the nature of reality, the whole of existence, is essentially condensed and constituted into these two truths, the conventional and ultimate truths. This is not some fabrication but merely an observation of what [really] exists.</p>

How Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths based on the Two Truths:

<p>Merely having an understanding of the basis, that which constitutes reality itself, is not enough. This knowledge alone will not free one from suffering. However, based on an understanding of these two levels of reality, one can then adopt a method to deliver oneself from suffering.</p>
<p>On the basis of understanding of the two truth facets of reality, the Buddha based all of His teachings on His observation and the thorough understanding of what is already in existence and will always be, and thus taught the <i>Four Noble Truths</i> as His first teaching. Hence, based on the two truths, the Buddha taught the Four Noble Truths.</p>
<p>The teaching on the Four Noble Truths is essentially an explanation of <i>the cause and effect relationship with regards to the class of thoroughly afflicted phenomena and the class of thoroughly pure phenomena.</i></p>
<p>This is how it is phrased in precise technical language. Simply stated, this means the causes and conditions that bind one in samsara and the causes and conditions that lead one to be freed from samsara and achieve nirvana.</p>
<p>If one understands reality as according to what Buddha has taught, a superficial and deepest level, understanding the whole of reality in terms of these two truths, then why is one still in samsara having to take rebirths repeatedly?</p>

An illusion showing how one is affected by the appearance and apprehension of inherent existence:

<p>To understand this, the example of <i>An illusion</i> is shown: The aberrations and illusions a magician conjures can be both attractive and frightening. When one sees the attractive and pleasant illusion, one believes in it as real and develops attachment for it. If one sees a scary and frightening illusion, one also believes in it as real, develops fear and aversion for it.</p>
<p>The illusion conjured by the magician, whether it is pleasant or frightening, is a mere illusion. There is no real object there. Even though it is just an illusion, nevertheless, one is affected by it when it is being cast by the magician. The illusion appears, one believes in and becomes involved in it by developing excitement and desire, or aversion and fear.</p>
<p>This example of an illusion is then applied to the meaning: In reality, whatever appears to one's daily life, especially when one meets with problems, difficulties, sufferings and one is [entrenched] in the situation, the way the suffering situation appears, appears to be so real, existing right there in and of itself from its own side.</p>
<p>While [the suffering situation] does not exist in and of itself, but it appears that way. One also assents to such an appearance and believes in its existence in that, that is how the [suffering situation] exists in reality. Based on one's mind assenting to such an appearance, this is where the [non-virtuous karmic evolution] starts. Anger, attachment and so forth arise.</p>
<p>Whatever experiences of problems, happiness and so forth that appear in one's daily life, appear as truly existent, existing in and of themselves while they are not. Nevertheless, one believes that, that is how they exist and assents to such an appearance. Based on that, the whole range of emotions are invoked in one, from anger to attachment and so forth.</p>
<p>One then starts to experience [even more] problems, unhappiness and all sorts of suffering.</p>
<p>If that is how one has been reacting all these while from life to life in samsara, getting oneself into problems one after another, based on assenting to the appearance of true existence, then how does one stop oneself from experiencing that again? The method to overcome that is explained by the next few examples: <i>A drop of dew, A water bubble.</i></p>

How to correctly listen to a Dharma discourse and its benefits:

Whenever you listen to an explanation to the Dharma like what is given now, it is very important that you reflect and analyze as you hear what is being said. If you merely listen to what is being said without thinking, reflecting and analyzing, then there is no way you will learn anything. You have to analyze simultaneously [as you listen to the teaching].

In the process of learning/ educating yourself in the Dharma, when you are hearing an explanation like now, you have to simultaneously analyze what you are hearing. If you do not even think about it, then you will not be able to see whether you understand or agree with what is being said or not.

[When you are thinking and analyzing what is being said], if there are areas where you find objectionable and disagree with, you can then bring the matter up to clarify.

When you are learning the great treatises of Buddhist philosophy, to understand what is written in the text or what is being said, you have no option but to analyze and reflect on it. Otherwise, there is no way to learn and understand any topic at all.

When you are engaging in the studies of such topics, you just have to try your best to understand what is being said. Your mind has to be really alert in seeking out the [meaning by] analyzing and reflecting.

Of course, this does not mean that you will necessarily understand everything immediately. Whenever you learn something, there will obviously be new concepts, words that you are unfamiliar with. However, this does not mean that you give up. You just have to try to understand whatever you are able to. The point is, you have to think and not sit there and not think at all.

Since understanding about reality like, for example, having some idea of the two truths, is so important, I will be repeatedly saying the same things but in different ways. This is because, this is the foundation for [all other understanding].

The point of saying the same things repeatedly is to stress its importance. It is also [an opportunity] for you to think of these [same points] repeatedly. For example, if someone were to ask you what the two truths are, you have to say decisively, at the least, their names and [their simple meanings].

It does not matter who asks you the question about reality or the two truths, how the question is being phrased, its purposes and so forth, you should be able to deliver a standard answer reflective of reality without [any reversal of your position].

There are many people who [are gullible] in that, someone says something and they would easily agree and believe. Someone else may then even [say something that is contradictory,] then they would also agree and believe as well. Hence, their understanding are not stable at all.

The point is, whatever understanding and conclusion one gains from learning should be firm and unshakable. You have to be convinced that it is like that and nothing else. That said, this does not mean that you should be foolishly stubborn.

Holding on to a position and being decisive about it is not being doggedly adamant: "Because my teacher said so!" [Your conclusion] should never be like that. It should be because you have thought about it and your position is supported by reason

The [culmination] of learning and reflection should result in a decisive and unshakable conclusion, especially when you are learning Buddhist philosophy. It cannot be [weak and feeble].

What I will be describing will not be new as you would have already studied them in tenets. All the schools of tenets have their own assertions and presentations of the two truths. If you remember what you have studied, then there should not be anything new to you. You have to know what the presentations of the two truths are according to the four schools of tenets.

This is because, if you know the assertions of the two truths as presented by the lower schools, then when you proceed to learn the presentation of the two truths according to the Consequence Middle Way School, then you would see how special, unique, extraordinary and striking their presentations of the two truths are.

Although you do not wish for suffering, nevertheless you experience them in many ways. You get angry even though you do not like it. You also develop attachment for all sorts of objects. You can describe the two truths and explain about reality very well, but when it comes to [yourself] being angry and attached, you still have to answer why this is so.

When you hear an explanation like this, like being asked: "Why do you get angry, upset and attached?" The way to listen to a teaching is that, simultaneously, you are also analyzing.

You should not be sitting there and merely registering: "Oh he explained why I get angry." You have to think, analyze and ask yourself this question at the same time, by searching inside [yourself] for the answer.

There is an art to listen, learn and study the Dharma. It is not just sitting there and merely registering the words. If you do not think of what you have read or heard, then it is impossible to develop insights and understandings.

People often think: "He is saying this numberless times! Oh I know all these as I have heard this how many times already." With such an attitude and without analyzing, this is why you would not 'taste' the Dharma as it does not go 'inside' [you].

This is why we do not change. This is the problem. You just have to ask yourself, many if not all of you here have heard numberless teachings in your life over many years. Yet, nothing much has happened, there is still no change.

Hence, it is important to ask where the problem lies. Such a lack of change despite having heard so many teachings over so many years is not due to a lack of the poverty of Dharma. It is also not the fault of the teachings themselves.

If you analyze and think carefully, it is evident that, this is because you have never seriously analyzed and thought about what you have heard and read. The whole problem comes from the lack of reflection, despite having read and heard so much.

How *A star, a visual aberration and a flame of a lamp* illustrate the nature of the two truths:

The first line of the verse from the Vajra Cutter Sutra states: *A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a lamp*. This is an explanation of the basis of reality. This is essentially condensed into the two truths [as shown by these three analogies].

In the analogy of a star, one can see many stars in the sky at night. This is likened to the variety of appearances that appear to a mind that is polluted by *ignorance*.

As for the mind that is polluted by the *predispositions of ignorance*, there are instances of such minds which are valid cognizers. There are also other instances of such minds which are non-valid cognizers.

There is a variety of the way objects can appear to a conventional awareness. There are obviously objects that exist that do appear to a conventional awareness. However, objects that do not actually exist can also appear, at least in the perspective of a conventional awareness. Then what or who is it that decides whether something exists or not?

This is because, anything can appear to a conventional awareness. So how does one tell that a particular appearance is representative of something that actually exists, whereas another appearance might just be a false appearance that does not represent any reality/ existent? This is something that one really needs to spend time analyzing and thinking about.

From the perspective of the Consequence Middle Way School, it is decisively stated that:

Everything that exists, necessarily exists in mere name, as merely designated by thought, [as fabrication or creation of the mind]. No phenomena has existed, is existing and will exist inherently.

Yet, it also states very clearly that:

Not everything that is the fabrication or creation of the mind, [that exists in mere name, as merely designated by thought,] would necessarily exist.

For example, while one's body does not exist from its own side, nevertheless, it appears to be inherently existent to the mind it is appearing to. Also, to the eye consciousness apprehending a mirage as a body of water, there can be an appearance of a mirage which is not water, but appears to it as a body of water. [The mind then also] believes in it.

These are examples of how objects can appear to the mind but do not actually exist in reality.

In the teachings, such easy examples, like mistaking a mirage to be a body of water, are used to allow one to understand the deeper important meaning. If one understands the example, one can then try to understand how one's body, for example, does not exist in the way it appears. Although the body appears as truly existent, but it is not.

When one thinks of how one's body appears to one, it has never appeared and presented itself to one as existing in mere name, merely imputed by thought. One's body appears to one's mind instinctively as existing right there in and of itself. This is how objects like one's body appears to one, so real existing right there from its own side.

Even though this is how it appears, but at the end of analysis, it leads to the conclusion that, even though the body exists truly, but in reality it has never existed truly. All such analysis should lead to and settle upon this conclusion.

How *Form is empty, emptiness is form* is related to these first three examples:

It is the same as what is being stated in the *Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* in the sentence that says:

Form is empty.

What it is saying is that, for example, the form aggregate that one has, is empty of existing in and of itself truly/ inherently. Hence, this phrase is delineating on the meaning of ultimate truth.

Understanding this is indispensably important. The conclusion is that, phenomena such as the form of one's body does not exist in and of itself truly from its own side, although these appear to exist truly from its own side in and of themselves. Hence, phenomena, like the form of one's body, are empty of existing in and of themselves inherently. Hence:

The emptiness of form is the deepest, ultimate nature, the final mode of abiding of form.

Form is empty establishes the ultimate nature of form in that, form has never and will never exist inherently. The form, like one's body, does not exist in and of itself, hence, it is empty/ devoid of existing in and of itself inherently.

Having established that this is the ultimate nature of form, like one's body, for some, they could be mistaken in thinking that: "If form does not exist inherently in and of itself, then form does not exist at all." This is of course a wrong [conclusion].

This is because, form does exist. Hence, the next phrase states:

Emptiness is form.

The meaning of this phrase is the same as <i>The flame of a butter lamp</i> . Although the flame of a butter lamp has never existed truly in and of itself, nevertheless, it is dependently-arisen through the gathering of different conditions.
Through the gathering of the butter, wick and so forth, a flame of a butter lamp comes into existence. [Hence this shows that,] it does not exist in and of itself but exist in mere name as it is literally a mere appearance. This is how it exists.
The meaning of <i>The flame of a butter lamp</i> is essentially the same as the meaning of <i>Emptiness is form</i> . Although form is devoid of existing in and of itself, being empty of existing inherently, this does not mean that form does not exist.
It is a fact that, when one looks for the imputed object of form, one will not find something one can indicate concretely as form. What one finds [after searching for form is] the emptiness of form. Even though one has found the emptiness of form, this does not mean then that form does not exist. Then how does form exist?
<i>Within emptiness, form exists as merely designated by thought in mere name.</i>
This first line that states: <i>A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a butter lamp</i> , is an introduction to the basis/ foundation of what constitutes reality. The whole of reality, anything and everything that exists, can be included in the two truths.
It is stated in the teachings that, if one does not understand the basis that constitutes reality, especially in terms of the presentation of the two truths, one will not understand well and discover the intent of Buddha and His teachings.
Hence, to understand well the Buddha's teachings and His intent, one needs to understand well the two truths. When one does so, one will also be able to accumulate and complete the accumulation of the two collections with which one achieves enlightenment. Such are the benefits of understanding the two truths.
This is how it is stated in the teachings: The basis, the path and the result. The basis are the two truths, the path are method and wisdom, the result are the two form and truth bodies.

Explaining *An illusion*:

It is said in the teachings that, when one looks at one's own body or the body of someone else, it presents itself as something real and solid right there where one can touch, grasp at and point to. Whether one calls it an inherently existent pleasant and attractive body, it is something real right there and one assents to the appearance.
When one sees someone that one dislikes, the basis for feeling unhappy with the person at the mere sight of the body is also based on these fundamental belief that there is a really objectionable person right there from its own side.
However, whether [these two inherent scenarios] are really true or not remains to be seen by oneself and only oneself [alone]. One has to check one's own experience and see whether what the teachings say is true or not. One has to think about it.
Hence, be it the object of one's attachment or anger, the big analysis that one needs to do is this: In the view of one's attachment clinging onto a particular body, whether one's or someone else's, such a pleasant body is appearing in a certain way to one's mind of attachment. The big question is, even though this is how it appears, but is that how it actually exists?
Likewise, for the objectionable person one dislikes so much, in the view of one's anger, this person is appearing in a certain way, but is such an appearance indicative of how this person actually exists? This is what one really needs to think about. The correct conclusion upon thinking about this must be the same as what the phrase Form is empty is teaching.
Essentially it is saying that, whether it is the object of attachment or aversion, things do not exist in and of itself even though they appear in that way. When the meaning of the phrase <i>Form is empty</i> is applied to [the body of] one's enemy or friend, these [bodies do not exist] in the way one's anger or attachment believes it to exist.
This means that, one's object of anger or attachment is empty/ devoid of existing in the way one believes it to exist.
When one understands well that the form, enemy or friend does not exist in the way one's mind believes it to exist, then whether it is friend or enemy, the emotion behind it, be it attachment or anger, will be reduced substantially as the force behind one's attachment or anger [will be weakened].
If one develops such an understanding further, it is said that, not only would one be able to reduce such emotions, one can even eradicate them altogether, as there is no basis for them to arise in the first place.
Sometimes an adult can humor children, playing games with them by pretending to be holding onto something in the fist. He can then say: "I am holding onto something really fantastic, if you can guess what it is, it is yours!"
The children can then get very excited, analyzing, fantasizing so much and looking so much forward to getting that object being 'grasped at'. However, there is actually nothing there.
Likewise, one is like a child. That which one clings onto, whether it is the enemy or friend, there is either so much dread or hopes and expectations being heaped upon it. This leads to either very strong aversion or clinging. Ultimately, one is clinging onto and also being upset with nothing. Just like the child who is so excited with all sorts of hope for an 'empty fist'.
It is clearly evident that, one is suffering and will continue to suffer, all because of a hallucination over nothing. While there is nothing, one thinks it is everything, although reality is not like this.

In terms of the two truths, one understands how reality exists, being empty and existing in mere name. However, one's hallucination is the foundation of all of one's [distorted] views. Not knowing that, one leads one's life based on a fabricated reality, thinking that whatever one's hallucination tells one is true and following after the projection of one's hallucination.
While it is not true, one thinks that it is. One accepts whatever that appears to one's mind to be correct. Since the object, person and so forth appear like that, then it has to be like that and there is nothing more than that nor is there another possible reality. Based on the foundation of such a hallucination, that is how one leads one's suffering life.
This is why it is important to really penetrate deep to understand what actually exists. It is due to not knowing at all that, one continues to suffer in samsara.
If one does not understand the two truths, then there is no way to experience the finest heart essence of the Buddhadharma, no way to see the intent of the Buddha. There is also no way to see how the Buddhadharma is different, special and a class of its own from other beliefs/ traditions.
The ability to see that the Buddhadharma is something extraordinary and not shared with other traditions, can only come from understanding well the presentation of the two truths, the hallmark of Buddhism that explains what reality is. Without such an understanding, then one will not possess the [ability to know how] Buddhism stands out from all the other traditions.
In <i>Arya Nagajuna's</i> great treatise called <i>The Commentary on the Mind of Enlightenment</i> , he stated that:
<i>If one is able to conjoin the two understanding and realization that, how things are empty of existing inherently, Yet actions can still produce effects, that emptiness is complimentary with the workings of karma and its effects, Then such an understanding and realization is more amazing and marvelous than amazing and marvelous!</i>
Many people think they have some understanding of emptiness, yet these are the same people who say: "Since everything is empty, then there is no karma and its effects." [For them,] there is no way to understand the heart of the Buddhadharma.
These explanations are related to <i>An illusion</i> from the Diamond Cutter Sutra.
One circles in samsara due to living one's life based on a hallucination, assenting to the appearance that objects exist inherently. This is where all the afflictions like anger, attachment and so forth arise.
This is describing reality in general and one's particular reality, how one gets trapped in samsara. The method to free oneself from this, or at least to start reducing one's suffering, is then shown in the next example:

Explaining *A drop of dew*:

One starts with the meditation on impermanence. Through this meditation, one can at least reduce one's suffering, by reducing the strength of one's negative emotions like attachment.
A drop of dew can cease to exist very quickly as it is very fragile. All that is needed is the sunrise, then it dries up and ceases. This is an analogy for one's life, how it is quickly disintegrating. Whether it is one's own body or the body of one's object of attachment, everything is disintegrating and undergoing change.
Impermanence, the process of change, can be viewed from a very gross level that may take a long time [to unfold]. Even if one lives for a hundred years, after that, oneself and one's object of attachment would all not be around anymore. Eventually, one's body/ life and the bodies/ lives of others will cease to exist. This is an obvious coarse level of impermanence.
Based on this level of impermanence, for the occurrence of change to unfold over a long period of time, one can then view [impermanence] in terms of smaller moments/ units of time like a month and so forth, for change to occur. [One can then view such smaller changes all the way] down to the smallest units of time, the subtle impermanence of momentary change.
All schools above the Great Exposition assert the cause of production, abiding and disintegration are the same:
[On the basis of] gross impermanence, one can [reflect on] subtle impermanence. Although the Great Exposition School posits that production, abiding and cessation are not simultaneous but occur serially, but that is not the reality.
A composed/ compounded phenomenon is something that undergoes momentary change. When one thinks carefully using reasoning, [in the duration of] a moment of existence of an impermanent phenomenon, its production is also [the same] moment of its disintegration. This is the conclusion for subtle impermanence.
The cause for it to undergo momentary change/ disintegration is none other than the very cause for its production. There is not a separate cause for an impermanent phenomenon's disintegration. *See page 11.
Of course, [this reason does not apply] if one were to view coarse impermanence that occur over a longer period of time. However, the very basis for coarse impermanence is this very subtle impermanence.
Even though one understands that impermanent phenomenon can undergo momentary change, but if one were asked what it is that causes it to change momentarily, one would always [believe] that it is some other different cause.
However, the cause for an impermanent phenomenon to undergo momentary change is exactly the cause that brought it about in the first place. Hence, the cause of production is the very same cause of its disintegration.

<p>Hence, if one thinks about, feels and sees how one's object of attachment or anger would not last forever, but in fact are disintegrating in each and every single moment, then this will really help to lessen whatever negative emotions one may have in relation to such objects.</p>
<p>One of the conditions that makes attachment or anger arise, even though it may not be the root cause, is grasping at such objects as being permanent, have always been such ways and will never be something else. It is very clear that, in the perspective of one's attachment or anger, that is how the object appears.</p>
<p>While the reality is not like that, such objects [definitely] undergo [gross and even] momentary change. Reflecting and understanding impermanence helps one to remove the support of one's attachment or anger.</p>
<p>There is not a single person here who does not have attachment and anger. Hence, whenever such emotions arise, one has to meditate and check within one's experience to see whether all such explanations are true or not.</p>
<p>When one reflects on the momentary nature of one's object of attachment or anger, one should see if this leads to the reduction of one's attachment and anger or not. This is because, [in reality] it does.</p>
<p>It is the same in the way one feels about one's body. One always thinks and feels that one's body, its shape, color and so forth, will [more or less] remain the same. This is how it appears, this is how one thinks, feels and expects it to be.</p>
<p>Many people get worried, upset, distressed and disturbed when they accumulate potbellies around their waste. Khenrinpoche: Also, those who have been body-building in the gym, when their muscles start to become flabby, they would worry so much as well. Therefore, men, women and everybody have problems like that.</p>
<p>This does not mean that one should not take care of one's body. This is not the point. However, [taking care of it] has to be done within a reasonable [limit]. This is because, there are many people who make it their sole purpose in life to look good, [wishing to remain] healthy and strong forever. They make this the only thing worth striving for in life.</p>
<p>They then put in so much time, effort, energy and resources, spending their lives seeking merely that. This really makes their lives go to waste. This is not to say that one therefore neglects about fitness.</p>
<p>The reason those who are [miserably] worried about their healths and physical appearances is because, they do not see nor accept that it is in the nature of the body to change, this is the simple fact of reality.</p>
<p>If from the onset, one accepts the simple fact of reality that one will age, [one's body] will sag, go out of shape and so forth, then when it does actually occur, then there is either no [misery] or less of it. Therefore, it is important to reflect and remember impermanence continuously.</p>
<p>In the soon to be explained <i>37 Aspects of the Path</i>, which have classifications under different categories, the first is the <i>Four Close Placement of Mindfulness</i>. Of these four, the very first is the <i>Close Placement of Mindfulness on the Body</i>. This is a meditation on seeing the momentary nature of the body, how it is impermanent.</p>
<p>When one is sick, there is no use holding onto to the idea: "Oh, my sickness is so miserable..." Part of the reason one feels this way is that, one sees that the sickness is permanently unchanging and will be there forever.</p>
<p>One then worries and suffers unnecessarily. If one just reflects how, even one's sickness itself is an impermanent phenomenon that undergoes change, then it does help one's mind. Even if one's situation is going well, one is experiencing many blissful happiness, one also has to remember that it will not last forever.</p>
<p>Hence, if one is aware from the onset that, whatever pleasurable happiness one is experiencing is changing and does not last, having such an attitude and expectation, when one's happiness does cease, then one will not be so shocked. This is because, one has already expected it to happen.</p>
<p>Hence, a recollection of subtle impermanence, the momentary nature of phenomena, is very important and is something one needs to remember all the time. This is because, if one were to actively [be mindful of this], then it does not matter whatever situations and experiences one meets with in life, there will be less upheavals. One will remain unaffected by it.</p>
<p>In fact, this will lead to more peace in one's heart, happiness and less disturbances and unhappiness.</p>
<p>This is why the first teaching that Buddha gave was about impermanence. It is that important. It is very helpful if, from the onset, one has some accessible [mental tools] that one can utilize to alleviate the cause of one's problems, which is mainly attachment. Merely by thinking about impermanence does help one to pacify one's desire/ attachment.</p>
<p>The essential meaning of <i>The Four Close Placements on Mindfulness</i> is remembrance/ recollection. In the calm abiding section of the <i>Lam Rim Chen Mo</i> explaining what <i>Not losing one's object of observation</i> is, in developing calm abiding, mindfulness is [a non-forgetfulness of the mind with respect to a familiar object.]</p>
<p>The object of observation of the mental factor of mindfulness cannot be a new object. One can only be mindful of an object that one is familiar/ in contact with and thus remembers it well. Hence, its [objective feature] is posited as a familiar object.</p>
<p>The [subjective feature] of mindfulness is to not forget [the observed object]. This is because, if one forgets [one's observed object,] then there is no way to remember it. As forgetfulness of an object and remembrance of it does not occur together.</p>

One should apply mindfulness and vigilance on impermanence with whatever one does in one's life, remembering and not forgetting that, whatever situation one experiences will not last forever and will end eventually. Even while [the situation] is occurring, it is undergoing momentary change constantly.

If one also apply this remembrance to one's body and one's objects of attachment, it will make a significant positive impact and difference to one's life.

Explaining *A bubble*:

The analogy of a water bubble can be used to illustrate impermanence as well, but here, it is used to show how everything included in samsara is suffering.

Reflecting on the suffering of everything that is included in samsara is a means to reduce one's grasping/ attachment/ desire.

Of the four characteristics of the First Noble Truth [true suffering], it is not sufficient to reflect on [the three aspects of] impermanence, misery and empty. To achieve liberation and especially enlightenment, one needs to mainly reflect on selfless, the forth characteristic.

This is so as to overcome from the root, one's afflictions such as attachment, anger and particularly, one's ignorance, from which all the other afflictions arise. To illustrate that, the analogies of *A dream, a flash of lightning and a cloud* are shown.

These three show how one can understand that all the three times past, present and future phenomena are empty/ devoid of truly inherent existence.

One should be able to respectively explain how, the analogy of a dream is able to help one understand that all the phenomena that occurred in the past are empty of existing truly; how a flash of lightning illustrates that the present is empty of existing truly; and how a cloud illustrates that the future is empty of existing truly. One therefore has to analyze deeper.

From page 9 *:

Meditation on Emptiness – Jeffery Hopkins:

Page 350:

[All schools above the Great Exposition] hold that:

- (1) Production is the new arising of what did not exist before,
- (2) Abiding is the remaining of a type similar to what preceded it,
- (3) Aging is the non-similarity in entity of a later moment and a former moment, and
- (4) Disintegration is a product's not remaining a second moment after its present.

All four characteristics exist simultaneously because:

- (1) What is newly produced *is* just what does not remain for a second moment [disintegration].
- (2) What is newly produced *is* also just what abides as a type similar to its preceding cause [abiding] and
- (3) [What is newly produced] *is* just what is a different entity from its former cause [aging].

Therefore, all production last only the instant of their production; they require no further cause for their disintegration than their own production. Products have a *nature* of momentary disintegration; it is not something else that makes them so.

Brief introduction to the 8 Categories and 70 Topics:

The 8 Categories are the subject matter of the text called <i>The Ornament for Clear Realizations (Abhisamayalankara)</i> composed by [Buddha] Maitreya. In it, there are 8 chapters. Hence, the 8 categories are the subject matter of these chapters.
The Buddha taught the <i>Perfection of Wisdom Sutras</i> , of which there are the <i>Three Extensive, Middling and Short Mothers of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras</i> .
The <i>Short Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i> is contained in one volume, the <i>Middling Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i> is contained in three volumes and the <i>Extensive Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i> is contained in twelve volumes.
[Hidden] in these sutras are the 8 chapters. The subject matter of these chapters are [explained] in the 8 categories.
This text is essentially a text that clarifies the meaning of the <i>Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i> . [Its purpose] is to make it easier for beings to realize the subject matter/ meaning that is taught in the <i>Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i> .
In the opening verse of [this root text], Maitreya first pays homage to the <i>Three Knowers</i> . Of these three, the first is the <i>Exalted Knower of Aspects</i> , which is essentially the Wisdom Truth Body.
With the Wisdom Truth Body as the basis, there comes the two Form Bodies: Complete Enjoyment Bodies and the Emanation Bodies. These bodies are manifested for benefiting sentient beings through teaching/ turning the wheel of Dharma. Hence, it is through the Form Bodies that Buddhas work for sentient beings.
The basis upon which these two Form Bodies arise is the Wisdom Truth Body. Hence, the Wisdom Truth Body is the empowering condition for the two Form Bodies.
The empowering condition that enables the Supreme Emanation Body to turn the wheel of Dharma for the disciples of the Three Vehicles/ Lineages is the Exalted Knower of Aspects [Wisdom Truth Body].
Hence this is the function of the Exalted Knower of Aspects, which acts as an empowering condition for the manifestations of the Form Bodies that turn the wheel of Dharma for sentient beings.
The <i>Knower of Paths</i> is [mainly referring to] something that is included within a bodhisattva superior. Hence, it is [mainly] a bodhisattva superior's knower. The function of the Knower of Paths is that which allows the bodhisattva superiors to act for and accomplish the welfare and goals of the disciples of the Three Lineages.
It is the Exalted Knower of Aspects that is able to completely fulfill and accomplish the welfare, purposes and goals of the disciples of the Three Lineages. Prior to achieving the Exalted Knower of Aspects, one must possess the Knower of Paths. One can then say that this is likened to a cause for the Exalted Knower of Aspects.
Hence, the Knower of Paths functions to allow the bodhisattva superior to accomplish the welfare, goals and happiness of sentient beings, the disciples of the Three Lineages. However, it is the Exalted Knower of Aspects that does that perfectly.
The <i>Knower of Bases</i> functions/ causes the Hearers and Solitary Realizers to achieve the complete peace of nirvana.
Briefly, these are the functions of the Three Knowers. In the opening verse of this root text, homage/ praise is paid to these Three Knowers through expressing their functions. Upon hearing and seeing the praise through expressing their respective functions, it causes the disciples to generate faith and aspirations to achieve their respective goals of the Three Lineages.
In this context, there is an extensive explanation on the way faith is gained in the listeners' minds, which are divided into the two types of followers: the Followers of faith and the Followers of doctrine.
[Hence, these two types of followers are divided] in terms of their dull and sharp faculties: the Followers of faith [possess dull faculties that] generate mere faith by hearing this verse of homage. Those who do not simply generate faith, but do so [by contemplating deeply its meaning through logic and reasoning], are the [sharp facultied] Followers of doctrine.
The 8 Categories are essentially the <i>Three Knowers</i> , the <i>Four Applications</i> and the <i>One Result</i> . From the perspective of: 1) That which is to be achieved/ cultivated , there are the Three Knowers . 2) The means to achieve it/ the path , there are the Four Applications . 3) The result , there is the One Result .
In cultivating the path, this is essentially abandoning the two obscurations, the afflictive and knowledge obscurations. This then [culminates] in the achievement of the result, the truth body.
Hence, to abandon the two obscurations, one must meditate on the <i>aspects</i> of these Three Knowers completely.
As for the cultivation [application] of the aspects of the Three Knowers, the cultivation can be that which has: 1) Not achieved mastery yet and 2) Achieved mastery .
Hence, those whose [meditation that] have <i>not achieved mastery</i> , [strive] in cultivating the complete aspects of the Three Knowers, called Complete Aspects Application .
Those whose meditation have achieved mastery over the cultivation on the aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers is called Peak Application .

The application [immediately] prior to manifesting/ achieving the resultant truth body is [called <i>Momentary Application</i>]. In this meditation, one is able to [generate] all aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers in the shortest moment of time. This means that, all the objects of meditation must arise without any effort in that bodhisattva's mind [within that time frame].
For example, when the bodhisattva is meditating on impermanence, he is able to cultivate all the aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers without any effort in the shortest moment of time.
Hence, before one can manifest the resultant truth body, one must actualize the application that is able to completely cultivate all aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers in the shortest moment of time without any effort.
However, before one can actualize the application that is able to completely cultivate all aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers in the shortest moment of time without any effort, one must cultivate aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers <i>serially</i> .
Hence, there is the <i>Serial Application</i> . This is how the <i>Four Applications</i> are presented:
1) When one has not gained any mastery [over the cultivation of the aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers, one cultivates] the <i>Complete Aspects Application</i> .
2) When one has gained mastery [over the cultivation of the aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers, one cultivates] the <i>Peak Application</i> .
3) When one [progressively] meditates on the aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers to gain stability [in them, one is cultivating] <i>Serial Application</i> .
4) When one achieves stability [in the aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers], one [achieves] the <i>Momentary Application</i> .
Through cultivating these four applications at the time of the path, one achieves the resultant truth body.

Short explanation of the Perfection of Wisdom:

In this text, the 8 Categories are taught. At the beginning of the text, [Chapter 1 verse 3] it says: <i>“The perfection of wisdom will be perfectly explained by way of eight categories.”</i>
According to the philosophical views of <i>Autonomy Middle Way School</i> and all the schools below it, the perfection of wisdom exists only on Buddha ground. This is because, it is a <i>perfection</i> . Hence, for them, [such a mind] can only exist there.
However, according to the Consequence Middle Way School, they do not posit that, as the perfection of wisdom also exists during the time of training. Hence, the [phrase] perfection of wisdom is not taken to mean a culmination, but also taken to mean its process of progression towards perfection. Hence, [they assert] that it exists at the time of the path.
Since this text is generally explained through the philosophical positions of the <i>Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School</i> , hence, [in this context,] the perfection of wisdom does not exist at the time of the path, but only on Buddha ground.
If the perfection of wisdom is terminologically divided and explained from the perspective of its names, then there are four: 1) <i>The Natural Perfection of Wisdom,</i> 2) <i>The Scriptural Perfection of Wisdom,</i> 3) <i>The Path Perfection of Wisdom, and</i> 4) <i>The Resultant Perfection of Wisdom.</i>
1) <i>The Natural Perfection of Wisdom:</i> The explanations given earlier from the Vajra Cutter Sutra on <i>The star</i> shows the two ultimate and conventional truths. Essentially, the Natural perfection of wisdom refers to the <i>ultimate truth</i> , the deepest level of reality of all phenomena.
The Natural perfection of wisdom also refers to the <i>Tathagata Essence</i> , which refers to the clear light nature of the mind.
From the perspective of sutra, the <i>clear light nature of the mind</i> , the Natural perfection of wisdom [ultimate truth of the mind] is the <i>Basis Mahamudra</i> .
From the perspective of tantra, the <i>Basis Mahamudra</i> refers to the <i>extremely subtle mind of clear light</i> . [This mind] arises after the dissolution of the winds that support the four elements, the minds of white appearance, red increase and black near attainment [respectively].
From this perspective, the [extremely subtle mind] of clear light manifests [only] at the time of death. To the perspective of this mind, nothing appears except [an utter] vacuity. This comes about through the complete subsidence of all [dualistic appearances]. Such an extremely subtle clear light mind of death, to which [an utter vacuity] appears, is the Basis mahamudra
2) <i>The Scriptural Perfection of Wisdom:</i> Is essentially the main subject matter that shows/ expresses the Natural perfection of wisdom, that has the Natural perfection of wisdom as a subject matter.
The main subject matter that expresses the Natural perfection of wisdom is essentially emptiness. Hence, the mind that realizes this emptiness is 3) <i>The Path Perfection of Wisdom</i> .
Even though this is the general explanation of the path perfection of wisdom, but if one analyzes deeper, for something to be a path perfection of wisdom, it is insufficient for it to be a mere mind realizing emptiness. It has to be this mind realizing emptiness that is conjoined with mind generation.

<p>4) The Resultant Perfection of Wisdom: Is essentially the Exalted knower of aspects, which occurs at the time of the result, hence, the Resultant perfection of wisdom. To achieve the result, one needs to [cultivate] the path that brings it about.</p>
<p>Hence, there is the Path perfection of wisdom. However, the only basis that makes it possible to have the Path perfection of wisdom is [contained] in the ultimate nature of reality, how phenomena are. This is the ultimate truth, the Natural perfection of wisdom, which is the deepest nature of reality of all that exist.</p>
<p>Since the basis exists, hence, there is a path that is able to understand that. Therefore, there is the basis, the Natural perfection of wisdom. By virtue of that, therefore there is the path, the Path perfection of wisdom. By depending on such a path, one actualizes the result, the Resultant perfection of wisdom. Hence, this is the reason there are the basis, path and result.</p>
<p>From the perspective of tantra, the Path Mahamudra would perhaps be this: Through the force of meditation, one causes the winds that support the four elements to dissolve.</p>
<p>Together with the dissolution of the minds of white appearance, red increase and black near attainment, culminating in the [manifestation] of the extremely subtle mind, then at the time of death, if one is able to mix [such a meditation with the extremely subtle clear light mind of] death, then perhaps that is the Path Mahamudra.</p>
<p>However, for it to be a Path Mahamudra, it is unsure whether such an extremely subtle mind [necessarily] needs to realize emptiness [or not].</p>
<p>The Natural perfection of wisdom is the [emptiness of true existence of the] mind. Such a deepest nature of one's mind is not something that came before the mind itself. So long as the mind existed, such an emptiness of true existence of the mind has always been one entity/ one nature with the mind.</p>
<p>Even though that is the case, but since one has yet to see/ realize the emptiness of one's mind, therefore, one has been circling in cyclic existence till now. Eventually, when one is able to see the empty nature of one's mind, along with the empty nature of all [other phenomena] that exist, such a [realization] will be done by the Path perfection of wisdom.</p>
<p>When such a Path perfection of wisdom arises in one's mind, this is when the process of achieving permanent everlasting happiness, eradicating the obscurations and achieving full enlightenment, starts.</p>
<p>To develop such a Path perfection of wisdom, one has to depend on the Scriptural perfection of wisdom.</p>
<p>This is because, it is through the Three-fold process of Hearing, Reflecting and Meditating on the subject matter expressed by the Scriptural perfection of wisdom that enables one to eventually generate the Path perfection of wisdom through which one eradicates one's obscurations and achieve the Resultant perfection of wisdom.</p>
<p>Hence, the critical learning and analysis of the subject matter of the Scriptural perfection of wisdom become so important.</p>
<p>Lama Tsongkhapa stated very clearly that, the heart essence of the entire Buddhadharma lies in the subject matter of the Scriptural perfection of wisdom, essentially [the teachings on] emptiness. It is therefore important to realize and see this for oneself that this is the case.</p>
<p>One can examine the example set by the life story of Lama Tsongkhapa. In the early part of his life, he showed the aspect of not realizing emptiness. He then learned enormously, putting a lot of effort to accumulate merit and purifying obscurations in retreat isolation. Eventually he [showed the aspect of] realizing emptiness.</p>
<p>After he had seen for himself the ultimate nature of reality, he then composed the famous text <i>In Praise of Dependent Origination</i>.</p>
<p>When he showed the aspect of not realizing emptiness, he asked Manjushri what he needs to do to realize the ultimate nature of reality, seeing things as they are. Manjushri replied that, to see the ultimate nature of reality, realizing things as they are, there are three things that need to be done:</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Strive hard at accumulating merit and purifying the mind of negativities and obscurations. 2) Make single-pointed heartfelt requests repeatedly to the guru inseparable from one's meditational deity. 3) Engage in listening/ study, reflection and meditation on the great treatises.
<p>Lama Tsongkhapa took [these instructions] to heart and engaged in practices, putting in an enormous amount of effort to study/ learn, reflect and meditate, bearing a lot of hardships in the process. Eventually, he showed the deed of realizing emptiness of phenomena as they are.</p>
<p>By depending on these three conditions, when he eventually saw and experienced reality as it is himself, he then developed an unshakable, irreversible faith and devotion towards the Buddha, seeing Him as a valid person that is very special and unparalleled. Based on such a faith and devotion, he composed this text. Towards the end of this composition, he said:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Since it is due to my teacher's kindness I have met with the teaching of the unexcelled teacher, I dedicate this virtue too towards the cause For all beings to be sustained by sublime [qualified] spiritual mentors.</i></p>

To see for oneself how unparalleled, unrivaled and unsurpassed the Buddha's teachings are, this essentially means knowing the ultimate nature of reality, the hallmark of the entire Buddhadharma.

If one understands the presentation of reality, the basis, particularly, if one gains a precise and decisive understanding and conviction in the Natural perfection of wisdom, Path perfection of wisdom and in dependence upon these, how the Resultant perfection of wisdom comes about, it is only then that one can really 'taste' the distinctive 'flavor' of the Buddhadharma.

First of the 8, the Exalted Knower of Aspects:

To illustrate the Exalted Knower of Aspects, there are these 10 topics which explain it [in 2 ways:]

- 1) Through the presentation of object, [by which one understands the subject], and
- 2) Through the presentation of cause, [by which one understands the result.]

Khenrinpoche: When we study in the monastery, we have to memorize everything in this text by heart. I still remember the [number]: 10, 11, 9, 11, 8, 13, 4 and 4 [that make up the 70 topics]. If you really want to learn and discuss, then you have to memorize the words. If you don't memorize, then there is nothing to discuss as you don't know how to say the words.

In the monastery, when you go to debate, you are not allowed to carry anything, but go empty-handed. You have to ask questions and say the words. But if you have nothing to say, then you just sit down there and don't learn any single word.

Hence, [the monks] in the monastery are trained like that. They have to memorize [everything]. This is how they improve their memories. Someone says: "Oh, you don't know anything." Then your ego comes: "Oh, I know that..." [You then go back to memorize that and show it the next day in the debate class]. Hence, there is a lot of competition going on.

[In this way,] this helps you to improve. However, we are not like that here. I'll just try to explain as much and brief as possible, but I am not sure how much you can catch this.

1-1) Mind generation:

Of the 10 topics that illustrate the first knower, the Exalted Knower of Aspects, the first [of this first] topic is Mind generation.

The reason this is the first [of the 70] topics is to show that, the specific special trainee disciples for which the text of Ornament for Clear Realizations is intended for, must [firstly] possess this specific quality. Hence, to be such a special trainee, one must possess this quality that [qualifies one to be a special trainee of this text].

In this text, there are long discussions and explanations on the nature of mind generation, with definition and division. Then there are the aspirational and engaged mind generations, [their definitions, divisions and so forth], with debates and so forth.

For example, there is an explanation of the 22 types of mind generation by way of simile and the descriptions of how these examples are cited from which sutras and so on.

1-2) Precepts:

The main object of attainment, the goal that these special trainees of the Ornament for Clear Realizations who possess mind generation are seeking, is the Exalted Knower of Aspects. To achieve this, one needs to listen to the instructions. Hence, after the first topic, the second topic is called Precepts.

[Among the 2 divisions, the first is by way of the] mode of instructions. When this precept is divided by this mode of instructions, then there are 10:

1-2-1) Precepts which instruct on achievings, its own entities. This is essentially concerned about understanding the basis that constitutes the reality of the two truths.

1-2-2) Precepts which instruct on the object of observation, the four [noble] truths: By virtue of knowing the basis of reality of the two truths, one then comes to understand what the Four Noble Truths are.

1-2-3) Precepts which instruct on the [basis of] reliance, the Three Jewels: Upon knowing what constitutes the basis of reality, one comes to know what the Four Noble Truths are. It is only when one knows the Four Noble Truths well, that one can then know what the Three Jewels, that one relies on, are all about.

[Such a sequence of presentation] is important. Hence, under this topic of precepts, these first three [topics are presented first]. This is because, one has to possess a real understanding and conviction of what exists, which has two facets to it. [It is] on the basis of [learning] the two truths, that one can then [learn] the Four Noble Truths, which also explain the path as well.

When one really understands well the Four Noble Truths deeply, one can then [proceed to] understand what exactly the Three Jewels, one's object of refuge that one is supposed to rely on, are all about.

Without knowing well and deeply the Four Noble Truths, there is no way one can [really] know about the Three Jewels. Whatever understanding is mere expression of the sound "Three Jewels", there is nothing more than that. Hence, to really know to whom or what one is taking refuge in, one really has to know well what the Four Noble Truths are.

After one has [delineated] what the reality, the Four Noble Truths and Three Jewels are, then to achieve the object of attainment through engaging in the practice perfectly, the remaining [7] precepts are taught for one to engage in and perfectly accomplish the practice.
To overcome one of the discordant factors, laziness, of which there are 3 types, the next 3 precepts are explained:
1-2-4) Precepts which instruct on effort in non-clinging [a cause to enhance achieving].
1-2-5) Precepts which instruct on tireless effort [a cause of non-reversal from Mahayana achieving].
1-2-6) Precepts which instruct on effort that thoroughly upholds the [Mahayana] path [a cause of non-degeneration from Mahayana achieving].
To symbolize and explain how exalted the practice can become, the next precept is shown:
1-2-7) Precepts which instruct on the five eyes [fleshly eye, divine eye, doctrine eye, wisdom eye, and Buddha eye].
To fully complete all the qualities of practice, then the next precept is shown:
1-2-8) Precepts which instruct on the six clairvoyances.
To instruct on achieving the final results of the training, then the last two precepts are shown:
1-2-9) Precepts which instruct on the path of seeing.
1-2-10) Precepts which instruct on the path of meditation.
In the studying of these [sub-]topics, it is not merely about listing down the names. There are also the presentation of each of these 10 [sub-sub-topics], their respective definitions, [pervasions] and so on.
Hence, there are [detailed] and extensive presentation of the two truths, the Four Noble Truths, Three Jewels and so forth. This is like what was explained in the <i>Tathagata Essence</i> , when there were [extensive] presentations of the Three Jewels.
There are also explanations on the special methods to achieve the goals of the different clairvoyances and supernatural powers. This is because, to be able to really work for others' benefit, one needs all such abilities.

1-3) Four branches of definite discrimination, the Mahayana path of preparation:

Through listening to this precept/ instruction, one achieves the <i>Mahayana</i> path of preparation/ branches of definite discrimination.
On the basis of knowing that there are the four divisions of the Mahayana path of preparation, heat, peak, forbearance and supreme mundane qualities, within these, there are extensive explanations of how the manifest apprehensions of the apprehender and apprehended are suppressed, one then progresses through the path of preparation.

1-4) Naturally abiding lineage, the basis of mahayana achieving:

The four achievings topics 7 to 10, Achieving through armor, Achieving through engagement, Achieving through the collections and Definitely issuing achieving, have to be [cultivated] with this naturally abiding lineage as its basis. Hence, it is presented as topic 4 before the other achievings.
One has to understand that the Mahayana achieving to be a Mahayana path. For something to be a Mahayana path, it has to [have a support which is its] basis. Such a basis of the Mahayana achieving [Mahayana path] is the naturally abiding lineage.
The way to understand how the naturally abiding lineage is the basis of the Mahayana achieving, is to understand how the basis of the Mahayana achieving, the naturally abiding lineage, to be the reality of the two truths.
Hence, one has to understand what constitutes what reality is: in summary, for any phenomenon [one is analyzing on], what makes it possible to exist in the place is [the support of] emptiness. Due to not knowing the basis upon which everything exists, the emptiness of true existence, one then circles in cyclic existence.
Whatever phenomenon that comes to mind, one holds to it as something true right there so tightly, that is why one is still trapped in one's own samsara.
This is the reason for the statement of the Four-fold emptiness of the <i>Heart of Perfection of Wisdom Sutra: Form is empty...</i> The purpose is to overcome one's grasping at a self by understanding that, what one thinks truly exists and holds on so tightly to, has never been there, has never existed. It has always been empty of existing truly.
Everything that exists is based on and arises from emptiness. Its deepest nature of reality is emptiness, the ultimate truth. That said, if one still grasps at emptiness as truly existent, then one [has not understood its meaning] and will remain trapped and not be freed from samsara. Hence, the emptiness of emptiness [is explained in that, the latter] does not exist truly as well.
This leads to the second phrase: " <i>Emptiness is form.</i> " This means form and its emptiness are not separate, distinct entities but one entity. Hence, the basis of the Mahayana achieving/ Mahayana path is the emptiness of true existence of phenomena.

1-5) Observed objects of mahayana achieving:

In essence, the object of observation of the Mahayana achievings/ Mahayana paths is **all phenomena**. In terms of its division, [there are 11]: virtues (that which are to be adopted), nonvirtues (that which are to be discarded), the unspecified (neither virtuous nor non-virtuous) and so forth.

Hence, [through observing the objects of phenomena, one learns to] go pass beyond and eliminate all superimpositions/ fabrications of phenomena.

Difference between learning the treatises superficially and learning it in detail:

This has been mentioned before: when one listens to the teachings, one needs to do so attentively with an alert mind as much as possible to see for oneself what is being said.
It is important not to become [an idle person who habitually spends time merely attending Dharma teachings]. This is more likely to happen to people who have been listening to Dharma for a quite a long time. One then becomes a bit complacent in that, one does not try [to understand the teachings], but is merely there physically.
Khenrinpoche: So, you must “hug” [embrace] the Dharma!
Hence, try your best to listen attentively. Even though the subject matter is difficult and challenging, but try your best. From my side, I will also try to at least ‘open your eyes’ to let you know that the Buddhadharma is indeed very expansive, deep and profound. There is no way to go into each detail as you do not have the time.
Since you do not have time, if we go into detail in the presentation here, this could then be a condition for people to get bored and discouraged as they do not see the purpose. Since this serves no purpose, hence we are not doing that here.
Going into details only works if the students are hardworking putting in the time and effort to learn. Then the instructor will also work together. But, in the absence of these conditions, then there is not much point going into detail.
This is an attempt to explain briefly to get a rough idea of the subject matter of 8 Categories and 70 Topics.
Going into details means that, there will be so many things one needs to resolve. Otherwise, if one looks at the topics simply: Exalted Knower of Aspects is just the [Definiendum]. However, merely knowing the words alone is obviously inadequate.
Khenrinpoche: I want you to know how to think. Don’t think that it is just so simple: “Oh, this is just the Buddha’s enlightened mind.” In one way it is simple. But if you want to read and really study the Buddha’s teachings and the treatises, then you have to know the words.
Of the 8 Categories, the first deals with the Exalted Knower of Aspects, which is defined as: <i>A fully developed exalted wisdom that directly realizes the ten topics, mind generation and so forth.</i> Its boundary: <i>Only on buddha ground.</i>
Simply stated, an Exalted Knower of Aspects is an exalted knower in the continuum of Buddha superior. It is a consciousness that is forever separated/ freed of all the defilement. [It is synonymous with] the Wisdom Truth Body.
There are 2 ways that illustrates these 10 topics: 1) Through illustrating the cause, one then comes to know the result, and 2) Through illustrating an object, one then comes to know the subject [mind] that realizes it.
For example, through using the examples of mind generation and so forth, this then illustrates what this Exalted Knower of Aspects is. This is because, it is a fully developed wisdom that directly realizes these 10 objects of the 10 topics. Hence, this is an explanation of what the Exalted Knower of Aspects is through illustrating the objects.

Stating the question for the debate and its responses:

<i>“If it is a wisdom that directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, it is necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects?”</i>
<i>[N means the student asserts it is not necessarily so; Y means the student asserts it is necessarily so].</i>
Student 1 N: No. The wisdom directly realizing the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, in the mind of the last moment of a sentient being [is an example of a wisdom that directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, which is not an Exalted Knower of Aspects].
Student 2 N: The exalted knower that directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, is not necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects. This is because, it is a fully developed wisdom that directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, [that fits] the definition of an Exalted Knower of Aspects.
For example, the wisdom that directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, in the continuum of a Mahayana superior on the grounds before achieving the path of no more learning.
Khenrinpoche: The forth topic, the basis of Mahayana achieving, is essentially emptiness, the suchness of the mind. Within the 10 topics, at least there is one that refers to the ultimate truth. Hence, is there a wisdom that directly realizes the two truths in the continuum of a sentient being? Here you see, it has become more complicated and does not end there.
Student 2: The wisdom that directly realizes emptiness in the continuum of a [bodhisattva] superior cannot realize conventionality. Perhaps, the 10 topics are not realized altogether in one mind for a sentient being.

Khenrinpoche: [Based on what you just said, then] if it is a wisdom that directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, it necessarily has to be an Exalted Knower of Aspects!
It is clear that, based on what has been explained so far, since sentient beings cannot realize the two truths directly at the same time, therefore, would not a wisdom that directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, necessarily be an Exalted Knower of Aspects?
If there are no other examples [to illustrate that the wisdom directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, is not necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects,] then a wisdom that directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, is <i>necessarily</i> an Exalted Knower of Aspects. This is because, there are no alternatives [to the pervasion].
Student 3 N: [There can be a wisdom directly realizing the 10 topics...that is not an Exalted Knower of Aspects, an example can be] a subsequent cognizer directly realizing emptiness in post meditative equipoise of a bodhisattva [superior] realizing the 10 topics. This is because, it is a continuity of a wisdom directly realizing emptiness.
Khenrinpoche: Your example serves no additional benefit to what has been discussed. This is because, it comes back to the similar examples as [the above two students].
Based on what has been stated <i>so far</i> , one has to say that: “If it is a wisdom directly realizing the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, it is necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects.”
Student 4 N: [Another example to show that it is not necessarily so:] A fully developed wisdom directly realizing the 10 topics on the Buddha ground outside the pervasion of the Exalted Knower of Aspects.
Khenrinpoche: Are you saying that, the [fully developed] wisdom directly realizes the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, exists on Buddha ground but is not necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects? This is something new in my ear! This is what trailblazers do! It is good. You can say anything that you like as we are all learning.
If you say that it is fully developed, then that would be the definition of an Exalted Knower of Aspects!
Since you say that, there can be an exalted wisdom directly realizing the 10 topics in the continuum of a Buddha superior that is not an Exalted Knower of Aspects, it follows that, this [statement you have made actually] fulfills the definition.
You have accepted that, the wisdom directly realizing the 10 topics, mind generation and so forth, in the continuum of a Buddha superior is not an Exalted Knower of Aspects, but you also accepted that, such a wisdom is a fully developed wisdom, then it is necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects!
Student 4: Is what is defined here as an Exalted Knower of Aspects always an Exalted Knower of Aspects?
Khenrinpoche: Whatever is defined here is defined by Maitreya! But it does not mean that you cannot debate and check. Essentially, this means that you are not accepting this definition and would have to abandon it! If that is the case, then what would the definition? Student 4: I accept the definition.
Student 5 N: [It is not necessarily so,] for example, an exalted knower of a 10 th ground bodhisattva. [The definition] did not state that it must directly realize the 10 topics simultaneously. It can be a broader general category.
Khenrinpoche: Good. This is the answer [that would have evolved] after a long debate. If you have thought about it, you will get such an answer. If you don’t think, then you would probably not get such an answer.
Student 6 Y: It says “A wisdom that...” this means that it has to be one wisdom that realizes all 10 topics together.
Student 5: There is no problem. A forest of 1000 trees or a forest of 10,000 trees is still ‘a’ forest. I only need to say a forest.
Student 7: Is not an exalted knower necessarily a knower on the Buddha ground?
Khenrinpoche: An Exalted Knower of Aspects is not equivalent to an exalted knower. A knower is a consciousness/ path that is conjoined with renunciation. In a way, path and a knower is the same. You have to know the definition. Sometimes, the translation uses exalted knower to perhaps distinguish the knower of any consciousness.
Student 8 Y: The 10 th ground bodhisattva will realize [the 10 topics] with a suchness with defilement, but suchness without defilement is not realized on the Buddha ground. Hence, someone who realizes the 10 topics has to be on Buddha ground.
Khenrinpoche: I did say earlier that, these 10 topics illustrate the Exalted Knower of Aspects. [One of the] two ways to show is this, illustrating the cause to [indicate] what the effect is. The naturally abiding lineage has to be included at the time of the cause. Hence, does the 4 th topic, the naturally abiding lineage, exist on Buddha ground?
Here, you have to understand how to sharpen your mind. You need to be involved [in the thought process], if not, then of course [you don’t get anything]. When someone asks question, you have to think about the answer [and not just say] yes, no. Up till now, you are still [doing this]. [Whatever is your conclusion], you must state your reason why you agree or not agree.
You must be brave and not worry about making mistakes. If you worry about that then you’ll never learn anything: “Oh I just say something [wrong] and people laughed...” [If you worry like that] you’ll never learn. You must be brave to learn.

Debating the correct answer to ensure conclusion is well thought out:

<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> Does the wisdom of the 10 th ground directly realize the two truths? <i>Student 5:</i> Yes.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> Then there exists a mind in the continuum of a sentient being that realizes the two truths directly. This means that the sentient being has seen the two truths directly. <i>Student 5:</i> Yes.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> Is it the case that, this sentient being has directly seen the two truths? <i>Student 5:</i> Yes.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> This sentient beings has realized emptiness directly? <i>Student 5:</i> Yes. 1
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> This sentient being is a superior. <i>Student 5:</i> Yes.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> The example that you gave was a general example, not a specific example. So I am going in that direction.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> Is sentient being a superior. <i>Student 5:</i> No pervasion.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> The question is not whether [a sentient being] is necessarily [a superior] or not, but is sentient being a superior? <i>Student 5:</i> No.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> It follows that, that sentient being is a superior because sentient being sees emptiness directly as you have asserted that. 1
<i>Student 5:</i> Then I'll have to [reverse this position and say that] sentient beings do not realize emptiness directly.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> If that is the case, then it follows that sentient beings do not realize the two truths directly.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> If that is the case, then it follows that superiors do not see the two truths directly! Does a superior necessarily realize the two truths directly? <i>Student 5:</i> Yes.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> Does the person in meditative equipoise in uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing see the two truths directly? <i>Student 5:</i> No. 3
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> It follows that such a person realizes the two truths directly because he is a superior. <i>Student 5:</i> Yes. 2
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> Your thesis, the starting point that you can never give up, is this: "If it is a superior, it necessarily realizes the two truths," but since you have accepted it 2 then you have lost your thesis as you have gone against your own thesis.
[This is because, you accept that this person in meditative equipoise in the uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing realizes the two truths directly due to the reason that he is a superior 2, yet you also deny that this same person can realize the two truths directly 3. Hence, you have contradicted yourself.]
<i>End of debate</i>

How debate/ discussion is the only way to learn the great treatises:

When we form a thesis, stating a position, it is not stated lightly as we would have thought about it. This is why one makes a position, stand by it and not change it lightly or give it up so easily.
Whether a position is wrong or right does not matter. However, the problem with not having a thought out position is that, because you have not thought it out, then if someone says this, you will agree, if another person were to say something else, you would also agree. Then you are changing positions constantly, then this will be a complete lack of understanding.
Due to not having a thought out position, even if you were to debate [vigorously], at the end you are still left with nothing.
<i>The whole point of debate is that, you should derive something, By eliminating all the possibilities and arriving at a definite understanding and conviction.</i>
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> This is like [being in a boxing match]. When you are hit very hard on the face, you will remember the pain. So debate is like that. No matter how painful it is, when you have to let go of your thesis, then you really keep [that mistake in mind and remember how you got it wrong].
The point of this exercise is to show you that, <i>If you really want to learn the philosophical treatises, [debate/ discussion] is the only way.</i>
You have to really think and analyze so that you can come to an understanding. There is no other alternative.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> But I am not sure how helpful such a discussion is. By having this discussion class, at the end, what did you learn? <i>Student:</i> Learn to listen better. <i>Khenrinpoche:</i> That is not the main point.

Examining the definition of Exalted Knower of Aspects in detail:

The definition of the Exalted Knower of Aspects is: A fully developed exalted wisdom directly realizing the ten topics, mind generation and so forth. Boundary: It exists only on the Buddha ground. There are 10 topics illustrating this.
Instead of defining the Exalted Knower of Aspects in this way, one can also say that the Exalted Knower of Aspects is: <i>A fully developed exalted wisdom directly realizing all phenomena.</i>
The meaning is the same [as the original definition]. To understand the Exalted Knower of Aspects as an example, one has to examine the different parts of the definition closely. One has to analyze [a few things]:
1) Why must it be a <i>fully developed exalted wisdom</i>? Why can it not merely be, for example, <i>an exalted wisdom</i>?
2) Why is it <i>an exalted wisdom</i>? Why can it not be a <i>fully developed mental consciousness</i>?
3) Why is an <i>exalted wisdom directly realizing the ten topics</i>? Why does it not say <i>simultaneously realizing the ten topics</i>?
When one tries to understand what an Exalted Knower of Aspects is based on this definition, at the minimum, one should know that, for something to be an Exalted Knower of Aspects, it must fulfill these requirements and possess such elements.
If one merely examines the Exalted Knower of Aspects simply, one can say that: <i>Any consciousness in the continuum of a Buddha superior is necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects.</i>
If someone asks: "If it is a consciousness in the continuum of a Buddha superior, is it necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects?" <i>Exalted Knower of Aspects, Wisdom Truth Body, consciousness that has abandoned the two obscurations, resultant perfection of wisdom</i> are all synonymous as these have the same meaning referring to the same phenomenon.
The boundary of existence is only on the Buddha ground. This means that, sentient beings do not possess [such a mind].

1-6) The object of intent of mahayana achieving:

[The first 5 topics of this category has been explained. The 3 rd topic,] the 4 branches of definite discrimination is another phrase for the [Mahayana] path of preparation.
The object of intent of mahayana achieving essentially refers to the purpose/ goal for practicing the bodhisattva path.
The topic prior to this topic is the 5 th topic of the Observed object of mahayana achieving, which observes objects like virtues, nonvirtues and so forth, in essence, all phenomena that exist.
The definition of the special intent of mind generation is to accomplish the [<i>purposes of others</i>]. To achieve this intent, one then generates the intent to achieve [<i>one's own purpose</i>] of omniscience to accomplish it.
The purpose of focusing on the object of observation of the mahayana achieving is to achieve the 3 objects of intent of the mahayana achievings. Hence, the goal of the bodhisattva path is to achieve the 3 objects of intent of mahayana achievings.
The objects are the: 1) Great heroic mind, 2) Great abandonment, and 3) Great realization. These 3 are posited as the objects of the great mahayana achievings because they are the highest/ ultimate methods to achieve the welfare of sentient beings.
[How the 8 qualities of the Buddha Jewel are related to these 3 objects of intent of Mahayana achievings:]
The first 2 of the 8 qualities of Buddha Jewel as shown in Tathagata Essence are <i>uncompounded</i> and <i>spontaneous</i> . Uncompounded refers to the Nature Body of natural purity and spontaneous refers to Nature Body of adventitious purity. Of the 3 objects of intent of mahayana achievings, the <i>great abandonment</i> refers to these 2 aspects of the Nature Truth Body.
The 3 rd quality, <i>not realized through the cause of others</i> , refers to the mind that directly realizes these 2 natural and adventitious purities. Hence, it is a mind that directly realizes the mode of phenomena, an exalted knower that directly realizes emptiness, the truth body, which is the fulfillment of <i>one's own purpose</i> .
On this basis, comes the [wisdom] truth body that is the fulfillment of the <i>purposes of others</i> . [These two are] related to the <i>Great Heroic Mind and Great Realization</i> .
The quality of [<i>knowledge</i>] refers to the knower that knows conventionalities/varieties of phenomena. Perhaps the reason it is the knower of the varieties of phenomena is that, it sees the presence of the tathagata essence, the natural purity, in all sentient beings' minds, while simultaneously realizing that sentient beings' minds are obscured by adventitious defilements.
Due to [the quality of] this knower of varieties/ knowledge, hence, there can be the next quality of <i>mercy</i> .
Due to the [quality of] <i>power</i> of these 2 qualities of knowledge and mercy, Buddhas can then work for sentient beings.
The observed objects of Mahayana achievings include all phenomena, which include virtues, nonvirtues and the unspecified. The virtuous objects are to be adopted, the non-virtuous are to be abandoned, and the unspecified are to be left in equanimity.
The purpose of focusing on all such observed objects of Mahayana achievings is to achieve the 3 objects of intent of Mahayana achievings, the great heroic mind, great abandonment and great realization.

[The last 4 topics are the] 4 Mahayana achievings: Achieving through armor, through engagement, through collections and definitely issuing achieving. For the purpose of actualizing the 3 objects of intent of the Mahayana achievings, the Great heroic mind, abandonment and realization, one must engage in these 4 Mahayana achievings.

[Description of what a Mahayana achieving is:]

Mahayana achievings or a path in the continuum of a bodhisattva is a path/ mind that arises in dependence upon mind generation as the basis, that enables one to accomplish the 2 purposes of self and others.

As mentioned in the *Ornament for the Mahayana Sutras*, for something to be a path in the continuum of a bodhisattva, it must possess the qualities of the **6 Greatnesses**:

- 1) Great abiding: which means it is based on/ resting on/ abides on/ relies upon mind generation.
- 2) Great effort/ perseverance: the bodhisattva is joyously persevering in achieving the 2 purposes.
- 3) Great result: in dependence upon such a path, this then brings about/ issues forth the result of great enlightenment.
- 4) Great undertaking: the bodhisattva promises in the undertaking to achieve the great purposes of all sentient beings.
- 5) Great forbearance: the bodhisattva willingly forbears all the hardships while working for sentient beings.
- 6) [Great accomplishment]: the bodhisattva works perfectly to eliminate sufferings and accomplish sentient beings' welfare.

1-7) [Mahayana] achieving through armor:

Definition: A bodhisattva's yoga conjoined with a vast intention desiring to practice inclusively the entire six perfections such as generosity and so forth within each of the six perfections.

This means that, when bodhisattvas engage in the practice of the Buddhadharmas to achieve the objects of intent, they do so with a very vast, strong and courageous intention. This is like a mental armor/ force/ energy.

The example given in the sutras is that of a king about to go to war. He then prepares himself by donning appropriate attire/ armor. Likewise, when the bodhisattvas practice the holy Dharma to accomplish the object of intent, they do so with very strong intention that will practice and accomplish it.

Achieving through armor means that, when a bodhisattva practices the perfections, say the perfection of generosity, within such a practice, all other perfections must also be included together. Hence, the bodhisattva must possess such a vast intention/ desire to practice inclusively the entire 6 perfections within the practice of a particular perfection.

However, having the intention to do so does not necessitates doing so, [but would fulfill the meaning of this achieving].

[How the cultivation of all other perfections are included within each perfection:]

Taking the bodhisattva's practice of the perfection of generosity as an example, when he is making the generosity of the gift of Dharma, he is also practicing the perfection of ethical discipline, by ceasing any arising of self interests.

When he is criticized while giving Dharma, he is supposed to practice the perfection of patience, putting up with forbearance.

When he is enthusiastically giving the Dharma, this is the practice of the perfection of joyous perseverance.

While giving the gift of Dharma, he should do so with a single-pointedness of mind [with the practice of the perfection of concentration.] This means that, when he is explaining about the Mahayana, he should just be focusing on this topic with mindfulness and vigilance, and not teach something else.

While giving the gift of Dharma, he should do so by non-objectifying the 3 circles [with the practice of the perfection of wisdom.] This means he brings to mind that the giver of the Dharma, the recipient of the gift of Dharma and the Dharma being delivered all do not exist inherently.

Perhaps dedicating roots of virtue from the act of giving the Dharma also constitutes the practice of the perfection of wisdom.

In summary, achieving through armor is the strong intention/ resolve/ desire to inclusively practice all the 6 perfections within each of the 6 perfections.

Boundary: Achieving through armor exists from the Mahayana path of accumulation through the end of the continuum of a sentient being.

1-8) Achieving through engagement:

After wearing the great mental armor, one then actually [engages in cultivation]. This is why, after achieving through armor, there is achieving through engagement. This is likened to a king who, after having [donned his armor], he does not just sit back down. The reason he has [donned his armor] is only because he wants to go to war.

[Boundary:] Achieving through engagement starts from the Mahayana path of preparation. From the start of this path, there is achievement through armor, essentially a strong resolve to inclusively [cultivate] all 6 perfections within each of them.

As one progresses through the path of preparation, achieving through engagement means one <i>joyously persevere</i> in it.
The path of preparation begins [together] with the achievement of the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness. Once this path starts, the bodhisattva gains the ability to suppress the manifest conception of apprehender and apprehended as truly existent. This ability comes from the realization of special insight. Before this, he is unable to do so.
Here, one is not merely waging a war against the afflictions, one is actually able to inflict some damage against the enemy, the afflictions. This only starts on the path of preparation, where one has [the powerful weapon] of the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness.

1-9) Achieving through the collections:

In dependence upon achieving through engagement, which is essentially engaging through joyous perseverance, one is able to accumulate the collections. Hence, achieving through the collections comes after achieving through engagement.
This is the wisdom in the Mahayana path of preparation that is conjoined with the [two] vast collections. This makes it possible to eventually bring about the result of the path of seeing soon.
This is because, due to the [powerful weapon of the] special insight focusing on emptiness on the path of preparation, the process of really being able to inflict damage on the afflictions actually starts. Through that, the bodhisattva is then able to accumulate [the two] vast collections. This in turn gives power to the mind to be able to [directly] realize emptiness soon.
When one goes to war, one must be adequately prepared. Just like in war, one has to [don the appropriate] attire and does so with a strong resolve [to win it]. One then actually goes to war. Going to war is one matter, whether one can win is another.
To achieve one's goals when waging a war, many conditions must gather: one must adequately prepare oneself with the correct weapons, strategies and so on, for one's army to be effective.
Likewise, achieving through collections refer to the wisdom that is conjoined with the two vast collections that prepares the mind to be able to directly realize emptiness soon.
[Boundary:] This starts from the great level of the supreme mundane quality of the Mahayana path of preparation.

1-10) Definitely issuing achieving:

This refers to the power that is able to bring forth without doubt the Exalted Knower of Aspects, full enlightenment.
Definition: A Bodhisattva's yoga on a pure ground that will definitely issue forth an exalted knower of aspects.
Boundary: Exist on the [three] pure grounds.
This is a yoga on the [three] pure grounds that definitely yields, without doubt, an Exalted Knower of Aspects. This refers to the occasion where one knows for certain that enlightenment would be achieved.
From the perspective of the Consequence Middle Way School, it is only when one achieves the 8 th ground that, the enemy, which are the afflictive obscurations, are destroyed. From then onwards, one works towards enlightenment. This is merely [glancing] at the topics at an extremely superficial manner. This is no where near any analysis of the topics.
For example, when one examines achieving through engagement in detail, one of its many topics is the presentation of the form and formless absorptions and concentrations, which explains the way to achieve calm abiding, achieve special insight on the basis of achieving calm abiding, the different realms of the form and formless absorptions and concentrations, and how these are achieved through meditating on the paths that meditate on the [coarse and subtle levels] and so forth.
Another example is that, when one examines the achieving through the collections in detail, there is an extensive explanation on the paths and grounds, how the different paths act as antidotes to the different objects of abandonment and how such objects are abandoned by the paths that abandon them.

2) Knower of paths:

Definition: A mahayana superior's clear realizer conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness within the continuum of the person who possesses it.
It is insufficient for a mind, merely because it is conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness, to [qualify] as a Knower of Paths. It has to be a Mahayana superior's clear realizer. If it is a Mahayana superior's clear realizer that is conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness, then [this qualifies it] to be a Knower of Paths.
Simply stated, a Knower of Paths is <i>a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior</i> . Hence, an exalted knower in the continuum of a Mahayana superior is synonymous with the Knower of Paths.
There is a difference in the limits of pervasion between a bodhisattva superior and a Mahayana superior. The limits of pervasion of a Mahayana superior is larger than the pervasion of a bodhisattva superior. This is because, a bodhisattva superior is necessarily a Mahayana superior, whereas a Mahayana superior is not necessarily a bodhisattva superior.

1st debate question: Is a Mahayana superior not necessarily a bodhisattva superior?

Student 1: A Mahayana superior includes Buddha.
Khenrinpoche: Hence, you are saying that, a Buddha superior is not a bodhisattva superior. Student 1: Yes.
Khenrinpoche: In the continuum of a Buddha superior, is there conventional mind generation? Student 1: Yes.
Khenrinpoche: Then what is the measure of bodhicitta? Student 1: Bodhicitta [exists] on the [learner'] path, once one reaches the path of no more learning, there is no more bodhicitta.

2nd debate question: If it is a Knower of Paths, does it necessarily [directly] realize emptiness? Does a Knower of Paths necessarily [directly] realize emptiness?

Khenrinpoche: You have to analyze [this question] based on the definition, which does not say: <i>A Mahayana superior's clear realizer directly realizing emptiness</i> ; rather, it is <i>a Mahayana superior's clear realizer <u>conjoined</u> with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a person who possesses it.</i>
Hence, [the definition] says [a clear realizer] "conjoined with" the wisdom directly realizing emptiness, and not just [a clear realizer] directly realizing emptiness.
If that is the case, does a Knower of Paths necessarily directly realize emptiness? Do not forget what was mentioned as being synonymous with the Knower of Paths: it is an exalted knower in the continuum of a Mahayana superior.
Whatever is the answer, you must always [based it on] an example to [substantiate] your position.
Student 2: [Not necessarily, for example,] the mind in the continuum of a bodhisattva superior directly engaged in the practice of generosity/ the mind of a bodhisattva superior in post meditative equipoise engaging in the collection of merit.
Khenrinpoche: Does the bodhisattva superior not see emptiness directly in post meditative equipoise?
Student 2: No, he does not realize emptiness directly. But his mind is conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness.
Khenrinpoche: You have already stated that the wisdom directly realizing emptiness does not exist, then how can that [mind in post meditative equipoise] be conjoined with a non-existent?
This is just an example to show how to think deeper about the definition.
Khenrinpoche: If it is a Knower of Paths, does it necessarily realize emptiness directly?
Student 3: Since the boundary states that it exists from the Mahayana path of seeing through to the Buddha ground, therefore, there must be the wisdom directly realizing emptiness, otherwise, it would not be in the boundary.
Khenrinpoche: What [does the question] have to do with the boundary?
Student 3: This means it has to be inside this boundary for it to be considered as a Knower of Paths.
Khenrinpoche: I am asking if [something] is a Knower of Paths, which exists from the path of seeing to the Buddha ground, does it necessarily realize emptiness directly.

Student 3: What is a clear realizer?

Khenrinpoche: Path, exalted knower and clear realizer [are synonymous]. Hence, a Mahayana clear realizer is a Mahayana path.

Student 4: With regards to the definition of the Knower of Paths, what is the significance of the last portion, where it says "within the continuum of the person who possesses it?"

Khenrinpoche: This section of this definition is saying that, to be qualified as being in possession as a Knower of Paths, such a person himself must possess the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. Merely because the wisdom directly realizing emptiness exists in the continuum of a person [in general] is not a criteria determining whether [a person in particular] possesses the Knower of Paths or not. Hence, for someone to be a Knower of Paths, he [in particular] must possess the wisdom directly realizing emptiness.

Student 4: If the wisdom directly realizing emptiness is in [the continuum of oneself], why would it be necessarily to say that, the realization is in the continuum of oneself who possesses the realization?

Khenrinpoche: Just because [the clear realizer] is conjoined within the wisdom directly realizing emptiness within the continuum of a person [in general], this does not necessitate it being in the [specific] continuum of the person who possesses it.

Summarizing the 10 topics of the Exalted Knower of Aspects:

The definition of the Exalted Knower of Aspects is: <i>A fully developed exalted wisdom directly realizing the ten topics, mind generation and so forth.</i>
'So forth' here refers to the rest of the 10 topics that constitute the Exalted Knower of Aspects.
As explained before, the main trainees for which this text is intended for, are those who seek to achieve the Exalted Knower of Aspects, full enlightenment. For such trainees, they must possess the attitude of uncontrived <i>mind generation</i> seeking that [this is shown in the 1 st topic]. To achieve such a goal, he must cultivate a path that leads to it.
Before that, he must receive instructions to do so. Hence, the [2 nd] topic of Mahayana <i>precepts</i> is taught. After hearing the precepts of the instructions, the bodhisattva trainee then reflects on it. These primarily occurs on the path of accumulation.
Through hearing and reflecting on the Mahayana precepts on the path of accumulation, the bodhisattva then achieves the path of preparation, which is also called the <i>Branches of definite discrimination</i> [3 rd]. This is a path which arises from meditation.
The 4 th topic is the <i>Naturally abiding lineage, the basis of the Mahayana achievings</i> . The main explanation is still in the context of the path of preparation in that, this path is essentially based on the suchness of the mind. Since that is the case, the topic of naturally abiding lineage/ Buddha lineage is then shown.
The naturally abiding lineage is the basis of the Mahayana achievings, which arises from the naturally abiding lineage as its basis. With that as the basis, the 5 th topic of the <i>Object of observation of Mahayana achievings</i> is shown.
This is essentially referring to the object of observation of the practice. The [main] objects being focused on in such a practice are: virtues, that which are to be adopted and nonvirtues like attachment, that which are to be discarded.
The purpose/ goal/ <i>[Object of intent of Mahayana achievings]</i> behind focusing on virtue to be adopted and nonvirtues to be discarded is essentially to achieve full enlightenment, specifically to achieve the Three [greatnesses:] Great heroic mind, Great abandonment and Great realization.
To achieve these Three greatnesses, the object of intent of Mahayana achievings, one must cultivate a path. Without which, these greatnesses would not be achieved. Hence, one needs to practice the <i>Four Mahayana achievings</i> :
<i>Achieving through armor</i> [7 th], <i>Achieving through engagement</i> [8 th], <i>Achieving through the collections</i> [9 th] and <i>Definitely issuing achieving</i> [10 th].
<i>Khenrinpoche</i> : One needs to know that the Exalted Knower of Aspects, the name given to Buddha superior's mind, is illustrated by these 10 topics, if not, one should at least know their names. The rough idea and relationships between these topics and their sequence of presentation are shown. Hence, when I am presenting the information, try to listen attentively.

How the reference tenet for this root text, the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School, asserts the Objects of abandonment and meditation:

The presentation on these 8 Categories and 70 Topics is explained according to the tenet of the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School. They assert that the Three Vehicles of the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Bodhisattvas have different objects of abandonment and meditation:
Objects of abandonment and meditation of the Hearers: The main object of abandonment of the Hearers are the <i>subtle self of persons</i> , the apprehension of a <i>self-sufficient substantially existent person together with its seeds</i> . The main object of meditation would then be the <i>subtle selflessness of persons</i> , the <i>emptiness of a self-sufficient substantially existent person</i> .
Objects of abandonment and meditation of the Solitary Realizers: The main object of abandonment of the Solitary Realizers is the <i>coarse self of phenomena</i> , an <i>apprehension of subject and object as different substantial entities together with its seeds</i> .
Hence, the main object of meditation would be the <i>coarse selflessness of phenomena</i> , the <i>emptiness of subject and object as different substantial entities</i> .
Objects of abandonment and meditation of the Bodhisattvas: The main object of abandonment of the Bodhisattvas is the <i>subtle self of phenomena</i> , the <i>apprehension of true existence together with its seeds</i> .
The main object of meditation would then be the <i>subtle selflessness of phenomena</i> , the <i>emptiness of true existence</i> .
Since the presentation of the 8 Categories and 70 Topics is based on the perspective of the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School, hence if one is unclear about their objects of abandonment and meditation, one would be confused when the later definitions are shown. Hence, one needs to understand these clearly now, which have been explained in tenets module.

2) Knower of Paths:

Definition: A mahayana superior's clear realizer conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness within the continuum of the person who possesses it.
Boundary: the Knower of Paths exists from the Mahayana path of seeing up to Buddha ground. It does not exist prior to the Mahayana path of seeing.
It is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior. As long as it is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, this will be Knower of Paths. A Knower of Paths and a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior are mutually inclusive.
Hence, any paths in the continuum of a Mahayana superior is a Knower of Paths.
There is not a Mahayana superior who has not realized emptiness directly. In the presentation of Mahayana paths and grounds, it seems that once the bodhisattva is on the Middling Mahayana path of accumulation, he would have realized emptiness. However, he realizes emptiness directly only on the path of seeing.
Hence, a Mahayana superior is someone who has necessarily realized emptiness directly. Whatever practice in his continuum, whether it is a meditation on bodhicitta or great compassion, there is not a single practice in his continuum that is not conjoined with the practice of wisdom directly realizing emptiness.
From this definition, one needs to understand that, if it is an exalted knower in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, it is necessarily conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness.

Stating the debate question:

If someone asks: "If it is a mind in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, does it necessarily realize emptiness directly?"
Someone may also ask: " <i>If it is a mind in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, is such a mind necessarily conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness?</i> "
Khenrinpoche: What I asked in the 1 st and the 2 nd questions are not the same. [For the 2 nd question,] if you say it is necessarily conjoined, then there is nothing [much to debate about]. But if you say it is not necessarily conjoined, then you must bring up an example, otherwise, you cannot [just] say no [without any substantiating illustration].
Student 1: No, the wisdom directly realizing emptiness itself [is an example to show that, if it is a mind in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, this mind is not conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. This is because, there is nothing that can be conjoined with itself.]
Khenrinpoche: Is the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior itself not a Knower of Paths? Student 1: Yes. Khenrinpoche: [Since that is the case, then it follows that,] if it is a mind in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, then [such a mind] is necessarily conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness!
Hence, the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior is conjoined with itself!
Khenrinpoche: There are bodhisattva superiors who have desires. Then is such a desire in his continuum conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness? If it is so, then how is such a desire conjoined with this wisdom?
In essence, a Knower of Paths is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior. As long as it is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, it is a Knower of Paths. For example, the wisdom realizing selflessness, great compassion and mind generation in the continuum of a Mahayana superior are all Knowers of Paths.
If someone asks: "Is the mind of great compassion in the continuum of a Buddha superior a Knower of Paths?" Student: Yes.
Khenrinpoche: Why? Because it is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior.

Reason showing why Bodhisattva superiors have to cultivate the Hearers and Solitary Realizers' paths:

A Knower of Paths is a knower that knows all the paths [of the Three Vehicles] fully and completely. This is merely an explanation of the etymology [derivation of the definition]. This does not imply a certain limits of pervasion.
The reason the Knower of Paths is explained as the 2 nd category after the category of the Exalted Knower of Aspects is that, to attain the Exalted Knower of Aspects, one must meditate on the Knower of Paths completely. Without which, one would not achieve the Exalted Knower of Aspects.
An Exalted Knower of Aspects is essentially a final/ highest/ perfect wisdom that realizes all phenomena directly.
Hence, to achieve the Exalted Knower of Aspects, a final wisdom that sees all phenomena directly, cultivating a path that meditates on emptiness alone, the practice of going for refuge to the Three Jewels alone, or the mere cultivation of renunciation alone, are all insufficient.
Hence, without cultivating a Knower of Paths that engages in the complete practice of the Three paths of the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Bodhisattvas, there is no way one can achieve the Exalted Knower of Aspects.

From here, one can see that a Mahayana superior [necessarily] meditates on the Hearers and Solitary Realizers' paths. Hence, it is not the case that a Mahayana superior does not meditate on the Hearers and Solitary Realizers' paths. It is not the case that, the Hearers and Solitary Realizers' paths are not objects to be [cultivated just] because these are lower paths.
Although a Mahayana superior has already realized emptiness directly, they still cultivate the Hearers and Solitary Realizers' paths. The reason is that, when one achieves enlightenment, oneself as a Buddha superior will work to accomplish the welfare of the trainees of the persons of the Three lineages, the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Bodhisattva lineages.
Hence, to work for their welfare, the Buddha superior has to turn the wheel of Dharma of the Three lineages for the persons of the Three lineages. Hence, for one to be able to do so, while on the path, the Bodhisattva superior has to [include in his meditation] the cultivation of the Hearers and Solitary Realizers' paths.
Even Bodhisattva superiors have to work for the benefit of sentient beings. This means that, they also work for the benefit and welfare of the Hearers and Solitary Realizers. To do so, the Bodhisattva superiors have to show them their respective paths. One can only show such respective paths after one has cultivated it oneself.
Therefore, the Bodhisattva superiors would not be able to teach the Hearers and Solitary Realizers if they themselves lacked prior experiences of the paths of the Hearers and Solitary Realizers. Hence, they have to cultivate the Knower of Paths.

2-1) Limbs of Knower of Paths:

There are 11 topics that illustrate the Knower of Paths, the 1st of which is the *Limbs of Knower of Paths*. This can be understood as being the cause, entity, result or being all these three of the Knower of Paths.

2-1-1) Freedom from the manifest pride that is a manifest obstacle to becoming a limb of a knower of paths:

To generate the Knower of Paths, one must be freed from the obstacles to the generation of the Knower of Paths. One of this is [manifest] pride.

It is said that, due to experiencing the results of past karma, the bodies of the gods of the desire and form realms would naturally emit [great radiance] of light. Hence, they would become very proud.

To work for such beings, the Buddha has to [emit His own magnificent natural light to overwhelm] them. Hence, [when the gods arrive in the presence of the more powerful radiance of the Buddha, their light is not seen at all. This then causes the gods to be] humbled, who then generates faith in Buddha, thus making them suitable basis for mind generation to arise.

Such manifest pride is a manifest obstacle [that hinders] the development of mind generation and the Knower of Paths in the continuum. Hence, one must be freed from such manifest obstacle of manifest pride. This then enables the person to be a suitable basis for mind generation to arise and the Knower of Paths to be cultivated.

2-1-2) Mind generation towards enlightenment, a cooperative condition:

Merely possessing the freedom from manifest pride alone would not enable the Knower of Paths to arise in that person's mind. A very important condition is mind generation. For the Knower of Paths to arise eventually, the person must not just be freed of manifest pride, he must also develop mind generation.

Hence, the person who can develop the Knower of Paths in his continuum must be a person who possesses mind generation.

Such persons who possess mind generation are therefore the actual basis for the development of the Knower of Paths. That said, someone may ask: "Are bodhisattvas the only ones that can develop the Knower of Paths?"

Reply: ultimately, all sentient beings can develop the Knower of Paths. This is because, the lineage pervades all sentient beings, as all sentient beings possess Buddha nature:

2-1-3) Activation of the mahayana lineage, the substantial cause -

[Establishing whether there are one or three final vehicles]:

Sutras like the [sutra unraveling the thought] state that there are three final vehicles; there are also other sutras that state that there is just one final vehicle. These [two positions] are asserted by the different tenets.

If one asserts there are three final vehicles, one is also asserting that not all sentient beings can generate the Knower of Paths.

The sutra unraveling the thought states that, from the very beginning, it is always the case that, in each sentient being's continuum, there exists an uncontaminated seed that predetermines their [final goal] of the three vehicles. Due to this, [proponents of tenets who hold this to be a definitive sutra] asserts there are three final vehicles.

Based on such assertions, once a person who is of a Hearers' lineage achieves the nirvana without remainder of a Hearers' vehicle, he will permanently remain as a Hearers' arhat and would never be able to [advance] to become a Buddha.

In these sutras, it is also said that, there are sentient beings who will never be able to achieve enlightenment. Hence, one will find sutras that state that there are 3 final vehicles. One will also find sutras that clearly state that there is 1 final vehicle.

<p>Since both versions are sutras, which are words uttered by Buddha himself, like the <i>Sutra unraveling the thought</i>, where He said that there are 3 final vehicles, and there are also other occasions like in the <i>King of concentration sutra</i> where He said that there is only 1 final vehicle, hence, one cannot conclude on the issue merely by [categorically citing] either one.</p>
<p>Therefore, it is very important to differentiate and distinguish between sutras of interpretive and definitive meanings. One can only resolve the issue by relying on reasoning.</p>
<p>This is the reason for learning about the <i>lineage</i> in Tathagata Essence, which is to eventually establish that, there is only 1 final vehicle. This means that all sentient beings can become Buddha.</p>
<p>The reason is that, even though sentient beings have myriad obscurations and defilements, but such defilements have never abided nor resided in the nature of the mind. Even though the defilements are present, but they are adventitious, which means they can be separated from the mind.</p>
<p>The Buddhas are unceasingly/ uninterruptedly and spontaneously/ effortlessly helping all sentient beings to be freed from such adventitious defilements.</p>
<p>Hence, this is the reason to prove that all sentient beings can be enlightened: <p style="text-align: center;"><i>The defilements are adventitious and there are methods to overcome them.</i></p> </p>
<p>The main reason Buddha taught there are 3 final vehicles in some sutras is that, sentient beings have diverse dispositions, capacities, interests and inclinations.</p>
<p>To place them in the different enlightenments for the time being, He taught that there are 3 final vehicles to cause some to become Hearer or Solitary Realizer arhats for the interim. However, His real intent that accords with reality is that, there is just 1 final vehicle in that, all sentient beings can become Buddhas.</p>
<p>The sutra gives the example of a skilful ship captain, who is leading his passengers and crews to a faraway destination that will take a long time to reach. In the meantime, his passengers and crews would become bored and tired of the long journey.</p>
<p>The skilful captain then miraculously conjures up an island and declares: “There it is!” This is to allow some of them [who are tired] to have a rest so as to continue on with their journey later. Hence, in the meantime, the skilful captain leads his flock to an island to have a temporary rest, which is not the final destination.</p>
<p>After having rested, the skilful captain will then declare that, the island is still not the final destination as there is somewhere else to go.</p>
<p>Likewise, at any one time, there will always be sentient beings who are not ready to enter the Mahayana path. Hence, they are guided either to the Hearers or Solitary Realizers’ path for the time being.</p>
<p>Ultimately, all sentient beings need to become enlightened and they <i>can</i> become enlightened. Hence, the reality is that, there is only 1 final vehicle and not 3.</p>

How to generate strong interests in the great treatises:

It is said that, one of the greatnesses of the *Lam Rim, the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, is that, if one understands it well, such an understanding would enable one to see all scriptures as instructions.

In [ancient] Tibet and even nowadays, some people have well equipped kitchens where there are containers for every [food item] like containers for rice, peas, salt, sugar and so on. If one is such a person and someone offers one a handful of rice, since one already possesses a container for rice, one would just add what one has received into it.

If someone were to offer one a handful of peas, one would also add it into one's collection of peas. If one knows the *Lam Rim, the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* well, one would be like the person who possesses many containers at home.

Likewise, whatever that one studies [well], especially the great treatises of the profound philosophical subjects, starting from the words itself and especially the meanings, one would be able to place them into their respective containers.

For example, one may be studying something that is directly related to the path that is shared with the person of medium capacity. Whatever information received that is relevant to the path of the person of medium capacity, one would classify such words and meanings into the "container" of the path of the person of medium capacity.

One may receive other information that is useful for one's practice of the path of the person of small capacity. One then places such [knowledge] into that "container", using them respectively.

When one knows the *Lam Rim* well, this is what one is able to do with one's studies: classify whatever one has learned, place them into the respective categories and use them in one's practice.

However, if the same handful of rice is given to a beggar who does not possess any containers, then this might be useless to him and would be thrown away.

Sometimes, one is almost becoming like the beggar in that, one does not know how to use the information, hence unable to appreciate something that one considers as useless. One is then almost about to discard them.

This has been mentioned before, for one to classify what one has learned, place it into the relevant section of the *Lam Rim*, appreciate and use the information, then in the course of learning, while one is progressing in gaining new information, concepts, understanding and topics, these cannot be done at the expense of what one has learned earlier.

If one moves to the next topic and completely forgets what one has previously learned in words, concepts, definitions and so on, then it becomes extremely difficult to experience the benefit of being someone who has "many containers."

2) Knower of paths:

As the term *Knower of Paths* suggests, it is a complete understanding/ knowing/ knower of the three paths of the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Bodhisattvas. That said, one should understand that this is merely to give an understanding of what a Knower of Paths is. This is not the definition of Knower of Paths.

In essence, a Knower of Paths is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior. So long as it is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, then it is necessarily a Knower of Paths. It does not matter what illustration it is, as long the illustration is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, then it is necessarily a Knower of Paths.

There are 11 topics that illustrates/ characterizes the Knower of Paths. Of these, the 1st is the *Limbs of Knower of Paths*.

To generate a Knower of Paths, one must be freed from manifest pride, which is an obstacle that hinders the generation of a Knower of Paths. However, merely being freed of this obstacle is insufficient for the generation of a Knower of Paths in the mental continuum. The basis that *directly* brings about the generation/ arising for a Knower of Paths is *mind generation*.

Qualm: Is it the case that, only Bodhisattvas can generate the Knower of Paths and not others?

Reply: From the ultimate perspective, all sentient beings possess the potential to generate the Knower of Paths.

***The direct basis that leads to the arising of the Knower of Paths is mind generation.
However, it is essentially all sentient beings that are the indirect basis for developing the Knower of Paths.***

2-1) Limbs of Knower of Paths:

The [limbs] of the Knower of Paths has [5] divisions. The [3] divisions of: 1) freedom from the manifest pride that is a manifest obstacle to becoming a limb of a knower of paths, 2) mind generation towards enlightenment, a cooperative condition, [and 3) activation of the mahayana lineage, the substantial cause, have been explained.]

The 4th division is the *Nature of a Knower of Paths [that does not discard cyclic existence]*. [The purpose of this topic is that:] Bodhisattva superiors do not mainly abandon the afflictions, unlike the Hearers and Solitary Realizers. This is because, the afflictions in their mental continua do not harm their practice of virtue and their activities to benefit sentient beings.

In the explanation of this section in the great treatises, there are many qualms, dispelling objections and so forth, that bring in <i>Haribhadra's Commentary Clarifying the Meaning</i> and so forth. The essential summary on the meaning that <i>The Bodhisattva superiors do not mainly abandon the afflictions</i> is this:
Their main object of abandonment is not the attachment that is included in the desire and form realms. Instead, the three, ignorance, the view of the transitory collections and pride are their main objects of abandonment.
This is because, Bodhisattva superiors take rebirth in cyclic existence due to the levels of the predispositions of ignorance and uncontaminated karma. Due to these, they can utilize desire and attachment as conditions to work for sentient beings.
Bodhisattva superiors are therefore unlike the Hearers and Solitary Realizers in that, the latter two enter into the meditative equipoise of the final peace of nirvana. Bodhisattva superiors do not do so. This is because, their main goal is to always work for the benefit of all sentient beings with skilful means that are possessed of wisdom.
Hence, they do not enter into the peace of nirvana, unlike what the Hearers and Solitary Realizers do.
[The 5 th division is the <i>Function of the Knower of Paths [gathering others into one's circle and so forth.]</i>]

2-2) Knower of paths that knows Hearers' paths:

As mentioned before, to benefit the disciples of the lineages of the Hearers and Solitary Realizers, the Bodhisattva superiors do so after having experienced the path themselves. They not only [understand] the paths, but they also generate the paths within their own continua. Through that, they teach it to others. Hence, [this topic is shown].

2-3) Knower of paths that knows Solitary Realizers' paths:

Since the Knower of Paths is something that is generated after cultivating the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Bodhisattvas' paths in one's own continuum, hence, there is a Knower of Paths that knows Solitary Realizers' path.
In the explanation of these 2 topics, there is a discussion on the differences between a Hearer and a Solitary Realizer, who are not the same. A Solitary Realizer is superior to a Hearer with 6 or 7 characteristics highlighting this. * See page 32

2-4) [Knower of paths that knows the] Mahayana path of seeing:

Through the order of the topics 2-2) to 2-4) in terms of their superiority, one can see that the Solitary Realizers' path is superior to the Hearers' path, and the Mahayana path is superior to the Solitary Realizers' path.
The Mahayana path of seeing has 8 [divisions of] forbearances and 8 [divisions of] knowledges. [The 8] forbearances are essentially the uninterrupted path, the antidote to the path of seeing abandonment included in the 3 realms.
When one abandons the afflictions of the 3 realms which are path of seeing abandonments, one achieves the path of release [of the Mahayana path of seeing], this being the 8 knowledges.

2-5) [Effects] of the Mahayana path of meditation:

If one knows the positive effects or results of cultivating the Mahayana path of meditation, one would be inspired to meditate and enter into the Mahayana path of meditation.
Hence, this topic refers to the positive qualities that arise from generating the Mahayana path of meditation.
There are 6 beneficial qualities that are attained through the force of cultivating the Mahayana path of meditation:
2-5-1) Thorough pacification that brings mastery of the mind: The phrase ' <i>Thorough pacification of the mind</i> ' actually appeared in the sutras, for example, the [middling] perfection of wisdom sutras in twenty thousand verses. [The phrases] <i>thorough pacification</i> and <i>free of pride</i> are mentioned in it, which are taken to mean the same.
Hence, thorough pacification here means to be completely subdued, freed or thoroughly pacified of pride.
2-5-2) Bowing to all beings: Due to such a thorough pacification, externally, one literally pays respects, bows to all beings.
As an effect of the Mahayana path of meditation, when the internal mind is thoroughly pacified, particularly of pride, then when it comes to the practice of giving, for example, externally, the Bodhisattva superior is very respectful of everyone.
Simultaneously, he also non-objectifies the three spheres in that, while giving, he recollects that the giver, the action of giving and the recipient of the gift are all empty of existing truly.
It is mentioned in the text that, such Bodhisattva superiors bow to all beings such as their own virtuous friends/ gurus.
Therefore, due to the internal pacification, which means thorough pacification of the mind, particularly having conquered pride, externally, such Bodhisattva superiors are able to respect or bow to all, while making their practice of generosity pure.
The point is that, due to the internal pacification of pride, then one would not practice generosity with pride, [behaving as if such an act is very important].

<p>2-5-3) Victory in the battle against afflictive emotions: This means that, due to the effects of cultivating the Mahayana path of meditation, one gains the victory in the battle against the three poisons. In the perfection of wisdom sutras, one finds phrases like: the Bodhisattva superiors gain victory over the weapon/ arrow of attachment.</p>
<p>In this root text, the <i>Ornament of Clear Realization (Abhisamayalamkara)</i>, the phrase ‘victory over the afflictions’ is used. However, in <i>Haribhadra’s Commentary Clarifying the Meaning</i>, he says that, these Bodhisattva superiors ‘overwhelm/ outshine such afflictions as attachment and so forth.’ Here, <i>outshine/ overwhelm</i> does not mean ‘destroy.’</p>
<p>This is because, as was explained earlier, the Bodhisattva superiors do not mainly abandon the afflictions. Hence, one should draw some relation between what was explained then and now.</p>
<p>2-5-4) Never being dominated by the harm of suffering: Due to <i>outshining/ overwhelming</i> such afflictions as attachment and so forth, such Bodhisattva superiors are never dominated by the harms of suffering. It is said in the sutras that, such Bodhisattva superiors can never be harmed by poisons, weapons, fire, drowning, curses and so forth.</p>
<p>[The sutras usually teach from a dialogue between two persons,] for example, in the <i>Heart of the perfection of wisdom sutra</i>, it is essentially a dialogue between <i>Avalokiteshvara</i> and <i>Shariputra</i>. In some other perfection of wisdom sutras, there is also a dialogue between, for example, the king of the gods <i>Indra</i> and <i>Kushika</i> and so forth.</p>
<p>In it, someone may say: “Bodhisattva superiors cannot be harmed by poisons, weapons, fire, drowning, curses and so forth.” Another person may then ask: “Why is that so?”</p>
<p>The first person may reply: “This is due to the knowledge mantra of the perfection of wisdom.”</p>
<p>The knowledge mantra perfection of wisdom here refers to the <i>path</i> perfection of wisdom, even though this is not the actual/ highest/ final perfection of wisdom, [the resultant perfection of wisdom]. This path perfection of wisdom is essentially the wisdom directly realizing emptiness, specifically, it is a Knower of Paths that realizes emptiness directly.</p>
<p>Hence, due to [such a direct realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Knower of Paths], such special Bodhisattvas cannot be harmed. This is what is mentioned in the <i>Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i>, where there are 5 qualities of:</p>
<p>“<i>The mantra of the perfection of wisdom, [is] the mantra of great knowledge ¹, an unsurpassed mantra ², the mantra equal to the unequaled ³, the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering ⁴, should be known as the truth ⁵ as it is not false.</i>”</p>
<p>This path perfection of wisdom refers to the Knower of Paths which knows the Mahayana paths. If one possesses this, one will be able to cross to the ‘other shore.’ [Hence, it possesses these 5 qualities:]</p>
<p>(1) The mantra of great knowledge: This path perfection of wisdom is the antidote that can overcome ignorance.</p>
<p>(2) The unsurpassed mantra: This is because, by depending on the path perfection of wisdom, one can achieve the unsurpassed non-abiding nirvana.</p>
<p>(3) The mantra equal to the unequaled: The unequaled here refers to the Buddha. Through the method of the path perfection of wisdom, one can be made equal to the unequaled.</p>
<p>(4) The mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering: Since the path perfection of wisdom is the unparalleled solution to all the sufferings, hence, it is the mantra that thoroughly pacifies all suffering.</p>
<p>(5) The mantra that should be known as the truth: This is because, how reality is, is no different as it is seen by what the path perfection of wisdom sees, directly seeing the suchness/ ultimate nature of reality of emptiness.</p>
<p>This mantra is not the general mantra that one recites [in the sadhana]. In the context of the Heart of the perfection of wisdom sutra, the mantra of the perfection of wisdom refers to the path perfection of wisdom.</p>
<p>If one analyzes, then it is clear that, the Bodhisattva superiors cannot be harmed by weapons and so forth.</p>
<p>Since the mantra here is the path perfection of wisdom, a wisdom directly realizing emptiness that is conjoined with mind generation, then when one achieves such a state, one will outshine/ pacify/ suppress the afflictions such as desire and so forth.</p>
<p>Since one has gained control over one’s mind, internally one has control. Therefore, externally one cannot be harmed.</p>
<p>2-5-5) Possessing the ability to achieve enlightenment: Since the Bodhisattva superiors possess the extraordinarily powerful mind generation at this point, they possess the quality of the ability to achieve enlightenment.</p>
<p>2-5-6) The place where a bodhisattva on the path of meditation resides, becomes a support of worship: Due to the extraordinarily powerful mind generation, Bodhisattva superiors on the Mahayana path of meditation bless the place wherever they reside, which becomes a place of worship that is worthy of honor, homage, offerings and so forth.</p>
<p>The question whether there is any real benefit of cultivating a good heart by merely meditating on bodhicitta without doing anything practical for sentient beings can perhaps be addressed here as one of the benefits of those who possess bodhicitta.</p>
<p>This of course refers to the Bodhisattva superior on the path of meditation, whose mind generation is so powerful that, it blesses the place. Of the three ripening effects of karma, such a meditation on their bodhicitta is an environmental effect.</p>

[Supports for the Mahayana path of meditation:]

The Mahayana path of meditation is [divided as 2:] the contaminated and an uncontaminated Mahayana paths of meditation.
The basis/ support <i>directly</i> producing the Mahayana path of meditation refers to the body one must possess <i>before</i> one can generate the Mahayana path of meditation. Of the three realms, [this basis] is a body of the desire human and god realms.
Both males and females can generate the Mahayana path of meditation. However, it is said in the sutra that, the support/ body for generating the path of seeing is a male body. Hence, one cannot do so in the form and formless realms.
Qualm: Why is that so? Reply: This is because, the support for the actual production of the Mahayana path of meditation must also be a support for the production of the Mahayana path of seeing. Since a support in the form realm cannot be the support for the production of the Mahayana path of seeing, [hence, it cannot be a support to generate the path of meditation.]
One cannot generate the path of seeing in the form and formless realms. This is because, according to <i>Vasubandhu's Treasury of knowledge</i> , the beings in the form and formless realms lacked enough disenchantment [to be freed from cyclic existence], they are hence unable to develop the path of seeing in their minds.
The abode in the desire realm is a support for generating the path of seeing because, one can generate a lot of disenchantment there. Hence, the basis that can actually generate the path of seeing is a desire realm body.
Qualm: Does it mean that the path of preparation cannot be generated in the form and formless realms?
Reply: Of the four stages of the path of preparation, one cannot generate the supreme mundane quality level of the path of preparation with the form realm as a support. This is because, when one progresses from the supreme mundane quality level to the path of seeing, one does so within one meditative equipoise.
It is mentioned in the text that, there are some who do achieve the heat and peak levels path of preparation with a form realm body. However, it is not clear whether this is the case for the forbearance level path of preparation. Hence, using reasoning, one can establish whether one can achieve the forbearance level path of preparation with a form realm body.
There are Bodhisattva superiors in the form realm but not the formless realms.
Khenrinpoche: Are there individuals in the formless realms who generate bodhicitta?
In the freedoms and endowments section of the perfect human rebirth chapter of the <i>Stages of the Path to Enlightenment</i> , one of the eight freedoms is the freedom from being a long-life god. It is clearly stated that, such a god refers to an ordinary god that lives in the land that is [one of the eight lands] of the fourth concentration [in one area of <i>Great Fruit</i>] of the form realm.
A long-life god also includes an ordinary god of the formless realms. The <i>Lam Rim</i> is essentially saying that, all the ordinary beings in the formless realms lack such a freedom while being in an inopportune state of a long-life god.
However, this does not refer to all the beings in the formless realms, merely the ordinary beings in the formless realms.
Khenrinpoche: What does this imply? Student: There are superiors in the formless realm.
This is an example to show that, words are explained for specific purposes. The statement does not say: "Freedom from being reborn in the formless realm, rather, it says, freedom from being an ordinary being in the formless realm."

* From *The Hidden Teaching of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*, citing Ngag-wang-pal-dan's *Meaning of the Words*, 32a.1, page 510:

Because in their final life in mundane existence self-arisen Solitary Realizers ¹ realize their own enlightenment by themselves, they also ² do not need to be taught by others, ³ their consciousness being more profound [than the wisdom of Hearers]. The word "also" includes that they ⁴ do not need to teach doctrine to others with their speech, [whereby] not speaking is more profound. Due to being endowed with these two profundities, the wisdom of rhinoceros-like Solitary Realizers is said to be more profound.

Divisions of the Mahayana path of meditation into the contaminated and uncontaminated paths:

A Knower of Paths is essentially a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior. There are 11 topics that characterizes this. Of these, the first 5 topics have been explained. After the Mahayana path of seeing is the Mahayana path of meditation.
This is divided into the contaminated and uncontaminated Mahayana paths of meditation.
The contaminated Mahayana path of meditation consists of the Mahayana path of meditation of belief [topic 16 and hence also topic 17], path of meditation of dedication [topic 18] and path of meditation of rejoicing [topic 19].
The uncontaminated Mahayana path of meditation consists of path of meditation of achieving [topic 20] and The completely pure path of meditation [topic 21].

Ascertaining the supports that produce the Four Mahayana learners' paths:

Supports for newly generating the paths of seeing and meditation:
The support/ body for newly generating the Mahayana path of meditation must be that of a desire realm, specifically, humans and desire realm gods. In terms of the continents, with the exception of the Northern continent, humans of the other three continents are suitable supports for newly generating the Mahayana path of meditation.
Ascertaining how precious one's human rebirth is: Of all the possible supports for newly generating the Mahayana path of meditation, the <i>best</i> are the humans of the southern continent.
In the <i>Lam Rim Chen Mo</i> , it is said that some of those who are born as desire realm gods, cultivated a path and planted very strong imprints in their minds in their previous lives as humans. They were then born as desire realm gods. Such persons can also newly generate the Mahayana path of seeing.
This is saying that, such desire realm gods who newly attain the path of seeing are those who already have cultivated the path and planted very strong imprints as humans in their previous lives. This means that, those who [did not do so] cannot newly generate the Mahayana path of seeing.
It is said also stated in the freedoms and endowments section [of the <i>Lam Rim</i>] that, it is not possible to newly generate a superior's path in the higher realm which are form and formless realms. It is also clearly stated in the text that, most of the desire realm gods are in an inopportune state, which means they lacked the freedoms.
Hence, since the human body is the best support for generating a path, this shows how precious a human rebirth is.
Having such a human body oneself, one thus possesses a supreme basis, the best support for newly generating a superior's path. On the basis of this human life, one can newly attain the realization of truth. No matter how powerful the desire realm gods may be, this is a potential/ opportunity that most of them do not possess.
It is said that, even though the form and formless realm gods have unbelievable concentrations and absorptions with their attainments of calm abiding, but they cannot newly attain a superior's path with a form or formless realm support.
Khenrinpoche: When I say "cannot newly attain", do you understand [its significance]? When I don't use the word "newly", what would be the problem?
Student 1: Even though one cannot newly attain the [superiors'] path there, there can be some who can possess [the superiors'] path in the form and formless realms. This is because, they have acquired that [in their previous lives as humans] but were born in the form and formless realms.
Reasons for asserting the supports for newly generating the Mahayana path of meditation:
Generally, the support for generating the Mahayana path of meditation is a desire realm support, specifically, a human and desire realm god. One cannot [newly] generate the path of meditation with the support of the higher realms of the form and formless realms. This means, one cannot generate the Mahayana path of meditation with a form or formless realm supports.
While one cannot newly generate the Mahayana path of meditation with a form realm support, but there are persons with a form realm support who are on the Mahayana path of meditation. This is because, the support for newly generating the Mahayana path of meditation has to be the same support for [newly] generating the Mahayana path of seeing.
It is said that, one cannot newly generate the Mahayana path of seeing with a form realm support. This is because, the support for newly generating the Mahayana path of seeing must be a support where one can generate very strong disenchantment/ disillusionment with cyclic existence.
The persons in the form realm are abiding in single-pointed concentration, with such a mind, they are unable to generate strong renunciation, a necessity for seeing the truth directly for the first time.
It is stated very clearly that, one cannot newly attain the Mahayana path of seeing in the form and formless realm with the form and formless realm supports.

Supports for newly generating the Mahayana path of preparation:
However, it is also stated very clearly that, one cannot generate the path of preparation with a formless realm support. One also cannot generate the supreme mundane quality level of the path of preparation with a form realm support. However, it is possible to generate the heat and peak levels of the path of preparation with a form realm support.
However, it is not clear [about the supports] for generating the forbearance level of the path of preparation.
The reason one cannot generate the supreme mundane quality level of the path of preparation with a form realm support is because, the support for generating the supreme mundane quality level path of preparation has to be the same support for newly generating the path of seeing. This is because, one moves from path to path in the same meditative equipoise.
This is also the same when one moves from the path of accumulation into the path of preparation in the same meditative session with the same support.
Hence, one can newly generate the path of preparation with a desire realm and form realm support. However, perhaps it would not be possible to newly generate the path of preparation with a formless realm support.
In the freedoms and endowments section of the <i>Stages of the Path</i> , one of the eight freedoms is the freedom of being a long-life god. It refers to two types of beings. One of these is an ordinary being in the formless realm.
'Freedom' here means, being freed from obstacles to cultivating a path/ Dharma practice.
Supports for newly generating the path of accumulation:
Khenrinpoche: Of the beings of the three desire, form and formless realms, who can [newly] generate the path of accumulation? Student 2: Beings of all three realms.
Khenrinpoche: One of the characteristics of a perfect human rebirth is the freedom from being a long-life god. One of the two types refers to all the ordinary beings of the formless realm. This is because, they cannot generate the path [in their continua]. Since that is the case, ordinary beings of the formless realm cannot newly generate the path of accumulation.
Essentially, ordinary beings of the formless realm are in an inopportune state as they lack the freedom to practice Dharma in general, specifically, they lack the freedom to newly generate a path.
Khenrinpoche: Is it possible to generate the path of accumulation in the form realm? Student: Yes. Khenrinpoche: In the desire realm? Student: Yes. Khenrinpoche: Are you able to say right away: "YES! It is possible to generate the path of accumulation with a form realm support."? I think from what I've said, you should be able to know, the answer is there!
Student 3: Yes, because the <i>Lam Rim</i> didn't say no! Khenrinpoche: Does the <i>Lam Rim</i> say yes? You should be able to conclude quickly. Didn't I say earlier that, it is possible to newly generate the path of preparation with a form realm's support? That said, then is it possible to newly generate the path of accumulation with that same support?
If one can newly generate the path of preparation with a form realm support, then there is no reason to say one cannot newly generate the path of accumulation with a form realm support as well.
Khenrinpoche: What about the desire realm? Can one newly generate the path of accumulation? There's no doubt isn't it? If it is possible to generate every other path, including enlightenment [in the desire realm], then what is there to stop one from generating the path of accumulation in the desire realm? Hence, there is no doubt about that.
There are six types of transmigrators of the desire realm, are all of them suitable supports for newly generating the path of accumulation? There is no doubt about humans and gods, as these have been made clear.
Student 1: There's a story of Buddha's past life as a hell being who generated bodhicitta for the first time. It is possible to generate the path of accumulation in the hell realm.
Student 4: It follows that the hell realm is an inopportune state.
Student 1: The perfect human rebirth is the best [support] to generate the path, but that does not mean that one cannot generate the path with other supports.
Khenrinpoche: Based on what you say, then even though the formless realm gods are not the supreme basis like the humans, but if they wish to, they can still generate the path? Student 1: Formless realm [is an exception.] When they are born, they enter into meditative concentration immediately and only arise from it at the time of death.
Khenrinpoche: What's your reason for saying that when they are born, they are immediately [absorbed into concentration]?
Student 1: When they are blissed out in meditative equipoise, how can they generate renunciation without suffering?
Khenrinpoche: But there are those in the form realm who do generate the path? Student 1: Not newly generating.
Khenrinpoche: Didn't I just say one can newly generate the path of accumulation in the form realm?
Student 1: Then one can do so in the form realm. Khenrinpoche: Then why is it one cannot do so in the formless realm? The formless realm gods do not experience the sufferings of pain and change.

It is said that, one can generate uncontrived bodhicitta on the basis of the six types of migrating beings of the desire realm. Of course, the best support would be that of humans. This means that:

One can generate the Mahayana path of accumulation with any of [the six migrating] supports.

It is stated clearly in the text that, the six types of migrators of the desire realm can newly generate bodhicitta, hence, the Mahayana path of accumulation. There are accounts in the sutras where in one of the past lives of Buddha as a sentient being, he generated bodhicitta for the first time in the hell realm.

There are also accounts of [newly] generating bodhicitta as a preta [hungry ghost] and a naga [animals].

This is what is said in the teachings, one can always discuss about this. For example, is being born in the hells an inopportune state or not. This is because, if one can generate bodhicitta as a hell being, then would that not make such a rebirth not an inopportune state?

One also has to analyze why it is not possible to generate a path in the formless realm. For example, why one cannot generate bodhicitta with a formless realm support?

It is said that, the best support for newly generating a superior's path, seeing the truth directly is that of a human being. However, it is humans and desire realm gods who can newly generate a superior's path.

This means that, the persons in the form and formless realms who have not attained the path of seeing would have to take rebirth in the desire realm to newly attain the path of seeing.

It was mentioned earlier that, one can newly generate the paths of accumulation and preparation with a form realm support. However, even a person on the path of preparation with a form realm support would still have to take rebirth in the desire realm to newly attain the path of seeing.

If one understands all of these, then one of the lessons to draw from is that, what one now possesses, a human rebirth, is very precious. This is because, it is on the basis on such a support that, one can generate the paths of seeing and meditation.

One cannot newly attain a superior's path, the path of seeing, for example, in the form and formless realms. Of all the different bodies one can take in the desire realm, the human body is the best and supreme basis to generate these paths.

The Bodhisattvas on the path of preparation with the form realm supports need to acquire the desire realm supports to newly attain the path of seeing. ***Khenrinpoche:*** How then do they take rebirths? Is it through the force of karma and afflictions?

One has analyze how they take rebirths from the form realm into the desire realm. Since these Bodhisattvas on the path of preparation are already in the form realm, they would already have achieved calm abiding and special insight with an actual concentration. Due to that, they would have suppressed the manifest afflictions included in the desire realm.

However, if they were to take rebirths under the control of karma and afflictions, then such a process would have to be included in the twelve links of dependent origination.

This means that, the actualizing karma prior to dying and taking rebirth would have to be nourished by craving and grasping. To be born in the desire realm, it has to be nourished by the craving and grasping of the desire realm.

Hence, it is explained that, such Bodhisattvas take rebirths in the desire realm through the force of their prayers. This is because, they see how important it is to acquire the desire realm support for newly attaining the path of seeing.

Hence, they aspire greatly for it, wanting it so much, thus making many aspirational prayers to acquire the desire realm support. One can then see how precious [one's human life of freedoms and endowments] is.

Student 5: Is the entire supreme mundane quality level of the Mahayana path of preparation a meditative equipoise, or are there post meditative equipoise within it?

Khenrinpoche: I cannot say for sure, but I think it would have to be.

Student 5: This is to account for the crossing over to the path of seeing.

Khenrinpoche: Yes.

Student 5: If that's the case, then how does one account for the Mahayana achievings through the collections where there are the accumulation of the two vast collections, which includes the collection of method, at the great level supreme mundane quality of the Mahayana path of preparation?

Khenrinpoche: One of the topics illustrating the Exalted Knower of Aspects is the Mahayana achievings through the collections. Its boundary starts from the great level of the supreme mundane quality of Mahayana path of preparation, which is divided into three [small, middling and great].

Within these three levels, the achieving through the collections starts from the great level. If the supreme mundane quality is necessarily a meditative equipoise, then are how the collections of merit accumulated?

The answer can be found in the definition, which ends with '*by way of being conjoined with the vast collections.*'

This does not state that one has to accumulate the collection of merit during meditative equipoise. This is because, by such a time, one would have accumulated some collections of merit and wisdom.

Student 6: It was stated that, a female body is not a suitable support for newly achieving the path of seeing, but both male and female bodies are suitable supports for newly achieving the path of meditation. Would there be a contradiction?

Khenrinpoche: I didn't say that you have to be a male to newly generate the path of seeing. I say that there are *texts* that say you have to be a male.

It is clearly stated that, one can newly attain the path of meditation with a male and female support. If that is the case, then there is no reason why one cannot newly attain the path of seeing with a female support, even though there are texts that say that you have to be a male to newly attain the path of seeing.

Khenrinpoche: Buddha says yes and no [to the same topic]. So, you have to be very wise and intelligent, otherwise, you will be confused!

Debating how long a new Bodhisattva with the lower realm support will stay in that realm:

Student 1: Other than the humans and desire realm gods, how far would the rest of the six migrating supports be able to progress after initially attaining the Mahayana path of accumulation?

Khenrinpoche: It was mentioned before that, one can generate bodhicitta on the basis of all the six types of migrators of the desire realm and enter the path of accumulation. The basis for newly generating the path of seeing is a human or a desire realm god support. If all of these migrators can enter the Mahayana path, then how far can they go with their supports? For example, after generating bodhicitta, how far can a hell being, preta or animal go? Can they go to the path of seeing or meditation?

Student 2: The beings in the lower realms who generate bodhicitta should exhaust their negative karma, would not stay long there and attain a good rebirth.

Student 3: I generate bodhicitta first time as a hell being, seeing so much sufferings around, I wish to stay until all the hell beings are freed from the hell realm.

Khenrinpoche: He is saying that, the Bodhisattvas will stay a longer time in the hells, the logic is: "I want to help all these hell beings." That is why he will stay a long time.

Khenrinpoche: One says the Bodhisattva will quickly come out, another says he will stay there for a long time. This is very good. You should exercise your mind, then you'll have a lot of ideas. Otherwise, I just say: "Oh, the six realms migrators can generate bodhicitta and that's it!" You wouldn't really use your brain. There are two different ideas here, what do you think?

Student 4: The hell beings and animals cannot develop calm abiding, hence, they can only reach the end of the path of accumulation.

Student 5: To choose where one can be reborn, one needs bodhicitta and the realization of emptiness. Hence, they don't stay there for long. This is because, if they only have bodhicitta but not the realization of emptiness, then they cannot choose to stay there long.

Khenrinpoche: Since they don't have wisdom realizing emptiness, then how can they choose their rebirths? Hence, they also cannot choose another rebirths but to stay there for a long time.

Student 5: But they have bodhicitta. **Khenrinpoche:** How does that make them get out faster? [The same reason that you gave will have two consequences:] because of [bodhicitta alone] he [cannot choose another rebirth] but have to stay for a long time; and because of [bodhicitta also], you said he will get out faster. This is very interesting if you think carefully.

Student 5: An animal that develops bodhicitta will [quickly get out of the lower realms.] This is because he has bodhicitta, thus too much merit to stay as an animal. If he were to stay on to help other animals, then he would have to choose to do so. The only way to choose is if he also has the realization of emptiness.

Khenrinpoche: The reason you gave, that 'he cannot choose,' is a little bit [not so correct.]

Student 6: Other than the humans and desire realm gods, can the rest of the six migrating supports realize emptiness? If not, these supports will not be able to go past the small path of accumulation. This is because, by the medium path of accumulation, they will necessarily have realized emptiness.

Khenrinpoche: That is good. There are three [divisions] of the path of accumulation: small, medium and great. She says that, these [supports] can still be in the lower realms, after that, they will get out. So, there will not be any hell being supports that will develop the medium path of accumulation. This is because, they will have realized emptiness. We need to think whether the hell beings can realize emptiness or not. The sutra mentioned very clearly that, one can develop bodhicitta [with the support] of any of the six types of migrators, like the hungry ghosts, nagas who developed bodhicitta and the hell beings. However, I have not seen any quotations about hell beings realizing emptiness in that support. So, I am not sure. One can ask: "Why can't one realize emptiness as a hell being...?" and many other questions.

Student 7: Student 4 said hell and animal Bodhisattvas cannot develop calm abiding. But for someone to generate uncontrived bodhicitta, even as a hell being, one needs calm abiding and special insight [focusing on bodhicitta]. If one can possess calm abiding focusing on bodhicitta, why not calm abiding focusing on emptiness?

Khenrinpoche: This is a good exercise for your mind. It is said that, if one generates bodhicitta, there is almost no way to fall to the lower realms. But even if one says there is a possibility, it is said that, such a being who falls into the lower realms will stay there only for a very short time, not long. This is mentioned in chapter one of *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*:

**1.13: Like depending on a hero when greatly afraid,
Even if I may have committed very terrible negativities,
I shall be swiftly liberated in dependence upon it.
Why then do those who have the imprints not depend on it?**

Therefore, I am inclined to think that, they will not stay in the lower realms after bodhicitta has been generated. Even if, say the hell being, who generates bodhicitta and makes the prayer to stay in it until each hell being is freed, they will not stay there for a long time. In fact, due to making such strong aspirational prayers, it purifies so much negativities such that, such a hell being Bodhisattva will be liberated very quickly from the hell rebirth.

Of course in general, due to having accumulated the karma to be reborn, say in the hells, that is why one gets to be reborn there. As to how long such a person stays there or how quickly he can be freed from it depends entirely on how much negativities are purified and merit is accumulated. So, perhaps it is better to say that, once bodhicitta is generated with a lower realms support, such a person will not remain in such a support for long.

It is stated quite clearly in the teachings that, once the forbearance level of the path of preparation is achieved, there is no more falling into the lower realms. Of course, some may ask whether it is still possible for the persons on the heat and peak levels path of preparation to fall to the lower realms. That is something to think about.

Ascertaining the supports for Bodhisattva superiors:

This was mentioned before, on one hand, it is not possible to newly attain the paths of seeing and meditation with a form realm support. On the other hand, one has to say that, there are Bodhisattva superiors with a form realm support. As for the formless realm, it is clearly stated in the sutras that, there are no Bodhisattva superiors there.

In *Asanga's Compendium of Knowledge [Abhidharma-samuccaya/ mngon pa kun btus]*, he said that, there are Bodhisattva superiors who take rebirths in the desire and form realms. But Bodhisattva superiors do not take rebirths in the formless realms. This is because, it is not an abode where one can ripen sentient beings. Since they have control over where they wish to be born, the Bodhisattva superiors do not choose to be born in the formless realms. It is said that, Bodhisattva superiors have control over where they are born. Hence, they will choose to be born where they can be of benefit to others. Hence, they will choose to be born in the desire and form realms.

If Bodhisattva superiors have control over where they wish to be born, since they can choose to be born in the desire realm, one can therefore say that, the Bodhisattva superiors can choose to be born as any of the six types of migrators of the desire realm. This includes being born in the hells. However, such rebirths in the hells are not due to karma and afflictions, but done intentionally with choice. Hence,

**Such Bodhisattva superiors are not a lower realm hell being,
But they choose to take on a lower realms support that looks like/ similar to a support of an actual hell being.**

**Since Bodhisattva superiors have abandoned negativities, they will not experience physical sufferings,
Because they have realized the truth of emptiness directly, they have no mental suffering.**

This is shown in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*:

**7.27 Due to having abandoned negativities there is no suffering
And due to skill there is no unhappiness.**

There can also be Bodhisattva superiors who also take on a form realm support.

Ascertaining the supports for Hinayana arhats:

It is said in the teachings that, the supports/ abodes of the three realms can be that in which Hinayana arhats manifest the state of Hinayana nirvana. One can achieve liberation from cyclic existence and become a Hinayana arhat on the basis of a desire, form or formless realm support.

The support for achieving nirvana on the basis of a formless realm support, for example, must be the [same formless realm] support prior to achieving nirvana, that is, when [such a formless realm support] was on the Hinayana path of meditation.

Similarly, to achieve nirvana on the basis of a form realm support, such a support must also be the same [form realm] support while being on the Hinayana path of meditation, which necessarily precedes achieving the nirvana [of the Hinayana path of no more learning].

The basis for newly generating either the Hinayana or Mahayana path of seeing has to be a desire realm support. The supreme basis will be that of a human support, while there are also desire realm gods who can newly attain such paths of seeing.

If that is the case, then perhaps one can probably establish that, the desire realm support has to be the support for newly generating the [either the Hinayana or Mahayana] paths of meditation.

Khenrinpoche: Are there Bodhisattva superiors with a form realm support? Yes. Are there Bodhisattva superiors in the formless realm? No. This is clear, don't be confused and don't forget!

There is a Hinayana superior on the path of meditation with a formless realm support. This is because, it is said clearly in the teachings that, one can achieve, say, the Hearers' nirvana with a formless realm support.

**Practicing the Lam Rim will be much more profound when one understands the great treatises -
Ascertaining one's own precious human rebirth through understanding the treatises:**

In the context of the *Eight freedoms*, one of which is the freedom from being a long-life god. One of the meaning of being a long-life god here is, an ordinary being of the formless realm. This does not refer to all beings of the formless realm. One can see the reason for being a long-life god in this context to mean, an *ordinary being* in the formless realm. It does not say *all* beings in the formless realm.

It is said that, there are persons who attain the Hinayana paths of seeing and meditation with a desire realm support. There are also those who can achieve the Hinayana path of no more learning on the basis of a desire realm support.

However, there are others who are unable to do so. They can reach the Hinayana path of meditation on the basis of a desire realm support, but they cannot actualize the Hinayana path of no more learning on that basis. Hence, they have to take rebirth in the form realm to achieve the Hinayana path of no more learning.

There are some in the form realm support on the Hinayana path of meditation who cannot achieve the Hinayana path of no more learning. Hence, such persons have to take rebirths in the formless realm and achieve the Hinayana path of no more learning [within that support].

In the 2nd topic that characterizes the Exalted Knower of Aspects called ***Precepts***, when divided [by the mode of instructions], there are 10. The 3rd [of these 10] is called the ***Precepts which instruct on the basis [of reliance on], the Three Jewels***. At this point of the treatise, there is a very extensive explanation on the topic called ***Twenty Sangha***.

[Within it,] there are detailed explanations on the different types of Hinayana superiors, which realms they reside in and so forth. If there are interests and determination to learn, maybe we can look at it. There are actually no limit to learning the Buddhadharma, especially such philosophical treatises. It is not that [the more] one learns, [the easier the topics become]. This is not how I see it. In fact, the more one learns, the subjects will become more subtle, deeper, profound and difficult.

For example, if one did manage to understand the [root text] taught so far, together with all the prior understanding of the paths and grounds, achieving liberation, and now, what sort of supports are needed to realize emptiness and so forth, when one combines all such understanding together, then when one were to have a [re-look] at the *Lam Rim* topic of a human life of freedoms, for example, one would then derive a much better understanding of what a freedom is. One would really feel that this precious human rebirth is indeed precious. Otherwise, without learning in depth to derive much understanding of so many topics, merely looking at the list of the [criteria of a precious human rebirth alone] would not enable one to really feel the importance of such a rebirth. Another example, one knows how important it is to realize emptiness directly, but one cannot do so with a form or formless realm support. To see the truth directly for the first time, one needs to be a human being of the desire realm. Based on this, one realizes it is actually inconsequential being born as a desire realm or higher realm god. To see that it is inconsequential, one needs to realize how one's perfect human rebirth is indeed different. This is an example to show how, learning and knowing about many other topics does reinforce and aid in one's understanding of the *Lam Rim*.

This human life of freedoms and endowments that one has achieved did not happen without causes and conditions, as there are so many of these that one must gather before one can achieve such a rare rebirth. One has worked so hard in the past to accumulate so much merit. The cause for such an opportunity that one is [enjoying] now is pure ethical discipline. This was then supported by the practices of generosity and so forth. At the same time, one has made many stainless aspirational prayers. All such causes and conditions took a long time to gather for one to experience the result now. However, merely possessing such a human life of freedoms and endowments in itself is also inconsequential as one has to make full use of it, which then makes such a rebirth meaningful.

When one combines all such understanding of how, one cannot directly realize emptiness on the basis of other supports, how precious one's present human life of freedoms and endowments is, how difficult it is to acquire it and so on, then perhaps one can feel it within one's heart that, what one possesses now is something really special, that one should do something with it.

There is an analogy shown in the teachings: There is a person who is traveling to a treasure island guided by someone. With the help of a guide, such a person actually reaches it. Although there are treasures there for him to take, but he returns empty-handed. He took so much effort to reach such an island, having found the right person to guide him there, and the island is filled with treasure there for the taking, but somehow, he forgoes the opportunity and returns empty-handed. When one sees this, one would think such a person is really foolish.

Likewise, one has worked so hard in the past, having created all the necessary conditions before with the help of a guide. Now, one has achieved such a perfect human rebirth, which is likened to having reached the treasure island. With such a perfect human rebirth, one can even see the truth and realize emptiness directly if one works at it. However, if one fails to practice and returns empty-handed back to an inopportune state of rebirth where there is no opportunity whatsoever like what one has now, then one is indeed very foolish.

Those who consider themselves as practitioners, this topic is something that one must side aside time to [study and learn] as it is very important. After having achieved one's perfect human rebirth, one should not waste it but use it to practice the Dharma. In fact, if one were to [practice hard,] one may even attain the path, perhaps even the path of seeing. Even if one did not manage to achieve a path, at the very least, one should work hard with one's practices and plant as much imprints as possible, simultaneously making aspirational prayers to actualize it in future lives.

When one realizes for oneself that one has such a precious opportunity, one should then motivate oneself by thinking: "Now that I have this opportunity, what shall I do? As much as possible, I shall aim to develop the Three Principal Aspects of the Path within my own mind: Firstly renunciation, bodhicitta and then the wisdom realizing emptiness."

Hence, one has to [learn and study] these topics, thinking that, with each moment that passes which was not used to learn and practice the Dharma, was a wasted moment/ day. One needs to develop such a feeling: "It was such a waste that I didn't get to learn or practice."

In the practice of rejoicing one's own merit, one rejoices in the merit one has accumulated in the past. one's perfect human rebirth is a special basis which came from its own cause, something positive that one has done in the past. One has accumulated a lot of merit/ causes. This is the reason one has achieved such a basis now. One needs to be certain and possess an incontrovertible conviction that, this precious human rebirth one is experiencing now is indeed a result of the positive actions accumulated in the past. It is on the basis of such an ascertainment that one is able to rejoice the merit one has accumulated in the past. Otherwise, there is no [meaning when one says]: "I rejoice in the merits I've accumulated in the past..." when one does not even cherish the *results* of the merit.

Hence, one can understand how the study of the deeper aspects of the Buddhadharma, the great philosophical treatises, is helpful in aiding one's understanding and practice of the *Lam Rim*. One can then use the points learned in the Buddhist philosophies to help one better practice one's *Lam Rim*. This is because, what the *Lam Rim* is, is necessarily the gathering of the essence of all the great treatises.

It is very important to know how to use what one has learned in the great philosophical treatises to better one's understanding and practice of the *Lam Rim*. Otherwise, one would become like the person who merely has one or two containers, when given a gift, one [is at a loss] as to where to put them, or one merely throws them away.

As one knows, one of the greatneses of the *Lam Rim* is that, if one knows it well, one will be able to see that every single scripture as something to be practiced and not merely an intellectual [self-indulgence]. For every single philosophical topic that one studies, one will know where and how to apply that in the *Lam Rim*. If one does not know the *Lam Rim* well, then perhaps it may be very difficult to utilize what one learns in Buddhist philosophy.

Perhaps there are many people who think that there is no real use in studying all such philosophies as they may think these are not for practice, that these texts have nothing to do with practice, nothing to do with the *Lam Rim*.

However, how can this be? This is because, the *Lam Rim* is the essence of all the great treatises. It is just that, one does not see it. In a way, [failure to see it] is understandable as the great treatises are really extensive and difficult to understand.

I have been saying this to you repeatedly: You should not be so easily and quickly discouraged when you find it difficult to understand some of the topics. If you really have no interest in the Dharma in the first place, then of course [feeling this way] does not matter as I am not referring to such persons. But if you are really and sincerely interested in wanting to know the Dharma, then you must remember not to become so quickly and easily discouraged. This is because, when you [allow yourself to be discouraged,] no one else except yourself are blocking and stopping your own progress.

One has to know clearly that, [one's study in the Basic program] is not a short term learning, merely here to find out a little bit about the Dharma for a month or a year. This is a long term study. So, for those of you who wish to and are engaged in continuous long-term study, then it is extremely important to be:

1) **Consistent in coming to class:** If you merely come to class one once in a while, then you are not going to learn. This is because, the subject matter is really challenging in the first place. If you are inconsistent in attending the lessons, then [your attempt at learning] will not work. Hence, for those of you who really see the purpose and wish to learn, then you have to be consistent in attending the lessons.

2) **Consistent in learning:** On top of attending the lessons consistently, you also have to be consistent in your learning. You also have to learn all the different subjects. This is because, perhaps you also see this point by now that, all the different subjects are connected. One of the difficulties I find teaching you is that, because of the lack of consistency where, one merely knows this topic but not others and so on, it becomes very difficult for me to teach as [all the subjects] are connected.

For example, we are repeating this small [section of the topic] over and over again. In fact, this should not be happening as there is no need for such a situation to happen if, one has been consistent. We are going around this same topic as I have to explain the same topic repeatedly due to [many of you] being bogged down by the lack of understanding.

Khenrinpoche: Sometimes I am also a little bit confused myself in knowing how and where to teach, what is really beneficial for you and so on...

Student 8: Does the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School assert a post meditative equipoise of the wisdom of subsequent attainment after the path of release of the Mahayana path of seeing, before initially entering into meditative equipoise of the Mahayana path of meditation?

Khenrinpoche: I am not sure, but perhaps not.

Student 8: If that is the case, then one can assert that one does not need the rest of the meditative equipoise on the path of meditation to accumulate merit to enable the mind to be become more powerful to enter into the next levels of meditative equipoise. This is because. One needs the wisdom of subsequent attainment in post meditative equipoise to accumulate merit to make the mind more powerful to enter the next levels of meditative equipoise to remove the respective afflictions.

If the wisdom of subsequent attainment during the post meditative equipoise at this juncture is not needed, then the same logic should apply for the rest of the subsequent attainments.

Khenrinpoche: If one asserts a subsequent attainment in the post meditative equipoise [on the path of seeing], then it will be difficult to account for why one cannot newly generate the path [of meditation] in the higher realms. This is the consequence.

This is something to think about. There is a different presentation of the paths and grounds according to the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School.

Student 8: Is it the case that, wherever the Bodhisattva superiors manifest in the six realms, the form realm and so on, their aspects will be in the supports of the beings of the realm they are manifesting into, but by conventional nature/ entity, these are mental bodies?

Khenrinpoche: It is stated clearly that, when the Bodhisattva superior takes rebirth in the hell realm, he would take on the hell being's support. He looks exactly like how a hell being should look like. When he takes on the support of a dog, when one happens to see such a Bodhisattva in such an aspect, one will not be able to tell that it is not a dog. Whatever a normal dog does, he will do as well. One can see him being born, growing up, dying in the exact way a normal dog will go through. It is said that, if they take on such an aspect, he will behave exactly like a dog. Hence, whatever aspects they take on, they will act exactly like how people will expect [such aspects] to act. Of course, even though such a Bodhisattva superior is in an aspect of an animal, but he is not a real animal.

Student 9: Does the Lam Rim say that, for a human, if he does not generate bodhicitta in the present life, then he will have to fall to the lower realms in the next?

Khenrinpoche: If one analyzes the path of the person of small capacity, such a person is seeking good rebirths in the future lives. The main method to achieve that is to practice the ethical discipline of restraining from nonvirtues. As a Buddhist, such a practice [is conjoined with] going for refuge to the Three Jewels. If one possesses these two, one will then achieve the goal of the person of small capacity, a good rebirth. The Lam Rim does not say from the beginning that, one needs bodhicitta or wisdom [to achieve a good rebirth].

How through the power of familiarity, one would be able to remember the topics and definitions:

Khenrinpoche: The drawing the [student] used and the conclusion of her [presentation] are that, if you train, you will be able to carry the elephant. No matter how small you are, if you train, you will be able to carry the elephant [big load of results]. As she mentioned, you all know that, for anything in this world, if we put in effort, we will be able to achieve something.

I mentioned this long time ago in 2004/2005 [recounting the trip to] America's New Mexico for two months to study English. The teacher who taught us was a lay person who was also studying Buddhist philosophy. He could read and understand Tibetan but could not speak it. He knew all the definitions [of the philosophic terms] by heart. He had mentioned how he managed to memorize all the definitions, which was [to use the mala] and recite the definitions [as like in chanting a mantra]. For each definition, he would [recite one mala]. In this way, he had memorized the definitions. Due to that, he can [recite the definitions] by heart.

Of course, after a week, [we would usually] forget. Hence, after a week, a month and six months, we have to [repeatedly] recollect again. [This shows that, even though you may remember them,] you cannot [maintain the recollection], as it does not stay [in the memory] forever. After a week, you should check to see if you could remember or not. If you could still remember, then [this means your memory of the definitions] is quite stable. If not, then you have to [refresh your memory]. If you could do this for a month, a year and years after that, maybe for ten years, you just have to do that. If you could still remember them, then [your memory of the definitions] would become quite stable. Sometimes you can remember any topics or its definitions for a day or a week, but if you do not recollect them but [allow the memory to lapse], then slowly it will be totally forgotten. But if you can recollect every week, month and so on, then [the memory of it] will become stable in your mind. After a year or two, it will become very stable. You will be able to remember them. Even if you may forget, but if someone were to say a word, you will be able to recollect.

Therefore, you need [to put in] a lot of effort to remember the [definitions]. This is the only way as there are no other techniques. So, it is good to remind oneself repeatedly. In this way, you will be able to remember them.

[This is] especially so for this topic, which is so challenging and difficult. I do understand why it is difficult [for some of you,] as I cannot explain each topic in detail now as it is not possible. I am merely giving some overview of the 70 topics, some idea what the 70 topics are, what [those who are really studying these topics in depth and breadth are thinking about]. But do not expect to understand each and every one of the 70 topics right now, it is just not possible.

2-5) [Effects] of the Mahayana path of meditation:

The 5th topic of the Knower of Paths is the [effects] of the Mahayana path of meditation. When divided, there are 6 [effects] that were explained earlier.

Of these 6 division, the 5th is *Possessing the ability to achieve enlightenment*. The Bodhisattvas on this level have entered into the path leading to enlightenment with the special practice of unifying method and wisdom. Due to this practice, it is said that, wherever they reside, the site becomes a place worthy of worship.

The reason this is so is mainly due to their practice of the perfections, especially the perfection of wisdom. The Mahayana path of meditation of belief comes as a side explanation from the 6 topics of the *Result of the Mahayana path of meditation*.

Encouragement for those who face obstacles in studying:

In the perfection of wisdom sutra, *Indra*, the king of gods, asked Buddha: "*Between writing down the words of the perfection of wisdom sutra, having written it, one then makes offerings of garlands, flowers, unguents [ointments], parasols, victory banners and so forth, verses making the same offerings to the remains of the relics of the tathagatas who have passed into parinirvana, which brings about greater merit?*"

Buddha then asked *Kushika* what he thought, who then reply with a question to *Indra*: "What do you think? Where did the tathagata come from? What practice did he depend upon through which he became a tathagata?"

Indra then replied: "One achieves omniscience and become a tathagata through actualizing the perfection of wisdom. It is through the perfection of wisdom that one becomes inconceivable, equal to the unequalled and unsurpassed.

Indra then asked Buddha: "Even if all sentient beings were to write down the perfection of wisdom sutra, make offerings of unguents, flowers, garlands, victory banners, parasols and so forth, what would be the purpose?"

Kushika then replied: "For those who are lazy, without joyous perseverance, having faulty wisdom and lacked high aspirations, it will be difficult for them to achieve full enlightenment. Therefore, those who wish to achieve enlightenment should strive to honor the perfection of wisdom through writing, making offerings to it and so forth."

Of the four divisions of the perfection of wisdom, the 2 nd is the scriptural perfection of wisdom, which is posited as the actual text of the sutra containing the teachings of the Buddha on this topic.
If one were to write out the words of the perfection of wisdom, honor, worship, make offerings of parasols, unguents, flowers, garlands, victory banners and so forth to it, one will accumulate great merit, through which, one will come to actualize the path perfection of wisdom. Through this, one will then achieve the state of unsurpassed full enlightenment.
This is an encouragement for those who are lazy, have faulty wisdom, lacked both joyous perseverance and high aspirations.
There can be so many virtuous actions and practices one can do physically and verbally, like reciting mantras, sutras, studying and so forth. Whatever it is, one should hold in mind that one of the goals/ purposes for all such practices is to actualize the path perfection of wisdom eventually.
[For this to happen,] one needs to accumulate merit and purifying one's mind. This is the reason one engages in doing prostrations, reciting mantras, texts and so forth. One should keep [such a motivation] in mind.
It is very important to work towards actualizing the path perfection of wisdom/ realizing emptiness. This is because, until one generates this path in one's own mental continuum, it will be impossible to sever one's root of samsara, hence one will be unable to stop taking rebirths within it, nor achieve full enlightenment.
Hence, whatever virtuous practices one engages in from now on, one should do so with the goal of actualizing the path perfection of wisdom in one's own mind.
One may spend one's entire life reciting many mantras, one may even be able to accumulate a great number of recitations due to that. In fact, some people may manage to recite tens or hundreds of millions of this and that mantras in their lives.
One does accumulate quite some merit if such an amount of mantras were recited, but no matter what, such tens or hundreds of millions of mantras one has recited will not even come close to touching one's root of samsara.
One may also spend one's entire life working very hard at reciting prayers. Doing this alone will also not even come close to touching the root of all of one's problems, ignorance.
Even those who meditate everyday for 5, 6 hours, no matter how profound it may be, how stable a concentration one may achieve focusing one's mind [on its object] without being distracted for hours, such [a feat] is inconsequential. This is because, let alone harming, [such meditations] will also not even come close to touching one's root of problems of samsara.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> The essential point I am making is this:
<i>It is not correct to be content with doing an entire lifetime of Physical and/ or verbal practices that are merely focused on prayers and recitations. Rather, one should motivate that such practices contribute to one's achieving the path perfection of wisdom eventually.</i>
One should also understand the reason why it is so important to actualize the path perfection of wisdom, the wisdom realizing emptiness. Particular here, this is not merely realizing any emptiness, but a path perfection of wisdom, which is a wisdom which sees the ultimate nature of reality conjoined with mind generation/ bodhicitta.
Ultimately, this is what one should be aiming for, the main purpose of whatever practices one is doing.
The main reason one accumulates a great amount of merit when one writes down the perfection of wisdom sutra, honors and worships it with offerings like garlands, flowers, unguents, parasols, victory banners and so forth, is this:
<i>The path perfection of wisdom is attained in dependence upon the scriptural perfection of wisdom, which is contained in the words that is the perfection of wisdom sutra. By holding onto the motivation of swiftly actualizing the path perfection of wisdom in one's own mind, when one writes it out, honors and worships it with offerings as above, such merit conjoined with this motivation will become a favorable condition for one to actualize the path perfection of wisdom.</i>
<i>Concurrently, one also engages in learning [the subject of] emptiness and reflecting on it to gain an understanding of it.</i>
Since the path perfection of wisdom is generated in dependence upon the scriptural perfection of wisdom, that is why one venerates and highly respects the perfection of wisdom sutra. When it is present, it is important to honor and respect it.
As <i>Shantideva</i> said in <i>Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds</i> [as an advice for those wishing enlightenment]:
<i>6.113 A buddha's qualities are accomplished From sentient beings and the Victors alike, So what kind of system is it that I do not respect sentient beings in the same way I respect the Victors?</i>
<i>6.118 Thus since sentient beings have a share In giving rise to the supreme qualities of the buddhas, It is correct to venerate sentient beings Due to similarity through just these.</i>

2-6) Mahayana path of meditation of belief:

As mentioned before, there are contaminated and uncontaminated paths of meditation. The Mahayana path of meditation of belief here is a contaminated path of meditation. That which defines contaminated and uncontaminated in this context is based on conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses respectively.

Hence, the contaminated paths of meditation are paths of meditation which are conceptual. The difference between conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses have already been explained in the module on *Mind and Awareness*.

‘Contaminated’ in general means [the mind being] accompanied with the afflictions. However, ‘contaminated path of meditation’ here should not be taken to mean this. Rather, it refers to paths of meditation which are conceptual in nature, uncontaminated paths of meditation are those which are non-conceptual in entity.

Of the 3 contaminated Mahayana paths of meditation [of belief, dedication and rejoicing,] the 1st is the Mahayana path of meditation of belief. It is first because, if there is belief, then there is the accumulation of merit.

As stated in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*:

**7.40 The Muni himself has said
That [aspiration] is the root of every class of virtue;
Its root is constant acquaintance
With the ripening results.**

‘Belief’ itself can mean different things. Here it is related to aspiration, particularly with faith. Within the division of faith, it refers to the faith of conviction.

As stated in *Mind and Mental Factors*, the mental factor of belief is one of the 5 object ascertaining mental factor: *a knower which holds the object that has been ascertained by its valid cognition, thinking, "It is just like this and not otherwise."*

The object of the Mahayana path of meditation of belief are the scriptural, path and resultant perfections of wisdom. [Of the three,] the main object is not the path perfection of wisdom, rather, it is the resultant perfection of wisdom.

This is similar to what was stated at the beginning of this text: the actual perfection of wisdom is the resultant perfection of wisdom, not the natural, scriptural nor path perfections of wisdom.

With the resultant perfection of wisdom as its main object, the Mahayana path of meditation of belief is an ascertainment of belief with certainty, a faith of conviction that, the resultant perfection of wisdom has the power to fulfill:

- a) One’s aims, b) One’s and others’ aims and c) Others’ aims.

The method to generate such a faith of conviction of belief is [through reliance on] scriptural authority and reasoning.

The *function* of such a faith of conviction in the resultant perfection of wisdom’s power to fulfill all three aims is essentially that: One will accumulate an immeasurable heaps of merit.

2-7) Beneficial qualities of the path of meditation of belief:

Through cultivating the Mahayana path of meditation of belief comes the beneficial qualities of the path of meditation of belief, which when divided, has 3 sets of 9 divisions: a) 9 praises, b) 9 eulogies, and c) 9 laudations.

Due to accumulating an immeasurable heap of merit through cultivating the Mahayana path of meditation of belief, there comes praises even when [the Bodhisattvas here] do not need them. The praises come due to having such an immeasurable amount of merit. Even if one is not seeking, desiring nor interested in these, the praises still come for such Bodhisattvas.

[In the case of oneself,] even if one desires and seeks praises, these do not come. Let alone that the praises do not come, sometimes in its place, criticisms can come instead. This is due to not having enough merit.

One of the beneficial qualities of the Mahayana path of meditation of belief is that, there are praises, eulogies and laudations. These praises come for such Bodhisattvas due to their accumulation of immeasurable merit. If that is the case, then the opposite is that, if one does not get praised, then this shows that one lacked the merit [for it].

2-8) Path of meditation of dedication:

Through the Mahayana path of meditation of belief, the Bodhisattva accumulates immeasurable heaps of merit. Due to such strong roots of virtue, this is where dedication comes in, which transforms such collections into the cause for enlightenment.

To be a dedication of merit, there must be a substance to be dedicated. The substance that is [consigned] by dedication are all the roots of virtue of the three times. Within that, there are one’s own and others’ roots of virtue.

Essentially, dedication is a *mind* that wishes, prays, hopes and transforms the roots of virtue of the three times of oneself and others to become a cause for complete enlightenment.

Khenrinpoche: If that is the meaning of dedication, then how does dedication transform the roots of virtue of others into a cause for enlightenment?

Ascertaining whether one can dedicate others' roots of virtue for one's own enlightenment:

Khenrinpoche: If it is one's own roots of virtue, since one owns it, then it is not difficult to see how one can transform such roots of virtue into a cause for enlightenment. However, how does dedication transform the roots of virtue of others into a cause for enlightenment? Is it possible in the first place to dedicate the roots of virtue of others?

If it is possible, then [it follows that] one can also necessarily transform others' roots of virtue into a cause for one's own enlightenment.

Student 1: Shantideva said that, to become enlightened, one needs sentient beings to be enlightened, then why not use their virtues as an aspiration, rejoice in them to be enlightened?

Khenrinpoche: This is not so much to do with aspiration or rejoicing, how does one actually dedicate someone else's virtue?

For example, there are Bodhisattva superiors who possess the quality of the Mahayana path of meditation of dedication. Does that mean that, there are other beings who have been and are still dedicating one's own merit as a cause for enlightenment?

The main question is this, can one dedicate and use someone else's virtues? For example, one creates merit, then someone else dedicates it for one?

Student 2: By exchanging self and other, one can then dedicate the other person's virtues. This is because, I think the that only way one can dedicate someone else's virtue for one's own enlightenment is that, one would first have to had exchanged oneself and other. **Khenrinpoche:** This is interesting, but you need to think [more].

Student 3: It is mentioned in the 7 limbs prayer that, there is rejoicing in one's own and others' merits. So it is possible to do so as one does a collective dedication. Within that, this includes rejoicing one's own and others' merits.

Khenrinpoche: The main purpose of dedication is to transform the roots of virtue into a cause for enlightenment. Since that is the case, can one transform others' virtues into a cause for enlightenment?

Student 4: Is one transforming [such virtues] into one's own or others' enlightenment? **Khenrinpoche:** You can say anything.

Student 4: I think maybe not possible to [dedicate] others' virtues and transform that into their enlightenment. This is because, Buddha would have transformed all of our virtues for all of our enlightenment already, yet there are sentient beings.

Khenrinpoche: If that is the case, then the possibility [of transforming their virtues for one's own enlightenment] would also not be possible! **Student 4:** That still remains a question for me.

Student 5: If one dedicates: "By virtue of sentient beings' merit, may it be a cause for them to be connected with me such that, when I am enlightened, I will be able to guide them to enlightenment.

Khenrinpoche: What you have said is essentially dedicating the roots of virtue of others for one's own enlightenment. This is because, whether it is dedicating it for one's own or others' enlightenment, one is achieving enlightenment for others' aims.

Is it possible, allowable and correct to dedicate the roots of virtue of others for one's own enlightenment? One can pray and dedicate in this way, but [in reality,] does it actually [work to] contribute to one's own enlightenment?

Student 6: Yes, this is because, I need others' merit. **Khenrinpoche:** Then are you robbing others' merits?

Student 6: I don't think the motivation is to steal their merit. **Ven Gyurme:** Since it is taking something that is not given, then is it stealing? **Khenrinpoche:** Their merits do not belong to you as you didn't work hard for their merits. You are merely using up others' merits! **Student 6:** No, I don't think so. **Khenrinpoche:** It belongs to others and does not belong to oneself!

Student 6: But I do a lot of things like that! Not in terms of stealing. For example, when I make offerings, I offer those that belong to myself and others by visualizing offering other people's offerings from their altars. Is that stealing?

Khenrinpoche: In offering practices, if one has not been given permission, then it is incorrect to visualize offering things that belong to others. **Student 6:** I fundamentally do not think that this is stealing.

Khenrinpoche: It is not correct to make offerings of substances on the altars of others without permission. Why is it incorrect? **Student 6:** There are always exceptions. There are many people who don't know how to dedicate, whatever virtues created may be destroyed by anger. Then I can help them protect their merit by dedicating for them.

Khenrinpoche: Then [the rest of you had better] be careful, whoever does not dedicate his/ her merit, she will come...

Student 7: Perhaps if it is common property, like taking the [street] lights that belong to the citizens of Singapore, [and make offerings of those lights,] then it will not become stealing. If one takes private property, then of course it becomes stealing. If [taking common property does not become stealing,] then how does one think of [taking] merit that is common property?

If one recalls verse 27 of the Tathagata Essence: *A Buddha's body is pervasive, suchness is without differentiation.* All sentient beings' merit are carried by their clear light mind, this being the carrier of imprints of both virtues and nonvirtues.

If one understandings the ultimate nature of the clear light mind being emptiness, perhaps with the clear light mind being a common property, as well as being the carrier of merit, if one takes that as the merit and dedicates it towards enlightenment, this means one is taking all sentient beings' merit as one's own towards enlightenment.

Summarizing: 1) [Taking and dedicating] common property [does not become stealing], 2) Since clear light mind is without differentiation, [then perhaps one can take that as common property,] 3) Also, since clear light mind is the carrier of imprints, then maybe one can understand [how one can dedicate others' merit towards enlightenment that works in reality.]

Khenrinpoche: This is open for discussion, just say whatever you like to say, so it is good.

Student 8: Yes, [one can dedicate others' merit towards one's own enlightenment]. This is because, this fulfills the aim of oneself and others towards enlightenment. If [it does not work,] then it does not make sense that one makes such prayers.

Khenrinpoche: I am saying such prayers do not make sense. Why do you make such prayers, when it doesn't work?" We will see whether it works in the next class. Hope it works!

How the joy derived from working for others far exceeds the joy from working for oneself:

Khenrinpoche: One does work for one’s own happiness and strives hard at that. Even if one does achieve some happiness through merely looking out for one’s own interests, such a happiness will not be special and great when compared to the happiness one experiences when one is able to extend some help to others who are destitute or who really need help. When one does succeed in giving them some joy and see the joy in their faces when they experience some happiness due to one’s action, one will also experience some satisfaction and joy. I think such joy and satisfaction are really very different from the joy one experiences from merely working for one’s own welfare.

If one remembers such kind of joy one experiences from helping others during one’s lifetime and at the time of death, this may perhaps bring about some real satisfaction. This may be a cause for one to rejoice, which in turn bring even more joyful feelings. I do not think that remembering one’s own happiness achieved [during one’s lifetime] at the time death will bring the same level of satisfaction or joy. What I have just said is not difficult to understand as it is rather obvious. One should look within one’s experiences and see for oneself.

If one puts in at least the same amount of time and effort helping and benefiting others as the time and effort one puts into in one’s daily life working very hard physically and mentally for one’s own happiness, this will bring about the kind of joy and happiness that really cannot be compared. Especially at the time of death, for one to be able to remember, rejoice and feel satisfied with such a joy and happiness that came from benefiting and helping others, one must firstly experience such a joy in one’s lifetime [prior to this]. If one can prioritize others above oneself, do things to help and benefit others with a sincere heart, then the bliss, joy and happiness one experiences will be very special and different. If [one remembers such a joy at the time of death,] then one will obtain a good rebirth. Hence, one has to know the purpose/ point of benefiting and helping others. One has to try as much as possible to cultivate thoughts of benefiting others. If it is possible, do something practical as well.

2-8) Path of meditation of dedication:

For there to be a dedication, there must be a 1) substance to be dedicated. This is [asserted to be] all the roots of virtue accumulated by oneself and others.
The path of meditation of dedication refers to the dedication that is performed by Bodhisattva superiors on the Mahayana path of meditation. Their dedications are conjoined with the special method and wisdom possessed by them in their continua.
They dedicate the roots of virtue while non-objectifying the roots of virtue to be dedicated, the dedication and the dedicator, knowing that these do not exist truly but exist conventionally. They do so to fully ripen the minds of the three types of trainees: the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Bodhisattvas.
The etymology [derivation] of the Knower of Paths is a full knowledge/ understanding through experience, of the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Bodhisattvas’ paths. The Bodhisattva superiors know such paths through experience, teach these to the respective three types of trainees to enable them to achieve their respective goals.
Hence, for the purpose of achieving this [quality], the Bodhisattva dedicates his roots of virtue towards this.
It is stated in the sutra that, one dedicates the roots of virtue of oneself together with the roots of virtue of others.
What this means is that, one deposits one’s own roots of virtue together with the roots of virtue of the Buddha and Bodhisattvas with the intention that this becomes a branch/ aid to benefit others.
When one deposits one’s roots of virtue together with the roots of virtue of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, one thus has a part in [their dedications as well]. Hence, one can then dedicate such a [mass] of roots of virtue as an aid/ cause for the welfare of all sentient beings, particularly for them to achieve full and complete enlightenment.
Other than the substance of the roots of virtue that one is dedicating, there are also the 2) witnesses of such a dedication. These are all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Hence, one dedicates the mass of the roots of virtue as a cause for all sentient beings to achieve enlightenment in the presence of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, taking them as one’s witnesses.
The purpose of thinking of them as one’s witnesses is that, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas will grant their blessings such that, the aim of one’s dedication would be actualized quickly.
The 3) object of intent of dedication is for the welfare of all sentient beings and for the Buddha’s teachings to flourish. [Both of these] mean the same. This is because, the entire purpose of dedicating the merit for Buddha’s teachings to flourish is so that, sentient beings may be benefited by it.
Since Bodhisattvas are always working for sentient beings, therefore, whatever they dedicate is always for them. Even when one achieves enlightenment, whatever one does is also for them. Hence essentially, dedication is about [sentient beings].
4) [Function] of dedication: One of the [function] of dedication is that, it can transform an inferior [cause and effect] into a perfect result. Without dedication, particular [inferior] roots of virtue may only bring forth an insignificant result. If dedication is done properly, something that would have transformed into an inferior result will transform into a perfect result.

How dedicating one's and Buddhas and Bodhisattvas' roots of virtue towards enlightenment that serves as an aid to fulfill the welfare of sentient beings, is related to one's tathagata essence being aided by the enlightened activities of the Dharmakaya:

An example is shown in the sutra of putting a drop of water into the ocean: Once one puts a drop of water into the ocean, for as long as the ocean exists, it is said that such a drop of water will not cease to exist. Likewise, roots of virtue dedicated towards enlightenment will not be exhausted.
Applying the analogy to the meaning: When one puts a drop of water into the ocean, as long as the ocean exists, such a drop of water will not cease to exist. How does dedicating one's roots of virtue towards enlightenment makes it inexhaustible?
One's roots of virtue is like the drop of water. The roots of virtue of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas are like the ocean. If one were to en mass one's roots of virtue together with the roots of virtue of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, then this will make one's roots of virtue inexhaustible.
One has to understand how, when one puts a drop of water into the ocean, it becomes almost like indistinguishable, massed together [with the ocean].
Khenrinpoche: Then how does one mix one's roots of virtue with the roots of virtue of all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas?
Student 1: By meditating on emptiness of oneself, sentient beings, Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, then dedicating the merits as empty together with that, this would help.
Khenrinpoche: Can you mix your virtues with the Bodhisattvas' virtues? Student 1: Yes, if one meditates on emptiness.
Khenrinpoche: So if you don't meditate on emptiness then you cannot? Student 1: If one does not meditate on emptiness, then it does not work.
Student 2: One does accumulate merit by rejoicing at the virtues of the Bodhisattvas and Buddhas have accumulated. One then dedicates these merits, this then becomes [oneness].
Khenrinpoche: The analogy [of a drop of water in the ocean] is to help one understand the meaning. But in this case, it is an analogy for how one thinks about it. It is not the case that, since it is a drop of water put into the ocean, therefore, one should do likewise literally with one's merit. One should not think of it that way, but think of a similar essence.
What if I say that, when one dedicates one's merits towards enlightenment, one's small little merit becomes an aid for the fulfillment of the welfare of sentient beings? Hence, one's merit is then said to have 'mixed with' the roots of virtue of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, as this is what they intend.
What if one says that the meaning of mixing one's roots of virtue with the roots of virtue of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas is that, one's roots of virtue becomes an aid for the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas to work for the welfare of sentient beings?
In this discussion, do you think there is any relation to the Tathagata Essence module, where it was explained that, all roots of virtue in the continua of sentient beings are the enlightened activities of the Dharmakaya?
One also needs to think whether it is correct to dedicate someone else's virtues.
Even if one says it is possible for one to dedicate others' roots of virtue, does such roots of virtue in the continua of others actually work towards contributing to enlightenment?
One also needs to think, when one dedicates the roots of virtue of others towards enlightenment, whose enlightenment, one's own, others or both, would that be?
When a Hearer dedicates his merits, he does so towards his own Hearers' enlightenment. Can a Bodhisattva superior on the path of meditation then dedicates this Hearer's roots of virtue for his own full enlightenment?
Even though one says that the Bodhisattva superior on the path of meditation dedicates this Hearer's roots of virtue towards enlightenment, however, does such roots of virtue become a cause for the Bodhisattvas' enlightenment? Student: Yes.
Khenrinpoche: Then it follows that, there is no need to dedicate one's own merit. This is because, one's merits have been dedicated by all the numberless Buddhas and Bodhisattvas towards one's full enlightenment since beginningless lifetimes.
The dedicator is not an insignificant being as it is a Bodhisattva superior on the path of meditation. Hence, their dedications are very powerful. Hence, there is no need to dedicate one's own merit [as it has been done by them.]
Student 2: Even though they may do that, but if one has no wish to become something, then it will not work. Ven Gyurme: So that means the dedication by others for one's own enlightenment does not work!
Student 3: One has the conditions for the [dedication] to [bear fruit], but one needs to accumulate the substantial cause for it to happen. Student 2: The Buddhas can do their parts, but if one does not do anything then they also cannot [help].
Khenrinpoche: [With regards to the Hearer's roots of virtue in relation to the Bodhisattva,] the Bodhisattva can only dedicate such roots of virtue either towards the Hearer's own enlightenment or towards his own full enlightenment. Do both work?

<p>Student 4: The Buddha's enlightened activities work [for those whose lineages are ripening or about to ripen,] manifesting in the form of a qualified guide. This then refers to karmic connections. The sutras taught by [Shakyamuni Buddha] mainly explain about all the karmic connections He has had in His past lives with certain persons or disciples.</p>
<p>For such persons, as a fish, deer and so on, that He has met and benefited before, for which He had dedicated merits towards, the time will eventually come for such karmic connections to materialize in Buddha's lifetime to become His disciples and thus able to [further] ripen their continua.</p>
<p>Perhaps, even though the countless Buddhas attained the state of Dharmakaya, one cannot dismiss the very important aspects of karmic connections accumulated between the superior person and the inferior person in the past.</p>
<p>When the superior person eventually becomes a Buddha, the inferior person under His care in the past will become His disciple one day. Due to that, [the latter's] continuum is ripened and guided by such a qualified teacher.</p>
<p>Therefore, when one dedicates the lower trainees' [roots of virtue] towards [one's own] enlightenment or one dedicates one's own virtues towards one's own enlightenment, it will both work. This is because, [when one becomes enlightened,] one will manifest from the Buddha's enlightened activities into actual guides to benefit his disciples.</p>
<p>This is how it works all the time, when one looks at the story of the Buddha, how [such karmic connections] work. From the disciples' side, of course they must have their own substantial cause of aspiration to achieve enlightenment, but there is also the cooperative condition of the qualified guide. When these two gather, the disciples can become enlightened.</p>
<p>Ven Gyurme: The karmic connection is formed by the prayers of the Bodhisattva?</p>
<p>Student 4: Yes. This is especially so if one has benefited someone [specifically,] like in the case of the Buddha's past life, when he was a Bodhisattva, before he sacrificed himself to the five tigers, he dedicated merits towards their enlightenment. [Due to such connection,] the five tigers became arhats and Bodhisattvas [during Buddha's lifetime].</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: The reason dedication is possible in the first place is all due to the tathagata essence. This is the substantial cause for enlightenment. [Tathagata essence] is why enlightenment is possible, hence, this is why dedication [works].</p>
<p>However, possessing [the tathagata essence] alone is insufficient. One needs to have the conditions to activate it. The Buddhas can appear in all forms. This is because, it is not possible for Buddha to turn the wheel of Dharma while remaining in the Dharmakaya aspect. Hence, he appears in all kinds of aspects like one's friend and so forth.</p>
<p>Hence, oneself needs such external conditions of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas [appearing in the form of guides and so forth], who then triggers off something that causes one to develop virtuous thoughts like remembering death and impermanence and so forth.</p>
<p>Hence, one needs both the substantial cause and cooperative conditions. In this context, the substantial cause is one's own tathagata essence. One also needs the cooperative condition of the Buddha. Without the Buddha, it is also not possible.</p>

2-9) Path of meditation of rejoicing:

<p>Due to belief [2-6 & 2-7], the Bodhisattva superior is able to accumulate an immeasurable heap of merit. Due to such heap of merit, they possess the substance to be dedicated [2-8]. Hence, they then dedicate the merit. Since they have the opportunity to accumulate so much merit, they rejoice [2-9] at that. Rejoicing is the method to increase the roots of virtue dedicated.</p>
<p>When there is stable belief, one is really able to accumulate a great amount of roots of virtue. Having such a belief is likened to finding a goldmine. When one does find gold, one can fashion many things with it, making jewelries, statues and so forth. How one fashions it depends on the possessor of the gold. Similarly, dedication is that which transforms the roots of virtue.</p>
<p>With gold, one can fashion it into the most wonderful things like the best jewelries and ornaments. Likewise, with dedication, one can transform one's roots of virtue into the cause for full complete enlightenment.</p>
<p>Even though the roots of virtue one has accumulated may be inferior, when left alone, will only issue forth an inferior result, but with dedication, one can transform such insignificant roots of virtue into a cause for full enlightenment.</p>
<p>This is again made possible by dedication, which is that which transforms an otherwise inferior cause into an inferior result. Instead, dedication can transform [such an inferior merit] into a perfect result.</p>
<p>Even though one has dedicated one's roots of virtue as a cause towards full enlightenment, however, this does not mean that it is guaranteed to continue all the way to enlightenment. This is because, along the way, such roots of virtue can be destroyed by, for example, anger and so forth.</p>
<p>Hence, [to avoid this,] when one dedicates merit towards full enlightenment, it should be conjoined with non-objectifying the three spheres. It is said that, if the roots of virtue dedicated is conjoined with the wisdom realizing emptiness, then such roots of virtue are guaranteed never to be destroyed.</p>
<p>This is one of the reasons why, [cultivating] the wisdom that sees the ultimate nature of reality for what they are as they are, the wisdom realizing emptiness, is so important. This is because, until one possesses such a wisdom, there is no way that, any virtue one dedicates can be conjoined with it.</p>

That said, even if one does not possess the wisdom realizing emptiness for the time being, it is still not so bad if one is not habituated to anger.
Hence, for oneself, when it comes to [cultivating] virtue, before one even achieves anything, one has to work very hard at it. Even when one is eventually able to develop some virtues, one may then get angry. When one fully develops such anger, it will have great power to destroy one's roots of virtue frequently.
This is the reason, when <i>Kyabje Lama Zopa Rinpoche</i> leads his students in dedication, he always conjoins it with emptiness.
Hence, it is so important to gain at least some idea of emptiness as much as possible, putting whatever one knows into practice as one dedicates one's merits by non-objectifying the three spheres in that: the dedicator, the act of dedicating and the merit dedicated, all do not exist inherently.
How one accumulates merit through the force of rejoicing: It is said in the sutra to the effect that,
When one rejoices in the roots of virtue of someone inferior in cultivation, one accumulates more merit than such a person.
When one rejoices in the roots of virtue of one's peers, those about the same level of cultivation, one accumulates a similar amount of merit.
When one rejoices in the roots of virtue of someone superior in cultivation to one, one accumulates a portion of such merit. For example, if one rejoices in the merits of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, one accumulates one tenth of such merits.
It seems to have been written somewhere that, if one wishes to accumulate merit while remaining lazy [in cultivating virtues oneself], like lying down or sleeping, then one should [practice] rejoicing.
This is also stated in the Lam Rim. The reality is that, when one rejoices in anyone's merits, it acts against one's own jealousy as it is a practical solution to one's negative sense of competitiveness and jealousy.
If one can really feel happy [in one's competitors or superiors' qualities], right there and then, whatever negative sense of competitiveness and jealousy will all subside. This is the [practical] benefit [gained] right away.
Whomever is creating merit, if one is really able to feel happy thinking: "How wonderful it is he is creating virtues!" [Immediately] one experiences the bliss, peace and happiness in one's heart.
For there to be [the cultivation of] rejoicing, there must be a happy mind and real joy in one's heart that comes about through observing the virtues of others. When one truly feels the joy, that is rejoicing. When [such a mind is manifest,] there is no room for any [mental states of] negative competitiveness and jealousy.
Hence, one should try as much as possible to rejoice, feel such a happiness while observing the merits of others and oneself. This is because, this really increases one's roots of virtue, this is its function.

2-9 & 2-10) Path of meditation of achieving and The completely pure path of meditation:

These are the uncontaminated paths of meditation. They essentially mean the same, but are conceptually isolated [terminologically differentiated] in that:
From the perspective of that which establishes the imprint of final realization, this is the <i>path of meditation of achieving</i> .
From the perspective of that which establishes the imprint of final abandonment, this is called <i>The completely pure path of meditation</i> .

3) Knower of bases:

<p>Definition: an exalted wisdom abiding within a lesser vehicle class of realizations conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of the person who possesses it.</p>
<p>To know what a Knower of Bases is, one has to examine its definition, which has two parts. If these two parts are present, then one can call its definiendum as Knower of Bases:</p>
<p>a) This mind must be conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing the selflessness of persons. However, this alone does not qualify this mind to be a Knower of Bases. Above this, b) This mind must abide within a lesser vehicle class of realizations.</p>
<p>Meaning of abiding within a lesser vehicle class of realization: To understand this, one needs to know the main objects of meditation of the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Bodhisattvas as according to the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School:</p>
<p>The Hearers take the selflessness of persons as their main object of meditation. The Solitary Realizers take the emptiness of subject and object to be different substantial entities as their main object of meditation. The Bodhisattvas take the emptiness of true existence as their main object of meditation.</p>
<p>The Solitary Realizers also do take the selflessness of persons as their main object of meditation as well. However, they also take the emptiness of subject and object as being different substantial entities as their main object of meditation as well.</p>
<p>Hence, according to this school, the main objects of meditation of a Hinayanist [in general] are the selflessness of persons and the emptiness of subject and object as being different substantial entities.</p>
<p>The following are the lesser vehicle class of realizations: [On their respective paths of seeing,] Hearers directly realize the <i>selflessness of persons</i>, Solitary Realizers [directly] realize the <i>emptiness of subject and object as being different entities</i>.</p>
<p>Selflessness here does not refer to emptiness, but refers to the selflessness of persons as asserted by the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School and all the schools below it, which assert the selflessness of persons in the same way.</p>
<p>The measure of abiding within a lesser/ Hinayana class of realizations is that:</p>
<p><i>If an exalted wisdom takes a Hinayanist's main object of meditation with a similar observed object and aspect, then this qualifies it to be a mind that abides within a Hinayana class of realizations.</i></p>
<p>How a Mahayana superior is a Knower of Bases: Is the wisdom directly realizing the selflessness of persons in the continuum of a Mahayana superior a Knower of Bases? Yes, This is because, [such a knower] is directly conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing selflessness. [Such a realization] itself abides within a lesser vehicle class of realizations.</p>
<p>Is such a wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior a Hinayana path? Yes. Is it also a Mahayana path? Yes. This is because, if the person who possesses this wisdom is a Mahayanist, then the knower in his continuum is a Mahayana path.</p>
<p>The reason such a wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior is a Knower of Bases, specifically, the reason such a wisdom abides within a lesser vehicle class of realizations is that:</p>
<p>Such a wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior has <i>A similar object of observation and similar aspects to the wisdom directly realizing selflessness of the Hinayana superior.</i></p>
<p>The object of [meditation] would be the emptiness of a self-sufficient substantially existent person.</p>
<p>Ascertaining the limits of pervasion of a Hinayana path: A Hinayana path is either: <i>a) A path in the continuum of a Hinayanist, or b) A path abiding/ included within a lesser vehicle class of realizations.</i></p>
<p>Hence, a Hinayana path is not necessarily a path that is in the continuum of a Hinayanist, a Hearer or a Solitary Realizer. Hence, the Hinayana path does exist in the continuum of Bodhisattva and Buddha superiors. This is because, a Knower of Paths is a knower that knows all the three paths of the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and the Mahayana completely in its entirety</p>
<p>The reason a Mahayana superior needs to know all the three paths is that, [Buddhas] and Bodhisattvas work for all sentient beings, and not all sentient beings are of the Mahayana lineage. All sentient beings refer to everyone, particularly here, it refers to the disciples of the Hearer, Solitary Realizer and Mahayana lineages which are the objects to be subdued.</p>
<p>To work for the disciples of each of these lineages, the Bodhisattva superiors have to show the Dharma that is in accordance with their respective aspirations. Hence, in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, there are the Hearers' paths, Solitary Realizers' paths and definitely the Mahayana paths.</p>
<p>An illustration of a Hinayana path that exists in the continuum of a Mahayana superior can be the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, as well as the wisdom directly realizing emptiness of subject and object as different entities in the continuum of a Mahayana superior.</p>
<p>The reason such realizations in the continuum of a Mahayana superior is a Hinayana path is that, such realizations share similar objects of observation of meditation and similar aspects [with the Hinayana class of realizations].</p>

The objective aspect [/object of observation] and subjective aspect of the main object of meditation of a knower who abides in the Hinayana/ lesser class of realizations:

<p>The wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior is a Hinayana path. This is because, it has a similar observed object and aspect to the main object of meditation of, say, a Hearer. The similar object of observation is <i>person</i>, whereas the aspect is [realizing that this person is] <i>empty of being self-sufficient substantially existent</i>.</p>
<p>Hence, whatever that abides within a lesser vehicle class of realizations is necessarily a Hinayana path.</p>
<p>However, if something is abiding within a Mahayana class of realization, it is necessarily a Mahayana path? No.</p>
<p>This is not stating that, for example, the Mahayana path exists in the continuum of a Hearer. Hence, does the Mahayana path exist in the continuum of a Hinayanist? No.</p>
<p>Is the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior a Mahayana path? No.</p>
<p>Qualm: It is a Mahayana path. This is because, such a wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior abides within a Mahayana class of realizations.</p>
<p>Reply: No pervasion. Just because something abides within a Mahayana class of realizations does not necessarily make it a Mahayana path.</p>
<p>Student 1: Does the Hinayana superior not realize to the highest level, the emptiness of object and subject as different entities? Khenrinpoche: From the perspective of this school, it is possible for a Hinayana superior to realize the emptiness of true existence.</p>
<p>Boundary: It exists in the continua of all superiors. Hence, this also includes Buddha superiors. As long as it is a superior, it is definite that the Knower of Bases exists in such a continuum.</p>
<p>Student 1: In the definition, is the wisdom directly realizing selflessness necessarily a wisdom directly realizing the selflessness of persons?</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: If one is referring to the definition, then that wisdom directly realizing selflessness is the realization of the selflessness of persons. However, just because this refers to the selflessness of persons does not necessarily mean that it is in relation to a person, [as it can also refer to, say, the objects utilized by such a person].</p>
<p>Hence, do not think of this in relation to how the Consequence Middle Way School delineates [the selflessness of person and phenomena to have the same object of meditation, emptiness, but different bases. Rather, think in terms of how this school delineates the selflessness of person and phenomena by the different emptinesses with respect to the same base].</p>
<p>A Knower of Bases exists in the continua of all superiors. However, this is not the same as saying that, if it is a path in the continuum of a superior/ whatever paths possessed by a superior, are necessarily a Knower of Bases.</p>
<p>Therefore, if one wants to know what a Knower of Bases is, one has to know its definition. Essentially, it is a wisdom that is conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing selflessness, above this, such a wisdom needs to abide within a Hinayana class of realizations. If these characteristics are present, then such a wisdom is Knower of Bases.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Is the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayanist a Knower of Bases? No. This is because, it is not abiding within a Hinayana class of realization. This is because, a Hinayanist does not take a similar object of meditation with such an observed object and aspect.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Please give some illustrations of a path in the continuum of a superior which are <i>not</i> Knower of Bases.</p>
<p>Student 2: An inferential realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior. Khenrinpoche: Why is that?</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: To determine something is a Knower of Bases or not, one has to see whether it possesses the characteristics of a Knower of Bases. If it does not, then it is not a Knower of Bases. What is missing here from the definition?</p>
<p>Student 2: [Realizing] selflessness is in the definition, which is missing in this case.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: I am not saying that it has to be a wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons, rather, [a Knower of Bases] must be <i>conjoined</i> with the wisdom directly realizing selflessness. Something being a wisdom directly realizing selflessness and [a knower] being conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing selflessness are two different things.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: What is it from the definition of the Knower of Bases is missing here? If nothing is missing, then it necessarily is a Knower of Bases. If something is missing, then it is not a Knower of Bases. Student 2: I don't know!</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Whether it is an inferential realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior, or whether it is the direct realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior, they are not Knower of Bases.</p>
<p>This is because, [such knowers] are not abiding within a Hinayana class of realizations. The inferential realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior does not abide in the Hinayana class of realizations, neither does the direct realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior abides in the Hinayana class of realizations.</p>
<p>The reason that these [two knowers] do not abide in the Hinayana class of realizations was explained earlier.</p>

Student 2: The meditation of loving kindness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior.

Khenrinpoche: Why is this not a Knower of Bases? **Student 2:** Because it is not the main object of meditation of the lesser class. **Khenrinpoche:** Why is loving kindness not the main object of meditation of a Hinayanist. **Student 2:** It is not one of the specific topic of meditation of the lesser class. **Khenrinpoche:** Good. **Student 2:** Thank you!

Reasons the Knower of Bases is presented after the Knower of Paths:

The explanation on the Knower of Bases comes after the explanation on the Knower of Paths. One reason is because, if one lacks a good cultivation of the Knower of Bases, then one will not be able to produce well the Knower of Paths.

Another reason is that, without cultivating well the 16 aspects of the 4 Noble Truths, impermanence and so forth, which is included in the path shared with persons of medium capacity, one will not be able to generate well the path of the persons of great capacity. Hence, after the presentation of the Knower of Paths, there is the presentation of the Knower of Bases.

3-1) Knower of paths not abiding in cyclic existence through knowledge:

There are 9 topics that characterizes the Knower of Bases: **3-1) Knower of paths not abiding in cyclic existence through knowledge.** This is mutually inclusive with the **Knower of Paths that knows Hearers' paths [2-2)].**

The wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior is [an illustration of] a Knower of Paths not abiding in cyclic existence through knowledge, as well as a Knower of Paths that knows Hearers' paths.

Khenrinpoche: Are there Knower of Bases in a Mahayana superior's continuum? Yes, there is no doubt. For example, the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior. It is a Hearer's path, a Knower of Bases and a Knower of Paths. It is Knower of Paths because, it is a Knower of Paths that knows Hearer's paths.

Is [the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Mahayana superior] a Knower of Paths not abiding in cyclic existence through knowledge? Yes.

Definition: A mahayana superior's exalted knower abiding in a type of realizer that ceases the extreme of cyclic existence relative to a conventional base.

The extreme of cyclic existence relative to a conventional base refers to a rebirth in samsara projected by karma and afflictions. The wisdom directly realizing selflessness of person in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior is the mind that ceases such an extreme of cyclic existence.

Hence, [an illustration of] the Knower of Paths not abiding in cyclic existence through knowledge can be the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior. This is because, such a wisdom is that which stops the extreme of cyclic existence, a rebirth in cyclic existence which is projected by karma and afflictions.

3-2) Knower of Paths not abiding in peace through compassion:

[As differentiated from the] 1st topic of the extreme of cyclic existence, in this 2nd topic, there is the extreme of peace, which refers to the Hinayana nirvana. That which stops one from abiding in the of extreme of peace is great compassion in the continuum of, for example, a Bodhisattva superior. This is the Knower of Paths not abiding in peace through compassion.

Hence, such a compassion is a special method that enables one not to abide in the extreme of peace.

The extreme of samsara is the rebirth projected by karma and afflictions. That which stops [such an extreme] is the wisdom directly realizing selflessness of person in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior. Hence, such a wisdom is a Knower of Paths not abiding in cyclic existence through knowledge.

The extreme of nirvana here refers to [abiding in] the Hinayana nirvana. That which stops [the Bodhisattvas from such an extreme] is the great compassion in their continua. Hence, such a great compassion is Knower of Paths not abiding in peace through compassion.

3-3) Knower of Bases distant from the resultant mother:

3-4) Knower of Bases close to the resultant mother:

3-5) Knower of Bases that is of the discordant class:

3-6) Knower of Bases that is of the antidote class:

Resultant mother here is the resultant perfection of wisdom. *The wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior* is an example of **3-4)** a Knower of Bases that is close to the resultant mother.

The wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons in the continuum of a Hinayana superior who has not realized the emptiness of true existence is an example of **3-3)** a Knower of Bases that is distant to the resultant mother.

[Such a wisdom] is a Knower of Bases that is distant to the resultant mother because: a) Such a Hinayana superior does not possess great compassion. b) Such a Hinayana superior has not realized the emptiness of true existence. Since it is bounded by the apprehension of true existence, such a wisdom is a Knower of Bases that is distant from the resultant mother.

Whereas the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior is a Knower of Bases that is close to the resultant mother. This is because, it is a) conjoined with great compassion, as well as [conjoined with] b) the wisdom directly realizing emptiness of true existence. Hence, it is a Knower of Bases close to the resultant mother.
The 3-3) Knower of Bases distant from the resultant mother is mutually inclusive with 3-5) the Knower of Bases that is of the discordant class.
Explaining the meaning of being close and distant to the resultant mother: There can be 2 persons, one who initially enters the Hinayana path, travels all the way to become an arhat, after that, he enters the Mahayana path. The second one enters the Mahayana path from the onset without entering the Hinayana path.
Hence, when referring to being close or distant [to the resultant mother, this can be understood to be which of these 2 persons] will reach enlightenment first. The first person will take a very long time to reach the resultant mother, he is very far from achieving the resultant perfection of wisdom/ enlightenment.
This is because, a) such a person does not possess the thought to benefit others, b) the entire purpose/ main goal of this person's life is to achieve the Hinayana nirvana. Once he achieves such a state, he will merely abide in that peace for eons.
It is said that Buddha will eventually try to wake such arhats from their peaceful states and urge them to achieve enlightenment. Nevertheless, it is very difficult for them to enter the Mahayana path and work for enlightenment.
This is because, they are so well [habituated in abiding] in peace. Hence, after having heard Buddha's persuasion, they would again go back and abide in peace. It is therefore very difficult to be able to really move them from their peace.
Even if some of them do arise from that peace of nirvana and enter the Mahayana path, but due to the strong habituation of abiding in such a peace, it is said that, they would habitually go back to abiding in their peace.
The 3-3) Knower of Bases distant from the resultant mother is mutually inclusive with the 3-5) Knower of Bases that is of the discordant class. This is because, [such a knower] is an obstacle to achieving enlightenment quickly.
This is because, instead of generating the Mahayana path of accumulation [from the onset], one enters the Hinayana path. This then becomes an obstacle and impediment to generating the Mahayana path. Hence, it is a discordant factor for entering the Mahayana path.
[Therefore, one can apply the same understanding to understand what a 3-4) Knower of Bases close to the resultant mother mean, which is mutually inclusive with 3-6) Knower of Bases of the antidote class].

3-7) Application of a Knower of Bases:

3-8) Equality of application of a Knower of Bases:

3-9) Mahayana path of seeing:

To achieve the Knower of Bases that is close to the resultant mother, one needs to cultivate the 3-7) Applications [of a Knower of Bases] and [maintain] an 3-8) Equality of application [of a Knower of Bases].
The topics that characterize the Knower of Bases ends with the 3-9) Mahayana path of seeing, without showing the Mahayana path of meditation, which is unlike the [topics that characterize the] Knower of Paths. What is explicitly shown here is the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. However, the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is also implicitly shown.
The reason the Mahayana path of meditation is not shown in the context of the Knower of Bases is that, once one achieves the wisdom directly realizing selflessness, this alone is sufficient.
One need not repeatedly familiarize oneself with such a realization. This is because, this wisdom directly realizing selflessness alone can act as the antidote to the apprehension of a self of person, [the antidote to cyclic existence].
When the Bodhisattva achieves the Mahayana path of seeing, he sees the truth directly [realize the emptiness of true existence,] he also realizes the selflessness of persons directly as well. From then on, he does not need to repeatedly familiarize himself with the [latter realization of the selflessness of persons].
This is because, the whole purpose of repeated familiarization of the realization is either to abandon the afflictive obscurations or the knowledge obscurations.
This was mentioned already, the Bodhisattvas do not take the abandonments of the afflictions as their main goal, hence on the path of meditation, they do not place special effort to repeatedly familiarize on the realizations of the selflessness of persons.
This does not mean that the wisdom directly realizing selflessness does not exist on the Mahayana path of meditation as it does. Hence, the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas do possess the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in their continua.
Hence, the wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons in the continua of a Mahayana superior is a Hinayana path. This means that, Hinayana paths do exist in the continua of Mahayana superiors. The reason this is a Hinayana path and a Hearers' path is because, it is a wisdom which abides within a Hinayana class of realizations which exist in the continuum of a Hearer.

The Bodhisattva superiors ***do not*** take rebirths in cyclic existence primarily due to their [direct] realization of true existence, [such a realization enables them to no longer take rebirths in cyclic existence that are due to their karma and afflictions]. Such a realization is also conjoined with bodhicitta.

However, this is not necessarily the case for Hinayana superiors. This is because, there are such superiors who do take rebirths in cyclic existence due to their karma and afflictions.

For example, even after achieving the Hearers' path of meditation, it is said that they still have to take rebirths in cyclic existence for 14 times, either as a desire realm god or a human being. There are also many Hearers on the path of meditation who take rebirths in the form and formless realms due to their karma and afflictions.

Reply to the question from lesson 9:

Student 1: Does the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School assert a post meditative equipoise of the wisdom of subsequent attainment after the path of release of the Mahayana path of seeing, before initially entering into meditative equipoise of the Mahayana path of meditation?

Khenrinpoche: Perhaps one has to say yes. [The 3 stages] of the supreme mundane quality level of Mahayana path of preparation, the uninterrupted path and the path of release of the Mahayana path of seeing [consist of] only 1 session of meditative equipoise. From the path of release of the Mahayana path of seeing, the Bodhisattva superior arises from this meditative equipoise and achieves the wisdom of subsequent attainment of the Mahayana path of seeing.

When such a Bodhisattva superior enters into meditative equipoise that has sufficient power to act as a direct antidote to the Mahayana path of meditation abandonments, such a meditative equipoise becomes the uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of meditation. He then achieves the 1st uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of meditation and subsequently enters into the Mahayana path of release of the Mahayana path of meditation. He then arises from this meditative equipoise and enters into the post meditative sessions where he achieves the wisdom of subsequent attainment [of the Mahayana path of meditation].

If one asserts that there is the wisdom of subsequent attainment on the Mahayana path of seeing, would that not mean that one can acquire the basis of a form realm support on the path of seeing? If that is the case, would that be a problem? The explanation on the basis for newly attaining the Mahayana path of meditation was explained before. This is necessarily a desire realm support.

Student 1: It then follows that, one can newly achieve the Mahayana path of meditation on the basis of a form realm support. This is because, such a support exists on the subsequent attainment of the Mahayana path of seeing.

Khenrinpoche: It is clear that, there is the wisdom of subsequent attainment on the Mahayana path of seeing. I remember reading somewhere and have said something about this before [in the previous BP batch], that the duration of the Mahayana path of seeing is very short. Since the Mahayana path of seeing is very short, there is no need to take another rebirth [from the desire realm support].

Student 1: [Since wisdom of subsequent attainment in post meditative equipoise is very short, then] how would such a Bodhisattva superior have enough opportunity to accumulate merit that is powerful enough to enter into the meditative equipoise that is the antidote class to the path of meditation?

Khenrinpoche: The 9 levels of obscurations [of the Mahayana path of meditation] is divided into 3 big, 3 medium and 3 small. This presentation here explains that the 3 big is divided into the [big of the big, medium of the big and small of the big]. The [big] of the big, due to it being a coarse affliction, one does not need to work very hard to accumulate merit to [overcome this level of obscuration]. I don't know what the text says, I am just explaining it in my own way.

Even though one needs to accumulate the collections here to actualize the uninterrupted path that is strong enough to overcome the respective levels of obscurations, however, I think I've seen somewhere that the period of the path of seeing is very short, but I don't know how short it is.

Student 1: Is there a difference between this school and the Consequence Middle Way School's assertions of the wisdom inferentially realizing emptiness on the superior's path in that, for the Consequence Middle Way School, such a wisdom has transformed in entity into a direct realization of emptiness when it initially attains the path of seeing. Since such a wisdom is transformed, then is the inferential realization of emptiness on the superior's path taken to be non-existent?

Khenrinpoche: I think the manner of proceeding should be the same. But what one needs to think about is that, when the Bodhisattva on the path of preparation achieves the path of seeing, whether ***all instances*** of the conceptual realization of emptiness in his continuum transform in entity into the direct realization of emptiness or not.

It seems like, one has to say that, not all the conceptual minds realizing emptiness transform into the entity of direct realization of emptiness after achieving the path of seeing. This means that, there are superiors who possess realization of emptiness via thought.

Student: Would such realizations necessarily be inferential? Thought need *not* be arriving at the conclusion through a sign ascertained incontrovertibly. It can a subsequent cognizer through conceptuality conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness which is not an inferential realization of emptiness.

Khenrinpoche: I am not sure whether you can say these are inferential cognizers, but here are definitely subsequent cognizers.

Student: [Asserting that there are] subsequent cognizers [realizing emptiness] is not a problem. The only problem is the inferential realization of emptiness. Within conceptual cognizers, there can be the division of inferential cognition and other conceptual consciousnesses other than the inferential realization. Since there are remnants of the inferential realization of emptiness from the path of preparation, could such [minds] become subliminal or non-manifest?

Khenrinpoche: Whether Bodhisattva superiors possess the inferential cognition of emptiness or not, such a question can be answered by [analyzing] whether they have inferential valid cognizers realizing emptiness or not. That is to say, if there are still Bodhisattva superiors who still need to realize emptiness in dependence on reasoning, then one can say that there are inferentially valid cognizers in the continuum of Bodhisattva superiors. You have to think of [how to answer your] question by answering this question.

Story of the Bodhisattva Always Crying One:

[*Tartu Ngon*, who was able to complete the first countless great eon of merit, of the three countless great eons of merit in the Paramita path needed to achieve enlightenment, all within seven years because he cherished his guru more than his own life.]

The Bodhisattva Always Crying One was obviously someone who had developed bodhicitta and was working hard to achieve enlightenment. He had very strong interest in wanting to listen to the teachings on the perfection of wisdom. He was always thinking of how he could find someone who could teach him this sutra. He then went into isolation wondering how he could receive teachings on the perfection of wisdom. He was always thinking of that, to the extend of crying repeatedly over this.

One day he heard a voice from nowhere, who said: “In the Eastern direction, there is a land called “*Incense Smell*,” there resides a Bodhisattva called *Chöpa* (*Skt. Dharmagupta*). He is someone whom you have had [close] karmic connections with over many lifetimes. If you go there and look for him, you will be able to hear the perfection of wisdom sutras from him.”

After hearing the voice, he left in the eastern direction looking for the Bodhisattva Chöpa. He traveled for a very long time and thought to himself: “How much further will I have to travel before I can see this Bodhisattva?” As he had only heard the voice telling him to go in the eastern direction, he did not get the opportunity to ask [where exactly it was]. The more he traveled, the more he got discouraged as he did not know how much further he had had to go.

The Bodhisattva Always Crying One was someone who had achieved the concentrations. So he went into meditative equipoise, upon which he had visions of many Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, who told him to merely continue to go in the eastern direction, after a certain distance, he would meet the Bodhisattva Chöpa, so he should not give up. The Buddhas and Bodhisattvas in the vision also gave him teachings as well. After the vision ended, he continued on his way. [As he recalled his vision] while he was continuing on his journey in the eastern direction, he wondered to himself:

“From where did all the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas come from, and to where did they return to?”

As he continued on his journey to meet the Bodhisattva Chöpa, he also started to wonder what he should be offering when he eventually meets this Bodhisattva as he thought that he must offer something to him. He then thought: “I really have nothing to offer him, the only thing [of some value] that I possess is my body, so I will sell my body, in return for whatever that I can get, I am going to offer that to the Bodhisattva Chöpa, this is so that I can receive the perfection of wisdom sutras teachings from him.”

He then reached a town, upon where he thought he could get someone to buy his body. He then shouted loudly in the market advertising himself: “I am here to sell my body, are there any buyers?” However, no matter how much he had advertized, he could not find any buyers. This is because, the maras had known about his intention. They then used their magical powers to cause everyone in the market not to hear what he was saying. Due to not being able to find any buyers, the Bodhisattva Always Crying One became very worried: “I am not going to find any buyers, hence, I am not going to get my teachings on the perfection of wisdom sutras!”

The god *Indra* also knew the intention of the Bodhisattva Always Crying One, who was trying to sell his body to receive teachings on the perfection of wisdom sutras. So *Indra* wanted to test his resolve to see if he had really meant what he had said. So *Indra* manifested as a Brahmin, went to the Bodhisattva Always Crying One and said: “I need some offerings for my rituals: some human flesh and blood, a human heart, a human bone and its marrow. Are you willing to sell me what I need?”

The Bodhisattva Always Crying One agreed, who then began to cut off a piece of flesh from his leg and bled himself for the blood. Since Indra in the disguise of the Brahmin also wanted bone and marrow, he then thought to break his leg bone with a piece of rock. When he was about to do that, a queen with an entourage of 500 female attendants were nearby and saw what was happening. Curious, she went up to him and asked what he was doing.

The Bodhisattva Always Crying One then said: "I am selling my body to get offerings to present to Bodhisattva Chöpa to receive teachings on the perfection of wisdom sutra. The queen and her entourage all felt very inspired by what they had heard. They then generated great faith [in the Bodhisattva Always Crying One]. The queen then said to him: "You do not need to do that, I will provide all that you need." The queen and her entourage then made many offerings to the Bodhisattva Always Crying One. They then rode on the chariot together to look for the Bodhisattva Chöpa.

Indra was not an ordinary god, but was someone who possessed the speech of the power of truth. Hence, whatever prayers he uttered can be actualized. Indra was also convinced of the Bodhisattva Always Crying One's resolve to receive the teachings on the perfection of wisdom sutra. He then uttered the power of truth, through the power of such an invocation, the Bodhisattva Always Crying One's health [and injuries] were then fully restored.

As the Bodhisattva Always Crying One together with the queen and her entourage of 500 female attendants were nearing the abode where the Bodhisattva Chöpa was residing, he then thought: "We had better get off our horses and chariots, as it would be inappropriate to ride all the way in." They then walked the remaining distance.

When they reached the land called Incense Smell where the Bodhisattva Chöpa was residing, the Bodhisattva Always Crying One saw the place [appearing] like a pure land, in it there was a very beautiful celestial mansion with a pavilion. This was where the perfection of wisdom sutra was housed and worshiped. He also saw the abode where the Bodhisattva Chöpa was staying.

The Bodhisattva Always Crying One then went to the mansion where the perfection of wisdom sutra was placed and made many wondrous offerings in honor of the perfection of wisdom sutra. The Bodhisattva Chöpa was [appearing] in the aspect of a lay person with an entourage of many females. When the Bodhisattva Always Crying One finally met the Bodhisattva Chöpa, he prostrated, paid homage, offered his body and his entire being to him. The Bodhisattva Chöpa then asked him: "You have a queen and 500 attendants, are you also able to offer them to me as well?" The Bodhisattva Always Crying One then said: "If I can offer my body, what else can I not offer? Of course!" He then offered everything to the Bodhisattva Chöpa. Even though he had offered everything to the Bodhisattva Chöpa, the latter offered everything back to him.

However, the Bodhisattva Chöpa did not confer the teachings on the perfection of wisdom sutra immediately. In fact, on that very same night, he went into meditative equipoise. Before that, he said: "I will remain in concentration for seven years." So for seven years, he did not confer any teachings that the Bodhisattva Always Crying One was seeking.

So the Bodhisattva Chöpa entered into concentration and remained in it for seven years. During that entire period all day and night, the Bodhisattva Always Crying One and his entourage circumambulated the abode where the Bodhisattva Chöpa was absorbed in concentration.

After seven years had passed, the Bodhisattva Chöpa then gave teachings on the perfection of wisdom sutra to the Bodhisattva Always Crying One. As a result of receiving this teaching, the Bodhisattva Always Crying One was able to see the truth, realize emptiness directly.

This is not a fairy tale story, but an actual historical account of what had actually taken place. If one reads the Short perfection of wisdom sutra in eight thousand stanzas, one would find this account being mentioned there towards the last few chapters.

The message of this account:

From this story, one can see how precious the perfection of wisdom sutras are. They are precious due to the subject matter, the main subject being the natural perfection of wisdom, which is the object: emptiness.

One has to really think about what it is that keeps one suffering continually, constantly binding one in one's own samsara. If one sees this, then one will know, that it is only through realizing emptiness, the natural perfection of wisdom, that can free one from one's own samsara. Therefore, when one sees the purpose and has the opportunity to learn about emptiness, one will do so with joy and enthusiasm.

To realize the perfection of wisdom, besides the teachings themselves, one also need a teacher, someone who can teach one the perfection of wisdom.

*Particularly, if one can find someone one has a karmic connection with,
Due to the karmic affinity and connection,
His explanations will be clearer and easier for one to understand.*

This historical account is that of a Bodhisattva, someone who already possesses bodhicitta. One just need to see how hard he had had to work to realize the perfection of wisdom. If he had needed so much sacrifice and hard work, then one has nothing [in comparison]. Since one does not possess bodhicitta nor is anywhere near to possessing it, then obviously one has got to work even harder.

Hence, one should put in hard work and never be discouraged. This is because, what this module provides is a start to understanding a little bit about the subject matter of the perfection of wisdom sutra, the Eight categories and the seventy topics taught in the perfection of wisdom sutras. Of course, this is not an easy task, hence, one should all the more work hard at it and never give up!

Khenrinpoche: Never give up! Never give up!

To be able to really understand and realize the perfection of wisdom, one needs a lot of merit and much purification. Hence, in the sutras itself, it says:

Therefore, honor and worship the perfection of wisdom sutras, write it out, make offerings and prostrate to it and so on.

One of the reasons [this is mentioned is because,] one needs a lot of merit and powerful purification.

Generating faith in the perfection of wisdom sutra and practicing it:

In the 6th topic of the Knower of Paths, the Mahayana path of meditation of belief, the belief here refers to believing in the mothers to be the source of one's and others' aims. It was mentioned there that, making offerings to the perfection of wisdom sutras is the same as making offerings to the Buddhas themselves. The main reason is this:

The Buddhas came from actualizing the perfection of wisdom. To do so, one has to rely on the perfection of wisdom sutras, the subject matter contained in them is emptiness. Hence, when one worships and makes offerings to the perfection of wisdom sutras, the merit is similar to making offerings to Buddha himself.

For this reason, therefore, whether it is a perfection of wisdom sutra, any other sutras or Dharma texts, including the texts one is studying in order to practice it, one has to respect all such texts. As it is mentioned in the trainings after one has taken refuge in the Three Jewels that, one has to respect the Dharma texts, regarding them as the Dharma Jewel itself, by putting them in a clean and respectful place. If possible, one should also make offerings to the texts. Of course, all such acts would have to depend on whether one has the mental factor of belief in the first place. If one has belief, then one would be able to do all such things. When one does so, one would accumulate immeasurable merit. With an amassing of these, it is said that, one would come to understand and realize the emptiness of the perfection of wisdom.

One already knows all such things. However, knowing it is one thing, while being able to actually do it is another. Merely knowing that there are benefits and what ought to be done itself does not bring any benefit at all. It is only when one actually does it, that one gets the benefit. It is said in the teachings that, the entire purpose of studying is to put what has been studied into practice. It is mentioned in the Lam Rim that, if one does not practice what one hears and learns, then such learning or hearing has no benefits whatsoever. As is clearly mentioned in the Lam Rim that, there is no such thing as a Dharma to be learned or studied and another Dharma to be practiced.

***To think that what one has learned is not meant for practice,
That there are some other special instructions to be practiced is wrong, a huge mistake.
Whatever is learned is meant for practice, whatever one practices is that which one has learned.***

Clarifying that the topics that illustrate the exalted knowers are not necessarily the knowers themselves:

Khenrinpoche: Whatever is an Exalted Knower of Aspects is necessarily a Knower of Paths. An exalted knower in the continuum of a Buddha superior is necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects and is also necessarily a Knower of Paths.

Khenrinpoche: There are 9 topics that illustrates or characterizes the Knower of Bases. Do you think all 9 are necessarily the Knower of Bases? I don't think so.

Student 1: If [these topics are not necessarily Knower of Bases, then] why are they listed under [the topics of the] Knower of Bases?

Khenrinpoche: If you remember what I've said about the Exalted Knower of Aspects, there are 10 topics that illustrate or characterize the Exalted Knower of Aspects. There are 2 ways in which these topics illustrate or characterize the Exalted Knower of Aspects:

- 1) Through the presentation/ illustration of the characteristics of object, one understands the subject, and
- 2) Through the presentation/ illustration of the characteristics of cause, one understands the result.

Through these 2 illustrations, one comes to better understand what is being illustrated, in this context, what the Exalted Knower of Aspects is. For example, the 1st topic that illustrates the Exalted Knower of Aspects is mind generation. Through understanding mind generation as a cause, one comes to understand the result of mind generation, [the Exalted Knower of Aspects].

Hence, [even though] mind generation [is one of the topics of the Exalted Knower of Aspects,] this is not saying that the mind generation [of all the paths] is necessarily an Exalted Knower of Aspects. Therefore, something which is an illustration is not necessarily that which is being illustrated. For example, when one sees smoke, one comes to understand there is fire. But smoke itself [the illustration] is not fire [that which is illustrated]. Hence, this is not saying that the object is the subject, that the cause is the effect.

How to learn through homework:

Khenrinpoche: When [a student presents the homework,] there will be some points that are correct and others that are mistakes. But this is good. Everybody should put in effort to do the homework. Of course, everybody will make mistakes, it is through making mistakes that you learn.

Sometimes, you don't want to [lay open] your mistakes and pretend that you know. You will not learn much.

So, when I say to [present your work,] you should [volunteer to do so] immediately. All [of you] are worried about showing your mistakes. We all make mistakes. Of course when you make mistakes, then I will have to say that it is a mistake. You just have to accept it. From there, you will learn.

Homework is very important. After thinking about [the answer,] you write down what you think is the correct answer. But when you come here [to present,] you realize that it is not correct. From there then you learn. In this way [of being corrected,] you will never forget. Otherwise, it will be very difficult. If I [merely explain about] something, you think you understand, say, Knower of Paths and [its shared characteristics and so on,] but after 2 or 3 days, [all such understanding will become] zero again as you will forget everything. But if you do the homework, because you have thought a lot and have [those thoughts] written down, then from there, when you read about them and discuss them, it will become much clearer. So homework is important. Of course, this topic is not easy as there are a lot to learn.

Explaining the Four Applications after the Three Exalted Knowers-**4) Complete aspects application, the 1st of the Four applications:**

Definition: A bodhisattva's yoga conjoined with the wisdom cultivating a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers. **Boundary:** Mahayana path of accumulation through the end of the continuum.

Simply stated, if it is a Complete aspects application, it is necessarily a path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva. If it is a path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva, it is necessarily a Complete aspects application. [Hence, Complete aspects application and a path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva are synonymous/ mutually inclusive].

Complete aspects here mean all the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers without any missing. Hence, Complete aspects application is a mind that meditates on the aspects of these 3 exalted knowers.

Khenrinpoche: What do Bodhisattvas meditate on? *They meditate on the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers.*

<p>Khenrinpoche: How do Bodhisattvas meditate on the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers? They do so either: a) Serially/ individually or b) Completely gathering them together through a compendium of all the aspects.</p>
<p>In the case of a <i>Complete aspects application</i>, this is a mind that meditates on a compendium of the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers, it is not something that meditates on the aspects individually. Rather, it meditates on a compendium of the aspects.</p>
<p>A <i>compendium</i> means to summarize/ bring together all the aspects. Since a Complete aspects application is a mind that cultivates a compendium of the aspects of the 3 exalted knower, then <i>Gyaltsab Je's commentary on the 'Ornament of Essential Explanation (rNam bshad snying po rgyan)</i> ' explains this to mean:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Meditating on the aspects with a mind that is a union of calm abiding and special insight.</i></p>
<p>Since this is a scriptural authority, then it becomes a source/ citation for asserting that: <i>A Bodhisattva necessarily has calm abiding and special insight.</i></p>
<p>The reason this is so is just as stated: This is because, they cultivate a compendium of the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers, which means to cultivate these with a union of calm abiding and special insight.</p>
<p>As to [what] cultivating a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers [with a union of calm abiding and special insight] is, it is not clearly stated in any of the texts. Hence, it is rather challenging.</p>
<p>My own teacher <i>Gen Lobsang</i> commented on this by using an example of going to the top of a building looking at the view below. One sees everything in its entirety and not merely one or two buildings.</p>
<p>Likewise, when the Bodhisattva cultivates a compendium of a the 3 exalted knowers as a Complete aspects application, it is not looking at one or two aspects individually, but completely engages all the aspects collectively in its entirety.</p>
<p>Although the Complete aspects application is a mind that cultivates a compendium of the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers, this does not mean that it is a mind that realizes each of the 173 aspects. There is no necessity of realization.</p>
<p>In essence, a Complete aspects application is a practice of the Bodhisattva that cultivates a compendium/ summary/ condensation of all 173 aspects of the 3 exalted knowers through a union of calm abiding and special insight.</p>
<p>Since this is all that is stated about its meaning, one then has to analyze further what it means.</p>
<p>Student 2: Can one say that the union of calm abiding and special insight [of the Complete aspects application] does not necessarily refer to a union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness? Khenrinpoche: Yes.</p>
<p>Student 3: What does the <i>Bodhisattva Yoga</i> refer to? Khenrinpoche: <i>Yogi</i> refers to a person who possesses a <i>yoga (Tib. Naljor)</i>. <i>Nal</i> refers to the natural state, in the ultimate sense, it refers to the final nature of phenomena, the clear light nature of the mind in that, the afflictions have never abided in that final nature of the mind. <i>Jor</i> means to connect/ realize.</p>
<p>A real yogi is someone who has realized this. Such a person is a yogi/ practitioner, this is the real meaning of practitioner.</p>
<p>In the terminological division of the perfection of wisdom, the 1st is the Natural perfection of wisdom, one can take this to be the meaning of <i>Nal</i>, the natural state of the final nature of all phenomena [object].</p>
<p>The mind that realizes [this natural perfection of wisdom] directly is the path perfection of wisdom [subject]. The person who possesses such a yoga, [the path perfection of wisdom that realizes the natural perfection of wisdom] is thus the yogi.</p>
<p>This is the final, highest meaning of <i>yoga</i> and <i>yogi</i>. However, yoga [in general] can be taken to mean, for example, someone who practices generosity without any self cherishing attitude, completely for others' sake. He can be called a <i>yogi</i>.</p>
<p>One can say that a person who practices without being attracted to the happiness of the present life nor to the happiness of cyclic existence is also a practitioner/ <i>yogi</i>.</p>
<p>Perhaps, one can take <i>Nal</i> to mean liberation and enlightenment, the final/ highest level of happiness. <i>Jor</i> then means to connect with, move towards and actualize that. The person who possesses such a mind is thus a <i>yogi</i>.</p>
<p>In the context of this definition of the Complete aspects application, the Bodhisattva's yoga refers to any practice in the continuum of a Bodhisattva. Hence, a Bodhisattva is necessarily a Bodhisattva yogi.</p>

Explaining the sequence of presentation of the applications:

<p>In the 1st 3 chapters of the Ornament for Clear Realizations, the aspects of 3 exalted knowers are presented individually: In Chapter 1, there is the Exalted Knower of Aspects, Chapter 2, there is the Knower of Paths, Chapter 3, the Knower of Bases.</p>
<p>The aspects of 3 exalted knowers are thus presented. However, these are not sufficient, one also needs to meditate/ cultivate the aspects of these 3 knowers. One's meditation must also be conjoined with the applications.</p>
<p>Momentary application is presented in Chapter 7. In essence, it is a mind of the Bodhisattva that has attained stability with respect to all aspects of the 3 exalted knower. It exists only for a very short time, at the end of the continuum of a sentient being. For Momentary application to arise, one must gain stability/ steadiness with respect to aspects of the 3 knowers.</p>

Hence, before one achieves Momentary application, one must cultivate Serial application, which is presented in Chapter 6. The purpose of cultivating Serial application is for someone who has yet to gain stability with respect to the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers to do so.
Before one can achieve [the result of] Serial application, one must cultivate and achieve its basis, which is Peak application.
One cultivates Peak application for the purpose of <i>gaining mastery</i> over the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers.
Before one can cultivate Peak application, a cultivation which has gained mastery over the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers, one must hence meditate on the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers. Hence, one begins with the Complete aspects application. This is the reason Complete aspects application is the 1 st of the 4 applications presented.
This is how one explains the 4 applications, how before achieving the particular Momentary application as shown in Chapter 7, one must cultivate Serial application shown in this context, before that, one must cultivate Peak application shown in this context, and before that, one must have Complete aspects application shown in this context.

4-1) Knower-aspect of the antidote class indicated in this context:

Definition: an exalted knower that is able to quell its discordant class. [In general,] for it to be a knower aspects of the antidote class, it has to be a wisdom/ path/ exalted knower that is able to quell its discordant class.
However, for it to be a Knower-aspects of the antidote class <i>indicated in this context</i> , it has to be a path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva conjoined with a wisdom that cultivates on any aspects of the three exalted knowers. This then becomes an exalted knower that is able to quell its discordant class, a Knower-aspect of the antidote class indicated in this context.
Division: There are primarily 3: 4-1-1) Knower-aspect that is a knower of bases, 4-1-2) knower-aspect that is a knower of paths, and 4-1-3) knower-aspect that is an exalted knower of all aspects.
The following 3 pairs of knowers are synonymous: a) A knower-aspect that is a Knower of Bases <i>and</i> Knower of Bases, b) a knower-aspect that is a Knower of Paths <i>and</i> Knower of Paths, and c) a knower-aspect that is an Exalted Knower of Aspects <i>and</i> Exalted Knower of Aspects.
How both the object-aspects and subject-aspects are aspects to be cultivated:
Aspects can be divided into object-aspects and subject-aspects. For example, [the object of meditation:] mind realizing impermanence, the object-aspect is <i>impermanence</i> , whereas the subject-aspect is the <i>mind</i> itself realizing impermanence.
There are those who assert that object-aspect is to be meditated on but not the subject-aspect. There are also those who assert that it is only the subject-aspect that is to be meditated on but not the object-aspect.
Our system posits that both the object-aspects and subject-aspects are to be meditated upon.
Using the above example, the mind [subject-aspect] that meditates on impermanence is not only that which is to be cultivated, one is also meditating on its object-aspect, impermanence. Therefore, when one meditates on impermanence, one also needs to cultivate the mind [subject-aspect] that meditates on impermanence.
If one asserts that object-aspects are not to be cultivated but merely the subject-aspects, then there would arise the fallacy of: Emptiness is not an object of meditation, whereas emptiness is the main object of meditation of, say, the Bodhisattvas.
If one asserts that subject-aspects are not to be cultivated but merely the object-aspects, then again there would arise another fallacy that: Great compassion is not an object of meditation of the Bodhisattvas, whereas it is.
2 ways of meditation: a) subject-aspect realizing the object-aspect, b) subject-aspect transforming/ generating into the entity of object-aspect.
Even though there are different manners of meditation, but both the object-aspects and the subject-aspects of all such objects of meditation are to be cultivated upon. Using the above example: Impermanence is the object-aspect that is to be meditated upon, one is meditating on the aspects of impermanence, its [entity], characteristics and so on.
For a mind that meditates upon and realizing impermanence, it is taking impermanence as its object-aspect and meditates on [and eventually realizing] it. The mind does not transform into the entity of impermanence.
When one is cultivating great compassion, one is meditating on great compassion [as its object-aspect], however, the purpose of such meditation is to eventually transform one's mind [subject-aspect] into the entity of great compassion [itself].
Therefore, even though these two types of meditation have different ways/ manners of meditation, but both object-aspects and subject-aspects are objects [of meditation] to be cultivated upon.
The Knower-aspect of the antidote class indicated in this context is a meditation where the subject-aspect transforms into the entity of the object-aspect:
In the case of the Knower-aspect of the antidote class indicated in this context, the cultivation is that of the [subject-aspect]/ knower-aspect/ mind being transformed into the entity of the object-aspect.

173 aspects of the 3 Exalted Knowers:

In Chapter 4 of the <i>Ornament for Clear Realizations</i> [4 th of the 8 Categories], the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers are shown. There are: 4-1-1) 27 aspects of the Knower of Bases, 4-1-2) 36 aspects of the Knower of Paths, and 4-1-3) 110 aspects of the Exalted Knower of Aspects. Hence, there are 173 aspects of the 3 exalted knowers in total.
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Further divisions the 27 knower-aspects of the Knower of bases:

4-1-1) The 27 knower-aspects of the Knower of Bases are shown in relation to the 4 Noble Truths:
4-1-1-1) 4 knower-aspects of true suffering: These are the 4 knower-aspects [subject-aspects] of the Knower of Bases that realize the 4 characteristics of true suffering – impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless.
4-1-1-2) 4 knower-aspects of true origins: These are the 4 knower-aspects of the Knower of Bases that realize the 4 characteristics of true origins – cause, origin, strong production and condition.
4-1-1-3) 4 knower-aspects of true cessations: These are the 4 knower-aspects of the Knower of Bases that realize the 4 characteristics of true cessations – cessation, pacification, high auspiciousness and definite emergence.
4-1-1-4) 15 knower-aspects of true paths: These are the 15 knower-aspects of the Knower of Bases that realize the 15 characteristics of true path. These 15 knower-aspects are again divided into 3:
4-1-1-4-1) 4 aspects of true paths of the uncontaminated [non-conceptual] paths of seeing, which are antidotes to the afflictive obscurations: path, suitability, achievement and deliverance.
4-1-1-4-2) 5 aspects of true paths of the contaminated [conceptual] paths of meditation, which are antidotes to the apprehension/ conception of external forms: These are shown by certain phrases in the perfection of wisdom sutras.
4-1-1-4-3) 6 aspects of true paths of the uncontaminated [non-conceptual] paths of seeing, which are antidotes to the apprehension/ conception of external forms: These are also shown by certain phrases in the perfection of wisdom sutras.

Further divisions of the 36 knower-aspects of the Knower of paths:

4-1-2) The 36 aspects of the Knower of Paths are also shown in relation to the 4 Noble Truths:
4-1-2-1) 8 knower-aspects of true origins, 4-1-2-2) 7 knower-aspects of true paths, 4-1-2-3) 5 knower-aspects of true sufferings, 4-1-2-4) 16 knower-aspects of true cessations.

Further divisions of the 110 knower-aspects of the Exalted Knower of Aspects:

These 110 knower-aspects of the Exalted Knower of Aspects are divided into 3:
4-1-3-1) 37 aspects of an Exalted Knower of Aspects concordant with Hearers. These 37 aspects will be explained.
4-1-3-2) 34 aspects of an Exalted Knower of Aspects concordant with Bodhisattvas.
4-1-3-3) 39 uncommon aspects of an Exalted Knower of Aspects.

Possibilities between the Exalted Knower of Aspects and the Knower of Paths:

Student 1: There are 3 possibilities:

- 1) Something which is an Exalted Knower of Aspects but not a Knower of Paths: Not possible.
- 2) Something which is an Knower of Paths but not an Exalted Knower of Aspects: The wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior is a Knower of Paths. It is not an Exalted Knower of Aspects as it is not [included within the continuum of] a Buddha superior.
- 3) Something which is both an Exalted Knower of Aspects and a Knower of Paths: Great compassion in the continuum of Buddha superior is an Exalted Knower of Aspects as it exists in the continuum of a Buddha superior. It is a Knower of Paths as it is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior.
- 4) Something which is neither an Exalted Knower of Aspects nor a Knower of Paths: The wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Hinayanist. This is because, it is a path in the continuum of a Hinayana superior.

Possibilities between the Knower of Paths and the Knower of Bases: 4 possibilities.

- 1) Something which is a Knower of Paths but not a Knower of Bases: Mind generation in the continuum of a Mahayana superior is a Knower of Paths. It is not a Knower of Bases because it does not fulfill the definition of the Knower of Bases.
- 2) Something which is a Knower of Bases but not a Knower of Paths: The wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons in the continuum of a Hinayanist is a Knower of Bases. This is because, it is a path in the continuum of a Hinayanist. It is not a Knower of Paths because is a path [in the continuum] of a Mahayana superior.
- 3) Something which is both a Knower of Paths and Knower of Bases: The wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons in the continuum of a Mahayana superior. It is Knower of Paths because it is a path in the continuum of a Mahayana superior. It is a Knower of Bases because it abides within the Hinayana class of realizations.
- 4) Something which is neither a Knower of Paths nor a Knower of Bases: The wisdom directly realizing emptiness of true existence in the continuum of a Hearer superior. This is because, it does not fulfill the definition of the Knower of Bases, as the Knower of Bases is only the [realization of] selflessness and not the realization of the emptiness of true existence. Even though he may practice it, but this does not fulfill the definition required to be a Knower of Bases.

Khenrinpoche: What you said is correct. In the definition [of a Knower of bases,] there are 2 parts. Which part of the definition is missing? **Student 1:** Both.

Khenrinpoche: The wisdom conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing selflessness is missing?

Student 1: This is a wisdom directly realizing emptiness of true existence.

Khenrinpoche: I understand that. But that [wisdom directly realizing selflessness] is missing?

Khenrinpoche: The wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons exists in the continuum of Mahayana superior. This is a Knower of Bases as well as a Knower of Paths. **Student 1:** Yes.

Khenrinpoche: It is a Knower of Paths because it is conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. It is also a Knower of Bases because it is conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons. **Student 1:** Yes.

Khenrinpoche: Since this is so, then in the case of a Hearer superior who has direct realization of emptiness, why is such a mind not directly conjoined with the mind directly realizing selflessness?

Student 1: Did you not say before that, [the Hinayana superiors] can practice [direct realization of emptiness] but that does not mean it is a Knower of Bases?

Khenrinpoche: I am not saying that this is a Knower of Bases. There are 2 parts to the definition. How can the [wisdom directly realizing selflessness] be missing?

Ven Gyurme: Why is [the Hearer superior's wisdom] not conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons?

Student 1: To whom does the [Hearer superior] who abides in the Hinayana class of realizations takes as the similar objects of observation and aspects? This is because, the Mahayana superior who abides in the Hinayana class of realizations takes the Hinayanist's similar observed object and aspects.

Khenrinpoche: The wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of, say, a Hearers superior, is a wisdom of realization that abides within a Hinayana class of realizations. It is not a Hinayana path just because it is a path in the continuum of a Hearer. Hence, the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Hearer superior is a Hinayana path because, such a wisdom abides within a Hinayana class of realizations.

In the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior, for example, there is a wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons as well. The object of observation of this mind is the *person*. The aspect of this wisdom is the *selflessness of persons*. [These observed object and aspect] are similar to what a Hinayana superior realizes. For example, when a Hearers realizes a selflessness of persons, he focuses on the observed object, *person*, while his aspects is that of the *selflessness of persons*.

Hence, for the wisdom directly realizing selflessness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior, such a particular mind has a similar observed object and similar aspects to the Hearer superior. The selflessness of persons is the main object of meditation of a Hinayanist.

4) Complete aspects application:

Simply stated, any path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva is a Complete aspects application.
In general, a knower-aspect [subject-aspect] of the antidote class is any path that is able to quell/ overcome/ destroy its discordant class. In particular here in the Complete aspects application, when referring to the knower-aspects of the antidote class indicated in this context, it is referring to the knower-aspects of the antidote class in the [path] of a Bodhisattva .
In Chapter 4 of the Ornament for Clear Realizations, when the [1 st topic of the] knower-aspects of the antidote class 4-1) is shown, there are mainly 3 [divisions]:
4-1-1) Knower-aspect that is the Knower of Bases, 4-1-2) Knower-aspect that is the Knower of Paths and 4-1-3) Knower-aspect that is an Exalted Knower of Aspects.
In general, when object-aspects of the 3 knowers are enumerated, there are 173 object-aspects. Therefore, there are 173 knower-aspects that meditates on these 173 object-aspects.
The way these 173 knower-aspects meditate on these 173 object-aspects, is through removing all superimpositions with regards to these 173 object-aspects. This is the reason why the knower-aspects of the antidote class is that which are able to quell its discordant class, by removing all superimpositions with regards to the objects these Bodhisattvas are meditating on.
Likewise, these Bodhisattvas are also cultivating/ meditating on the knower-aspects, and not merely the object-aspects.
Of the 173 aspects of the 3 exalted knowers, 4-1-3) 110 aspects pertain to the Exalted Knower of Aspects. Among these:
4-1-3-1) 37 are aspects of the Exalted Knower of Aspects concordant with those existing in Hearers. 4-1-3-2) 34 are aspects of the Exalted Knower of Aspects concordant with those existing in Bodhisattvas. 4-1-3-3) 39 are uncommon aspects of an Exalted Knower of Aspects.
4-1-3-1) The 37 aspects of the Exalted Knower of Aspects concordant with those existing in Hearers are also called the: 37 harmonies with enlightenment.

4-1-3-1) The 37 harmonies with enlightenment:

These are explained in the context of an exalted knower who has already entered the path. There are 7 divisions:
4-1-3-1-1) 4 close placements of mindfulness: on the body, feelings, minds and phenomena. From the perspective of the paths cultivated, these 4 close placements of mindfulness are mainly cultivated on the small level path of accumulation.
4-1-3-1-2) 4 correct abandonings: These are mainly cultivated on the middling level path of accumulation.
4-1-3-1-3) 4 legs of magical emanations: These are mainly cultivated on the great level path of accumulation.
4-1-3-1-4) 5 powers: These are mainly cultivated on the heat and peak levels path of preparation.
4-1-3-1-5) 5 strengths: Mainly cultivated on the forbearance and supreme mundane quality levels path of preparation.
4-1-3-1-6) 7 branches of enlightenment: According to the <i>Ornament of the Mahayana sutras</i> and <i>Differentiating the Middle from the Extremes</i> , these are mainly cultivated on the path of seeing.
4-1-3-1-7) 8 branches of arya paths: These are mainly cultivated on the path of meditation.
The enlightenment here is posited as the final state of full enlightenment. Hence, these 37 cultivations are that which are harmonious with full enlightenment. One can understand this to mean that these 37 cultivations are that which are favorable/ concordant causes for actualizing full enlightenment.

4-1-3-1-1) 4 close placements of mindfulness:

4-1-3-1-1-1) Its objects of observation:

4-1-3-1-1-1-1) Objects of the close placements of mindfulness on the body:

<p>3 Objects of observation: a) Outer body, b) Inner body and c) Both outer and inner body. [In general, body here refers to <i>all forms</i> included in the divisions of functioning thing into form, consciousness and non-associated compositional factor. This body/ form itself has 2 divisions into external and internal forms].</p>
<p>Hence, do not take body here to mean just the physical body, but one must understand it to mean <i>all forms</i>.</p>
<p>a) Outer body: refers to all [external] forms which are forms not included in the continuum of a person/ not conjoined with consciousness. There are 5 external form sources of visible form, sound, odor, taste and tangible source.</p>
<p>b) Inner body: In the presentation of mind and awareness, for a consciousness to be generated, 3 conditions must be present. One of these is the uncommon empowering condition.</p>
<p>The uncommon empowering condition for the generation of an eye consciousness would then be the eye sense power. The uncommon empowering condition for the generation of an ear consciousness is the ear sense power, and so on. Therefore:</p>
<p>Inner body refers to the 5 sense powers [which are the internal forms from the division of forms into external and internal].</p>
<p>Significance of the 3 conditions for generation of a consciousness to help understand the Law of causality:</p>
<p>To generate, say, an eye consciousness apprehending form, one needs the 3 conditions. This is significant as this shows the [existence of] causality. This is because, such a consciousness does not arise from nowhere. The 3 conditions must gather:</p>
<p>a) Observed object condition: here an external visible form. b) An uncommon empowering condition: here, the eye sense power. These alone are insufficient, a consciousness must exist immediately preceding the generation of such an eye consciousness apprehending form, so there is also the: c) Immediately preceding condition.</p>
<p>It is only when these 3 conditions gather that, will an eye consciousness apprehending visible form be generated.</p>
<p>If one analyzes, when an eye consciousness apprehending visible form is generated, it is generated into the aspect of visible form, it is therefore aspected. For example, an eye consciousness apprehending blue is generated into the aspect of blue. What causes it to be generated into the aspect of blue is all due to the observed object condition, visible blue.</p>
<p>Hence, when an eye consciousness apprehending visible form is generated, it is generated into the aspect of the visible form it is apprehending.</p>
<p>The eye consciousness can only apprehend visible form. It cannot apprehend sound, touch, taste and so forth. This is because, its uncommon empowering condition, the eye sense power, can only enable the seeing of visible form. It does not possess the capacity to enable the eye consciousness to apprehend smell, touch and so on.</p>
<p>When an eye consciousness apprehending visible form is generated, it is able to apprehend and understand its object, visible form, clearly. Hence, there are the characteristics of clarity/ luminosity and awareness/ knowing.</p>
<p>The reason it is able to be clearly cognizant of its object is due to its immediately preceding condition. This is because, the eye consciousness apprehending visible form is a continuation of a former moment of consciousness, which is another clear and knowing. Hence, the eye consciousness apprehending visible form is able to clearly cognize/ understand/ know its object.</p>
<p>Whereas, external forms like tables, chairs and so forth cannot cognize anything as these are not clear and knowing. This is because, their cause which preceded its own existence, say a table, is not another clear and knowing.</p>
<p>Understanding these 3 conditions is not merely about being able to state them. One has to analyze. One of its implication is that, even the mere generation/ production of one moment of eye consciousness, many causes and conditions must gather.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Since your eye consciousness is clear and knowing, why is it that your eye consciousness cannot hear sound? One can only say that such a consciousness cannot hear.</p>
<p>The eye sense power, the uncommon empowering condition for the generation of the eye consciousness apprehending visible form, together with the other 4 sense powers, are the inner body.</p>
<p>c) Both inner and outer body: These are the forms that serve as the bases of the sense powers, that is, the 5 sense organs.</p>
<p>It is [firstly] called inner body because, compared to an external form source which is not conjoined with a continuum, [these 5 senses organs are considered] as an inner body. It is then called outer body because, in relation to the inner body of the sense powers which are much more subtle, these [sense organs] are more coarse, hence are called outer body.</p>
<p>To make it simple, there are just an outer and an inner body. The body which is conjoined with consciousness is an inner body. The body which is not conjoined with consciousness is an outer body.</p>
<p>In essence, all forms are objects of observation of the close placements of mindfulness of the body.</p>

4-1-3-1-1-2) Objects of observation of the close placements of mindfulness of feelings:

The 3 objects of observation are the 3 types of feelings: Pleasant, unpleasant and neutral.

4-1-3-1-1-3) Objects of observation of the close placements of mindfulness of minds:

Mind can be divided into main/ primary consciousnesses and mental factors. Of these two, minds here, [the objects of observation of the 4 close placements of mindfulness of minds] refer to the primary consciousnesses.

4-1-3-1-1-4) Objects of observation of the close placements of mindfulness of phenomena:

The objects of observation of the close placements of mindfulness of phenomena are all the 50 mental factors other than feelings. In general, there are 51 mental factors, if the mental factor of feeling is excluded, there are 50. These are included as phenomena here. Besides these, all the non-associated compositional factors and permanent phenomena are also included.

Just as all existences are objects of observation for calm abiding, likewise, in essence, all objects/ existences are objects of observation of the close placements of mindfulness.

4-1-3-1-1-2) Its manner of meditation:

4-1-3-1-1-2-1) Manner of meditation of the close placements of mindfulness of body:

This is done by investigating both the general and specific characteristics of the body.

General characteristics: According to the *Treasury of knowledge (Abhidharmkosha)*, when one cultivates the close placements of mindfulness of the body as the basis, one can meditate on its being impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless.

Specific characteristics: Meditating on the bodies' elements and that which arise from it, the evolutes.

Although the objects of observation of the close placements of mindfulness of the body are the 3 types of body, including those not conjoined with consciousness, but at the time of meditation, the primary object of observation is one's own contaminated body that is the result of karma and afflictions. Hence, such a body is true sufferings. Its cause is true origins.

4-1-3-1-1-2-2) Manner of meditation of the close placements of mindfulness of feelings:

General characteristics: Meditating on feelings as being impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless.

Specific characteristics: Meditating on the entity of experience.

4-1-3-1-1-3) Reasons for meditating:

One meditates on the 4 close placements of mindfulness to overcome the 4 erroneous conceptions:

a) Conceiving that which is impure to be pure, **b)** Conceiving that which is suffering to be pleasure, **c)** Conceiving that which is impermanent to be permanent and **d)** Conceiving that which is selfless to have a self.

a) When one meditates on the close placements of mindfulness on the body, one does so primarily focusing on it being impure: **this is to counter the erroneous conception of the body as being pure.**

b) When one meditates on the close placements of mindfulness of feelings, one does so primarily focusing on contaminated pleasures to be in the nature of suffering: **this is to counter the erroneous conception conceiving that which is suffering to be happiness.** The main practice is to continually remember that the pleasant feelings one experiences are actually suffering.

Hence, the main focus of the close placements of mindfulness on feelings is not merely feelings, but mainly the feelings of pleasure, which are actually contaminated pleasures.

This is because, in every moment of one's life, one is seeking happiness, specifically, the next experience of contaminated pleasure [after one has had the first moment of it]. This is what one is always looking for when one [moment of happiness finishes]. One works so hard every moment for it. One then accumulates so much negative karma just to experience them.

Even though such contaminated pleasures are suffering, one does not see it as such. One instinctively sees such experiences as very pleasurable and hence something one must possess.

By meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on feelings, one needs to realize for oneself that, such contaminated pleasant feelings that one seeks to acquire are in fact the source/ origin of sufferings.

How the 4 characteristics of true origins are related here to help overcome such erroneous conceptions:

Each of the 4 Noble Truths in turn have 4 characteristics. The reason there are these 16 aspects of the 4 Noble Truths is that, there are 16 wrong/ erroneous conceptions that need to be eradicated.

The 4 characteristics of true origins are **i) Cause, ii) Source, iii) Strong production and iv) Condition.**

True origins refer to the essential causes and conditions that result in suffering, primarily, one's contaminated appropriated aggregates of the body and mind. With these results, one experiences the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death.

<p>How the 4 aspects of true origins come about: This is an important point one must understand.</p>
<p>The cause of one's contaminated aggregates is true origins. But if one were to analyze and seek out the ultimate root cause, it is <i>ignorance</i>. Hence, the 1st characteristic of true origin is <i>i) Cause</i>, which refers to such an ultimate root cause, <i>ignorance</i>.</p>
<p>One's contaminated appropriated aggregates are the result of true origins, which are karma and afflictions. However, the root cause [of such karma and afflictions that results in one having such] contaminated existence is essentially ignorance. This is how the 1st characteristic, <i>Cause</i>, comes about. Here, it refers to the root cause [of ignorance] that results in such existence.</p>
<p><i>ii) Source or origin</i> (Tib. <i>kun 'byung</i>), literally the source of all. This refers primarily to <i>projecting karma</i>. With the root cause of ignorance, one accumulates projecting karma. When it ripens, it brings about myriad varieties of bodies and experiences of suffering. Hence, all such experiences essentially come from projecting karma. Hence, it is the origin of all.</p>
<p>From ignorance, there is karma. With karma, one is thrown/ propelled to appropriate a contaminated body and mind.</p>
<p><i>iv) Condition</i> (Tib. <i>Rkyen</i>). The root cause is ignorance, which leads to accumulating projecting karma. Merely having accumulated projecting karma does not mean that [its result], the contaminated appropriated aggregates, will [be issued forth]. Another condition must also gather. This primarily refers to the <i>condition of craving and grasping</i> of the 12 links.</p>
<p>This is because, it is these craving and grasping of the 12 links of dependent-origination that nourish the seed of projecting karma, giving it power to issue forth and bring about one's contaminated appropriated aggregates.</p>
<p>When the seed of the projecting karma is nourished to the point of no return, where the seed is definitely going to issue forth its result, projecting the next contaminated body, this becomes the link of <i>potential existence</i>, that is: <i>iii) Strong production</i>.</p>
<p>When one reflects on these 4 aspects of true origins, one can derive a deeper understanding. By reflecting on cause, origin, condition and strong production, one will then be reflecting on the 12 links of dependent-origination.</p>
<p>This explanation on the 4 aspects of true origin is related to the explanation on the close placements of mindfulness on feelings, primarily meditating on how all of one's experiences of pleasurable feelings are actually suffering.</p>
<p>The aspect of condition here refers to craving and grasping. Without these 2 conditions, even though one has already accumulated the projecting karma [in the past,] the seed of the projecting karma cannot be nourished, hence, it will not be able to issue forth its effect, a contaminated body.</p>
<p>Craving comes about through feelings, particularly, pleasant feelings. For one, when pleasant feelings arise, one definitely becomes attached to it and cannot bear to be parted from it.</p>
<p>When one becomes attached to such pleasant feelings, next comes craving. With craving, comes grasping. This then leads to [them nourishing the seed of the projecting karma to the point of no return, the arising of potential existence, which actualizes a contaminated body in cyclic existence].</p>
<p>When one cultivates the close placements of mindfulness on feelings, among the 3 types of feelings of pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings, one primarily focuses on pleasant feelings.</p>
<p>By understanding, realizing, and [becoming familiar with] remembering, that [such pleasant feelings] are suffering, one will then be able to overcome the erroneous conceptions conceiving that which is suffering to be happiness.</p>
<p><i>Khenrinpoche:</i> All of one's experiences of pleasant feelings are suffering. This is clear. However, what about the objects one utilizes in daily life: one's phone, house, furniture, car, food, clothes and so on? Are such objects themselves true suffering as well?</p>

Answering the question: Is the physical environment sentient beings abide in true suffering?

Student 1: Yes. This is because, it is a product of karma and afflictions which result in appearances to sentient beings, both in terms of, [in this case, the inner and outer bodies]. Hence, appearances to sentient beings include the environment they are born into, which are the results of past actions, karma, as well as of course, their afflictions. [Hence, these are true sufferings].

Student 2: Not all things around us are true sufferings, only those that produce feelings, especially pleasant feelings, which are the conditions for [generating] attachment, craving and grasping. These in turn nourishes the seeds of karma which gives it power to issue forth contaminated aggregates.

What space is and whether it is true suffering:

Khenrinpoche: Give an example of something that would not produce feelings. **Student 2:** Space, nirvana. No feelings.

Khenrinpoche: When you see cloudy days for a month without any sunshine, then one day you see sunny day with blue sky...

Student 2: This is not space, this is weather... **Khenrinpoche:** You don't see blue sky? Blue space?

Student 2: I have feelings for sky, clouds, weather, but no feelings for free space. **Ven Gyurme:** Do you like big house or small house? **Student 2:** I like big house, but that is not space but a big house...

Khenrinpoche: When you see the sky you enjoy it, don't you? **Student 2:** I do. But it is sky and not space.

Khenrinpoche: What is the difference between space and sky? **Student 2:** Nothing exists in space, no objects, no sky but free space. It is an abstraction.

Khenrinpoche: You have no feelings for space but you have feelings for sky? **Student 2:** Yes. To me it is different.

Khenrinpoche: For me, it is the opposite. I enjoy space but I don't know how to enjoy the sky. You are able to move because of space and not so much because of the sky, isn't it? Due to [the existence of] space, you are able to move [around], if there's no space, you cannot move [around], how are you going to enjoy [moving around without the presence of space]?

Student 2: Never thought about it that way...so now I have a feeling, now I am suffering...space makes me suffer...!

Khenrinpoche: I think the opposite way:

*Space is something we can use. When you say 'sky', it is just the label.
On the [basis of] space you label 'sky', 'sky' is nothing else [other than that]. Space [has functions].
Due to it, there can be darkness and light. If there is no space, then there cannot be darkness, light [and so on].*

Therefore, we can use space. But whether it is an object of attachment, we can discuss about that. **Student 2:** So space is suffering? **Khenrinpoche:** Everything is suffering: left, right, up, down...wherever we live in, nothing is perfect...!

How external forms are true sufferings and how these are purified of being true sufferings:

One's contaminated appropriated physical and mental aggregates are a very good example of true suffering. It is very clear that it is true suffering. This is because, on the basis of these, one has to endure birth, aging, sickness, death and so forth.
One utilizes many objects, these can all be included in the 5 types of [external] form [sources] of visible form, sound, smell, taste and touch. The main question is, are these true sufferings or not?
Perhaps for ordinary beings under the control of karma and afflictions, the objects of utilization for such beings, Whether these are sources of form, sound, smell, taste or touch, are all true suffering.
If one examines the objects of utilization for ordinary beings who are under the control of karma and afflictions, such objects induces suffering when they come into contact with and utilizes it.
Perhaps it is better to say that the objects of utilization for ordinary beings are true suffering. When one is an ordinary being under the control of afflictions, objects like forms and so on that appear to one are said to be true suffering.
However, when one's mind is purified, freed and separated from the afflictions, One can also say that the forms that appear to one then is also purified of one's afflictions.
Comparing the two modes of appearances of [external] forms: When one's mind is still not purified of the afflictions, whatever forms that appear has its own mode of appearance. When one's mind is purified of the afflictions, although the same form may appear, but its mode of appearance will be different.

The reason that external forms are true sufferings:

When one is an ordinary person whose mind is under the control of karma and afflictions, coming into contact and experiencing [external] forms induces suffering . This is the reason for asserting that [external] forms are true sufferings.
However, when one whose mind is purified of the afflictions, even though one may then come into contact with the same [external] form, but it would no longer induce suffering. Hence, for one at that time, [external] form is not true suffering.
Experiences of an [external] form before and after the realization of emptiness: Before one realizes emptiness, whatever appears to one, appears as truly existent right there from its own side. After one realizes emptiness, one experiences objects as being like illusions. Even though forms appear, but one has the appearances of these as being like illusions.
In <i>Asanga's</i> higher Abhidharma of the <i>Compendium of knowledge</i> , he said that, when true suffering is divided into two, there is the world, <i>Jig-ten</i> , the world of the impure environments (lit. the container) and the world of the impure inhabitants (lit. the essence). Both the world of the impure environments and its inhabitants are all true sufferings.
From where did the world of the impure environment arise from? <i>The world of the impure environment arose from the collective karma of the world of the impure inhabitants.</i>
Hence, perhaps one can say that the world of the impure environment, the result of the collective karma of the world of the impure inhabitants, is the environmental effects, one of the three effects of karma, that one as an individual has to experience.
Just as the environment that one lives in, experiences and utilizes, is the result of collective karma, likewise, the objects of utilization, whatever [external] forms that one uses daily, all arise from karma. Hence, the objects of utilization of ordinary beings, no matter how one interacts with it, would somehow act as the basis for one to experience suffering.
If one accepts that the world of the impure environment is the result of karma, then the objects of utilization that an ordinary being utilizes in his daily life, the [external] visual form, sound, smell, taste and touch, would also be the result of karma.

Category 5 of 8 categories, application 2 of 4 applications, Peak application:

Definition: A bodhisattva's yoga conjoined with the wisdom highly transformed [that has attained mastery] from the Mahayana path of accumulation that cultivates a compendium of the three exalted knowers.
Boundary: Heat level mahayana path of preparation through the end of the continuum (of the sentient being).
The 1 st application is Complete aspects application. Essentially, it cultivates a compendium of the aspects of the 3 knowers. On the Mahayana path of accumulation, the Bodhisattva cultivates a compendium of the aspects of the 3 knowers. Such a cultivation becomes more exalted on the Mahayana path of preparation than on the Mahayana path of accumulation.
The specific Complete aspects application that is taught in the 4 th Chapter of the Ornament for Clear Realizations is for the purpose of achieving mastery over [being highly transformed with] the cultivation of the aspects of the 3 knowers.
At the time of Peak application, the Bodhisattva has gained mastery over the aspects of the 3 knowers.
Possible meaning of 'having gained mastery over/ highly transformed from' cultivating aspects of the 3 knowers:
It is not exactly clear in the treatises as to the definition of the measure of gaining mastery over the aspects of the 3 knowers. Perhaps one can say that, when one achieves the Mahayana path of preparation, one achieves the special insight focusing on aspects of the 3 exalted knowers . Due to that, the Bodhisattva gains mastery over the aspects of the 3 knowers.
Simply stated, on the Mahayana path of accumulation, the Bodhisattva cultivates/ meditates on the Complete aspects application, essentially cultivating a compendium of the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers. He trains well in it to the point where he can gain mastery over such a cultivation. This is the time when he achieves the Mahayana path of preparation.
After he gains mastery over the cultivation of the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers, it is then labeled Peak application.
How achieving through armor is the same as Complete aspects application: Of the 4 achievings of the Exalted Knower of Aspects, there is the <i>Achieving through armor</i> . This is essentially the same in meaning with Complete aspects application.
The meaning of <i>Achieving through armor</i> is essentially that, the Bodhisattva puts on a mental armor of cultivation which is a mind of determination and courage. For example, when he cultivates the perfection of generosity, he has a great determination and intention to include the practices of all other perfections in this practice of the perfection of generosity.
He has great intention, courage and perseverance to ensure that, in the practice of each of the perfections, all the practices of all other perfections are included within it. If one understands this, perhaps this can offer a better understanding of what cultivating a collection/ compendium of the aspects of the 3 exalted knowers, a Complete aspects application, is all about.
This is just an explanation to help one gain some idea [of what a Complete aspects application is]. It is not a definition.
Hence, Achieving through armor refers to such a strong intention to include the practices of all the perfections within the practice of a specific perfection. When one then cultivates the <i>Achieving through engagement</i> , it is not merely a strong determination, but it will become an actual engagement itself. He is actually doing it.
Hence, <i>Achieving through engagement</i> and <i>Peak application</i> are the same in meaning.

The Mahayana path of preparation is achieved when the Bodhisattva achieves a union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness. The mode of apprehension of emptiness of such a mind is therefore more exalted than the mode of apprehension of emptiness of the mind on the Mahayana path of accumulation.
When the Bodhisattva enters the Mahayana path of preparation, due to the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness, he gains the ability to start suppressing the manifest apprehension of true existence. Such an ability increases as he progresses on this path, which is divided into the heat, peak, forbearance and supreme mundane quality levels.
Hence, the afflictions do not manifest frequently nor easily for such a Bodhisattva. Therefore, he does not really accumulate karma motivated by the afflictions. Perhaps one can say that, once the Mahayana path of preparation is achieved, one will never be born in any inopportune states.
Khenrinpoche: How many possibilities are there between a Complete aspects application and a Peak application?

4-1-3-1-1) 4 close placements of mindfulness:

4-1-3-1-1-3) Reasons for meditating: a) Close placements of mindfulness on the body:

There are 4 close placements of mindfulness of body, feelings, mind and phenomena. One way to explain them is to relate them as antidotes to the 4 erroneous conceptions.
There is an erroneous conception that apprehends one's body, which is the basis of self, that which the self 'resides' in, as clean and pure. Hence, if the 'self, I, person' does not reside in the body, then one would not see it as pure and clean.
For example, a dead body/ corpse and the body which the self resides in, are essentially the same in being a body. However, one instinctively thinks of the body in which the self resides as pure and clean, whereas the corpse is apprehended instinctively as dirty and impure. In fact, the difference between these two bodies is a mere breath.
With the body one is attached to, when the person is still breathing, one feels so attached. However, when the person stops breathing, in the very next moment it becomes a corpse. One then does not want to have anything to do with it anymore. Khenrinpoche: You get so scared and instinctively want to run away within seconds. There's no more feelings with it at all.
Hence, there is a big difference whether the person resides in the body or not for one to feel that way. This is because, when the body is still the residing abode for the person, one relates to the person as 'mine'. Attachment then arises. This is the reason one works so hard everyday just to take care of one's body.
One apprehends and holds onto to the body as being the residence/ place where the 'self, I, person' resides. Due to that, one apprehends the body as being pure and clean. This then leads to attachment, craving and desire. One then accumulates new karma, as well as nourishes the seeds of previously accumulated karma.
When one meditates on the close placements of mindfulness of the body, firstly, one has to see how one instinctively views one's body as pure, clean and desirable. The next thing is then to investigate whether this is so or not. If one invalidates this, then the third question is to think of the counteracting [antidotes] to be used for such wrong thoughts.
When one understands what needs to be done, one then cultivates the mind of antidote to such wrong thoughts. The more one cultivates the antidotes to the wrong conceptions, the less one accumulates karma.
Hence, one needs to counteract the wrong conception that the body is pure and clean. The antidotes were already explained extensively in Chapter 8 of Shantideva's <i>Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds</i> . One merely has to analyze them.
Particularly, in the outlines that {Reflect on the unclean nature of the body and so forth [8.40 – 8.70]}, one of these explanations is to {Reflect on their lack of cleanliness in light of the fact that they are the <i>cause</i> at which unclean things exit the body [8.58]}. Hence, the body is not just impure, it is also the source of impurities.
One has to reflect whether this is true: Looking at the different orifices of the body, there is no need to mention about the substances that exit from the lower orifices, it is very clear that it is impure and filthy, but what about the substances that exit the upper orifices, the nose, mouth, ears and so forth, is there anything one can point to that is clean and pure?
It is not difficult to understand. One merely has to place one's attention there and analyze, the answer is very obvious.
Khenrinpoche: One very interesting point: when your hair is still [conjoined with] your body, you can be so attached to it, especially if you have long hair! You would wash it and feel it is so clean that, you would even [twirl it] and put it in your mouth! You won't feel it is dirty, because "it is part of me!" That is why you feel it is clean.
However, the same hair, even if it is a mere strand that is [detached and lands] on your food, you may find it dirty. Particularly, if you find a strand of hair in your food served to you in a restaurant, you would immediately complain and reject it. [The waiter] would merely go back to the kitchen, remove the hair and serve [the same plate of food] back to you...!
So, it is a very interesting phenomenon that, once your hair is separated from your body, you would not see it as clean nor cherish it at all. You would feel it is dirty and throw it into the dustbin, you would not put it inside your mouth!
[All such contrasting behaviors] that come about are always due to the self. In this case, one views one's body to be the place of residence of the 'self, I, person'. Since one always sees oneself as the most important, then of course one would also see one's own body as clean and pure as well.

When one's hair is still conjoined with one's body, one has no qualms about playing with and putting it into one's mouth. But the moment the very same hair separates from one's body, one has the idea that it is separated from one's 'self, I, person', that it is no longer part of 'me'. Due to the connection with the 'I' being severed, one then starts to see it as it is: dirty.
Khenrinpoche: The same [reason applies], when you cut your hair, you may sometimes keep it and not throw it away. This is because, you still consider it as 'my hair'. But if it is someone else's hair, you won't keep that!
[All such behaviors] essentially come down to one's sense of connection with the 'self, I, person', so long as one has the idea that it is 'me' or 'part of me', [one would behave in such contradictory ways].
When one reflects on the close placements of mindfulness of the body, one firstly observes one's own contaminated body, how it is by nature impure and dirty, as well as a source of filth and impurities.
If one considers the substances that exit one's body as impure and filthy, then there is no need to say that the origins of such impure substances, one's body itself, must also be impure and filthy. This is the argument that Shantideva made in Chapter 8.
Hence, 1) one's contaminated body is by nature dirty, filthy and impure. 2) It is also the source/ origin/ cause of impurities. 3) Its substantial cause is essentially the egg and sperm of one's parents, which are clearly impure and dirty. Since its cause is dirty, then no need to mention its result, one's body, is also dirty and impure.
Hence, no matter from which perspective one analyzes, in reality, the entity of one's body, its result [substances that exit the body], its cause [egg and sperm] are all impure and dirty. Although this is reality, but one does not view one's body that way.
In this Chapter, Shantideva further advised: If one's mind is so stubborn and would not change even after reflecting on these points, then one should visit a place where one is able to observe corpses, how these decompose over time.
One then also comes to understand that one's own body is the same, as eventually it will become like that. Through this, one can then work towards counteracting one's attachment/ desire for one's own body.
One can also mentally dissect one's own body, starting with one's skin, 'exposing' the flesh. One then goes deeper to observe the blood, bones, joints, veins and so forth. This is another method to counteract attachment to one's body.
In Chapter 8 of Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds, Shantideva emphasized much on how the body is dirty and filthy by nature and so forth. This is because, the reason one is unable to meditate and practice the Dharma are all due to very strong attachment to many things, especially to one's own and others' bodies due to instinctively feeling that these are very pleasant.
One thinks that one's and others' bodies one is attached to are all very pure, clean, nice, desirable and to be taken care of.
In that chapter, there are many elaborate explanations to challenge and question one's attachment by asking: "If one is attached to the body, then what exactly is one attached to? Its color, shape or what?" By analyzing how the causes and results of the body are all impure, one also comes to understand that the body itself is impure.
Hence, with such a natural idea that one's body is the residence of the self, based on this, other misconceptions would therefore arise. Based on this, one generates attachment, leading one to accumulate karma and suffering in samsara.
Hence, meditation on the impurities of the body counteracts such an erroneous conception. Hence, one has to extract the information from Chapter 8 of Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds and utilize them in one's reflections and meditations.
In essence, the meditation on the impurities of the body from that chapter is done by examining the very nature of the body itself, its causes and its results, are by nature dirty. Through reflection on the entity, cause and result in relation to one's contaminated appropriated aggregates, one understands how one's body is impure and dirty.
Through that, one can reduce one's erroneous conception of attachment conceiving it as pure. One will then eventually overcome it completely. There are also other advice on meditating on the body of the past, present and future to achieve this.

b) 4 close placements of mindfulness on feelings:

This is a cultivation on how feelings are actually sufferings. When one enjoys activities or utilizes objects, one is not actually enjoying the activities nor utilizing the objects as such. The enjoyment or utilization are essentially experiences, which are feelings. Hence, what one is seeking are essentially feelings. Within [the three types of] feelings, one is seeking <i>pleasure</i> .
One works continuously just to enjoy life, doing so through interacting with different objects or people. One is not really enjoying the object or people, it is the experience which are the feelings one is seeking. Essentially, what one is working for continuously is <i>craving to experience such pleasant feelings continuously</i> . This is the crux of what one is seeking in life.
When one experiences unpleasant feelings of sufferings, problems and unhappiness, one craves so much to be separated from them and craves for the return of experiencing pleasant feelings. This is what one does continuously in life.
However, for oneself as an ordinary being, such enjoyment of pleasant feelings is always involved with attachment and craving. One instinctively regards experiencing these pleasant feelings as the most important thing, the real happiness in life. Due to such instinctive belief, one then naturally gets attached to such feelings, being very emotionally involved with it.

Due to that, one does anything one can to achieve it with strong attachment. One then accumulates all sorts of karma. This is how one continues to circle in cyclic existence. Hence, one needs to stop such cravings for feelings. Until one does so, there is absolutely no way out of suffering/ samsara.

Hence, the solution for one is to realize that, whatever feelings one experiences are actually suffering.

Whatever one craves for, are essentially for feelings. Hence, for one, the condition for cravings to arise are feelings. One then follows after craving, which then becomes grasping. With it, the link of potential existence then arise. From that, comes birth, aging, sickness and death. If one analyzes, the origin for all of one's suffering in samsara is essentially one's feelings.

Therefore, birth, aging, sickness and death come from potential existence, which comes from grasping, which comes from craving. The condition for craving to arise is feeling. The problem is that, one feels that feelings, particularly pleasant feelings, are so desirable. Due to that, this gives rise to craving and grasping.

All kinds of feelings do arise, the problem is not so much the feelings themselves, rather, it is one's attachment to them which gives rise to problems. Even though one experiences pleasurable feelings, but one needs to see if these are indeed suffering.

Hence, when using this meditation, one uses one's memories of past experiences to understand how:

All present and future feelings are suffering.

For example, one has had many experiences of pleasures. When it arises in the present, one does not instinctively see it as suffering, but as something desirable and to be followed. However, one needs to counteract such erroneous conceptions.

One has had innumerable past experiences of pleasures. However, these are nothing but mere suffering. Hence, one [would see] that the present feelings, no matter how desirable they may appear, as not suffering, but if one remembers all the past pleasurable experiences, one can remind oneself that such present pleasurable feelings are no different from the past.

With that, one can reduce one's attachment to the present experiences of pleasure.

Likewise, all the pleasurable experiences one may experience in the future will also be no different in that these are suffering.

Hence, it is important to understand from this meditation, how one's feelings are the origins for one's suffering. When one is able to see this and become familiar with such a meditation, one can definitely reduce and counteract attachment to feelings.

Shantideva: There are no pleasures that one has not experienced in the past. Whatever experiences one is experiencing and will experience will not be any different nor better from those one has experienced in the past. Hence, why is one still clinging onto such pleasurable feelings?

Therefore, one of the best way to [counteract attachment to pleasures] is to recall that, whatever pleasurable experiences one has experienced in the past will turn out to be suffering, never satisfying. This is evidently one's experience. So one needs to remember that. When one becomes attached to such pleasures now, one has to remind oneself it will not be any different.

If one is a practitioner or a meditator, then one has to come to realize for oneself, that whatever experiences contaminated pleasurable feelings, including the daily pleasurable experiences, are actually causes and producers of pain and suffering.

One's past experiences of pleasures are like dreams. Once one wakes from it, one cannot go back to it. Likewise, whatever pleasurable experiences there were, were nothing much except that, one has had an experience of it. That is all there is to it.

c) Close placements of mindfulness on the mind:

One has a very strong feeling of one's 'self, I, person'. One feels that there is something one can eventually identify that is it. But if one were to analyze and look for such a 'self, I, person', one will probably point to one's mind as being it.

One would also regard such a 'self, I, person' as being eternal, permanent and unchanging. Based on such a concept that there is a real permanent and stable 'self, I, person', one would definitely crave and grasp at it. One then accumulates karma.

If one were to point to something that is one's 'self, I, person', one would almost certainly point to one's mind as being it. One has the concept of one's mind being one's 'self, I, person'. One conceives of such a mind as being the self that is permanent, eternal, enduring and unchanging.

Hence, to overcome such an erroneous conception, one meditates on the impermanence of the mind, how it is a momentary phenomenon that changes in each moment. This is rather evident when one observes one's mind, it is never static but changes from moment to moment. Through that, one then counteracts the erroneous conception of the self as being permanent.

One has a solid concrete sense of self-identity. One always believes that one's self is eternal and enduring in a permanent unchanging way. There is always this 'I' that is the same throughout all of time. This is an erroneous conception.

Based on such a belief, one works so hard continuously taking care of one's 'unchanging I'. Such an attitude leads one into attachment and anger all the time. One then accumulates karma and continues to circle in cyclic existence. In this way, one sees how all of one's sufferings, problems and entire samsara come from such a strong sense of an 'I' that is unchanging.

By meditating on the close placements of mindfulness of mind, one can counteract the erroneous conception of the apprehension of permanence.

d) Close placements of mindfulness on phenomena:

Phenomena can be divided into the thoroughly afflicted class and thoroughly purified class of phenomena. There are many different non-virtuous minds that come under the class of minds that are thoroughly afflicted class of phenomena. There are also virtuous states of mind like love and compassion. These are minds of the thoroughly purified class of phenomena.

Whatever these may be, even if it is an object belonging to the pure class, one instinctively thinks of and apprehends these as existing in and of themselves, established as an 'own self' with a core identity. Due to conceiving of a self in each and everything that exists, this also induces the affliction of craving. This would then lead to the accumulation of karma.

By meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on phenomena, one then counteracts the erroneous conception that all thoroughly afflicted phenomena and completely pure phenomena are objects of utilization of a self-sufficient substantially existent person.

This is done by seeing how all thoroughly afflicted phenomena and completely pure phenomena lack a self. Through that, one overcomes the erroneous conception conceiving the selfless as a self.

This is how the meditation on the 4 close placements of mindfulness acts as an antidote to the 4 erroneous conceptions as explained by *Gyaltsab Je's Essential Ornament*.

Summarizing how meditating on the 4 close placements of mindfulness overcomes the 4 erroneous conceptions:

a) In essence, through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on the body, one overcomes the erroneous conception of the body as pure.

b) Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness of feelings, one overcomes the erroneous conception of pleasant feelings in particular as pleasurable.

c) Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness of the mind, one overcomes the erroneous conception of the self as permanent.

d) Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness of phenomena, one overcomes the erroneous conception of either a thoroughly afflicted or pure class of phenomena as possessing a self.

Student 3: Since all external objects of utilization are true sufferings, then are holy objects also true sufferings?

Khenrinpoche: This depends. Whatever the basis/ object one interacts with and in dependence on it, one has to see whether it induces in one the experiences of happiness or suffering. When one experiences suffering, then it is true suffering. When you are fighting over the holy objects, for example, then it brings suffering, isn't it?

Student 3: Then the Buddha statue becomes true suffering. **Khenrinpoche:** You cannot say Buddha statue in general. You have to say, the Buddha statue that is the object one is interacting with, if it brings about suffering, then it will be true suffering.

Student 3: How does one accumulate merit with respect to it when one is angry towards it?

Khenrinpoche: The answer is shown in the *Lam Rim Chen Mo*. This is due to the power of the object.

Student 3: Does it mean that, one can accumulate both virtues and nonvirtues with respect to holy objects?

Khenrinpoche: That can be debated. You should think about it.

But the main point about stating that the world of the external environment being true suffering is so that, one can start to look at the objects one utilizes daily in that, for oneself as an ordinary being, such objects induces attachment, anger and so forth. Therefore these objects are suffering.

One then extends such a concept to the external environmental effect, the spacial world that one lives in, to understand that it is suffering as well. This is for the purpose of generating renunciation, a sense of disenchantment with life [in cyclic existence].

Student 4: If it is a path in the continuum of a Hinayanist, even though it is not a Hinayana class of realizations, is it still a Hinayana path? For example, the wisdom realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Solitary Realizer is actually a Hinayana path but not a Hinayana class of realizations. **Khenrinpoche:** Correct.

Student 4: Hence, is such a path a knower that is neither one of the 3 knowers?

Khenrinpoche: The intended disciples of the Ornament for Clear Realizations are Mahayanists. Hence, the explanations of the 3 exalted knowers and the 4 applications are meant for Bodhisattvas.

Student 4: What is the meaning of conjoin? Are the subsequent clear realizer of the Knower of Paths subsequent cognizers? This is because, according to the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School, subsequent cognizers are not valid cognizers. This would then mean that there are paths that are not valid?

Khenrinpoche: The Autonomy Middle Way School did not assert that a path is necessarily a valid cognizer. Of course, a path is necessarily a mind that realizes its object. They did not define non-valid cognition as necessarily being a wrong cognition.

Another way of explaining how to overcome the 4 erroneous conceptions from the perspective of the 4 Noble Truths:

Each of the 4 Noble Truths has another 4 aspects. Hence, the 1st, true suffering, has 4 aspects: impermanence, suffering, empty and selfless. These 4 are antidotes to counteract the 4 erroneous conceptions of: purity, bliss, permanence and self.

Question: How are the 4 characteristics of true sufferings of impermanence, suffering, empty and selfless the antidotes to the 4 erroneous conceptions of permanence, bliss, purity and self?

Answering the question:

Student 5: By realizing how one's aggregates are impermanent and undergoes momentary changes, one dispels the erroneous conceptions holding the aggregates to be permanent. **Khenrinpoche:** So, the antidote to permanence is meditation on impermanence.

Student 5: By meditating on how one's aggregates are the basis for experiencing the 3 types of suffering, one dispels the erroneous conception holding the contaminated pleasurable feelings as bliss and the contaminated body as pure. By meditating on how one's aggregates are empty of being self-sufficient substantially existent and lacking an inherently existing self, one dispels the erroneous conceptions holding the aggregates as possessing a self.

Student 1: If one asserts these only from the perspective of the highest school, then how would the lower schools use the 4 aspects of true sufferings to overcome the 4 erroneous conceptions?

Khenrinpoche: If [student 5] said "empty of inherent existence", then that would refer to the Prasangika school. So you have to say the common assertions that fits all the tenets. **Student 5:** [If we need to have common assertions,] then the empty refers to the emptiness of being permanent, unitary and independent, selfless would then refer to being empty of being self-sufficient substantially existent.

Khenrinpoche: Each of the 4 Noble Truths has 4 characteristics, making a total of 16 characteristics. The 4 characteristics of true sufferings are impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless. So a true suffering is impermanent, a true suffering is suffering, a true suffering is empty and a true suffering is selfless. There are many erroneous conceptions. However, the 4 features of true sufferings are taught to dispel the 4 specific erroneous conceptions conceiving impermanence as permanent, conceiving suffering as bliss, conceiving impure to be pure, and conceiving selfless as a self.

In one of Asanga's text, he said that, *one aspect of true suffering acts as an antidote to one erroneous conception*. Following that sentence, there is another that says, *an aspect of true suffering acts as an antidote to two erroneous conceptions*. This is then followed by another sentence, *the two aspects of true suffering act as an antidote to one erroneous conception*.

In one of Kedrup Je's text, he clarified what Asanga had said: *The aspect of impermanence act as an antidote to the conception of permanence. Meditation on suffering, the second aspect of true suffering, is an antidote to the erroneous conceptions of purity and bliss. Meditation on empty and selfless, the third and fourth aspects of true suffering, are the antidotes to the erroneous conception of selfless as self.*

In Jetsun Rendawa's commentaries, he said very clearly that *the erroneous conceptions of purity and bliss are counteracted by the meditation on suffering*.

Hence, the reason that the meditation on suffering, the second aspect of true suffering, acts as an antidote to two erroneous conceptions is because, *the erroneous conceptions of purity and bliss's manner of apprehending its objects are* similar in that, they both *conceive the apprehended object as pleasant and attractive*. Since these two erroneous conceptions have a similar [subjective] aspect of the manner of apprehension, this being holding its object as pleasant and attractive, hence, the meditation on suffering is the antidote to these two erroneous conceptions.

The purpose of [highlighting this is that]: When one is asked how the 4 characteristics of true suffering act as antidotes to the 4 erroneous conceptions, one usually assumes that, since there are 4 erroneous conceptions and 4 aspects of true sufferings one needs to meditate on, then one aspect of true suffering will be the antidote to just one erroneous conception. One would then probably think that the meditation on impermanence is the antidote to the erroneous conception of permanence, meditating on suffering is the antidote to the erroneous conception of bliss, the meditation on empty is the antidote to purity, the meditation on selfless is the antidote to the erroneous conception of self. However, if one were to examine the treatises, this is incorrect. Like, in the case of thinking that the meditation on empty being the antidote to the erroneous conception of purity, this is incorrect.

It is clearly stated in the teachings that, the meditation on suffering acts as the antidote to the erroneous conceptions of purity and bliss. By meditating on how everything is suffering, one can counteract the erroneous conceptions conceiving that which is impure to be pure, as well as conceiving that which is suffering as bliss.

Hence, one needs to keep this in mind, not just retaining it as mere [memorizing the sequence], more importantly, one needs to understand why [such sequences] are the case, how the erroneous conceptions are counteracted by the different aspects of true suffering. One needs to understand the point.

Summarizing how the 4 aspects of true suffering overcome the 4 erroneous conceptions:

The 4 erroneous conceptions:	Subjective aspects, holding its object as:	How the 4 aspects of true sufferings act as antidotes to these erroneous conceptions:
1) Conceiving impermanence to be permanent:	Permanent.	Meditating on impermanence.
2) Conceiving suffering to be bliss:	Pleasant and attractive.	Meditating on suffering.
3) Conceiving the impure to be pure:		
4) Conceiving the selfless to possess a self:	Possessing a coarse and/ or subtle self.	Meditating on the emptiness [of a permanent, unitary and independent self and the objects utilized by such a self].
		Meditating on the selflessness [of a self-sufficient substantially existent self that is the controller of the aggregates].

How the teachings on true suffering does not increase suffering, rather, it shows the way out of suffering:

Khenrinpoche: Someone was asking that if one understands that everything, including oneself, the environment left and right and everything one enjoys, are all true sufferings, then would that lead to ‘over-renunciation’. Then there would be no point to live, as such an understanding is very depressing.

Also, many people say, Buddhism is always teaching about suffering. Then why bother to study it as it makes one become more miserable? If someone were to ask such lines of questions, how would you answer?

Student 6: I also feel that way because, we don’t really see [pleasure] as suffering. We feel that we are giving up our happiness. If we realize that everything, our objects of enjoyments, our aggregates, are true sufferings, then we will want to give it up. **Khenrinpoche:** Good. He said that, if you know more about suffering, you will be able to work hard and not relax.

Student 6: I think renouncing what is true suffering is not over-renunciation. This is because, no one wants suffering. The problem is whether one understands what true suffering is. **Khenrinpoche:** The idea is, if you feel that everything is suffering, then you will become very tensed, stressed and overwhelmed by the suffering.

Student 6: But we also need to understand that there is a way to stop it. If the Buddha only taught the 1st two truths, then there is no hope. **Khenrinpoche:** Correct.

Student 7: Pleasant feelings will only be the cause and producer of sufferings so long as one is attached to it. If, for example, my son’s exam scored well, I will feel happy. But if I am aware not to be attached to it, would it still be a source of suffering?

Khenrinpoche: Do you recognize that such feelings itself are suffering? **Student 7:** I can’t at the moment.

Khenrinpoche: For oneself, one still possesses the apprehension of ‘self’. Due to that, then there will be an apprehension of ‘mine’. Hence, everything that belongs to that ‘self’, including ‘my children’, will all be related to the ‘self’. Then whatever situation it may be, it will be involved with attachment. This is regardless whether one feels happy or not, there will be attachment. Even though there may be attachment, but if one does not follow and exaggerate it, then that itself is good. If someone important to one does not do well in his exams, would one still feel happy? Since there is an apprehension of a ‘self’, therefore, there will definitely be attachment. Hence, when someone important to one does well in life, one is happy. This is all due to attachment. When such a person does not do well, one feels unhappy. This is all due to attachment as well.

As it is said in the *Vinaya*, *those who fail to see that samsara is suffering will be able to stay relaxed as they feel everything is fine*. They are called ‘the childish’. That is how the childish lead their lives with such perspectives. However, the *superiors are also able to stay relaxed and think that everything is fine* as well. Even though they have the same experiences, but the reason for such behaviors are different. This is *because, they realize suffering*. Due to that, they are relaxed about suffering. As to which of the two examples is better, to which one prefers, one has to examine the examples:

*If one possesses a sickness, is it better to not know that one is sick,
Or is it better to discover [that one has such a sickness] with the aid of a doctor?
Hence, it is better to know that one is sick, so that one can do something about it.*

Khenrinpoche: You don’t think so? **Student 8:** I think there needs to be a balance. When I heard that everything is suffering, the idea of over-renunciation came to my mind. If every pleasure, the sweet mango that I taste, the pleasant music that I listen to, are all contaminated, then what is this life for?

Student 9: I think the reason we suffer a lot is because we have a lot of expectations. If we learn to let go of our expectations, then our minds will be at ease. This is because, the more expectations there are, the more sufferings there will be.

Khenrinpoche: Good. It is important to understand and accept that, we are changing from moment to moment. We are aging, we will get sick and we will die one day. This is a fact of reality that can never change. Hence, it is better to know it and more importantly, to accept it rather than holding onto what [Student 9] said about expectations, which are essentially that, life will be as good as before and will never change. This is the main problem because, when reality presents itself in a different way to what one expects or wants it to be, when changes come, one gets a huge shock. When one gets very sick, or when one has to die very soon, then one becomes so shocked. This is all due to the expectations that one's situation cannot be otherwise. This is where the pain comes from. But if one were to recognize and accept that it is the way it is, whether one likes it or not, this is how life and nature are, then when one does experience sicknesses or when death comes, there is much less suffering.

Therefore, there is a huge difference in knowing that one is suffering and blindly refusing to [acknowledge] it.

If one understands and accepts that the body one has is the basis for all the suffering of this life, as without it, there is no basis to experience suffering. Hence, it is the basis/ medium/ vessel/ conduit where all the experiences of this life are encountered. Hence, the reason one suffers is all due to possessing such a body. When one accepts such a reality, then life becomes much easier as when problems come, it is not that important. Otherwise, one gets so shocked.

This is the reason why many people cannot accept it, as they do not understand that the body is aging and disintegrating momentarily, that one will get sick, die, cease to exist eventually and hence, suffer. Hence, when they get some sickness, they will complain: "Why me?" Such inability to accept gives them so much unhappiness and suffering. But if one understands the simple fact that, this is the nature of life, due to one's possession of a body, one will suffer. If one accepts that this is life, then when problems come, one's mind will definitely not be so disturbed. If one does not recognize and accept that this is the nature of life, then there is nothing one can do about it. When problems suddenly come, like having sicknesses, or death approaches, there will be so much fear, worry and suffering.

Above one's mere experiences of suffering, if one applies one's understanding of karma, then this makes the experience even more rich and profound. One is able to handle the situation. There is therefore a big difference between knowing and not knowing in that, if one knows and accepts that one's body is disintegrating and aging moment to moment, then one will get sick and die. I think this is much better than merely pretending such things do not exist, refusing to accept and to even think about it. If one does not accept nor think about it, yet if life goes smoothly without having to die, then that is fine as it is another matter. However, the simple fact is that one will definitely get sick and die. If one can accept this reality, then there will be much less mental turmoil and disturbances when one eventually meets with such difficult stages of life. Like what Student 8 had said about expectations, these really create a lot of suffering. This is not merely referring to one's body, getting sick or dying, but essentially about everything in life. The more expectations one has, the more pain one will have.

Hence, if one is content, accepting the reality that life is suffering, then there will be much less mental suffering.

While it is important to recognize all such facts about samsara, how everything is suffering, at the same time, one must also know how, when and what to think at the correct time. Otherwise, for some people, when they think of suffering, this makes their minds very uptight, narrow, compressed and stressed. This is wrong. This is the reason when one trains one's mind, one has to train it in stages. This is the reason the Lam Rim topic of a human life of freedoms and endowments is taught right at the beginning. This shows that there is hope. Hence, one has to know how to progressively train one's mind.

One should think of one's own human life of freedoms and endowments, how one has already obtained it and, on the basis of that, one can achieve whatever one chooses or creates the causes for it. Also, such a life is especially exalted when compared to other basis if, one were to correctly work hard at it, it becomes the best basis for newly attaining paths like the paths of seeing, meditation and so forth. Even though the gods of the higher realms possess calm abiding and special insight, but compared to one, they cannot newly achieve those transcendental paths on their bases. Whereas one's basis is the best for doing so. Above this, one can reflect on how hard one must have worked in the past to acquire such a rebirth. Due to having kept pure morality, engaged in some practices of generosity and so forth, the favorable assisting conditions, as well as having made many stainless prayers and dedications, these are the reasons one is experiencing such a result now, with a human life of freedoms and endowments. When all such understanding dawn on one, one will only feel the sense of enthusiasm and joy.

***Dharma practice is never meant to be done with a depressed, unhappy and unwilling mind.
It has to be done happily and willingly with a sense of joy. Particularly, all the time one needs to possess
The attitude of self-confidence, a positive self-esteem, when one practices the Dharma.***

This is the reason it is very important to meditate on the topic of a human life of freedoms and endowments. However, merely thinking that one possesses such a life, one may think that life is so wonderful, then there is the danger one may live life thinking that life is that way without doing anything right. Hence, one also needs to meditate on death and impermanence to persuade one to practice. Therefore, one has to practice according to the Lam Rim. Hence, Buddha did not merely explain about suffering, but its origin, the possibility to bring all such to an end, and the path. If one has the understanding of the entire perspective, this will make a difference to the mind. If there is no solution to the suffering, then yes, it is better to be ignorant, not to know, think, remember nor meditate on it as it is pointless.

But because there is a way out, then it becomes very important to think about suffering, recognize and accept it.

Khenrinpoche: How many possibilities are there between Complete aspects application and Peak application?

Student 1: Something which is a Complete aspects application but not a Peak application: an inferential realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Bodhisattva on the path of accumulation that has not achieved mastery of the compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers. **Khenrinpoche:** Sounds good.

Something which is Complete aspects application and Peak application: Does not exist. This is because, when one achieves the special insight focusing on the aspects of the 3 knowers, one achieves mastery and does not cultivate the Complete aspects application. **Khenrinpoche:** This is wrong.

Something that is Peak application and not Complete aspects application: When one achieves special insight focusing on the aspects of the 3 knowers, one achieves mastery. Hence, such a special insight focusing on the 3 knowers in the continuum of the Bodhisattva is something that is Peak application and not Complete aspects application. **Khenrinpoche:** Also not correct.

Something that is neither Peak application nor Complete aspects application: Direct realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana arhat. Since this is not a Bodhisattva yoga, hence, it is neither. **Khenrinpoche:** Correct.

Khenrinpoche: The first and last [possibilities] are correct while the middle 2 are wrong, so you get 50 marks! I understand where you are confused. But this is good as you did the homework. I mentioned this before, if you really want to learn, then you must do the homework. By making mistakes, then you will learn.

With regards to the earlier explanation of Complete aspects application cultivated for the purpose of acquiring mastery, and how Peak application is an application that has achieved mastery over the cultivation of the compendium of the aspects of the 3 knowers, this explanation was merely for the purpose of helping you to get some idea of what these two applications are for.

The definition of the Complete aspects application clearly states that it is: A Bodhisattva’s yoga conjoined with a wisdom that cultivates a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers. The boundary exists from the Mahayana path of accumulation [through] the end of continuum.

Your 2nd and 3rd examples are therefore incorrect. This is because, you said that, when one achieves Peak application, Complete aspects application does not exist anymore. This cannot be the case, as Complete aspects application exists from the Mahayana path of accumulation through the end of the continuum of a sentient being. Hence, this application does exist on the Mahayana path of preparation.

It is taught that, if it is a path included in the continuum of a Bodhisattva, it is necessarily a Complete aspects application. A Bodhisattva necessarily possesses the wisdom that cultivates a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers.

Peak application is a wisdom that cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers. But its cultivation is more exalted than that done on the path of accumulation. This is because, when one achieves the path of preparation, one achieves the Peak application which is the wisdom that has achieved mastery over the cultivation of the aspects of the three exalted knowers.

Hence, [something which is] a Peak application is necessarily a Complete aspects application, but [something which is] a Complete aspects application is not necessarily a Peak application.

Category 6 of 8 categories, application 3 of 4 applications, Serial application:

Definition: A bodhisattva’s yoga conjoined with the wisdom that serially cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers for the sake of attaining steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers.
Boundary: From the Mahayana path of accumulation up to just prior to the end of the continuum (of the sentient being).
The difference between Serial application and Momentary application is based on whether one has <i>achieved steadiness</i> with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers.
Serial application is a mind that serially cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers from the Mahayana path of accumulation <i>for the purpose of achieving steadiness</i> with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers.
The Bodhisattva cultivates aspects of the three exalted knowers. This is done through cultivating a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers, as well as through cultivating the aspects of the three exalted knowers serially. Hence, both cultivations are done from the Mahayana path of accumulation.
The Bodhisattvas cultivate a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers from the Mahayana path of accumulation <i>for the purpose of achieving mastery</i> over such a cultivation.

The Bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation do cultivate the aspects of the three exalted knowers serially. When they achieve the path of preparation and acquire the Peak application, they also cultivate the aspects of the three exalted knowers. However, such a serial cultivation of the aspects of the three exalted knowers is done in a definite and correct order.
This is not necessarily so on the Mahayana path of accumulation.
On the paths of preparation, seeing and meditation up to just before the end of the continuum of a sentient being, in any one meditation session, the Bodhisattvas cultivate the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers serially for the purpose of achieving steadiness in the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers in a definite order without missing anything.
The Bodhisattvas start to cultivate Serial application from the Mahayana path of accumulation, doing so up to just prior to the end of the continuum. This means that, at the end of the continuum, there is no Serial application. Hence, there are Serial applications [on the entire Bodhisattva paths] up to but before the achievement of the wisdom of the end of continuum.
When the Bodhisattva achieves the wisdom at the end of the continuum of a sentient being, he achieves steadiness with respect to the Serial application of the aspects of the three exalted knowers. Prior to this point, from the path of accumulation up to just before the end of the continuum of a sentient being, he serially cultivates aspects of the three exalted knowers.
[From the path of preparation onwards,] he serially cultivates 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers in order without missing anything. At the end of the continuum of a sentient being, he achieves steadiness with respect to the serial cultivation of the aspects of the three exalted knowers.
Qualm: Why is it that the Bodhisattva achieves steadiness with respect to the serial cultivation of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers [only at the end of the continuum]? Why is the steadiness not achieved prior to the end of the continuum?
What does achieving <i>steadiness</i> with respect to the serial cultivation of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers mean?
Meaning of achieving steadiness:
Reply: <i>An instant of a complete action</i> is asserted to be the time it takes to snap a finger. At the end of the continuum, when the Bodhisattva places his attention on any uncontaminated phenomena in such a short moment of time, all other instances of uncontaminated phenomena that are of a similar type are also manifested in his mind.
When one achieves the wisdom at the end of the continuum, whatever phenomenon that is manifesting, all other phenomena of a similar type are also simultaneously manifested. Hence, the Bodhisattva has the power and capacity to do this.
For example, at the end of the continuum, when the Bodhisattva brings to mind [a specific] emptiness included within the thoroughly purified class of phenomena, the emptiness of all other thoroughly purified class of phenomena are also manifest.
All of these are done within the duration of a finger snap. He is able to do so as a result of his thorough familiarization of the cultivations of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers that were started from the path of accumulation.
Hence, at the end of the continuum, when the Bodhisattva achieves Momentary application, he achieves the steadiness with respect to the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers. This is all due to the long cultivation of the Serial application that was started from the Mahayana path of accumulation.
Therefore, such an attainment has to occur, if not, how would one become enlightened? This is because, when one becomes enlightened, one sees all phenomena directly as it is. Hence, before enlightenment is achieved, such a capacity to meditate on the aspects of the three exalted knowers must be attained prior to it.
It is the same with regards to studying about the 8 Categories. One studies its definitions, boundaries and gets a rough idea what these are. Even within 5 minutes, one is able to explain what these categories are. This happens if one is familiar with them after having thought about them repeatedly.

Category 7 of 8 categories, application 4 of 4 applications, Momentary application:

Definition: A bodhisattva's final yoga that has attained steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers.
Boundary: Exists only at the end of the continuum of the sentient being. In Chapter 6 of the Ornament for Clear Realizations, Serial application is presented. In Chapter 7, Momentary application is explained.
To help one understand the meaning of achieving steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers, the example of a Bodhisattva bringing to mind the emptiness of a thoroughly purified class of phenomena was shown. Within a finger snap, phenomena of a similar type, the emptinesses of all thoroughly purified classes of phenomena are also manifest.
The phrase ' <i>Phenomena of a similar type</i> ' was used. By the power of such a phrase, would that not seem to suggest that, those discordant phenomena are not manifest? Essentially, anything that are not emptiness are not manifest.
If that is the case, would there be any problem?

Student 2: Would the Serial application of the three exalted knowers be done in post meditative equipoise? This is because, in the uninterrupted path and the path of release, nothing except emptiness appears. The three exalted knowers cannot appear. During Momentary application, only the emptiness of the three exalted knowers appears, not the aspects of the three exalted knowers, how does that transform into the Buddha's manifesting the three exalted knowers?

Khenrinpoche: The definition of Serial application states that it is a Bodhisattva's yoga that is *conjoined with* the wisdom that serially cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers for the sake of attaining steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers. It does not say a Bodhisattva's wisdom that serially cultivates aspects of the three exalted knowers and so forth.

The earlier explanation on how Serial application is a wisdom that serially cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers for the purpose of achieving steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers was to help one understand in essence, what a Serial application is. But if one goes by definition, then it is a Bodhisattva's yoga that is *conjoined with* the wisdom that serially cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers for the sake of achieving steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers. If one analyzes from the perspective of the definition and debates, then one has to be more specific.

Since the definition is a Bodhisattva's yoga that is *conjoined with...*, then even if one posits the illustration of the wisdom of meditative equipoise, there is still no problem.

Student 2: Then how would that become a steadiness in the final moment? This is because, this is the steadiness of the appearance of the aspects of the three exalted knowers. In the final moment, there is only [the appearance of] emptiness, so there is no appearance of the aspects of the three exalted knowers, so how would that be a steadiness then?

Khenrinpoche: The Bodhisattva has achieved the power to do so if he so wishes, that does not mean that [the aspects of the three exalted knowers] must appear. If he wishes to, he has the capacity to make all the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers appear. **Student 2:** Not before Momentary application, right? **Ven Gyurme:** During Momentary application. **Student 2:** During Momentary application, it is only meditative equipoise. **Khenrinpoche:** He has achieved the power to do so.

Student 2: So, would such a power only manifest on the path of release of the path of no more learning, on the Buddha ground, as such a power would never manifest during Momentary application.

Khenrinpoche: On Buddha ground, the Buddha does not even need to manifest them through an instant of a complete action as it will be even shorter. So, the Bodhisattva at the end of the continuum has the power to do so. This does not mean one has to do so. If he wishes to, he can do so but not [necessarily having] to do so.

Ven Gyurme: How long or short is the end of the continuum? **Khenrinpoche:** I don't think it is merely a snap of a finger, it can be longer than that. In deity yoga, there can be the meditation that states: "Instantaneously arise as such and such a deity." The word *instantaneous* here refers to an instant of a complete action which means a finger snap. This only happens to those who possess thorough familiarization. For one, not to mention a finger snap, one [would not be able to generate the appearance of a deity for a long time].

Student 3: Why is it that the Bodhisattva's Momentary application not include the aspects of a completely afflicted phenomena but only thoroughly pure phenomena? This is because, Buddha can realize everything.

Khenrinpoche: Correct. What was explained was merely an illustration. The example was the Bodhisattva focusing his mind on the emptiness of a thoroughly pure phenomenon. The phenomena of a similar type will also appear. This means that the emptiness of all other thoroughly pure phenomena will also appear. That was merely an example.

If the Bodhisattva focuses his mind on the emptiness of a thoroughly afflicted phenomenon. Then the emptiness of all other thoroughly afflicted phenomena will also arise.

So, the qualm that I raised earlier was: could the Bodhisattva manifest in his mind the emptiness of both the thoroughly afflicted phenomena and completely pure phenomena?

In the meditative equipoise on the path of seeing, when the Bodhisattva realizes emptiness directly, it is said that he realizes the emptiness of all phenomena directly. However, I don't think he can see the emptiness of all phenomena directly in an instant of a complete action of the duration of a finger snap.

Student 2: If he realizes the emptiness of ignorance, would it not mean that he still possesses ignorance [during the time of] Momentary application?

Khenrinpoche: It is clear that, such a Bodhisattva at the end of the continuum does not possess ignorance, hence, it is not possible to enter in meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness of his ignorance.

According to the Autonomy Middle Way School, does such a Bodhisattva possess ignorance? No. But has he abandoned ignorance? No. This is because, [for this school,] to achieve enlightenment, one has to abandon ignorance. In the continuum of this Bodhisattva at the end of the continuum, does he possess the apprehension of true existence? No. This is due to the antidote that he has cultivated. The apprehension of true existence, the apprehension of the self of phenomena, cannot arise.

Student 4: What does meditating on the 173 aspects of the Serial application in [correct] order mean?

Khenrinpoche: In the definition of Serial application, it is a wisdom that serially cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers for the sake of attaining steadiness. There are 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers. Once Peak application is achieved, from the Mahayana path of preparation, *when* the Bodhisattva serially cultivates aspects of the three exalted knowers, he necessarily does so serially in the proper order one after another.

Perhaps the Bodhisattva would probably meditate on the 27 aspects of the Knower of Bases, followed by the 36 aspects of the Knower of Paths, then the 110 aspects of the Exalted Knower of Aspects. However, I have not seen it stated clearly in the text.

Student 5: Why is cultivating the Serial application in a proper order an important factor to complete this application?

Khenrinpoche: In general, of the three exalted knowers, one would firstly have to generate the Knower of Bases, then the Knower of Paths, through that, one then eventually achieves the Exalted Knower of Aspects. In terms of the two selflessness, the selflessness of persons is realized first. This is related to the explanation of the Knower of Bases. After that, the selflessness of phenomena is realized, of which, according to the Autonomy Middle Way School, there are coarse and subtle aspects. This is related to the Knower of Paths. Since one has to meditate in such a way to cultivate the Knower of Bases, followed by the Knower of Paths, perhaps, in terms of the serial cultivation of aspects of the three exalted knowers, one starts with the 27 aspects of the Knower of Bases, one then meditates of the 36 aspects of the Knower of Paths.

This is the same with the practice of the Lam Rim, the Stages of the path. One must firstly meditate on the path shared with persons of small capacity. It is only after that, that one progresses to meditate on the path shared with persons of medium capacity. On the basis of that, one can start meditating on the persons of great capacity. Hence, the order is definite, one cannot skip [the order]. Likewise, when one meditates on the 3 knowers, one cultivates the Knower of Bases first, then the Knower of Paths and then meditates on the aspects of the Exalted Knower of Aspects.

My personal thought on this is that, when you meditate on something serially, in a proper order over time, through that familiarity, one will eventually meditate on that simultaneously. This can only be possible due to the habituation with a pattern. I wonder if, at the time of the practice to achieve steadiness, when one is meditating on the 173 aspects but not in proper order, would one be able to meditate on all 173 aspects together eventually? Even if one is able to do so, perhaps it will be more difficult.

Student 5: What is the meaning of ‘conjoin’?

Khenrinpoche: Taking the Bodhisattva superior’s practice of generosity as an example. One has to say that, his mind of generosity is held or conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. If it is a path in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior, then it is necessarily conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. When he practices generosity, such a practice is accompanied/ held by [/conjoined with] the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. Such a practice of generosity will not be affected by the usual tendency to hold onto the 3 spheres, the gift, the act of giving and the giver as truly existent. This is because, his practice of generosity is done by non-objectifying the 3 spheres. However, this is *not* stating that his mind of generosity realizes emptiness directly. Rather, when his mind of generosity is manifest, it is unlike that of ordinary beings. When one gives, one holds onto the gift, the giver and the action of giving as something there very strongly. [For them, this is not so,] this is because, they possess in their continua the wisdom directly realizing emptiness.

Likewise, if it is a path, it is necessarily conjoined with the determination to be free, renunciation. If it is a Bodhisattva’s path, it is necessarily conjoined with mind generation/ bodhicitta. Hence, whatever they do, it is naturally for the sake of others and never mixed with [/conjoined with] self cherishing. This is because, whatever they do, [such actions are] conjoined with/ accompanied by bodhicitta.

If someone possesses renunciation in his continuum practices generosity, then such a practice is conjoined with renunciation. Hence, whatever he does, including such a practice of generosity, is never done, for example, for the happiness of this life.

Whatever recitations or practices one does, it will always start with going for refuge to the Three Jewels, followed by the generation of bodhicitta. This is because, it is said that, the motivation [for doing any virtue] is so important. Hence, it is very important to adjust and set a proper motivation at the very beginning [of any practice].

*This is because, whatever practices one does will be affected by the type of motivation one possesses.
So, depending on what motivations one's actions are conjoined with, then such actions will produce its specific results.*

Likewise, when one is learning, listening to, reading or studying the Dharma and so forth, **the motivation that is conjoined with such activities** is also very important. For example, if the motivation of learning, listening to Dharma and so forth, is to subdue one's mind, then whatever such activities one does will contribute to subduing one's mind. However, such activities that are conjoined with the motivation of subduing the mind is not merely being conjoined at the beginning. One usually does try to generate some motivation at the beginning, but when one actually engages in the activity itself, one then completely forgets about [the motivation one has set out at the beginning]. This is not what is meant by being 'conjoined with'.

*To be conjoined with a motivation means to be held by it.
This means [one's activity] is held by [one's motivation] all the time.*

Hence, how many hours one is studying, reading or listening [to the teachings, such an activity] should be held by the motivation: "I am doing this to subdue my mind." Since [the activity] is held by such a motivation, then whatever one learns, every single word one reads or hears will become a cause and be helpful in subduing one's mind. Likewise, when one asks questions, receives answers or answers questions and so forth, whether such activities become a cause for subduing one's mind depends on whether it is held by such a motivation.

Hence, to say that an activity is to be held by a motivation/ conjoined with the thought, both the holder [activity] and that which is held [motivation] must be together. Otherwise, there is no meaning to the word conjoin. Hence, the two must be present. For example, the activity of learning the Dharma and so forth, must be held by the motivation, the motivation must be there at the same time together with it.

The usual idea of setting the motivation is only at the beginning of the activity: "Oh, I've set my motivation." We think we have set it, but in the first place, even such a setting of motivation is not done well. We would think to set it and then do something else. This is the reason one's practices do not [produce results]. This is because, the activities must be held, kept in the mind, with the motivation, [if there is going to be any results due to the motivation].

Khenrinpoche: Is there something that is all 4 applications?

Student 1: No. This is because, there is nothing that is both a Serial application and a Momentary application.

Khenrinpoche: Good. One can tell that it was a very good answer. This is because, in a mere few words that he used as the reason, it shows he understood there is not something that is all 4 applications. One can provide such correct answers only after one has thought about it. Hence, that was a well thought out answer. That is why I always tell you, that you really have to think about the [material you study]. You also have to do so voluntarily.

Student 2: Whatever is a Hinayana class of realizations is necessarily a Hinayana path. This is because, such realization takes as its object of meditation similar to the object and aspect of a Hinayanist. However, whatever is a Mahayana class of realizations is not necessarily a Mahayana path, even though such a realization takes as its object of meditation similar object and aspect of a Mahayanist. Why is that so?

Khenrinpoche: Even though the reasons are similar, however, one cannot say that the Mahayana path exists in the continuum of a Hinayanist. However, in the continuum of a Mahayanist, it is possible to possess a Hinayana path.

Khenrinpoche: Are there Hinayana paths in the continuum of a Mahayanist? Someone is a Hinayanist because he possesses the Hinayana path. Then why is it that the Mahayanist also possesses the Hinayana path? Why is it that the Mahayanist must possess Hinayana paths in his continuum?

Student 3: This is because, the Bodhisattva superior has to teach disciples of different dispositions and vehicles, hence, he needs to possess knowledge and realizations about these vehicles.

Khenrinpoche: The answer is something like that. However, is there self cherishing in the continuum of a Mahayanist?

Student 3: No. **Khenrinpoche:** It follows that a Mahayanist has self cherishing. This is because, this is how he can teach those who have self cherishing.

Student 3: Not necessarily so. This is because, one does not need to possess self cherishing to teach them.

Khenrinpoche: To teach and take care of those who have self cherishing, if one does not possess self cherishing, then how would one be able to do so?

Why Bodhisattva superiors need to generate the Hinayana paths in their continua:

In the sutras, it is said that the Bodhisattvas need to know the paths of all the disciples they have to take care of. These can be from any of the three lineages. Hence, the Bodhisattvas need to know the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Mahayana paths. The way to take care of them is to teach them through knowing the paths themselves. This is the reason why they have to generate the Hearers and Solitary Realizers' paths in their continua.

This is why the Mahayanist do possess Hinayana paths in their continua. The main illustration being the direct realization of selflessness of persons. Since the wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons is the main object of meditation of the Hinayana trainees, and since the Bodhisattva superiors possess such a wisdom directly realizing selflessness in their continua, so it is said that, such Bodhisattvas possess the Hinayana paths in their continua.

4-1-3-1-1) 4 close placements of mindfulness:

Presentation of the 4 close placements of mindfulness in relation to the 4 Noble Truths:

One can understand the 4 Noble Truths through knowing these 4 close placements of mindfulness:
1) Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on body , one understands that one's contaminated appropriated aggregate is the entity of suffering. Through that, one understands true suffering.
2) Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on feelings , one understands true origins.
As mentioned before, when one experiences pleasant feelings, this would almost lead to craving, a desire not to be separated from such a pleasant feeling. When one experiences unpleasant feelings, one desires to be separated from it.
Hence, both pleasant and unpleasant feelings essentially lead to craving, which is a source/ origin of suffering.
Through understanding both close placements of mindfulness on body and feelings, these act as [antidotes] to abandon these first 2 Noble truths.
Khenrinpoche: It is clear that, pleasant and unpleasant feelings do induce desire to not be separated and to be separated from them respectively. However, do the neutral feelings of equanimity also lead to desire / craving?

In a commentary to the Mahayana Sutras, it is said that <i>the feelings of equanimity leads to the craving for something</i> . Perhaps the following is what is meant by such a statement: Wanting to get something [after experiencing neutral feelings].
When one is feeling neutral like sitting down for some time, one gets bored after a while. This leads to a wish to experience a pleasant or exciting feeling. One is not contented merely sitting doing nothing. It is very clear that, one's daily life for the entire lifetime is constantly seeking manifest experiences of contaminated pleasures because one craves and desires for it.
Due to that, one does many things and accumulates karma to circle in cyclic existence. Hence, the main condition for continual circling in samsara is essentially one's craving based on one's contaminated feelings of pleasure.
All of one's experiences of pleasure are nothing more than such a brief experience of pleasant feelings at that moment. Hence, such experiences are like dreams. Once it is over, it does not continue on. When it ceases, one would then be seeking for the next feeling of pleasure. When it does manifest, it is also another mere experience [that one time].
When such an experience ceases, one again craves and desires for the next experience of pleasure. This is one's life.
Hence, all of one's experiences/ feelings of pleasures are the main conditions for one to continue to suffer in samsara. This is because, pleasant feelings induce cravings, which give rise to karma and so forth.
3) Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on mind, one understands true cessation.
Qualm: How does such a meditation lead one to understand true cessation?
When one meditates on the close placements of mindfulness on mind, one comes to see its momentary nature undergoing momentary change. Such a realization of momentary change will destroy conceptions of permanence of the mind.
One tends to conceive of the body as the residence/ basis where the 'self, I, person' resides, one's feelings as that which is to be utilized/ enjoyed [by such a 'self, I, person'] and the mind as one's 'self, I, person' itself.
Since one conceives of one's mind as permanent and unchanging, then grasping at the mind as being the basis of the 'self, I, person', one then grasps at this 'self, I, person' as being permanent as well.
Hence, if one understands that one's mind is in the nature of changing momentarily, one can then also understand that one's mind being one's 'self, I, person' is impermanent and changing. Perhaps this is how one overcomes the erroneous conception of the 'self, I, person' as being permanent, unitary and independent.
Through realizing how the mind is changing momentarily in each moment, hence the continuum is eternal [in the sense that it will not cease to exist], one also understands that the 'self, I, person' is not self-sufficient.
Rather, [its unceasing existence] is dependent on the aggregates. Since the continuum is eternal, then the continuum of the 'I', which exists in dependence upon the mind, will also continue to exist forever.
Hence, one will then understand that, even though the continuum of one's body may be severed, but since the mind continues on eternally and, since the 'self, I, person' does not exist self-sufficiently but in dependence upon the mind, then one will understand one's 'self, I, person' will exist eternally.
Through this, one can understand that, there is a 'self, I, person' who can actualize true cessation.
This is a difficult point to understand because, what is mentioned in the text is just a mere paragraph that says:
<i>“Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on mind, the basis of self-grasping, the mind is analyzed as impermanent and so forth, thereby stopping the conception of that. Then, due to the absence of the fear of the annihilation of the self, you will actualize true cessation.</i>
There are no other explanations that is clearer than what is stated here.
Hence, perhaps when referring to the close placements of mindfulness on the mind, one meditates on its impermanent nature, changing momentarily. Through that, one also comes to understand how its continuum is eternal.
Since the continuum of the mind is eternal, then the 'self, I, person' which is imputed in dependence upon the mind, will also have to exist eternally, even though it also changes momentarily.
Hence, even if the continuum of the body disintegrates and is severed, one will then not develop the fear of annihilation of the self. From here, one understands that true cessations can be achieved on the basis of mind.
Since one has yet to realize selflessness, then this is one of the reason one is afraid of death. This is because, one has the innate conception that one will cease to exist, the fear that one will go out of existence. This is because, one conceives one's existence very strongly with one's body, thinking: “When my body ceases to exist, ‘I’ will also cease to exist.”
Such an innate fear arises due to not having realized selflessness. When one understands how one's 'self, I, person' does not exist in a self-sufficient way, but as merely imputed on the mind, since its continuum will exist forever, then the continuum of 'self, I, person', whose existence is dependent on the mind, will also exist forever.
Hence, this shows that, eventually, true cessation can be achieved.

Hence, there is no need to fear about the annihilation/ going out of existence of the ‘self, I, person’. This is especially so, when one understands that the ‘self, I, person’ does exist in dependence upon the mind. Since the mind will never cease to exist, then there is also no way that the ‘self, I, person’ will cease to exist as well.
From the tantric perspective, the final basis of designation of the ‘self, I, person’ is the extremely subtle wind and mind. Since these extremely subtle wind and mind will never cease to exist, then the ‘self, I, person’ will also never cease to exist.
Hence, when the selflessness of persons is realized, then one will not generate anymore fear of the annihilation of the ‘self’.
Therefore, when one analyzes the ‘subtle self’ in this way, there is really no ‘I’ being born nor going out of existence, as it has always been there. Khenrinpoche: So no need to worry, you will never die, as you were never born. So why be afraid?
I am not sure if this explanation is appropriate or correct. This is something to think about: Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on the mind, one understands true cessation. My personal opinions are not necessarily the truth.
4) Through meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on phenomena, one understands true paths.
Phenomena here includes all phenomena, which can be divided into completely pure phenomena and thoroughly afflicted phenomena. Examples of completely pure phenomena are minds like love, compassion, faith and bodhicitta. Examples of thoroughly afflicted phenomena are the three mental poisons, jealousy, negative competitiveness, pride and so forth.
One should understand that completely pure phenomena are objects to be cultivated and the thoroughly afflicted phenomena are objects to be abandoned. Through understanding these, one enters into true paths.
This is how one engages in the 4 Noble Truths through meditating on the 4 close placements of mindfulness. With the exception of the close placements of mindfulness on mind, the other three are easy to understand.

If one does not realize pervasive compounded suffering of conditionality, one does not seek liberation:

With respect to pervasive compounded suffering, the suffering of conditionality, this primarily refers to one’s contaminated appropriated aggregates, which are the vessels of all the sufferings, as it is the medium through which one experiences all sufferings in the present. It is also the basis for all future sufferings as well.
These contaminated appropriated aggregates are the medium through which one experiences the suffering of pain and change. This is explained extensively in the Lam Rim literature. One should use such information on the meditation of the close placements of mindfulness on the body.
All of one’s suffering of sickness, aging and death happen on the basis of one’s contaminated appropriated aggregates. These are the basis from which such sufferings can occur. Otherwise, [such sufferings cannot happen].
Due to possessing such a set of contaminated appropriated aggregates, there is never a single moment where one can really feel at ease, with real peace and joy. Possessing such aggregates is likened to carrying a bed of thorns on one’s bare back .
It does not take much to experience manifest pain and suffering. All one needs to do is to poke one’s body, one feels discomfort immediately. Hence, the conditions for discomfort exist right there [so long as one possesses them]. Hence, it is important to see and realize such truths and reality of one’s existence for oneself.
One’s body is made up of the 4 elements. As soon as there is an imbalance in any of them, one will experience discomfort or fall sick. When the wind elements are in excess, one experiences mental agitation. If the fire element is too strong, one feels hot or develops fever and so forth. This is the nature of one’s body.
Hence, the very essence of meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on the body is to realize that one’s contaminated appropriated aggregates, one’s body, is the basis for all the present and future sufferings.
Such a reflection is necessary for those who are seeking liberation, to achieve the state of nirvana.
This is why, in the Lam Rim literature, when the topic of suffering is explained, the emphasis is always on the suffering of conditionality of pervasive compounded suffering, the main suffering. It is said that, if one is unable to correctly recognize what this is, then there is no way for one to develop the real wish from one’s heart for liberation.
When one understands well how one’s body is an utterly contaminated vessel for suffering, then it is also possible to feel the utter uselessness of holding onto it. One has the sense that it is inextricably part of ‘me’, a sense of ‘self’ in relation to one’s body. When one understands it is suffering, then one will not cling onto it as ‘my body’ with a strong sense of clinging.
The more one correctly recognizes and realizes that one’s body is suffering and contaminated, the more one’s attachment and clinging onto it will become lesser. The lesser one clings onto one’s body, the lesser [mental] suffering one will experience when one eventually experiences its physical suffering.
One is less disturbed by such experiences as much as one would have had, if one had not realized that it is suffering.
Through understanding well true sufferings, one understands what true origins are. Based on that, one develops the wish to actualize true cessations. If one develops the desire to actualize true cessations, one would then enter and engage true paths.

As a Dharma practitioner, how to rely on mindfulness and vigilance to avoid hurting others with one’s body, speech and mind:

Therefore, when one meditates on the close placements of mindfulness on body, the best object to focus on is one’s body. Hence, as beginners, one needs to pay attention to one’s physical bodily conduct.
This is because, it is said that one’s physical demeanor does have an effect on others. Therefore, one should place mindfulness on the [body] to avoid the physical demeanor/ conduct that would disturb others and focus on adopting a bodily conduct that would be agreeable and helpful to others.
In <i>Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds</i> , there are many explanations on physical bodily conduct. Examples are given, that if one were to point out a direction to someone, one should not show that with a mere finger. Rather, with a respectful demeanor, one should extend all of one’s fingers and show the direction to the person.
Hence, one should not rely on a bodily conduct that is objectionable but respectful to others. Whatever such physical body conduct that others find objectionable, that would disturb their minds, one should be mindful to abandon them and adopt bodily postures and physical demeanor that others would not find objectionable.
One should always be mindful in this, thinking: “As a fully ordained monk and a Dharma practitioner, I have a responsibility not to act in any disagreeable manner.” Likewise, verbally, one should remind oneself that: “I am a Dharma practitioner, I should be mindful to say things that are pleasant and not say unpleasant things to others.”
Khenrinpoche: One of my Geshe friend’s parent and sister came from Tibet to Delhi to meet him. While [they were on the road] negotiating with a taxi driver for the fare, my Geshe friend got upset and showed his temper to the driver.
His behavior shocked both his mother and sister very much. The latter then asked him: “You lived in the monastery for 30 years, became a fully ordained monk and a graduate Geshe, how come a small episode like this causes you to show temper?”
After [such an admonition from his sister,] his mind changed totally. This is a very good and important reminder for oneself.
Being a Buddhist practitioner for 10, 15 or 20 years, this is a very long time. Nevertheless, if one cannot even be patient with a small [unpleasant experience], then one has to ask oneself: “What sort of practitioner am I?”
Sometimes people would say that, Buddhist practitioners are worse than the non-practitioners. This is a reminder for everyone that, one really needs to be careful. Otherwise, when you study so much [that you are supposed to be knowledgeable as to what to practice, but you end up making] your mind become even harder and harder like a rock...!
Nothing changes! One cannot bear to hear even some small unpleasant words and blows up. Hence, one needs to be reminded. That is why I mentioned about the Geshe, whose mind really woke up [from the admonition by his sister:]
“Having been a monk for 30 years, you should almost be enlightened.” It is true that, being a monk for 30 years, even the small incident of the taxi fare, 10 or 20 dollars difference being not a lot, [one can still get upset].
So, all of us just have to try to be mindful of our body, speech and mind. Whatever actions that would negatively impact others, as much as possible, one should try to avoid.
One would always like to consider oneself as a practitioner of Dharma, one also knows that one should not be harming nor hurting others, hence practically, one just has to be careful to rely on mindfulness and vigilance in whatever one does.
One finds in the <i>Vinaya’s</i> rules of conduct for fully ordained monks, many precepts governing their movements, the way they walk, eat, sit and so forth. For example, they are not supposed to walk and become distracted. Ideally they are supposed to look not beyond a certain distance but looking down when walking. They are also not to walk while swinging their hands.
The whole purpose for many of such precepts is to instil a sense of mindfulness and vigilance all the time.
One has to cultivate mindfulness and vigilance on one’s bodily behavior that does not behave in an objectionable manner that harms others. Likewise, one should not say non-beneficial and harmful words nor think harmful thoughts that harm others.
When one finds oneself falling short in this, with mindfulness and vigilance, one should discover that one is in such a situation. If possible, one should remedy, confess and do something about it.
Khenrinpoche: The logic that Buddhists learn so much, is supposed to help [subdue] oneself. Sometimes however, many of us instead use it [differently. For example,] when someone [is upset with] one and shouts at one to hurt one, one then [retaliates:] “Oh, [your unpleasant experience is due to] your karma. Using such ‘logic’ [to retaliate] is really not good.
When you say some bad things to hurt others, you may again say: “This is your karma!” One uses logic in the wrong way.
<i>Sometimes learning too much philosophy does not become a good thing. One has to know that and be careful not to allow learning of philosophy to become a big danger in deceiving oneself, if one does not know how to use the knowledge.</i>

The benefits of seeing and recollecting one’s body as filthy, impermanent and having to be left behind eventually:

The object of close placements of mindfulness is something that is known by a wisdom. Such an object that is known by a wisdom is then held closely by the mental factor of mindfulness. Hence, there is the close placements of mindfulness.
To remember, recollect or be mindful of something, one must firstly have already known the object one is going to remember, recollect and be mindful of, without which one cannot be mindful. Hence, mindfulness is a mental factor that brings to mind a valid object one already knows.
The close placements of mindfulness on body is also taught in the <i>Vinaya</i> , the ethical code of conduct. There, it is taught primarily for the ordained, one recollects and places one’s attention on the impermanence, filthiness and impurity of the body.
In sutra, the body is explained as being in the nature of not abiding for long but will undergo disintegration, something that one has to leave behind eventually. This is something one should think about as this is the reality of one’s body.
One firstly understands such a reality through wisdom. Once it is understood by wisdom, one then holds such a fact as an object of one’s memory, recollection and mindfulness to be kept in the mind without losing the recollection of it.
As one goes about one’s daily activities, a part of one’s mind’s attention is always placed on this fact that one’s body is impermanent, not lasting very long and to be left behind eventually.
Many people engage in all sorts of wrong livelihoods for the purpose of sustaining themselves looking after their bodies.
1) If one is able to understand the reality of the body with wisdom, seeing that it is by nature impermanent, disintegrating momentarily and will die eventually, placing one’s attention with mindfulness not forgetting such a fact, then in one’s daily activities, such an understanding, recollection and mindfulness would contribute to the abandonment of wrong livelihood .
2) Above this, when one knows this reality well, remembers it continuously, then this gives strength to one’s mind to make one’s life meaningful, using it to engage in practice. If one continually recognizes and remembers that one’s body is impure, filthy, impermanent and will die eventually, this gives one impetus to take essence of this life .
3) When one views others in the same manner of being impermanent and dying eventually, this helps one to regard others without any jealousy, arrogance nor pride . One would even regard oneself as their servant.
4) When one realizes that one’s body is filthy, impermanent and will die eventually, this also helps one to not be attached to one’s possessions . Without such attachment to one’s possessions, then one will be able to make having such possessions meaningful, using them beneficially .

The disadvantages of not recollecting that one’s body is filthy, impermanent and to be left behind eventually:

It is not that one does know that one’s body is impermanent, that one has to die one day as one already knows that. The problem lies in not recollecting it, putting such a knowledge at the forefront of one’s mind, placing one’s mindfulness on it.
Due to not remembering it with mindfulness, one then forgets that one’s life is impermanent, that one is going to die soon, then many problems arise in one’s life.
Knowing such a fact alone will not be helpful. Rather, it is the [intention] to have it at the forefront of one’s mind, putting one’s mindfulness on it without forgetting it as much as possible. With familiarity, then this will help.
When one fails to remember this fact, then when one’s life situation becomes difficult, one will be at a lost as to what to do. For example, one may become sick suddenly. One gets so worried, not knowing how or what to think.
However, if one recognizes the reality of one’s body, more importantly remembering that this is the nature of life, filled with suffering, sickness and eventually dying from it, then having the sickness will not cause much worries and difficulties.
Before one can place one’s mind’s attention closely on say, the body being filthy, dirty, impermanent and so forth, one must firstly come to recognize such a fact. Such an understanding and recognition are what wisdom does.
Wisdom is the mind that sees reality as it is. It is not a mind that fabricates falsities, that [superimposes] about one’s body being impermanent. This would not be wisdom but a superimposition.
In this case, it is wisdom that sees the impure body just as it is impure, seeing the impermanent body as it is impermanent.

Manner of meditating on the body to counteract desire for it as according to the *Vinaya*:

a) Viewing the body like a disease: It is explained in the <i>Vinaya</i> that, when one sits down in meditation on the close placements of mindfulness on the body, one should sit in the <i>Seven Fold Vairocana</i> posture, then primarily observe one’s own body and regard it as like a disease.
As mentioned before, the basic nature of one’s body is suffering. Due to possessing such a nature, one’s body is like a disease. This is very much like, when one has the sickness of cancer as a condition, bodily growth like tumors and so forth can appear and grow very big. The tumor is analogy of the cause of [the inherent pain when one possesses a body].

<p>b) Viewing the body like a weapon: If one touches a sharp pointed weapon like a spear, for example, one feels pain. The body is analogy of this, [as a mere poke at it causes pain].</p>
<p>c) Viewing the body like poison: If one ingests some poisons, one may not die immediately but may die slowly with pain. One's body is just like that. It is only a matter of time that one's body will be filled with manifest problems.</p>
<p>d) Viewing the body as impermanent, empty and selfless. [Such analogies are] how it is explained in the <i>Vinaya</i>.</p> <p>The purpose of such reflections and meditations on how the body is dirty, filthy and essenceless is to counteract and oppose desire and attachment. Such meditations are helpful for those who are very desirous with strong attachment.</p>
<p>Other methods of viewing the body: There are also other meditations that counteract attachment for the body. One could be attracted to the body of another person for various reasons like its shape, color or tactile feel. The suggested meditations to counteract this is to imagine the color, shape or tactile feel of the body one is attracted to, 8 or 9 days into its decomposition.</p>
<p>e) If one is attracted to the <i>color</i> of the body, then a suggested meditation could be to imagine in phases, the changes occurring during decomposition: the color of the body one is attached to changes to bluish color of a corpse. Next, one imagines that boils occurring such that pus oozes out from them. Next, when the boils dry up, what is left is bare flesh.</p> <p>The reason one is attracted to a person's bodily color is due to finding the color of the person's body as beautiful and attractive. If one generates in place of this, a recognition, attitude and imputes a sense of ugliness onto the body, this will oppose any idea that it is attractive.</p>
<p>f) If one is attracted to the <i>shape</i> of the body of another, then one can meditate on 2 aspects to counteract such an attachment: i) Meditating on the aspects of eating: Imagine the body of the person being eaten by maggots [after dying].</p> <p>ii) Meditating on the aspects of breaking down: A few days after being eaten by maggots, the body breaks down into parts without a whole body. These are the 2 aspects to counteract attachment to the bodily shape of one's object of attachment.</p>
<p>g) If one is attracted to the <i>tactile feel</i> of the body: i) After the body has broken down into parts, imagine that even these parts are also eaten by maggots and so forth. ii) After the maggots have completely eaten every part of the body parts, what is left is merely the skeleton.</p>
<p>h) If one is attached to one's or someone else's body to be served, honored or respected: One should imagine the body to be like a corpse, not moving nor reacting.</p>
<p>i) Viewing the body as a skeleton: One can view one's or someone else's body like a moving skeleton. This acts as an antidote to the above various forms of attachment that may arise in relation to the body.</p> <p>All such meditations can counteract manifest forms of desire and attachment. When these arise, such meditations are helpful to reduce one's sense of attachment and desire or making them non-manifest for the time being, but they cannot stop attachment completely. To do so, the only way is to realize selflessness.</p>
<p><i>Khenrinpoche:</i> I've not seen it myself but, I've heard that in Thailand, the Theravada tradition has the practice of bringing their novice monks to where corpses are placed for a few days for them to see how the bodies decay. Would you like to go?</p> <p>The reality of our bodies is exactly like that, no different [from the corpses]. This trains your mind to reduce attachment. This 'seeing' meditation is very helpful as we only talk or imagine, but we don't see how disgusting our body is. There is really nothing much to cherish. [Such meditations to reduce attachment] are explained in the <i>Vinaya</i>.</p>

Manner of meditating on the body to counteract desire for it as according to the *Abhidharmakosa*:

<p>In the <i>Abhidharmakosa</i>, there is the explanation of visualizing one's own or someone else's body one is attached to as a skeleton: One imagines that certain parts of the body are eaten by maggots, like the tip of one's big toe or at the mid-brow, through to where one can see the bone. From there, one imagines more bones are revealed as the flesh is eaten up.</p>
<p>When all the flesh is eaten up, what is left is the mere skeleton. Likewise, imagine this is happening to everyone, they also become like skeletons. Then imagine that the entire world environment being filled with skeletons.</p>
<p>The meditation starts with oneself as a skeleton, emanating out to seeing more and more similar skeletons until one's visualization fills up the place one is staying, going out to the surrounding place, country, then to the world. At the end, one then withdraws all of them absorbing into each other, then finally absorbing into one's skeleton.</p>
<p>One places attention on this skeleton. Perhaps this is how to meditate for beginners.</p>
<p>In the 2nd stage, the essence of meditation is similar. However, after one has withdrawn all the skeletons back into the original skeleton, instead of viewing the entire skeleton, it becomes half in size.</p>
<p>In the 3rd stage, one starts off with the same emanating and withdrawing visualizations. Here, instead of focusing on the original skeleton as half, one dissolves all the skeleton into the skull. One places attention merely on that alone.</p>
<p>In the 4th stage, everything is similar. At the end, one withdraws the skeletons back into the original skeleton, which then dissolves into the bone area at the mid-brow the size of a thumb without the skull. One places attention on that alone.</p>

One's human life of freedoms and endowments can either be essenceless or precious:

In Chapter 8 of *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*, it is explained that the main obstacle for developing concentration is attachment, particularly, attachment to the body. There were much emphasis placed on the antidotes to counteract attachment to the body. When one is unable to sit down, meditate and think about Dharma, the main problem is attachment to the body.

Hence, if one fails to counteract attachment to the body, then real Dharma practice would not be possible.

One finds a lot of difficulties meditating due to attachment, especially to one's own or someone else's body. This is a difficult and challenging issue for everyone. Unless one is able to counteract such attachment, then real practice will be difficult.

If one is able to place one's attention on the fact that one's own and someone else's body are essenceless, filthy, dirty, impermanent, having to die and decay one day, then this would be helpful for the mind, as it is only such a mindfulness that would enable one to make one's life meaningful.

On one hand, it is emphasized that the human body is dirty, filthy, impermanent, will die and decay one day, But on the other, it is also emphasized that the human life of freedoms and endowments is Extraordinarily precious, more precious than the lives of worldly gods.

The reason the human life of freedoms and endowments is precious is because, with it, one can achieve the many goals of the happiness of this life, future lives, liberation and enlightenment. All such goals are achieved on the basis of such a life. Other than being a basis for such goals, there are no other reasons why it is precious.

On the basis of such a human life of freedoms and endowments, it is possible to newly achieve the paths of seeing and meditation. This is something that cannot be achieved even with a god rebirth.

Although one's human life of freedoms and endowments is dirty, filthy and impermanent, yet it is very precious as one can achieve many goals with it. Hence, one has to take care of and make full use of it well, not letting it go to waste.

Khenrinpoche: In my hometown village, people would keep the cow dung. Even though it is dirty, but they cherish it so much and keep it. This is because, they know it is useful, even though it is dirty.

When the cow poos, they would immediately rush to collect the poos and bring it home. They can use it as a fertilizer. After that, they would knead it like a bread, place it on the wall to dry. After a month or two, it would become totally dry and be used as cooking fuel that makes powerful fire. This makes delicious cooked food!

One's human life of freedoms and endowments is precious. Hence, one needs to take care of it. However, one must know how to do so. Otherwise, it will merely be taking care of a filthy, dirty and essenceless bag.

One's life is already difficult as it is, but if one leads one's life motivated by attachment and desire, one is then merely making one's life even more difficult with these. This is the same as going out to collect a huge amount of feces, bringing them back to one's room merely to smell them, as one does not know what to do with them, [as opposed to the villagers].

These are the various antidotes for those who are very desirous to counteract their attachment. Of the various meditations to counteract the various attachment to the different aspects of the body, it is said that, the ***meditation on the body as skeleton*** acts as antidote to ***all*** of the aspects of attachment to the body.

If one has a lot attachment to one's own or someone else's body, then such a meditation, when it is done, will be helpful. One has to discover for oneself, when one experiences strong desire or attachment, then thinking about this meditation, whether it works or not. This is because, the fact is that, it does work to counteract any manifest desire. One has to try it out for oneself.

Using close placement of mindfulness on body, speech and mind to avoid harming others:

The essence of close placements of mindfulness on bodily conduct is this: one has to check whether one is using one's body to harm or hurt others or not. One has to place mindfulness on that to not use one's body to harm others.

It is not that one does not know such [teachings]. One has studied them before, as when one creates nonvirtues with one's body, speech and mind, there are the 4 ripening effects. These come about if one engages any actions that harm others.

If one does so with one's body, speech and mind, then the damage is done [in the sense of accumulating the causes] for the 4 ripening effects. Hence, the question is not whether one knows them, rather, it is a question whether one remembers it or not.

Therefore, the idea is to place close placements of mindfulness to remember these so that, as much as possible, one acts to refrain from harming others.

When one is mindful of not harming others physically and hurting others verbally, over and above the advantage of not accumulating the non-virtuous karma of harming others, there is also the benefit of accumulating the virtue of physically and verbally benefiting others. ***Khenrinpoche: How you behave makes a big difference for you. So it is important.***

One day I went to a shop to look for some shoes. While I was trying out some, [I needed a pair of socks as I was not wearing any and asked that from the retail assistant]. She came back with a pair of used try-out socks, but handed them to me with both her hands! Being a Malay lady, [so her behavior] was not about respecting me [as a Buddhist monk].

When you go to other shops, the [retail assistants] may just hand you the pair of socks with one hand.

Therefore, this is one's own experience, about how one would feel, when someone hands you something with both hands respectfully, of course you would feel happy.	
If someone were to hand you something, even though it is not done in a non-respectful manner, but the way of behaving [without due regards] may cause you to immediately project the thought that he or she may not be such a good or nice person, but an arrogant one.	
One then generates unhappiness there immediately. Since it is an unpleasant experience, you won't be buying anything.	
If the assistant [serves you with due regards], of course you would buy from her. So, both receive the benefits. The shop makes the profit, oneself gets the benefit of getting what one wants and leaves the shop happily with just a small act from her.	
From this one can tell that, we as Buddhists need to do something:	I am just giving a small example, but if you do this, the benefit would be that:
1) To [refrain from] hurting others.	1) Others will not be unhappy with you.
2) As much as possible, we should smile [to others] with respect.	2) This would really bring so much joy to others.
3) Not be arrogant, but always [consider oneself] as low as possible.	3) Others will immediately feel respectful towards you.
So, how one behaves [physically and verbally], how one shows one's facial expression towards others is extremely important. Try to talk to others, say hello to them, smile at them. When one [comes across] another, [one should not behave] as if one did not see the other person. This creates so much negative energy, which means unhappiness with each other.	
Life is very short, how long can one live? 1 year, 2 years, 1 month, 10 years? Nobody can predict. So, this is something one should remind oneself all the time, to be mindful with one's bodily behavior.	
It is the same with how you speak to others. The way you talk can bring so much happiness and joy to another person. Your same words and speech can also bring so much pain and sufferings to others. Therefore, always be mindful in how you communicate and talk to others.	

If one were doing the right and wonderful thing, no one would dare to be upset with one:

<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> I did mention this before. I was in Tushita center in Dharamsala in 1986 or 1987 for 2 months doing a text memorizing retreat. It was December or January, so it was very cold. About 9.30 in the morning after sunrise, I came out of the room and sat on the garden to get some heat from the sun.
A western nun whom I had known but had never spoken before, brought some visitors to Tushita center. When she saw me, she asked me where Ven. Roger's room was. As I had just come out of the room and was feeling very cold, I merely pointed with my front finger in the direction of the room and said: "That's the room." It was not very far as I could see the room.
I also didn't mean anything [with my gesture and reply]. I didn't know [what happened,] but she got so upset and angry with me that she shouted: "Why don't you stand up and show the room to me?" Of course I was also upset and angry, so I didn't move at all, but merely said: "The room is that window there in front of you, just go there."
Of course, if you think deeply, I have my own problem. If I had stood up and showed her the room [with both my hands] and said: "Come, this is the room," then I think it'll solve all the problem! But I didn't do that.
When I went for His Holiness' teachings, she saw me, but went by another way not wishing to face each other, as if having seen ghosts! That went on for almost 2 or 3 weeks. She was so upset and told another nun: "This monk is so arrogant," and told many stories about how bad I was. Another nun friend asked if I should go apologize to her so things would be alright.
But I didn't do that. She knew I was a Kopan monk, so she said to me: "Last time I did so much to help Kopan, now I am not going to help anymore." She even went to talk to Rinpoche. After a while, my nun friend organized a dinner for both of us.
We sat down and talked but [no one apologized]. After that, we were alright, no more problems [with each other]. The episode was actually a small one, but it became very big.
The reason I am telling this story is that, she had walked for quite some distance to Tushita center, of course she would be tired, cold and facing whatever difficulties she may have had. She also didn't know that I had just come out from my room for the sun. If I was able to show her the direction with a respectful demeanor, I think there won't be any issue at all.
When you think about that, [it is oneself] who had really created the problem. It was I who had started the problem, not her.
<i>So sometimes it is really important to recognize [one's own deepest motivation.] Sometimes one [may feel indignant], but if one were to look deep down, if oneself was doing the right and wonderful thing, then who would dare to be upset?</i>
I think no one would be upset with you. I think so. If you smile, others would smile back. If you are not smiling, then others won't return the smile. Therefore, we really need to think deeply.
However, we always assign blame to others: "This person is so bad, that person is so nasty!" Oneself is totally perfect: "I am so good and perfect. I didn't do anything. So why did this person do this, why did that person get upset with me?"

In reality, [one is actually at fault,] but one never thinks that it was. One thinks that the problem always come from the other person. One never thinks one is the cause of the problem.
Hence, the point of what I am talking about here is that, it is really important for one to be mindful in how one speaks and reacts. This makes a huge difference for oneself, bringing so much happiness. Just like the example of the [shop assistant] who handed the pair of socks to me [with both hands]. It was just a simple act, but that made a big difference.
When you go to the restaurant, you can see how the waiters and waitresses talk to you, you would feel extremely pleasant. This is because, they are so pleasant, smiling and so forth. From the business perspective, of course, that is the best way to do, which will bring in all the customers to the restaurant, by the manner one serves others [with due regards].
Then there is no need to mention for us as Buddhists, being so committed with refuge not to harm sentient beings, taking Bodhisattva vows, wow, wow, wow, then taking tantric vows, making so many promises in front of gurus, Buddhas and all mother sentient beings. <i>In reality of course, you cannot even “tahan” one sentient being!</i>
You really need to think deeply. You have all learned so much, but you really need to think how to behave. If you behave well, talk nicely and have pleasant manners, then this is of course amazing, as you don't blame anyone. You become like little compassionate Buddha. [Things become] different, as everybody loves and cares about you, you have less problems.
Even though you may love this or that topic, have so much knowledge about the Dharma, but your [Dharma] action is zero. There is a saying by some Kadampa masters: “You know everything, but you don't know one thing.” Hence, when you learn about this topic on mindfulness, it is important to learn how to always be mindful of your body, speech and mind.
As mentioned in the Lam Rim, of all the recognition, the best supreme attitude and recognition is that of death and impermanence. If one can remember at the forefront of one's mind all the time that one is definitely going to die and that this is uncertain, then such an attitude and remembrance is said to be the best of all awarenesses.
The Kadampa masters have a saying that, one knows a hundred things but missed out one thing, which is death and impermanence. Due to not remembering death and impermanence, one is like a person who, even though knows a hundred things, but due to not remembering this, is equivalent to not knowing anything.
For some whose minds are always very busy thinking about things with a lot of messy discursive thoughts, the recommended antidote is to cultivate mindfulness on breathing meditation. There are 6 points for counteracting discursiveness. This is explained in [<i>Vasubandhu's</i>] <i>Autocommentary to the Treasury of Knowledge, the Abhidharmakosa</i> .
In the <i>Sthavira</i> sub-school of the Hinayana tenets, which is the Theravada tradition of the Pali Canon, there are a lot of sutras, many of which are unavailable in the Tibetan tradition, but which explains the cultivation of mindfulness in one's daily behaviors while walking, sitting, eating, lying down, as well as breathing and so forth.

Understanding mental body

Student 1: How does the body of the Bodhisattva on the supreme mundane quality level path of preparation, which is a body of true suffering, become a mental body, which is no longer true suffering, when he achieves the path of seeing in the same meditative equipoise?

Khenrinpoche: If one remembers the assertion of the Hinayana tenet of the Vaibhasika, the Great Exposition School, the [Bodhisattva's] path of preparation to the path of no more learning/ enlightenment is done in one sitting. Hence, they assert that the Buddha's body is not Buddha Jewel. This is because, like oneself, they cannot fathom how a body of true suffering [can become non-true suffering]. So, you are still [asserting] Vaibhasika tenet and have not "upgraded"! [I am] joking...you have to "upgrade" yourself, don't [stay where you are] forever...

The direct realization of emptiness ensures no more fresh accumulation of projecting karma for cyclic existence, yet, it does not necessarily prevent taking rebirths in cyclic existence under the power of karma and afflictions:

If one considers the bodies of the Hearers on their learners' paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing and meditation, these bodies are all true suffering. Also, as mentioned before, within the many different types of Hearers on their Hearers' path of meditation, there are some of such Hearer superiors who still have to take rebirths in cyclic existence for up to 7 more times. These are superiors who have seen the truth directly and hence no longer newly accumulate projecting karma. Nevertheless, they still have the imprints accumulated in the past. Hence, some of them still have to take rebirths in cyclic existence under the power of karma and afflictions. Hence, one can perhaps say that, the physical body of the Hearer superior on the path of meditation is true suffering. This is because, it is a product of karma and afflictions, hence one can say that it is necessarily true suffering.

How the lower schools assert that the nirvana with remainder is true suffering, that such foe destroyers still possess true sufferings and true origins:

Such a Hearer superior on the Hearers' path of meditation then goes on to actualize the Hearers' path of no more learning and becomes a foe destroyer on the basis of the present support that he has while on the path of meditation. The Autonomy Middle Way School and all the schools below it assert that, such a foe destroyer achieves a nirvana with remainder, which is then followed by attaining a nirvana without remainder. They assert that the nirvana with remainder, the body that the foe destroyer possesses, is true suffering. Hence, the Hearer superior on the Hearers' path of meditation becomes an arhat on the basis of the body/ support that he has, which is true suffering. Therefore, when he actualizes nirvana, he does so with remainder. This is because, even though this arhat no longer possesses any afflictions in his continuum, nevertheless, he still possesses the [body] aggregate which is true suffering. Hence, something [remains] behind [as true suffering].

If one is asked whether those arhats who have achieved the nirvana with remainder still possess true suffering, then one has to say yes. When asked whether they possess true origins, then one probably has to say yes as well. However, when the arhat achieves the nirvana without remainder, due to being separated from the [bodily] aggregate which is true suffering, then such an arhat is said to have achieved the nirvana without remainder.

How the aggregates of the foe destroyers who have achieved nirvana with remainder are not samsara:

One can actualize the foe destroyer on the basis of a desire realm, form realm, as well as formless realm supports. Hence, the supports of the 3 realms are supports for actualizing the Hearers' enlightenment. One achieves the Hearers' foe destroyer on the basis of the support he has while on the Hearers' path of meditation. Hence, when the Hearer arhat achieves the nirvana with remainder, his aggregates are true suffering. Having said this, it is mentioned very clearly in the teachings that, those aggregates of such an arhat are not samsara. Therefore, the support of the Hearer superior on the Hearers' path of meditation is true suffering and samsara, however, the support of the Hearer's arhat who has achieved nirvana with remainder is true suffering but not samsara.

Qualm: Why is the form aggregate of the Hearer's arhat who has achieved nirvana with remainder true suffering but not samsara?

In general, samsara is the factor of having to take on rebirth, moving from life to life under power of karma and afflictions. The Hearer superior on the Hearers' path of meditation still possesses karma and afflictions in his continuum as these have not been abandoned. Hence, he possesses the *potential* in his continuum to connect to another birth in cyclic existence. Hence, his aggregates, the support of the Hearer superior on the path of meditation is samsara, as well as true suffering. However, a Hearer foe destroyer is someone who is obviously freed from cyclic existence as he has achieved liberation. This is because, he *does not possess the potential* in his continuum to take another rebirth set of aggregates in cyclic existence due to karma and afflictions. However, these arhats who have achieved nirvana with remainder possess true sufferings and true origins. In general, true origins can refer to either karma or afflictions. However, the arhats who have achieved nirvana with remainder do not possess true origins which are karma nor afflictions. Hence, what sort of true origin is possessed by such arhats?

When such Hearer arhats achieve the nirvana with remainder, they do achieve the mental body as well. When they achieve the nirvana without remainder, they achieve the mental body with the capacity to emanate.

The characteristics of the mental body of the Bodhisattva superior:

As for the Bodhisattva on the supreme mundane quality level of the path of preparation, he achieves the path of seeing from [such a support] within one sitting. For someone who is of the definite Mahayana lineage, the body of such a Bodhisattva on the supreme mundane quality level of the path of preparation is necessarily true suffering. He also achieves the path of seeing in one sitting with such a support. However, when the path of seeing is achieved, it is said that, such a body transforms into the mental body, where the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death are abandoned.

In the division of mind generation into 4, there are the:

- 1) Mind generation of engagement through belief (on the Mahayana paths of accumulation and preparation).
- 2) Mind generation of special pure thought (from the Mahayana path of seeing through the 7 impure grounds).
- 3) Ripening mind generation (on the 3 pure grounds).
- 4) Mind generation of one who has abandoned the obstructions (in the continuum of a Buddha).

When the Mahayana path of seeing is achieved, the Bodhisattva realizes emptiness directly. The Hearer's path of seeing is also achieved when emptiness is realized directly. Hence, the *manner* of realizing emptiness for both superiors *are the same*. However, there is huge *difference* in the *mind* itself that realizes emptiness directly. This is because, the Bodhisattva superior's direct realization of emptiness on the path of seeing is *accompanied by mind generation*. When the Mahayana path of seeing is achieved, his mind generation becomes more exalted than before. Due to this mind generation that accompanies the direct perception of emptiness, the quality of his mind directly realizing emptiness surpasses the mind of the Hearer superior that realizes emptiness directly.

When the Bodhisattva realizes emptiness directly and achieves the path of seeing for the first time, it is said that, at that moment, such a Bodhisattva far outshines even the foe destroyers. Even though the foe destroyers have already abandoned the afflictive obscurations, all afflictions together with their seeds, whereas the Bodhisattva superior has not, but such a Bodhisattva superior far outshines the foe destroyers. An example is given that, no matter how high level a minister may be, whenever he is in the presence of a king, the king always surpasses and outshines the minister, merely by the [prestige] of the king's lineage. Hence, due to the direct perception of emptiness, the Bodhisattva also achieves an elevated state of mind generation, where it becomes the mind generation of special pure thought. Such a mind generation becomes more powerful and elevated due to the direct realization of emptiness on the path of seeing.

It is said that, the Bodhisattva superior here on the path of seeing achieves the mental body as well. Therefore, could one draw a connection between such a special mind generation and taking on a mental body, which is freed from true sufferings and true origins due to his special mind generation?

It is said that, once one achieves the Mahayana path of seeing, one will never [go through aging and grow old]. If one does not want to [go through aging and grow old], then one has to achieve the Mahayana path of seeing. The Mahayana grounds are explained to be achieved from the Mahayana path of seeing up to the end of the 10th ground, where the descriptions of all inconceivable qualities of the Bodhisattvas are said to possess. If one thinks about it, this is something very difficult to fathom as these descriptions just cannot fit one's mind. For example, the Bodhisattva on the 1st ground can emanate 100 bodies, 1000 bodies on the 2nd, 100,000 bodies on the 3rd and so forth.

[As stated in the *Lam Rim Chen Mo*,] the Bodhisattva achieves the *surpassing practice of the perfection of generosity* [which is defined as a *perfected generosity that is conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness*] *only* on the first ground onwards. The various surpassing practices of the perfections are also related to the 10 grounds with the presentation of the 10 perfections. It is said that, the Bodhisattvas on the 1st ground are able to give away their bodies without any difficulties, as easy as giving away a plate of vegetables. Hence, if anyone were to ask them for their hands, legs, head or whatever, they can give it away without any pain nor difficulties. Prior to achieving the Mahayana path of seeing, the Bodhisattva does not possess such courage nor determination. Once he achieves the Mahayana path of seeing and enters the 1st ground, due to his extraordinary mind generation, where the quality of his mind is very different, hence, he possesses the surpassing practice of the perfection of generosity where he has no issues nor difficulties in giving away his body. One also has to remember that his body has already transformed into the mental body.

I would personally think that, the reason Bodhisattvas' support changes into the mental body is due to their extraordinarily mind generation attained on the Mahayana path of seeing. Generally, the question still remains, for it is very difficult to explain without any real explanations, on what enables the body to transform into the mental body.

If one analyzes this from the perspective of Highest Yoga Tantra, where [it is said that] one achieves enlightenment in one life within the same body, then is the same body [at the time of enlightenment] still true suffering? If it is, then it would follow that Buddha's body is true suffering.

Student 2: Was it not mentioned in previous module that, one achieves the mental body due to the levels of predisposition of ignorance and uncontaminated karma?

Khenrinpoche: This was explained during the module on Tathagata Essence, Chapter 1 of the *Sublime Continuum*. The usual presentation of the 12 links of dependent-origination is according to the thoroughly afflicted class of phenomena. There is also a presentation of the subtle 12 links of dependent-origination that is included in the knowledge obscurations. In the *Sublime Continuum*, the presentation of the mental body that arises from the levels of predisposition of ignorance and uncontaminated karma is in the context of the presentation of the 3 pure grounds. This means, [the text is saying that such a mental body] does not occur before the 3 pure grounds. However, it is also said in many texts that, upon achieving the Mahayana path of seeing, the Bodhisattva takes on a mental body. Then this raises the qualm: What will be the substantial cause of the mental body of the Bodhisattva superior on Mahayana path of seeing? I have already given my opinion then.

Student 3: If the impure ground Bodhisattva still have not abandoned their afflictive obscurations, yet they do not possess true suffering, would that mean they possess samsara as well as nirvana?

Khenrinpoche: Why not? Bodhisattva superiors take rebirths in samsara to benefit sentient beings. It is said that this is done not due to karma and afflictions, but that they can take rebirths anywhere in samsara intentionally as any forms just as they wish. There are many accounts of Buddha in his past lives as a Bodhisattva [superior], that took rebirth as a monkey and so on, as well as how they gave up their lives to benefit sentient beings. All these [acts of taking rebirths and dying] are done intentionally within their control.

Student 3: Why does one need a desire realm support to generate enough disenchantment for the ordinary Bodhisattva to become a Bodhisattva superior for the first time? Since the Bodhisattva superior possesses the mental body, why is there still the need for him to possess a desire realm support to achieve the path of meditation for the first time?

Khenrinpoche: When bodhicitta is generated, one enters the Mahayana path of accumulation. On the path of preparation, the Bodhisattva still possesses mind generation. Here, although it is still mind generation, but it is not the same [level of] mind generation, as it is a more powerful type. Then of course, when he enters the Mahayana path of seeing, his mind generation would become even more powerful and exalted. Hence, one has to say the same for renunciation. This means that, renunciation has to increase as well.

According to Buddhist cosmology, one's human world is called the Southern continent. There are other three in the north, east and west. Of these 4, one's Southern continent is the best environment to generate the paths. It is said that, it is very difficult to generate the paths in the other 3 human world continents. The humans in the Northern continent have a definite lifespan of 1000 years with generally equal wealth, resources and enjoyments. Hence, there is no poverty there. It is said that, the lifespans of the humans in the Eastern and Western continents are also fixed at 500 years, with resources, enjoyments and so forth. Hence, it is also difficult for the paths to be generated in their continua as well.

It is said that, the human and god supports included in the desire realm are the best supports for generating the paths. Particularly, the human support of the Southern continent is very much admired as the basis for generating the paths. This is because, the lifespan, enjoyments are not definite, whereas suffering is very obviously manifested in that, one sees one's and others' suffering easily. Hence, it is easier to develop renunciation.

From the perspective of tantra, the human body of the Southern continent is the supreme basis. This is because, such a body is made up of the 6 constituents.

In any case, it is said that, one can newly attain a path on the basis of a form realm support, but not newly attain a supramundane path, that is, the path of seeing. To newly attain the Mahayana path of seeing, not only does one need renunciation, but one particularly needs a very strong form of renunciation. Hence, the form realm basis is not the [appropriate] support to newly attain the Mahayana path of seeing, due to them not having enough disenchantment. One therefore needs a very strong renunciation to newly attain the Mahayana path of seeing. By virtue of the support/ existence, the beings in the form realm cannot newly attain the Mahayana path of seeing.

In *Vasubandhu's Abhidharmakosa*, he wrote that, one cannot newly attain the path of seeing in the higher realms. There is only 1 reason/ sign given in that, there is a lack of disenchantment.

Khenrinpoche: So based on this logic, you have to think deeper what [he meant] and why. If you can [arrive at a conclusion], you can be more clever than Vasubandhu!

Student 2: On the impure ground, the Bodhisattva superiors possess uncontaminated karma. [Then what is the ground being impure of?]

Khenrinpoche: If you were asked if the [impure ground Bodhisattvas] accumulate karma, then you would have to say yes. If you were asked the follow up question on whether they accumulate contaminated karma, then you would have to say no. Therefore, you would probably have to end up saying that, the karma that [the impure ground Bodhisattvas] accumulate are uncontaminated karma. If that is the case that they accumulate uncontaminated karma, then one would have to ask oneself through what [intention/] motivation?

For the 3 pure grounds, it is clearly stated that, [such Bodhisattvas] accumulate uncontaminated karma due to the levels of predisposition of ignorance. Hence, there should be no qualms with that. However, do the Bodhisattvas on the path of seeing accumulate uncontaminated karma that is motivated by the levels of predisposition of ignorance or not? If one says that the Bodhisattva superiors on the 7 impure grounds do accumulate uncontaminated karma, then one must account for what it is that motivates such accumulations. Would [the motivations be due to] the levels of predisposition of ignorance? If one says that it is indeed the case, then would there be any faults? Do such Bodhisattva superiors undergo the inconceivable transference of death that occurs due to uncontaminated karma that come about in dependence upon the levels of predisposition of ignorance? It is clear that on the 3 pure grounds, the Bodhisattvas do undergo the inconceivable transference of death as a result of having accumulated uncontaminated karma in dependence upon the levels of predisposition of ignorance. Hence, could one also say the same applies to the [the Bodhisattvas] on the 7 impure grounds? If it is so, then would there be any faults?

Student 4: What is the meaning of someone being definite of the Mahayana lineage?

Khenrinpoche: The Mahayana lineage is activated/ awakened when great compassion is generated in the heart. However, there are 2 types of persons whose Mahayana lineages are activated: one who is of the definite Mahayana lineage and one who is not definite in the Mahayana lineage.

For one who has awakened one's Mahayana lineage with the generation of great compassion, if one's pledge and determination to achieve full enlightenment is accompanied with very a stable resolve and irreversible faith, very much likened to those of sharp faculties, then one is definite to enter the Mahayana path [within one's lifetime] without entering other paths. One then proceeds towards enlightenment [without ever giving it up]. Perhaps whether a person is definite with his Mahayana lineage or not, has essentially got to do with how strong and stable a resolve he has in his heart. I wonder if it is sufficient merely to say that, one who is of the definite Mahayana lineage is someone who merely generates bodhicitta and enters the Mahayana path, as it is obviously insufficient [a criteria]. Perhaps if someone's resolve is very strong, stable and who generates and enters the path without ever giving it up, then one can say such person is of the definite Mahayana lineage.

Perhaps, to become a person of a Mahayana lineage [in his lifetime], this requires work over many [preceding] lifetimes. It is not merely thinking about it during one's lifetime, rather, it is a result of having trained [well in the past], which lead to planting much imprints over many lifetimes that become strong and stable. I do not think [such accumulation of merit] just happens in one life, one does something and then feels: "I am of the definite Mahayana lineage!" I think one of the conditions for someone to become one who is of the definite Mahayana lineage is the strong and stable imprints of the Mahayana.

Hence, if one makes strong prayers, generates strong determination and aspiration to place as much of such imprints as possible, over time one reduces self cherishing and increases more and more of the thought to benefit others, putting all such conditions together, working at it for many lifetimes, then perhaps there is hope for one to become a person who is of the definite Mahayana lineage. Otherwise, it would be difficult.

Definition of "Someone who is definite with regard to Mahayana Nature (Tib.: *theg chen gyi rigs nges*).":

Someone who is definite with regard to Mahayana Nature' refers to a person

(1) who will attain Buddhahood without losing Bodhicitta and entering the Hinayana path and

(2) who either has awakened Mahayana Nature or will awaken Mahayana Nature in his current lifetime.

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Perfection of Wisdom Studies

INSTITUTE FOR BUDDHIST DIALECTICAL STUDIES

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How to meditate on the body and its pleasant bodily feelings as impermanent to abandon attachment for it:

There are many approaches to the meditation on topic of the close placements of mindfulness of the body. One can reflect on how it is impermanent, impure, empty and selfless.
There are many important reasons why one meditates on the close placements of mindfulness on the body. One innately regards and misconceives one's body as permanent and unchanging. One also misconceives it as [having] a self and so forth.
Such misconceptions lead to all sorts of clinging and attachment to the body. Due to the attachment to one's body, this life, one concentrates only on taking care of this life by maintaining this body, spending all the time only on that.
Due to this, one then is unable to set aside time for Dharma practice/ spiritual development. This is what is said in the teachings. Whether this is true or not, one has to analyze and realize that for oneself.
For example, if one focuses on the impermanent nature of one's body, bringing to mind that one's body is disintegrating [momentarily], eventually ceasing to exist with mindfulness and vigilance at all times, then this will really make a difference in reducing or even stopping one from accumulating nonvirtues.
When mindfulness of one's impending death is actively kept within one's mind while one goes about one's daily life, this makes a huge difference in that, one will not have strong attachment for wealth, power, possessions, people who are one's relatives, friends, loved ones and so forth.
When one possesses mindfulness and vigilance of one's death and impermanence, at the very least, such objects of attachment would not be an issue that cause one great mental disturbances as one would not have strong attachment for them that causes pain in one's heart.
Hence, this really makes a big difference [to one's welfare] as opposed to not having such mindfulness and vigilance actively kept within the forefront of one's mind in one's daily life.
Since one possesses a body, it is natural that one will experience pleasant bodily feelings. Experiencing such feelings are alright, so long as one does so with a strong understanding and constant mindfulness of the impermanence of one's body.
When one applies such an understanding to one's feelings, one can also recollect that the feelings themselves are also momentary, arising and experienced but not lasting. The understanding that such [pleasant feelings] do not last will help one not to become greatly attached and strongly clinging to them.
In the absence of strong attachment and clinging to such pleasant bodily feelings, one will not accumulate many nonvirtues usually accumulated in one's daily life seeking such feelings.
Since one's body is impermanent, then it goes without saying that the bodily feelings that arise in dependence upon one's body are also momentary, not permanent nor static. Although this is the case, one is unaware that, even one's pleasant bodily feelings are actually impermanent.
Not only that, one even misconceives such pleasant bodily feelings to be permanent, holding onto and wishing that these will always be there, stable and never changing. Of course, one's pleasant bodily feelings are impermanent, they will not last [even for a moment]. When the [euphoria] is gone, in its absence, one is again left in the void of the [doldrums].
This would then lead to the craving and grasping for another new experience of pleasant feeling. In that way, whatever one does in one's life, one is [merely] seeking for the next experience of pleasant bodily feelings. This is how most people lead their lives on a daily basis, merely pursuing pleasant feelings out of attachment for them.
When one analyzes this, it is evident, how people would give in to their strong attachment and follow after them. This is how easy it is to accumulate, not just nonvirtues, but very strong nonvirtues.
Since everyone knows the Lam Rim, the Stages of the path literature, on the section on karma, which explains how 1 karma has 4 results, here referring to, how just from an instant of 1 nonvirtue, one has to experience the 4 results.
This is something that one needs to meditate on and think about. When one meditates on the consequences, the effects, how from just 1 nonvirtue, there arises 4 results, then one would develop the thought: "I had better not engage in nonvirtues, otherwise, I would have to suffer greatly for it."
One has to think well the general characteristics of karma, how it increases, the results of an action done [will not perish], etc.
On the basis of the meditating on the impermanent nature of one's body, one then meditates on the impermanent nature of pleasant bodily feelings one experiences in one's life. It is certain that one will definitely experience pleasant bodily feelings, however, the point is that, one should just experience them without being attached and then clinging onto to them.
[To be able to do this], one has to see for oneself the problems and harms one gets for being attached to and clinging onto pleasant feelings.
[These are the explanations on how] the body is impermanent, as well as how feelings are impermanent.

How to meditate on the body and its painful bodily feelings as impermanent to abandon anger due to it:

<p>[Above these,] the body is also miserable, [having the characteristics of] suffering. The reason one experiences the sufferings of birth, aging, sickness and death is all due to possessing the body. Without it, there is no way one suffers in these 4 ways.</p>
<p>Whatever unpleasant feelings, particularly bodily sufferings experienced in the present, as well as all the painful physical sufferings one will experience in the future can only occur due to possessing a body.</p>
<p>In the first place, one's body is a cause of one's physical suffering. This is the other understanding and awareness one has to actively keep in mind constantly, that one is the possessor of the vessel of suffering, one's contaminated appropriated aggregates. Since that is the case, hence one possesses true suffering, that one's body is true suffering.</p>
<p>Hence, one has to see the benefit of keeping such an awareness in the forefront of one's mind constantly, how it is beneficial.</p>
<p>One does not merely experience physical bliss all the times. In fact, many times, one experiences unpleasant, suffering and painful bodily feelings. Therefore, if one does not know how to think, then when such experiences arise, then one's would easily become disturbed, unhappy, one gets upset, angry and suffer.</p>
<p>When one generates an unhappy mind of frustration due to one's physical disability or pain, one may even inflict physical harm on or utter unpleasant words to others, essentially reacting negatively with one's body and speech.</p>
<p>Just as one meditates on the impermanent nature of one's pleasant bodily feelings, likewise, when one experiences physical discomfort or bodily pain, one should also place attention on the impermanent nature of such unpleasant bodily feelings.</p>
<p>One should recognize and be constantly aware that, even though [such unpleasant feelings are] there, but these will not last forever as these are not permanent.</p>
<p>One of the reasons such experiences become difficult for one, where one exaggerates and making it worse than it actually is, is that, when one is experiencing such unpleasant feelings, one feels that it will there forever. Such exaggerations actually makes one's already painful feelings even greater.</p>
<p>Hence, if one remembers at the forefront of one's mind that, such painful feelings are also impermanent, disintegrating momentarily, then even though one has to undergo such painful experiences, but there will not be as much sufferings added.</p>
<p>Hence, it is very helpful to constantly remember and be aware of the fact that one's body is suffering. Even though one may be feeling neutral, feeling neither happy nor pain, but one's body is the very condition for any kinds of experiences of suffering. One is therefore bound to experience suffering as one's body is "made to suffer" at any time.</p>
<p>As the example has been explained before, all that is needed is merely to press one's body, one immediately feels discomfort.</p>
<p>This is how one's body is. One is therefore born to suffer with one's body, which is its nature. Hence when conditions gather, one should not be surprised when one experiences physical pain, as without the body, one would never need to suffer.</p>
<p>Hence, it is important to see that one possesses the cause for suffering within one. Due to possessing the body, hence, all the conditions can [cause pain]. Even though this is the reality, but one does not remind oneself about this, then when one's health goes bad or one experiences physical pain, one gets disturbed very easily.</p>
<p>One gets so disturbed with so much worries, thinking: "It must be my diet," or "It is spirit or naga harm!" This is not so much about saying about what is harming one, but being disturbed by, getting worried, or being surprised by such experiences.</p>
<p>There is actually no need to be surprised, as the cause for suffering is already present constantly within oneself.</p>
<p>One has to acknowledge the fact that, the reason one suffers in one's life is due to oneself being the [possessor of the] source of suffering. Hence, one should not be any surprised [when suffering occurs], but just accept it. This makes life much easier.</p>
<p>There are people who live with the idea that: "Nothing bad must befall on me, I must never experience suffering as it is wrong for there to be suffering in my life." [When one] lives life with such an attitude, then it does not take much to be unhappy. [All that is needed is a] little problem or discomfort and one become unhappy immediately.</p>
<p>Therefore as explained before, if one does not want to experience bodily pain in life, then the solution is to achieve the mental body! There are 2 ways to do so. One way is to become a foe destroyer, another way is to achieve the Mahayana path of seeing, where one's mind generation becomes the mind generation of pure resolve.</p>
<p>It is only these 2 types of sentient beings that do not possess [the bodily pain] like oneself. Hence, one should not be surprised [by being afflicted with pain], as even those who have entered the path other than these 2 beings also have to suffer. Since these beings have to suffer, then whether one likes it or not, there will be problems and sufferings in one's life.</p>
<p>If after having achieved the mental body and one still experiences suffering, then perhaps one has the [appropriate reasons to be surprised and lament about it]. Otherwise, there is no need to ask: "Why is my life [full of] suffering with this pain and that unwanted problem." One should not be the kind of person to be asking such questions!</p>
<p>Therefore, when one [encounters] problems in life, with this suffering and that pain, one just have to [cope and manage] it. This is not saying that, when one meditates on this [topic], then one would [automatically be freed from problems, sufferings] and one need not do anything about them. One just have to sort and manage whatever problems that come now and then.</p>

Hence, depending on what the problem is, one should adopt [appropriate] measures accordingly to solve the problem. If one [is sick], one cannot sit down and meditate, but has to consult the doctor.
However, the point of being constantly aware of how one's is impermanent, suffering and so forth is that, when one does experience such problems and pain, one's mind is more subtle and remains undisturbed.
Therefore, there are real practical benefits when one places one's attention and awareness on these facts and realities that, one's life and body is [essenceless], impermanent and suffering. This is really helpful. Thus, the point here is to be constantly placing one's mindfulness and awareness actively at the forefront of one's mind as one goes about in one's daily life.
[To have success in this,] one has to practice such mindfulness all the time. Otherwise, one will not be any different from someone who does not know anything that the body is impermanence and suffering.
One may even be able to explain very well the big theories about how the body is impermanent and so forth, but if one does not remember it oneself constantly, then in reality, one is no different from someone who lacked such knowledge. One's knowledge serves no real practical benefit to oneself.
However, if one actively remembers these points at the forefront of one's mind as one goes about one's life, one will see the positive effects on one's life and mind. One will then 'taste' how useful and helpful the Dharma really is. This is how one enters into real practice. If one is still thinking about other things and still hopes to taste the Dharma, then it will be difficult.

When meditating on the selfless nature of the body, in terms of the selflessness of persons, to abandon attachment to it, the benefit is much greater:

Above this, if one can place one's mindfulness on how one's body is selfless, then it is said that the benefit is much greater.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> Do you know why it is much greater?
If one can remember and recollect how one's body is selfless, one will experience much more benefit than the earlier [recollection]. The word 'selfless' literally means 'no/ absence/ lack of self'. Here according to the [lower schools], the 'self' here refers to self-sufficient substantial existence.
When applied to the person, selflessness of persons here means the absence of a self-sufficient substantially existent person, something one absolutely grasps at. One has a natural, innate, unthought feeling/ grasping that there is an 'I' who is an experiencer of pain and joy that exists somewhere inside the body but is not dependent on and also separated from it.
One grasps at such an 'I' to be the controller of the body, viewing it as its possession. Based on such an apprehension of a self-sufficient person, there comes an apprehension of 'mine'. Hence, it feels that this is 'my body'.
Mixing with such an attitude/ grasping, one also views and regards 'my possessions', 'my friends and loved ones on my side'. Of course, such attitudes induces attachment and aversion and so forth.
Hence, with such a strong natural apprehension of a self-sufficient person, being independent of the body. yet is its controller and owner, then naturally there will come the feeling/ attitude/ concept of a real 'others'.
Hence, such an innate grasping at such a self-sufficient person is the basis for afflictions like anger and attachment to arise.
When one's own attachment and anger arise, one should see whether [these minds] are inevitably linked with the natural feeling of 'I'. If one thinks about it, this is very clear.
For example, the reason one is attached to an object is due to the fact that it is pleasant and attractive to one's 'I' and not to someone else. Hence, [one's attachment essentially originates from one's] 'I', the 'I' is the reason [for attachment] to arise.
Therefore, the stronger the sense of 'I', the stronger will be the mind of attachment or anger.
The psychology of this is thus very clear in that, the reason one gets very attached or upset is not because the object is appearing very nicely or bad to someone else, but always what one's 'I' feels, how it is appearing pleasant or unattractive to one's 'I', that becomes the reason for attachment or anger to arise.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> What do you think? Do you get attached because this person appears as beautiful to [someone else]?
If one thinks about it, it is clear that, whatever afflictions like anger, attachment and so on that arise, these all essentially originates from one's 'self, I, person'.
When one says [a person is] selfless, this means [the person] is absent/ being empty of such a self-sufficient substantially existent person. This means that, a self-sufficient substantially existent person, which one thinks naturally exists at all times separately from one's body and mind but yet is its controller/ owner, does not exist whatsoever.
Hence, if such a misconception of a self, which is the root from which afflictions like anger, attachment and so forth arises, is harmed and cut, then there would be no way for anger and attachment to arise as their root has been severed.
This is how it is explained with regards to the selflessness of persons, particularly in the Hinayana tenets. They only [present] the selflessness of persons as there is no presentation of the selflessness of phenomena. It is only in the Mahayana tenets of the Mind Only School, the Middle Way Autonomy and Consequence Schools that present the selflessness of phenomena.

There is still the need to meditate on the selflessness of phenomena, to abandon attachment to the body:

<p><i>Khenrinpoche:</i> Since the root of afflictions is severed when one realizes the selflessness of persons, then why does one still need to realize the selflessness of phenomena?</p>
<p>In the Mahayana tenets, they do not merely present the selflessness of persons, there are many explanations on the selflessness of phenomena.</p>
<p>According to the Mind Only School, they assert that the selflessness of phenomena as the emptiness of subject and object as different entities. Due to this, they refute external objects existing as different entities/ substances from the mind.</p>
<p>When such a presentation is added to the presentation on the selflessness of persons, which they also assert, it is said that the impact and effect of subduing and taming the mind of its afflictions is even stronger.</p>
<p>Just as the person does not exist in the way it appears in a self-sufficient substantially existent manner, being empty of existing in such a way, likewise, although phenomena appear to exist as a separate/ different substance from the perceiving consciousness, nevertheless, they are empty of existing in such a manner.</p>
<p>The Autonomy Middle Way School also have their own assertion of selflessness of phenomena.</p>
<p>[However,] the highest and ultimate explanation is given by the Consequence Middle Way School. They assert that, whether it is the person or phenomena other than the person, when one searches for the imputed object amongst its basis of designation or outside of it, one would not be able to find it. Hence, the imputed object, when sought, cannot be found.</p>
<p>Therefore, be it the person or phenomena, all of these do not exist in the way it appears. This is the most powerful [antidote] that can eliminate the arising of any afflictions. When one derives some understanding of this, then one also derives some understanding of what nirvana is, that the pacification of the afflictions that result in liberation, really does exist.</p>
<p>In essence, when one meditates on the close placements of mindfulness on body, by seeing how it is selfless, the effect in terms of pacifying anger and attachment is even greater than the positive effects one derives from meditating on the body as impermanent and suffering.</p>
<p>This is because, when one sees that the person one thought has always been self-sufficient substantially existent in fact has never existed, that there is no such controller of an 'I' that exists without depending on the body, then this eliminates the reason to be upset or attached when one experiences pain or joy.</p>
<p>Hence, when one meditates on the close placements of mindfulness on body, these are the main points to realize and then not forget, to be constantly aware of what has been understood: How the body is impermanent, misery, empty and selfless.</p>

Reiterating that, for beginners, one can meditate on the body as skeletons to abandon strong desire for it:

<p>Since there are many aspects of one's own or others' body one may be attached to, hence, there are different antidotes one can apply to counteract them. One may be attached to its shape, color, touch or being served, honored, respected or worshiped. Depending on which aspects of the body one may be attached to, one applies its corresponding antidotes.</p>
<p>There are antidotes suggested in the <i>Abhidharmakosa</i>, as well as in the <i>Vinaya</i>. However, there is the one antidote that counteracts all the different aspects to the body, the meditation on the skeleton.</p>
<p>This meditation is a visualization that one's mind imputes onto one's own or others' body. In reality, these bodies may not be skeletons yet, but it is only a matter that these will become one. Hence, it is not a total [fabrication], rather, it is [visualizing] something that will definitely occur to one's mind now.</p>
<p>It is taught as a method to counteract strong desire and attachment. When these arise, if one wishes to do something about them, then this 'skeleton meditation' is what can be done.</p>

Explaining the antidotes to discursive thoughts:

<p>Some people may just have the busyness of discursive thoughts thinking about nonsensical things continuously. A suggested antidote can be using the mindfulness of the inhalation and exhalation of the breath.</p>
<p>In relation to this, in the <i>Treasury of Knowledge</i>, <i>Abhidharmakosa</i> and its <i>Auto-commentary</i>, 6 different [aspects] are taught.</p>
<p>1) The first practice is Counting: This is [popularly known as] the Nine-Round Breathing Meditation. Here, one counts to 10 cycles of inhalation and exhalation. As one inhales, one places one's mindfulness on one's inhalation, thinking: "I am inhaling!" As one exhales, one thinks: "I am exhaling!" These 2 inhalation and exhalation are then counted as 1 [cycle].</p>
<p>When one initially begins with one's practice, one has to repeat and maintain these [exercises] for up to 10 cycles without letting one's mind being distracted to something else. If it does, one has to start all over again.</p>
<p>2) The second step is Pursuing: When one succeeds in 1) one then proceeds to the next level. As one inhales, one [intently follows or visualizes] the breath going down one's throat, the heart, the navel, the waist, the thighs, the calves, the soles, until it leaves one's soles into the earth.</p>

<p>Depending on one's breathing capacity, if one's breath is unable to [last too long of going into the earth,] one visualizes one's breath going [down] to the distance of up to a [<i>cubit</i>- distance from elbow to fingertip]. If one is able to go further, one visualizes it goes [down] to the distance of a [<i>yard</i>- nose to fingertip, with arm straight out to side, head facing front], etc.</p>
<p>When one pulls up the winds [breath], one imagines the winds entering one's soles, up the calves, thighs, waist, navel, heart, throat, as it leaves one's nostrils, one again visualizes it goes to the distance of a [<i>cubit, yard</i>] and so on.</p>
<p>The point about the entire meditation process is that, whether one is inhaling through the nostrils, all the way down to the soles [and into the earth], or when exhaling and visualizing the winds reversing back into the soles, through to the nostrils and so forth, one's mind cannot be distracted, but is placed on the breath/ wind itself.</p>
<p><i>Khenrinpoche</i>: What do you think, when you breath in, the winds go through your nostrils and then downwards, does it go beyond your stomach, into your thighs, calves, soles and so on? When you inhale and exhale, do your energy channels move and vibrate? If there is no movement of winds in the channels, then there is no difference from a corpse.</p>
<p>What do the scientists think? When one breaths in, is it the case that it is only the stomach [area] that moves, or are the blood vessels moving through the entire body? <i>Student 1</i>: The breath goes into the lungs, the [oxygen] is then carried by the blood cells, pumped by the heart to the entire body.</p>
<p><i>Khenrinpoche</i>: Oh then, all of these are all done by the wind. The heart is pumped by the wind, if there is no wind, the heart cannot pump.</p>
<p>3) The third meditation is called <i>Setting</i>: [As one inhales,] one visualizes one's breath as a string of jewels running down from the nostrils to the soles. This then comes up to form a circle when it enters the nose. One places one's mind on [such a visualization] without any distractions.</p>
<p>Above that, one also simultaneously uses the mental factor of investigation which is from the [division of] investigation and analysis. One simultaneously investigates by examining an object roughly without analyzing it in detail. One investigates whether the breath benefits or harms the body, cold or warm and so forth.</p>
<p>The mental factor of investigation here is one of the 4 changeable mental factors of the 51 mental factors. These 4 are regret, sleep, investigation and analysis. These mental factors are called changeable because they are not necessarily virtuous nor nonvirtuous, as there could be instances of them being virtuous and nonvirtuous. Hence, these can change.</p>
<p>For example, with a motivation to be freed from the suffering body and achieve liberation from samsara, if one engages in either a rough examination or a detailed analysis of the impermanent, suffering or selfless nature of the body, then such mental factors become virtuous. This is all due to the <i>motivation</i>.</p>
<p>However, if someone is motivated by strong attachment to the body were to then roughly investigate the body or have a detailed analysis of it, then such mental factors of investigation or analysis become non-virtuous.</p>
<p>The same applies for sleep and regret. If one falls asleep with a virtuous [motivation], then the entire sleep becomes virtuous. If one falls asleep within a state of attachment, anger and so forth, then the entire sleep is non-virtuous. If one regrets having done any virtues, such a regret becomes non-virtuous. If one regrets having engaged in any nonvirtues, then it is virtuous.</p>

Continuing the explanation on the 6 aspects of meditation of inhalation and exhalation of the breath to counteract discursive thoughts, as explained in the Treasury of Knowledge:

Of the 6 stages of meditation on the breath, the 1st is *counting*, where an inhalation and exhalation is counted as 1 cycle, doing so up to 10 cycles. In the 2nd stage called *pursuing*, one inhales and brings the breath/ wind to the throat, heart, navel, waist, thigh, [calves, soles,] into the ground, up to a [cubit or a yard and so forth], depending on one's [breathing] capacity.

In the 3rd stage called *setting*, while inhaling and exhaling, one visualizes it like a string of jewels. When one inhales, the breath/ wind goes through one's nostrils, down the body to the heels, coming back up to form a circle and enters the nose.

While doing this with a part of one's mind focusing on the breath, another part of it roughly investigates, without detail analysis, on whether at times the breath is benefiting or harming the body, producing happiness or suffering, hot or cold, etc.

4) The 4th stage is *closely investigating*, where the inhalation and exhalation of the breath is not just the wind, but in addition to that, one closely investigates by thinking that the breath is the nature of elements like earth, water, fire and its derivatives.

Hence, these 3, together with the wind, constitutes the 4 elements. One also closely investigates that the inhalation and exhalation of the breath are also the elements' derivatives of the evolutes. These are form, smell, taste and touch. Hence, one closely investigates that the breath that are the 8 form substances.

Therefore, with the [8 form substances comprising the 4 elements, the 4 evolutes,] together with the mind and its mental factors [accompanying] it, one understands and [discerns] that these are the 5 aggregates.

5) The 5th stage is *transformation*. This is essentially transforming one's [object of observation of] the wind, setting one's mind in virtue.

6) The 6th stage is *completely purifying*. Perhaps here, one is perfectly applying one's mind towards higher and higher roots of virtue, causing these to increase.

Summarizing the 4 close placements of mindfulness:

A) Body: The meditation on 9 aspects to counter desire/ attachment [according to the *Vinaya*, page 86] explained before and the 6 levels of meditation on inhalation and exhalation explained here are included perhaps under the meditation on the close placements of mindfulness of the body.

B) Feelings: When the close placement of mindfulness of feelings was explained, it was primarily referring to pleasant feelings. Generally, one respond with cravings and desire when experiencing pleasant feelings, this then leads one to circle in cyclic existence. One of the way to counteract this is to meditate on the impermanence of such pleasant feelings themselves.

When one experiences painful unpleasant feelings, this also leads to cravings to be separated from them. Due to such cravings, one gets upset/ develops anger. To counteract such anger, one has to counteract the cravings to be separated from the unpleasant feelings in the first place. One of the ways to do so is to meditate on the feelings themselves to be suffering.

The feelings of equanimity may at times feel nice and peaceful. However, such feelings do lead to the perpetual arising of ignorance. This is something that should be counteracted by meditating on selflessness.

Therefore, even with regards to just 1 close placements of mindfulness on feelings, there are many methods to meditate on. One can meditate on the 4 characteristics of impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless of the close placements of mindfulness of feelings. Through these, one counteracts the afflictions of desire/ attachment, anger and ignorance.

C) Mind: When meditating on the close placements of mindfulness of the mind, one should pay attention to a few things:

1) The mind is a momentary phenomena, changing momentarily, 2) When one wishes to point to something that is the mind, it will be difficult to do so, 3) It is unobstructive, in the nature of clear light, 4) The continuum of such a factor of luminosity and awareness has no beginning nor an end in that, it will exist eternally.

Of the 2 mental factors of investigation and analysis when meditating on the close placements of mindfulness of mind, one is *analyzing* to discover its entity. Hence, it is a wisdom.

D) Phenomena: When meditating on the close placements of mindfulness on phenomena, this is essentially a wisdom that analyzes to delineate the issues with regards to those things like love, compassion and so forth, to be adopted and things like anger, attachment and so forth, to be discarded. Such a decisive understanding is done by hearing and reflection.

Through the force of these 2, one comes to correctly settle as to what has to be abandoned and cultivated. One then places mindfulness on such [an ascertainment].

Student 1: One of the objects of observation for the close placements of mindfulness on phenomena is permanent phenomena. How does one meditate on this when one meditates on the general characteristic of impermanence?

Student 2 [responding to Student 1]: Permanent phenomena are dependent upon impermanent phenomena. There are no permanent phenomena if there are impermanent phenomena.

Student 3 [responding to Student 2]: If permanent phenomena are dependent upon impermanent phenomena, then it follows that, permanent phenomena are the substantial cause of impermanent phenomena.

Khenrinpoche: Is there such a thing as [meditating on impermanence when observing a permanent phenomena] in the first place?

Student 4: Does it not refer to the thoroughly purified and afflicted classes of phenomena, and not just any phenomena?

Khenrinpoche: It is very clear in the text that, phenomena here also refer to permanent phenomena. As explained before, phenomena here refer to all mental factors except feelings, all non-associated compositional factors, as well as permanent phenomena. Is it difficult to answer [Student 1]'s question?

Khenrinpoche: It is very clear that one cannot meditate on the impermanence of a permanent phenomena. However, are uncomposed phenomena true suffering? If [something] is true suffering, then it has to arise from karma and afflictions. This means it has to arise from causes and conditions. Can something that arises from causes and conditions be an uncomposed phenomena? Therefore, can one even say that, uncomposed phenomena arise from causes and conditions? If it does, then [it follows that] there would be no way to stop them. How can one exhaust something that is permanent?

4-1-3-1-2) 4 correct abandonings:

[Of the 7 divisions] in the 37 harmonies of enlightenment [shown on page 64] the next division is the 4 correct abandonings.	
The objects of observation are: 1) Virtue in the class of thoroughly purified phenomena. Here, there are 2 divisions: That which has been generated and that which has not been generated. 2) Nonvirtue in the class of thoroughly afflicted phenomena. Here there are also 2 divisions: That which has been generated and that which has not been generated.	
With regards to the ways to meditate on the 4 correct abandonings, there are:	
a) Abandonment of the nonvirtues that have been generated, b) Non-generation of the nonvirtues that have not been generated,	c) Generating the virtues that have not been generated, d) Increasing the virtues that have been generated.
Hence, the entity of a correct abandoning is <i>joyous perseverance</i> . Before there can be joyous perseverance, there has to be strong aspirations for these 4 abandonings.	
There are 2 different words related to nonvirtues to be discarded and the virtues to be adopted. With regards to the virtues one has to generate, one has to <i>strive</i> in generating the virtues that have not been generated, as well as to <i>strive</i> to increase those that have been generated. As for the nonvirtues generated and not generated, one has to <i>put effort</i> [to abandon them].	
Before <i>striving</i> to generate virtues and <i>putting effort</i> to abandon nonvirtues, one should firstly possess the aspiration to do so.	
In the course of doing so, there will be obstacles along the way. One of them is <i>laxity</i> , literally a mind that feels low and weak. The antidote to this is to uplift the mind.	
There will also be times that one will be <i>distracted</i> away from striving in virtues and putting effort to abandon nonvirtues. The antidote to this is to reflect on the faults and disadvantages of distractions as well as samsara. With mindfulness and vigilance, one then places the mind back to abandon nonvirtues and cultivate virtues.	
The purpose of cultivating these 4 correct abandonings is to weaken and discard the discordant class of nonvirtues, adopt, strengthen and increase the concordant class of virtues.	
In this context, such a correct abandoning is an exalted knower, a joyous perseverance that exists in the continuum of someone who has already entered a path.	
Boundary: It exists from the path of accumulation up to Buddha ground.	
Qualm: If the boundary of the 4 correct abandonings extends to the Buddha ground, then do all the 4 correct abandonings exist in the Buddha superior's continuum?	
With regards to nonvirtue here, there are the non-generation of nonvirtues that have not been generated, there are also the abandonment of nonvirtues that have been generated. Likewise, there are the generation of virtues not generated, as well as increasing those that have been generated. Do all these 4 correct abandonings exist in the Buddha superior's continuum?	
From the etymological perspective, these 4 are called correct abandonings because they have been correctly abandoned.	

How the 4 correct abandonings are related to the 4 powers cultivated in the practice of confession:

The abandonment of nonvirtues that have been generated (a) is related to the power of support and eradication/ regret.
The non-generation of nonvirtue not generated (b) is related to the power of restraint.
The generation of virtues that have not been generated (c), as well as (d) the increase of virtues that have been generated are related to the power of applying the antidote.
Khenrinpoche: I have a personal qualm. The abandonment of nonvirtues that have been generated is related to the power of support and eradication/ regret. How does the mind of regret abandon/ eradicate the nonvirtues that have been generated?

Walking meditation focusing on emptiness as taught in Nagajuna's Fundamental Treatise on Wisdom:

There is a walking meditation that is related to the meditation on emptiness as taught in <i>Nagajuna's Fundamental Treatise on Wisdom</i> . When one walks, one takes many steps to move. One can then reflect: To where am I walking to?
It is obvious that one cannot be walking [back in time] to the place one has started walking from, as it was the past. One is also not at the place one is walking towards as one is not there yet. Since the path of the past does not exist and the path of the future has yet to exist, hence, one has to say that, one's action of walking to somewhere is then in the present [moment].
When one analyzes the exact present action of walking to somewhere, it is essentially the action of <i>one foot on the ground and another in the air</i> . One cannot be walking if both feet are on the ground.
Hence, one has to say that, the act of going starts from the moment the leg is lifted up, to before one puts it down. However, this entire period from the start to the end of the act of going itself can also be divided into the past, present and future.
Hence, if one really analyzes carefully, there is really nothing one can point to and say decisively that: "It is only this that is the act of going and not that." Hence, what is coming and going is merely established in name, posited in dependence upon something else. It is always in relation to something else that one can say that: "It is this and not that."
Whether it is sitting down, going and coming, if one were to look for it, there is really nothing one can point to that is it.
Therefore, all such actions exist and function, but they can only exist in mere name. One conceives of oneself naturally as something very solid that one can point to. This is how it appears and how one conceives of oneself. But if one analyzes and looks for it, then one would not be able to find the real 'goer', the 'stayer' or the 'person sitting down'.
Therefore, there are many things one can think about and focus on when one does walking meditation. But with regards to the meditation on selflessness/ emptiness, if one can place one's meditation on where the act of going is, who is the 'goer', then this may help in one's understanding of selflessness.
Since one is a beginner, it may be easier if one were to focus [one's meditation] on the inhalation and exhalation of the breath. One can also focus on the daily activity of walking.

Student 3: Wouldn't the *mental image* of say, the object of attachment, be also true suffering?

Khenrinpoche: What [student 3] is saying that, permanent [phenomena] can also give suffering, for example, mental image.

Student 5 [responding to student 3]: Is the mental image produced, does it abide and disintegrate? I am proposing that, mental image is impermanent.

Student 6 [responding to student 3 & 5]: According to the Prasangika, mental image is a permanent phenomenon. It does not create problems but it is how one apprehends it. This is because, if one apprehends it with ignorance or attachment and so forth, it is actually one's afflictions that cause suffering. However, how is an impermanent phenomenon, like the mind that disintegrates momentarily, able to hold onto to a permanent phenomenon like the mental image or emptiness, which does not disintegrate momentarily?

Student 7 [responding to student 3]: Perhaps [student 3] is thinking in terms of the [mental image] causing suffering. [Perhaps one should analyze whether] it is the [mental image] itself that is true suffering or not and not whether it causes suffering. If that is the case, then one has to say that, Buddha can also cause you suffering.

Khenrinpoche: Some students can get upset with their teachers, who may in reality be a Buddha. For such students, is that guru true suffering? This is because, [student 7] seems to accept that, if it is a cause/ origin of suffering, it is also true suffering. Hence, remembering someone has to be via a meaning generality of the mental image. One may then get upset with the image of the person. This being the cause, extending to the argument that, such a person in reality is a Buddha and one gets upset with him, then for such a student, is the person who is a Buddha true suffering? Hence, is there a common locus of Buddha and true suffering?

Student 7: Yes. However, it is the fault of one's afflictions which has nothing to do with the mental image.

Khenrinpoche: Then it follows that, for you, your body is not true suffering. This is because, it is your mind's problem and not your body's problems. Also, what about your house, is it true suffering? One has to say that, if [something] is true origin, then it is necessarily true suffering. However, if [something] is true suffering, it is not necessarily true origin. When referring to true suffering, one can therefore understand it as either true sufferings or true origins.

Student 7: Does the Bodhisattva on the Mahayana path of seeing possess the contaminated aggregate of the compositional factor [of ignorance, attachment and so on]? If so, why then does he not possess true suffering?

Khenrinpoche: In the case of a Bodhisattva on the path of seeing who has realized emptiness directly, does he possess ignorance? Yes. However, does such an ignorance belong to true origins? No. This is because, if one says that his ignorance belongs to true origins, then one would have to say that, he would possess the ignorance that would accumulate the karma that would project rebirths in cyclic existence.

However, there still remains the question that, does the ignorance in his continuum arise from afflictions/ ignorance/ nonvirtues or from virtues? Hence, what would be the ignorance in the continuum of a Bodhisattva superior?

Student 7: It arises from the seeds of ignorance.

Khenrinpoche: Then it follows that it arises from ignorance. Then it follows that it arises from the true origins of karma and afflictions. Then it follows that it is true suffering, that Bodhisattva superiors have true suffering.

Student 1: [How is the mind, an impermanent phenomenon, able to realize any permanent phenomenon like emptiness or mental image?]

How the suchness of the mind is a permanent phenomenon:

Khenrinpoche: The main thing to think about is what was posited as the Tathagata essence, as there are 2 parts to it.

There is a tathagata essence which is a factor of luminosity and awareness, which is the mind. The emptiness of true existence of the mind is also posited as the tathagata essence. The emptiness of true existence [of the mind] is *mainly* posited as the tathagata essence. However, the basis of emptiness [of the mind], the mind of luminosity and awareness itself, is also tathagata essence.

When the stains of defilements of the mind is removed through the force of the antidote of emptiness, such an abandonment/ absence/ void of the defilement is none other than the emptiness of the mind. Hence, a true cessation that is achieved through the force of antidote is not something different or other than the emptiness of the mind.

The mind has always been empty of existing truly since beginningless lifetimes. For as long as mind was in existence, the final nature of the mind has always been empty of existing truly. The emptiness of the mind is not something which has been created through causes and conditions. This is why, the Natural perfection of wisdom is posited as emptiness. This is because, for as long as emptiness existed, it has always been that way, undefiled by the defilements. The factor of luminosity and awareness, the mind, when it is separated from the defilements, becomes the Wisdom Truth Body. The emptiness of such a Wisdom Truth Body is the Nature Body.

When someone achieves the path of release of the path of seeing, his mind is separated/ ceased/ abandoned from a particular defilement of the intellectually acquired [apprehension of] true existence. Such an abandonment is essentially an emptiness, an emptiness of the mind which has abandoned a particular object of abandonment. It is just that, at that point in time, the emptiness of the mind of such a person who has achieved such an abandonment is called the **true cessation which is an abandonment of the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence**. This is essentially an emptiness. When the person abandons the afflictive obscurations, even though such an abandonment is still the suchness of his mind, it is nevertheless given the name which is the **true cessation which is an abandonment of the afflictive obscurations**. When his mind is eventually separated from all obscurations, including the knowledge obscurations, then the emptiness of such a mind is called the **true cessation which is an abandonment of the two obscurations**. Nevertheless, [such a true cessation] is still the same as being the suchness of the mind. [It is given a new because,] the mind has evolved. Based on that, a suchness of this newly evolved mind is given a different name.

During the entire process of evolution, because the mind has been changing and evolving, then the suchness of the mind that is also undergoing the same process of evolution acquires different names at different times. Therefore, the different names are acquired because the mind has changed and not because the suchness of the mind has changed. The suchness of the mind has never changed. Hence, the suchness of the mind is an uncompounded phenomenon.

How the meaning generality of mental images are not necessarily permanent phenomena:

As for the meaning generality of the mental image, this is a bit difficult to understand. In a mental image, there is a factor that is specifically characterized and another factor which is a mere conceptual construct. For one, these 2 factors are indistinguishably mixed together, hence, it is difficult to see the difference between them.

The point here is that, appearances that appear to a conceptual consciousness are not necessarily conceptual, as there are appearances that are conceptual and there are also appearances that are non-conceptual.

Cultivating the 4 close placements of mindfulness precedes the cultivation of the 4 correct abandonings:

One of the reasons of meditating on the 4 close placements of mindfulness is that, one comes to understand that the class of thoroughly afflicted phenomena, true sufferings and true origins, are objects to be abandoned, whereas the class of thoroughly purified phenomena, true paths and true cessations, are objects to be cultivated. One does so through wisdom.

Therefore, the main point is that, with wisdom, one comes to understand what is to be abandoned and cultivated. On that basis, one develops the aspiration to do so.

What follows after the 4 close placements of mindfulness are the 4 correct abandonings, essentially, the entity of joyous perseverance which is an enthusiasm for discarding the objects of abandonment and adopting the objects of cultivation.

There are nonvirtues that have already been generated. Hence, one has to abandon such nonvirtues that have already been generated. To do so, the power of support and eradication/ regret are very important.

About the qualm: Does merely generating regret alone lead to the purification of the negativities that have already been generated?

Perhaps one probably has to say that, if one has sincere strong regret, this will lead to the purification of the nonvirtue accumulated, just as a sincere apology would usually lead to the [resolution of enmity between oneself and one's enemy.]
In the accumulation of nonvirtue, if one cultivates the power of support, essentially going for refuge and generating the mind of enlightenment, particularly generating very strong regret, this would reduce or purify the nonvirtues already generated.
(a) The 1 st of the 4 correct abandonings is called the abandoning of nonvirtues that have been generated. Such an abandonment [generally] does not mean that it is an action that has already ceased, that the nonvirtues have been abandoned. Rather, it refers more to the action [of abandonment] one will do so in the future.
(b) The 2 nd is the non-generation of nonvirtues that have not been generated. This essentially mean not accumulating new nonvirtues. One does so through applying the power of restraint. If one is able to apply the power of refraining from performing the negative actions again, this makes a big difference to not generating new nonvirtues.
(c) The 3 rd is generating virtues that have not been generated.
(d) The 4 th is increasing the virtues that have been generated. With respect to the virtues that have been generated, one should not be contented, rather, one should seek to increase such virtues that already been generated.
Hence, be it generating the virtues that have not been generated or increasing those that have been generated, one needs to <i>strive</i> actively to bring these about. One does so with enthusiasm and not be content with small achievements. Rather, one should seek to increase those virtues that have already been generated. These 2 are related to the power of applying antidote.
This power is the condition for generating the virtues that have not been generated and increasing the virtues that have been generated. In the Lam Rim literature, there are 6 listed powers of applying the remedies/ antidotes: (i) Reading/ reciting teachings of Buddha, (ii) Reciting dharanis and mantras, (iii) Making offerings to Buddha, (iv) Reciting the names of different Buddhas, (v) Erecting holy images. However, the best and most powerful antidote is (vi) Meditating on emptiness.
One has to see for oneself why the latter is the most powerful. As <i>Shantideva</i> said at the beginning of Chapter 9, the chapter on wisdom: <i>9.1 The Muni taught all these branches for the purpose of wisdom.</i>
Wisdom here refers to the wisdom realizing selflessness. Be it the recitation of sutras, mantras, making offerings and so on, these are all preliminaries for leading sentient beings towards developing the wisdom realizing selflessness.
The root of cyclic existence is ignorance apprehending a self. While this is so, one has to identify for oneself what exactly this ignorance which is an apprehension of a self is all about. There is also only 1 antidote to this apprehension, which is the wisdom realizing selflessness. This means that, without it, there is no way to defeat one's ignorance, the root of problems.
This is why, it is most vital to engage in hearing, reflecting and meditating to develop this wisdom realizing selflessness. At the same time, one also has to accumulate a lot of merits, purify one's mind of obscurations and negativities.

What is it that one wants in the Dharma and the Dharma teacher:

One has to ask oneself: Why does one need the Dharma in the first place? What is it that one is looking for? One has to want the Dharma from the depths of one's heart. For that to happen, one needs to know/ see for oneself why one needs the Dharma. [Being at the center,] one is supposedly here to find out, learn and educate oneself about the Dharma. But does one ask oneself why is one doing this and what is one looking for? If one does not see for oneself from the depths of one's heart why the Dharma is so important for one to really need it, then [doing] everything [related to real Dharma practice] is going to be difficult. Until one gets a real or at least some feelings from one's heart how life in samsara is really suffering, then merely learning and studying the Dharma itself alone will not have much effect on the mind. Therefore, having some sense of renunciation, feeling it in one's heart that [samsara] is really suffering is important. Above that, one has reached a point in time where one sees that the root of one's problem is really one's ego of ignorance and the only way out is to develop this wisdom realizing selflessness. It is when one sees, feels and understands from one's heart about this, would one then be able to bear the hardships in one's learning and practice. One would then be able to disregard any physical discomfort or challenges one meets in the course of one's learning and practice.

It is at the minimum with such an experience would such a person be able to appreciate one's own guru. For such a person who is looking for a way out of samsara, being sick of it, hence wishing for the Dharma, especially the wisdom realizing emptiness that, when one finds someone qualified to offer what one wants, then of course one would be so appreciative of such a guru. One would feel his kindness. When the teachings say that '*the guru is kinder than the Buddha*', this would then make sense for such a person. If one is dying of thirst and meets someone who has water to offer that saves one from dying, then of course one would be so appreciative of him. One would regard him as so kind. This [analogy] is merely referring to the present life alone. Hence, for someone who realizes the suffering of samsara and is seeking a way out, when he meets a qualified teacher who can offer what he needs, forever freeing him samsara, then of course the kindness of such a guru is without comparison. For such a person who sees all these points, he can obviously feel the kindness of his guru, seeing how his guru can benefit him for all lifetimes up to enlightenment, then it is not difficult anymore for him to sacrifice himself for his guru, whether it is giving up his body or possessions to make offerings and so forth.

I think we have too much learning without practice. Of course in a way, one can say it is planting imprints. But no matter what imprints are planted, if the mind does not change, then merely learning the Dharma does not change the mind at all. Therefore, it is perhaps very difficult to possess the interest to practice the Dharma. One does not have such interest.

Relating the above [advice on Dharma and Dharma teacher] to the 4 correct abandonings:

Therefore, the 4 correct abandonings are essentially joyous perseverance. This means [putting in] effort, as one cannot [put in] effort without an enthusiasm for it. One must essentially enthusiastically want to abandon the objects of abandonment and adopt the antidotes to cultivate the practice. It is a real wanting from one's heart.

4-1-3-1-3) 4 legs of magical emanations:

These are essentially meditative stabilizations. Its objects of observation are literally "magical emanations". [The yogi] is able to cause one object to become many and many objects to become one.

The way to achieve concentration here is what has been explained in:

The cultivation of calm abiding as shown in Maitreya's Distinguishing the Middle from the Extreme, which explains: The way to develop calm abiding through cultivating the 8 antidote counteracting the 5 faults:

Of the 8 antidotes, the first 4: (1) *Faith*, (2) *Aspiration*, (3) *Effort* and (4) *Pliancy*, are antidotes to (a) the fault of *laziness*.

An aspiration/ yearning for developing calm abiding is essential before there is any hope for achieving it. However, before one can even start to yearn for concentration, one must first have faith, as it is the root of aspiration. This is the faith of conviction that [calm abiding] is absolutely necessary, beneficial and one really needs it.

From faith, one can develop strong yearning. With strong aspiration, one would then naturally and joyously persevere. One needs to joyously persevere, putting in a lot of effort to achieve the goal. By putting in the correct effort, one then achieves physical and mental pliancy. One would then not be overcome by physical and/ or mental challenges.

One therefore needs these [4 antidotes as general antidotes] to develop concentration.

However, at the beginning of the actual process of developing concentration, it is extremely important to not forget one's object of observation. Hence, (b) *Forgetting the object of observation* is [listed as the second] big fault. The remedy to this fault is (5) *Mindfulness*, which possesses the function of *not forgetting*.

On the basis of not forgetting the chosen object of observation, one then enters into the cultivation of concentration. In the process, many obstacles will arise, due to: (c) *Laxity and excitement*. To recognize the arising of these 2, one needs the (6) wisdom of *vigilance/ introspection*. This detects the arising of the faults of laxity and excitement.

However, being able to detect the arising of these 2 faults is insufficient. When one detects that they have arisen or are about to arise, one needs to (7) *apply the relevant antidote* to either fault that has arisen or about to arise. Hence, (d) *Not applying antidotes* when these are arising is a fault.

However, when one's mind is in a peaceful, calm and undisturbed state where these 2 faults are not arising, if one were to apply [any further] antidotes at such a time, this [application itself] then becomes a fault of (e) *Over-application*. Hence, one should not apply antidotes when laxity and excitement are no longer arising, leaving the mind in (8) *Equanimity*.

Another way to cultivate calm abiding is also explained by:

Maitreya's Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra, through the 9 Mental Stages:

(1) *Mental placement*: In the beginning, one has to choose and decide on an object of observation to develop calm abiding. Once chosen, one has to adhere to and stay on one's chosen object of observation without changing now and then. At this level, one would not be able to stay one's object of observation for even a minute or two as one's mind is easily distracted.

(2) *Continuous placement*: After one has placed one's mind on one's chosen object of observation, the idea is to extend one's ability to stay on one's object for a longer 4, 5 or 10 more minutes. If one wishes to develop one's mind and meditate, then this is what one has to do, putting in the time and effort.

(3) *Patched placement*: One's mind has achieved some stability to abide on the object at this level. Nevertheless, the mind can still be distracted. When one's mind is distracted, then with mindfulness and vigilance, one pulls the mind's attention back onto the chosen object of meditation. Here, one has a fairly good idea of both coarse and subtle forms of laxity.

(4) *Close placement*: Here, one is improving on what has been achieved on the 3rd stage with the application of mindfulness and vigilance. One's ability to stay on one's object of observation is stable and there is also clarity to it.

(5) *Taming*: [Due to excessive strength and force to achieve stability and clarity on the 4th level], one's mind's strength and force of holding onto one's object then becomes [slack and lax] due to subtle laxity.

Lama Tsongkhapa's *Lam Rim Chen Mo* mentioned that, some Tibetan masters before him had said that, the mind's concentration at this level is considered a good meditation due to clarity and stability, as well as being relaxed. However, Lama Tsongkhapa refutes this and said that in fact, this is not a good meditation at all.

Perhaps one may have experiences that are similar to this: When one meditates, one may sometimes be able to stay on the object with some clarity and yet feeling really relaxed to the point that, after a while, one may even fall asleep.

The point is, despite one feeling relaxed, if one's meditation leads one to fall asleep, then it would not be a good meditation.

<p>The main point is, if one's mind is becoming less clear and more dumb/ dull, leading eventually to sleep, which is a derivative of ignorance, then such a meditation cannot be a good meditation. This is because, such a meditation is not making one's mind better but worse [off than before].</p>
<p>This has been shown in the Lam Rim before so one has already known this, this is provided one has not forgotten about it. If one has forgotten all about this, this means that one has not learned nor understood it in the first place. This is because, there is no such thing as knowing/ ascertaining something and forgetting it. If one really knows it, one would not forget it.</p>
<p>Hence, understanding something and forgetting something is mutually exclusive.</p>
<p>Hence, Lama Tsongkhapa is saying that, if the meditation makes one's mind less clear, more dumb/ dull, that leads one to fall asleep, then that is a bad meditation. This is because, for a good meditation to develop one's mind, not only must there be stability on one's object without distractions, as well as clarity, there must also be energy in the mind's hold on the object.</p>
<p>There must be a good hold or firm grip on the object with an alert mind that has strength and energy. If such characteristics are present, then such a meditation would develop the mind [and not let it deteriorate].</p>
<p>At this stage, due to the great danger of being overcome by subtle laxity, the meditator has to [put in effort] to prevent the arising of subtle laxity by uplifting the mind through, for example, thinking about the great qualities of concentration, etc.</p>
<p>Hence, he needs to uplift the energy/ mood of the mind such that, there are the factors of stability and clarity, as well as energy/ force/ strength behind the mind's manner of holding onto the chosen object of observation.</p>
<p>(6) <i>Pacification</i>: There is no danger of being overcome by laxity here. But by uplifting the mind, one's mind could then come under the influence of distractions due to over-uplifting it. On stages 5 and 6, the factor of vigilance is extremely important.</p>
<p>Here, there is the danger of distractions due to over-uplifting the mind. One then has to notice the arising of distractions with strong vigilance. One counteracts this through thinking about the faults of distractions.</p>
<p>(7) <i>Complete pacification</i>: Here, there is still the possibilities of subtle excitement arising. Even if it does arise, without much effort, one is able to overcome it. Nevertheless, one still needs to put in effort.</p>
<p>(8) <i>One-pointed attention</i>: Here, there is no danger of laxity and excitement arising. One is able to stay on one's chosen object for a long time. Even if one allows for the arising of laxity and excitement, these will be quickly pacified through one's strong mindfulness and vigilance.</p>
<p>(9) <i>Balanced placement</i>: Here, one merely needs to put in a little effort to get into concentration. Once one gets into it, one will be able to stay concentrated for a very long time naturally.</p>
<p>Eventually, one will achieve mental pliancy, followed by physical pliancy. After this, the meditator experiences the bliss of physical pliancy, then the bliss of mental pliancy. It is said that, when [all] the pliancies are achieved, this marks the achievement of calm abiding.</p>
<p>Hence, due to the serviceability of mental pliancy, one achieves the serviceability [of physical pliancy, where the] winds/ energies course [through] the body. Due to achieving the serviceability of the body with physical pliancy, the smooth movements of the winds in the body, one achieves the bliss of physical pliancy, followed by the bliss of mental pliancy.</p>
<p>When all [the pliancies] are achieved, due to the serviceability of body and mind, the yogis do not find it tiring, boring nor feel lazy with cultivating virtue. This is because, once they achieve [such feats], laziness is completely overcome.</p>
<p>Therefore, they have no difficulties engaging in virtue with their minds, which are so enthusiastic and happy. When they engage in virtue with their bodies like making prostrations, unlike one, their physical bodies do not feel tired nor bored.</p>
<p>Having a mere understanding of such knowledge can help one see the importance of generating calm abiding.</p>
<p>This also shows that, although one possesses a set of contaminated appropriated physical and mental aggregates, with the mere achievement of calm abiding and not even to the level of enlightenment, one can achieve quite a bit of transformation that happens to both body and mind.</p>
<p>Hence, calm abiding is the basis for the 4 legs of magical manifestation. To be able to perform all such magical transformations, one needs the perfect concentration of calm abiding.</p>
<p>It is said that, the Bodhisattvas who possess such legs of magical manifestation can travel to pure lands to receive teachings.</p>
<p>On the great path of accumulation, one achieves the concentration of the <i>Stream of Doctrine/ Dharma</i>, where he is able to see the supreme emanation bodies directly and receive teachings from them.</p>
<p>All such [benefits] happen on the basis of having achieved calm abiding first. This is how important it is.</p>

The Wisdom Truth Body is the empowering condition for the generation of virtues in the minds of all sentient beings

Student 1: It is said that, all virtues generated by sentient beings are the enlightened activities of the Wisdom Truth Body. Since some sentient beings also generate contaminated virtues resulting in rebirths in samsara, does it mean that the enlightened activities of Buddha is the empowering condition for samsara?

Student 2 [responding to Student 1]: Buddha brings you to samsara to create good karma!

Khenrinpoche: Very good answer! Whether [one creates and accumulates] contaminated or uncontaminated virtues, it is not possible for suffering to arise from virtues. It is also not possible for nonvirtues to result in happiness.

Even though one maybe in samsara, but whatever pleasures one experiences in it, is the result of virtue, which is said to have arisen with the Wisdom Truth Body as the empowering condition. This is not an easy [point to understand], but perhaps one can think along the lines [of reasoning from] the tathagata essence. If one thinks about it, the Dharmakaya/ Truth Body is not something different or separate from the tathagata essence. The essential entity/ nature is the same. During the tathagata essence module, it was shown how suchness is without differentiation in that, the suchness of Buddha superior's mind and the suchness of [sentient beings'] mind are essentially the same nature. In emptiness, these 2 are the same. The emptiness of true existence of the mind is the tathagata essence. When the defilements are eventually separated from the mind, the suchness of the mind that [has become] undefiled is then called the nature body, which is essentially the suchness of the mind [given another name]. Previously, the emptiness of true existence of the defiled mind was called tathagata essence, when it eventually becomes undefiled, its suchness will then be [given the name of] the nature body, which is essentially the suchness of an undefiled mind and not something else.

If one thinks about the mind itself, the factor of luminosity and awareness, in a way it is the Wisdom Truth Body, it is just that for the time being, while the mind is still defiled, it is not [called the Wisdom Truth Body]. However, such a factor of luminosity and awareness has the potential to understand and know all phenomena. At the time being, it is covered by the adventitious defilements. When these adventitious defilements are eventually removed from the mind, the factor of luminosity and awareness, this very same mind itself will then be called the Wisdom Truth Body. [Such a phenomenon] is not something different as it is still the mind, it is just that, it has become the factor of luminosity and awareness unaccompanied by the defilements.

Likewise, the suchness of one's defiled mind is called the tathagata essence. When this suchness of one's mind is eventually separated from the defilements, it will then be called the nature body. Therefore, whether it is the mind, the factor of luminosity and awareness, or it is the suchness of the mind, at the time of the basis now and at the time of the result, these are essentially the same. When one investigates the ultimate nature of one's mind itself, [the ultimate nature of] the factor of luminosity and awareness, one finds that its deepest nature is empty. Therefore, the emptiness of true existence of the mind and the mind itself are essentially one entity, but conceptually being isolated into two different factors due to its [characteristics]. Based on the function of the mind's ability to cognize objects [clearly], such a factor of luminosity and awareness is given the name "mind". However, "mind" and "the emptiness of true existence of the mind" are essentially [two different aspects of the same entity].

In the heart of the perfection of wisdom sutra, it says *Form is empty, emptiness is form*. Instead of form, one can substitute that with "mind", deriving the same meaning: *Mind is empty, emptiness is mind*. Therefore, the deepest nature of the mind is emptiness. [The mind] does not transcend such a deepest nature. The mind exists from within emptiness, within the emptiness of mind, mind exists. Therefore, one has to understand that, mind and the suchness of the mind are one entity. If one thinks deep and traces the evolution of the origin of samsara and nirvana, these all amount to the factor of luminosity and awareness, the mind. It is the origin/ basis of samsara, it is also the origin/ basis of nirvana.

For such a factor of luminosity and awareness, the mind, to transform into the entity of virtue, the required conditions must gather. As shown in *Lorig*, for a consciousness to arise, here a virtuous state of mind to arise, there must also be the immediately preceding condition, [another] factor of luminosity and awareness that existed just prior to the arising of the virtuous state of mind. There also needs to be an empowering condition. It is said that, the empowering condition for the generation of any virtuous mind is the Wisdom Truth Body. As for the object of observation, one can posit many different things that can act as that for the generation of a virtuous mind, like the representations of the Buddha's body, speech and mind, or hearing the Buddha's teachings. Hence, for a virtuous state of mind to arise, one needs all these [three] conditions: the immediately preceding condition, the observed object condition and the empowering condition. The teachings explain that, the empowering condition for the generation of all virtues in the continua of sentient beings is the Wisdom Truth Body. One then has to think how it can act as the empowering condition.

If one says that there is something else other than the Wisdom Truth Body that is the empowering condition for the generation of a virtuous mind in any sentient being's continuum, then what would one posit it to be?

In the presentation of *Mind and awareness*, for a sense consciousness apprehending form to be produced, three conditions must gather: the observed object condition of form, the uncommon empowering condition of the sense power and the immediately preceding condition of another factor of luminosity and awareness that existed just prior to the generation of a sense consciousness apprehending form. When all three conditions gather, then a sense consciousness apprehending form is generated. Likewise, for a virtuous mind to arise, these three conditions must also gather: the immediately preceding condition, the observed object condition, as well as the empowering condition.

When one analyzes deeply, for an eye consciousness apprehending form, why is it that it is able to apprehend form but not something else? An eye consciousness apprehending form *is* the factor of luminosity and awareness, hence, it must have arisen from something which is another factor of luminosity and awareness, a prior moment of mind. Although it has arisen from a previous moment of mind, but an eye consciousness cannot apprehend something other than visible form. Hence, what enables an eye consciousness to apprehend visible form is its own peculiar sense power, an eye sense power, which is [the eye consciousness's] own uncommon empowering condition.

1) Reason for a consciousness being generated into the *aspect* of the object:

An eye consciousness apprehending visible form is then generated into an *aspect* of visible form. An eye consciousness apprehending visible form cannot be generated into the aspect of sound. The reason an eye consciousness apprehending visible form being generated into the aspect of form is determined by its observed object condition.

2) Reason for a consciousness remaining in the *entity* of consciousness:

An eye consciousness apprehending visible form is not generated into the entity of form, it is still the *entity* of consciousness, which is luminosity and awareness. This shows that, an eye consciousness must have arisen from a prior moment of consciousness as well, that which is luminosity and awareness, without which, an eye consciousness itself, which is luminosity and awareness, cannot be generated into that which is luminosity and awareness.

Based on what one has studied in the module on *Mind and awareness*, it is important for one to understand how, for example, a sense consciousness is produced by the gathering of the three conditions. Likewise, when one applies such an understanding to the arising of a virtuous mind, then for a virtuous mind to arise, many conditions must gather: focusing on some observed object that causes a virtuous mind to arise; the immediately preceding condition is obviously present. However, there must also be an empowering condition.

Consciousness, or the mind, has no beginning, neither will it have an end. Hence, consciousness is beginningless and will also never cease to exist. Likewise, the suchness of the mind has no beginning nor will it come to an end. One also has to think about and understand the concordance of cause and effect. A specific result can only arise from a concordant cause, an effect cannot arise from a discordant cause. The point is this: a virtuous mind cannot arise from a nonvirtuous state of mind. This is because, if one analyzes and thinks about the effects of virtue, the result of virtue has to be something good, pleasant and desirable. Something which is good cannot arise from something which is bad, but must arise from something which is also good as there must be concordance.

When virtue first arises, it cannot arise without a cause but with a cause, a concordant cause. The cause of a virtuous mind is a composite/ compounded phenomenon, hence, it necessarily arises from a cause. Since this is a virtuous state of mind, then it must arise from something which is also virtuous or good.

The activation of the Mahayana lineage is essentially the arising of great compassion in the continuum. For great compassion to arise and thus the Mahayana lineage to be activated, there must be reasons for it to be activated, the causes and conditions. It will not happen without reasons/ certain causes. Although one possesses the inherent potential since beginningless lifetimes to generate great compassion, that which makes it possible is due to the tathagata essence, which one possesses since beginningless lifetimes. Due to [one's tathagata essence], that is why it is possible [to generate great compassion]. However, just because one possesses the potential [to generate great compassion] alone does not mean that it can arise. This is not possible. Even though one possesses the seed, the base [of the tathagata essence], but other conditions must also be present, without which, the Mahayana lineage cannot be activated. It is said that, the Wisdom Truth Body is the empowering condition for the activation of the Mahayana lineage. Without it, it is not possible.

Khenrinpoche: What do you think? Who activates [one's Mahayana lineage]? Do you think: "I did it myself!"? Your answer must be: "I did everything myself...I don't need Buddha's help!" Is it true? If you think you did it yourself, then you don't need Buddha, isn't it?

If you do not think that the Wisdom Truth Body has a part in the generation of great compassion in one's own and others' mind, then it is essentially the same as saying that one did it oneself. If one follows such a [line of reasoning], that one [can actualize great compassion] oneself without the Buddha's help, then one would probably conclude that: despite them achieving enlightenment to benefit all sentient beings, all the power, abilities and omniscience to know the interest, dispositions and capacities of all sentient beings, yet the Buddhas are not doing anything at all to help sentient beings.

4 legs of magical emanations:

This is essentially a meditative stabilization/ concentration. This is briefly explained earlier as the 8 antidotes that act as remedies to overcome the 5 faults as shown in the *Ornament of the Mahayana Sutra*.

These 8 antidotes can condensed into the 4 methods: because the first 3, faith, effort, aspiration prepare and bring one to actualizing the concentrations quickly, they are classified as the **1) method of striving**.

Pliancy is classified as the **2) method of benefit**. This is because, when one achieves both the physical and mental pliancies, the body becomes serviceable. Hence, this becomes greatly beneficial for one.

Mindfulness and vigilance are classified as the **3) method of directing attention to its object of observation**.

Intention and equanimity are classified as the *method of the antidote*. Through mindfulness and vigilance, when one detects the arising of laxity and excitement, one has to apply the antidotes, without which, it becomes a fault. When the mind is calm and pacified without laxity and excitement, one should not be applying any antidotes. This non-application is an antidote.

Thus, intention [to apply antidotes] and equanimity [the antidote of not applying antidotes] are the **4) method of the antidote**.

Benefits of achieving the feats through the 4 legs of magical emanation:

By cultivating and achieving concentration, one achieves these 4 legs of magical emanation. The purpose of doing so is to achieve the 5 eyes and the 6 clairvoyances. With such supernatural abilities, one can benefit others more effectively.

By possessing these 4 legs of magical emanation in the continuum of a Bodhisattva, he can travel to many Buddha fields and enter into many doors of concentrations. With such strong and stable concentrations, all the aspirational prayers that are made become very powerful and effective.

Bodhisattvas make very strong prayers which are actualized, such as being reborn as different kinds of human beings and gods. Through such rebirths, they are thus able to benefit many sentient beings.

On the basis of having attained an actual concentration through calm abiding, [the Bodhisattva] acquires different kinds of clairvoyances [of the eyes] like the clairvoyances of the gods. With such clairvoyances, he can see coarse and subtle forms extending into great distances for many miles.

He can also hear both coarse and subtle sounds from far away, essentially all the sounds in the world. **Khenrinpoche:** He even understands what the mosquito is saying!

The common and uncommon causes for achieving the clairvoyances:

The common cause for **all** such following clairvoyances is having **attained an actual concentration**.

The uncommon causes of the **1) clairvoyance of the eyes/ gods** are: having made many light offerings, providing light to those living in darkness or providing the causes leading to the illumination of such dark places.

The uncommon causes of the **2) clairvoyance of the ears** are: having made offerings of music through instruments like bells and so forth to holy objects like stupas.

The uncommon causes for the **3) clairvoyance that knows the minds of others** are: not speaking about the faults of others even though one knows them, not negatively speaking about the physical faults of others who may have missing limbs and so forth, protecting and guarding the minds of others and so forth.

The uncommon causes for the **4) clairvoyance/ supernatural ability to emanate one object to become many and many objects to become one** are: offering foot ware and transport to others, helping those unable to walk by carrying them and so on.

The uncommon causes for the **5) clairvoyance to remember previous lives** are: bearing hardships for the Dharma/ practice, for example, putting up with the challenges of building a temple, reading, reflecting and remembering Dharma texts/ scriptures and offering the gift of Dharma to others in a proper manner.

Khenrinpoche: What is the benefit of remembering past lives? I remember last time when we went to [Sera monastery], there was a “mirror lady” who is able to see and check many things in a mirror. I noticed many Singaporean [students] who went to her only ask one question: “What is my past life?” I heard everybody went to her to check that.

I told them: “It is better that you check about your future life!” Even if you knew about your past lives, there is nothing much you can do about that, but if you knew about your future life, then it will be more interesting, as you can do something!

The ability to remember previous lives here mainly refer to the Bodhisattva’s ability to see who he has Dharma connection with, so that he can seek them out and thereby able to help them according to their needs and dispositions.

The uncommon cause for the **6) clairvoyance/ supernatural ability to exhaust all the fetters/ contaminants/ afflictions** refers to the realization of the final mode of abiding of the ultimate nature of phenomena.

The ability to know others' mind to benefit them is even more accurate when acquired through attaining an actual concentration:

[The ability] to remember past lives is something a desire realm god, many spirits and even some hell beings can do. Hence, the main [purpose] here [of attaining the clairvoyances] is to develop the ability to know the minds of others.
As for the ability to perform magical emanations, some spirits by birth are also able to perform apparitions. [For the Bodhisattva,] there is a way to do so in dependence upon mantras and using certain medicinal substances.
For the ability to know the minds of others, there are desire realm gods who can do so. Even for one, sometimes one is able to detect what someone is thinking about by merely looking at their facial expressions [or body languages]. Generally, one may have such abilities, but here the ability to read others' minds based on their facial expressions are those who are trained.
Hence, there are people who deliberately train to develop such abilities to know others' minds. It is a skill in which such people are very good at. Hence, such an ability is not cultivated [merely] on the basis of meditative stabilization.
Hence, the ability to read others' minds explained here is an ability that is attained through having attained an actual concentration. Therefore, such an ability to know others' minds will then be [even more] accurate.

Divisions and boundaries of the 4 legs of magical emanations:

When divided, there are 4: Legs of magical emanation of – 1) aspiration, 2) joyous effort, 3) intention and 4) analysis.
1) Leg of magical emanation of aspiration: refers to a very strong aspiration/ yearning to acquire concentration.
2) Leg of magical emanation of joyous effort: refers to putting in a lot of effort which leads to the arising of the concentration one was aspiring to.
3) Leg of magical emanation of intention: refers to an ability acquired at birth to perform magical emanations. This is the result of the ripening of the imprints left in the mental continuum in past lives due to concentration.
4) Leg of magical emanation of analysis: refers to the concentration which arises from having analyzed and thought well on the meaning of the instructions one has received from others.
Since the 4 legs of magical emanations are explained from the perspective of someone who has already entered a path, hence, the boundaries are from the path of accumulation up to the Buddha ground.
As explained before, if these 4 legs of magical emanations are related to a path, then it is <i>mainly</i> related to the great level of the Mahayana path of accumulation.
When one reaches the great level Mahayana path of accumulation and acquire the union of calm abiding and special insight, one then achieves the concentration of the <i>Stream of Doctrine/ Dharma</i> . Such a Bodhisattva will then be able to receive instructions directly from Buddhas.
To achieve this, many conditions must gather: As explained in <i>The Essential Ornament</i> , the Bodhisattva must have accumulated the collections for many eons, the Mahayana lineage [must be activated in his continuum], he must also have heard many teachings/ instructions and he must have pure ethical discipline.
One of the causes is to have heard many teachings and have studied well. When the Bodhisattva achieves such a stream of doctrine, it is said that he is able to remember all the teachings, not just mere teachings, but those that possess the lineage that he has received in the past. Hence, there must be the continuum of the lineage of the transmission.
Hence, when the Bodhisattva achieves the stream of doctrine, he will be able to recollect all the teachings that possess the transmissions that he has heard in the past.
This is why it makes a difference to have received the lineage of the transmission of the teachings. Eventually, when one achieves such a level, then whatever one has heard in the past, one will be able to remember everything.
This is perhaps one of the reasons why it is good and important to receive oral transmissions when the lineage exists. This is the benefit. Otherwise, some people may think that receiving oral transmissions are not important, perhaps due to finding it boring. But as for one now, it is difficult for one to [know that for sure and generate faith].

How the Wisdom Truth Body acts as the empowering condition for sentient beings' virtues to arise:

When great compassion arises in one's continuum, this is when one's Mahayana lineage is activated. Prior to this, one needs to generate the thought to benefit others. However, such a thought can only arise when all the conditions gather: The immediately preceding condition, the observed object condition and the uncommon empowering condition.
The empowering condition for the thought of benefiting others in any sentient being's continuum is said to be the Wisdom Truth Body. This is where one needs to think [and analyze deeply]. Following such a thought, comes great compassion.
When this is developed and on the basis, one arrives at [developing] bodhicitta. When one achieves the mind of enlightenment, one becomes a Bodhisattva. Traveling the Bodhisattva's 5 paths and 10 grounds, one actualizes the 4 bodies.
After one becomes a Buddha, one's own enlightened activities would then engage and help sentient beings. One's own Wisdom Truth Body will be the empowering condition for the arising of the thought to benefit others in others' continua.
When one actualizes the 4 bodies, one can perform enlightened activities for all sentient beings. It is said that, the enlightened activities of the Buddhas are effortless and spontaneous, as they have pacified all forms of exertions/motivations. This means they are freed of having to think or motivate before they can do anything.
Hence this shows that, the Wisdom Truth Body can act as the empowering condition for the arising of any virtue in the continua of all sentient beings effortlessly. That said, this does not mean that, [the work needed to remove suffering] is in Buddha's hand, as if the Wisdom Truth Body can do whatever it likes.
Just because the Wisdom Truth Body is present and is the empowering condition for the arising of virtue in the continuum of any sentient being's mind, this does not necessarily mean [it will transform all thoughts of sentient beings] into virtue. Therefore, both [conditions of the Wisdom Truth Body and sentient beings' intent for virtue] must gather.
Hence, from one's side as a sentient being, one also needs to put in effort. This is the reason why, for any virtue to arise, many conditions must gather. It has never been said that the empowering condition alone is sufficient.
Showing why the empowering condition of the Wisdom Truth Body alone is insufficient to generate virtue:
As shown in <i>Mind and awareness</i> , for an eye consciousness apprehending visible form to arise, the mere presence of the uncommon empowering condition, the eye sense power alone, is insufficient. From the side of the eye sense, it possesses the power and potential to cause an eye consciousness apprehending visible form to arise, but it alone cannot lead to that.
Hence, the observed object condition [and the immediately preceding condition] must also be present for this to happen.

Khenrinpoche: What are the discussion groups' outcome of this topic?

Student 1: There is no conclusion. This is because, the non-Buddhists may not accept this.

Khenrinpoche: It does not matter as it is not necessarily that they have to accept this. Whether they accept or not, the reality is like that, so it really doesn't matter. What is the doubt about non-Buddhists? They also create virtues, don't they? Of course Buddha will also help everybody, not only Buddhists. In fact, they would help non-Buddhists even more than Buddhists!

Student 1: Who then is the first Buddha? **Khenrinpoche:** You! You are asking among us, who is the first Buddha, isn't it? Then [it would have to be you!] **Student 1:** If one goes by the regression of the first Buddha, who then would be the Wisdom Truth Body that [helped him become the first Buddha]?

Khenrinpoche: There is no problem, since it is beginningless, then there is no issue there.

Student 2: If [the Wisdom Truth Body] is the empowering condition of virtues, then who empowers the first Buddha with virtues?

Khenrinpoche: Do you accept that, for us sentient beings, our minds do not have a beginning? Then how would Buddha have a beginning? Are you saying that there is a first Buddha?

Student 3: Since the Wisdom Truth Body is the empowering condition for great compassion to arise, then the very first sentient being that got enlightened must also have the empowering condition to generate great compassion. Since there are no Buddhas before him, so who gave him that empowering condition?

Khenrinpoche: Following from your assertion, since there is a first Buddha, then there must be a first sentient being!

How one is Buddha:

We all have a mind which is essentially that which is the factor of luminosity and awareness. Generally, the emptiness of true existence of the mind is the tathagata essence. Both [mind and the emptiness of the mind] are tathagata essence. If one considers from one perspective, the factor of luminosity and awareness is like the Wisdom Truth Body, the emptiness of true existence of the mind is like the nature body. Since [sentient beings' minds] are still accompanied by defilement, hence it is still not the actual Buddha. However, since sentient beings have always had these two, the mind and the emptiness of the mind since beginningless time, therefore, virtue, transformation and enlightenment are all possible.

In certain traditions, there is a way of phrasing that says that one is already a 'Buddha', as one has always been a 'Buddha'. Hence, how it is expressed has some sense to it. In the verse in the guru puja to generate [special] bodhicitta [LC 5], the phrase *primordial Buddhahood* is used. There is some sense to say that one is already Buddha, that one's factor of luminosity and awareness is like the Wisdom Truth Body and the emptiness of one's factor of luminosity and awareness is the nature body.

Since [these two] exist, that it has always been there, hence, if the conditions gather, this makes creating virtue possible in the first place. Otherwise, if the factor of luminosity and awareness, together with its emptiness, are absent, then there is no way for any virtue to arise. One cannot say that: "Buildings can generate virtue." Hence, for as long as sentient beings have existed since beginningless lifetimes, that which allows for enlightenment has also been there. In this sense, there is some sense in saying one has always been 'Buddha'. As long as one has existed since beginningless lifetimes, one has always been like a Buddha.

Therefore, one should not be looking for the Buddha outside oneself, as the Buddha has always been inside oneself. It is just that one is not aware of that and thus has not manifested it. Hence, there is some sense in saying that, in reality, one is oneness with Buddha.

When the defilements now covering the mind are eventually removed, then whether one says one has achieved enlightenment, or the factor of luminosity and awareness is appearing clearly and completely, these are different ways of saying the same thing. Likewise, all sentient beings are also like Buddhas. It is just that, they are unaware that the Buddha is not somewhere outside of them. Every sentient being is like a Buddha, as Buddha has always been with them. When they see and recognize this eventually, this is when they themselves as Buddhas.

This is just like achieving nirvana, one does so in one's own world environment included in samsara. When all the defilements are separated from one's mind and one achieves nirvana, one is still in the same world environment that other sentient beings are in. However for one, this world that one is in will no longer be samsara.

For one, the view of a pureland is limited to a place somewhere out there where one can get to. This is merely a uni-dimensional outlook. For if one's mind is purified of the defilements to the extent where everything appears in a pure way, then it does not matter where one is, wherever one is, [immediately] appears as a pureland.

Like what has been explained earlier about how samsara also includes the environment [sentient beings are in], it is only so for the person whose mind has not abandoned the afflictive obscurations and is still obscured by the defilements. For such a person, then whatever objects he comes into contact with, be it form, sound, smell, taste and touch, these will inevitably cause him to develop afflictions like anger, attachment, hence, bringing about suffering. For such a person, whose mind is still unsubdued and not liberated from the defilements, then the external world [of the objects] of form, sound, smell, taste and touch all become true suffering. This is because, these objects bring about the generation of the afflictions and cause suffering. When the same person abandons all the afflictions and defilements, then those same objects that caused sufferings earlier for him, due to having abandoned the defilements, will not bring about the arising of the afflictions and sufferings. In fact, it causes bliss and happiness to him.

Khenrinpoche: What do you think? To be in pureland, you have to die and go somewhere? Not necessarily, isn't it? This world [you are in] can be a pureland.

Student 4: [Since Bodhisattvas do not see that there is any point in going to the formless realms as they cannot benefit the beings there, then does that mean that the Buddhas also do not or cannot benefit the sentient beings there?]

Khenrinpoche: Whatever Bodhisattvas do, they still need to generate the thought [to benefit sentient beings, hence their motivation to benefit sentient beings,] whether it is coarse or subtle, is not effortless. For example, even if a Bodhisattva were to go to the formless realm, he still needs [effort] to generate the motivation. Before a Bodhisattva can be born in any place to benefit others, he must see the purpose of doing so. Seeing the purpose, he becomes motivated, which causes him to project the will, whether these are coarse or subtle, to go there. The Bodhisattvas do not see the peak of cyclic existence [or any of the formless realms] as places where they can be of any benefit to [the beings there]. Since they do not see the purpose, then of course they would not motivate to go there. Without motivation to go there, of course they would not be born there. This is because, they see that there are many more worthwhile places to go [to benefit sentient beings].

Unlike the Bodhisattvas, the Buddha is very different. This is because, he sees all phenomena directly. Wherever his mind perceives, it perceives it directly there as it is. Wherever his mind is, Buddha's holy body is there. Hence, the Buddha's body, speech and mind are inseparable one entity. This means Buddha pervades all phenomena without any need for any motivation to go anywhere. Hence, they are everywhere.

4-1-3-1-4) 5 powers:

In the 37 harmonies of enlightenment, the next group are the 5 powers. In relation to the 5 paths, these are primarily cultivated on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation, focusing on the 4 Noble Truths as its object of observation.
The 5 powers are the powers of: a) Faith, b) Effort, c) Mindfulness, d) Meditative stabilization and e) Wisdom.
The definition of a power in this context is: An exalted knower that is self-powered with respect to generating its result, an arya's path.
a) Power of faith: This is a faith of conviction with regards to what to adopt and discard with respect to the 4 Noble Truths.
Due to extensive learning, listening and hearing on the path of accumulation, then on the path of preparation, the Bodhisattva achieves such a faith of conviction with regards to what to adopt and discard in relation to the 4 Noble Truths. Hence, it is a faith of conviction that arises from knowledge.
b) Power of effort: Here on the path of preparation, the Bodhisattva possesses a lot of enthusiasm that delights in discarding that which are to be abandoned, true sufferings and true origins, as well enthusiastically adopting that which are to be cultivated, true cessations and true paths.
c) Power of mindfulness: With the faith of conviction and joyous perseverance, the Bodhisattva possesses the mindfulness of not forgetting the objects of observation and aspects of the 4 Noble Truths.
d) Power of meditative stabilization: Based on all the above, he then possesses the power of meditative stabilization, where he remains undistracted with a single-pointedness of mind focusing on the 4 Noble Truths.
e) Power of wisdom: Here, it refers to special insight, the special ability to analyze and discriminate between objects. Such analysis occurs within possessing calm abiding.
The boundary of Peak application is from the Heat level path of preparation through to the end of continuum of a sentient being. The purpose of cultivating the Complete aspects application is to gain mastery over the aspects of the three exalted knowers. The Peak application occurs when one has achieved such a mastery.
When one achieves the [Heat] level path of preparation, it is said that one has achieved mastery with respect to the meditation on the aspects of three exalted knowers. At this point, perhaps one can also say that, one has achieved mastery with respect to cultivating the object of observation of the 4 Noble Truths as well.
On the Great level path of accumulation, one would have achieved calm abiding focusing on emptiness. Within such a concentration of single-pointedness of mind, when one eventually achieves the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness, one would then enter and achieve the Heat level path of preparation.
This is when one can say one has achieved mastery over the cultivation of the aspects of the three exalted knowers.
Prior to the path of preparation, on the path of accumulation, one has not achieved mastery with respect to the cultivation of the aspects of the three exalted knowers. It is said that, the Bodhisattva achieves mastery when he enters the path of preparation. This is done while one achieves the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness.
Therefore, perhaps the difference between having achieved and not having achieved mastery lies in whether one has achieved the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness or not.
When one achieves the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness, one gains a powerful strength to suppress the respective defilements of the objects of abandonment, the discordant factors of the path of preparation like, non-faith, laziness and so forth.
How discordant factors can still manifest on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation:
On the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation, the Bodhisattva has the power to overcome manifest forms of these discordant factors of non-faith, laziness and so forth, during meditative equipoise. However, he is unable to destroy them.
Hence, while on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation, it is still possible for discordant factors like laziness, non-faith and so forth to manifest. He possesses the special insight observing emptiness, focusing on the aggregates and the 'I'. He also possesses the faith of conviction in the lack of true existence of the person and the aggregates.
Therefore, how is it possible for the Bodhisattva on these levels to manifest non-faith with respect to the lack of true existence of persons and aggregates? I think that, one can probably say that it is possible for the Bodhisattva at these levels to have non-faith of conviction with regards to the lack of true existence of the aggregates and person.
On these levels, during meditative equipoise, the Bodhisattva still possesses the coarse dualistic appearance in that, he has a sense of distance and difference between the object and subject being meditated on. He is also aware of such a duality.

The second power is the power of joyous effort, which means enthusiasm [for virtue]. Opposite to that could then be the laziness of discouragement. On these 2 levels, it seems that it is possible for the Bodhisattva to be discouraged on meditating on, say, the aggregates as being empty.
The third power is the power of mindfulness, whose function is not forgetting the object of meditation. In this case, not forgetting the 4 Noble Truths. On these 2 levels, it is possible for the Bodhisattva to forget.
The fourth power is the power of meditative stabilization, opposite to that would be distraction. The fifth power is wisdom, opposite to it would be the ignorance of not knowing. Perhaps one can say that it is possible for the Bodhisattva on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation to be distracted and have ignorance arising.
This is because, it is said that on these levels, even in meditative equipoise, the Bodhisattva still has dualistic appearance. They also <i>realize</i> that there is dualistic appearance. Hence, I would think that it is alright to say that, the discordant factors of the 5 powers, like non-faith, laziness, forgetfulness, distraction and ignorance can arise.

4-1-3-1-5) 5 forces/ strengths:

These are essentially the same [as the 5 powers]. The only difference is that, instead of the power of faith, for example, here it is the force of faith and so forth. These 5 forces are explained primarily with respect to the Forbearance and Supreme mundane quality levels of the path of preparation.
Due to meditating on the 5 powers on the Heat and Peak levels path of preparation, these 5 powers then become stronger on the Forbearance and the Supreme mundane quality levels of the path of preparation. Since these powers have become stronger, they are then called 5 strengths. These 5 forces then prepares the mind to see the truth directly on the path of seeing.
It is said that, on the Forbearance and Supreme mundane quality levels of the path of preparation, while in meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, although in reality dualistic appearance has not completely subsided, but there is the <i>appearance</i> of its subsidence. Hence, the Bodhisattva is unaware about this and feels as if dualistic appearance has subsided.
Since that is the case, he is not even aware of himself as a meditator. Hence, his mind has become even more subtler.
On these levels, one can probably say that the discordant factors like non-faith, laziness and so forth no longer arise. Using the body's emptiness of true existence as an example, the strength of faith of conviction would be that, it is empty just as it is. Its opposite, non-faith, the non-belief that the body is empty of existing truly, would therefore no longer arise on these levels.
Hence, although the 5 powers and 5 strengths are similar, but there is a difference between them in that, on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation, although the Bodhisattva gains the power to suppress many of the discordant factors like laziness, non-faith and so forth, but it is still possible for these to manifest.
However, on the Forbearance and Supreme mundane quality levels of the path of preparation, the Bodhisattva gains the strength to stop these discordant factors from even manifesting in the first place. These factors would no longer manifest.
In <i>Archaya Haribhadra's</i> commentary, it is said that the 5 powers of faith, effort, mindfulness, meditative stabilization and power arise together being mixed with the discordant factors of non-faith and so forth. This means that, at the time of the 5 powers, discordant factors can still arise.
He then goes on to say that, at the time of the 5 strengths, only the strengths of faith, effort, mindfulness, meditative stabilization and wisdom can arise. This means that, at the time of the 5 strengths, its discordant factors would no longer arise. Hence, based on such statements in <i>Haribhadra's</i> commentary, this is the reason for saying what I have said.

Student 5: The meditator [on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation] possesses calm abiding. This means that, he has overcome the 5 faults of laziness, forgetfulness, as well as the obstacles to meditative stabilization. How is it the case that, someone who has calm abiding that overcame all such faults, while he is in meditative equipoise, such faults can still arise? Does it mean that, someone who has calm abiding, would have laziness, forgetfulness and so forth [arise during meditative equipoise]? It was stated that, it is during meditative equipoise that these faults can arise due to possessing duality. Since that is the case, someone who has calm abiding without realizing emptiness also possesses the appearances of duality, would that also mean that, when he has the bliss of mental pliancy of calm abiding, he still has laziness and so on?

Khenrinpoche: Think about this, if you have achieved calm abiding, does it necessarily follow that you have abandoned all laziness, excitement, laxity?

Student 5: Of course not, but the point here is that, [at this stage] in meditative equipoise, there is duality. Because of this duality while in meditative equipoise, the [discordant factors] to the 5 powers can arise. Therefore, I have difficulty understanding that the sign, reason given was that, there is duality while in meditative equipoise, hence, the discordant factors can arise.

Khenrinpoche: Again think about this. Special insight is not calm abiding. Special insight falls under wisdom, which is a mind that investigates the object individually. This is what special insight is. Whereas calm abiding is a meditative stabilization.

Such an investigation is performed within the state of concentration of calm abiding. To this mind, there is also the appearance of duality, hence, when there is duality, is it alright to say that, there can be distractions and so forth? I don't know this exactly.

Anyway, this is something to think about and discussed. Of the 4 levels of the path of preparation, these are not necessarily meditative equipoise, as there are also post-meditative equipoise on the Heat, Peak and Forbearance levels. If one has difficulties conceiving discordant factors arising during meditative equipoise, then what about post-meditative equipoise? If one thinks about the post-meditative equipoise, then it is easier and straightforward that the discordant factors can arise.

So, perhaps you can discuss whether discordant factors can arise during meditative equipoise on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation.

Khenrinpoche: What do you think? After you have achieved calm abiding, can laziness still arise, do you still feel lazy?

Student 6: The body and mind have become serviceable.

Khenrinpoche: Following from what you said, then factors like laxity, excitement, laziness, distractions and so forth would not manifest.

Student 7: It was mentioned earlier that: "The purpose of cultivating the Complete aspects application is to gain mastery over the aspects of the three exalted knowers. The Peak application occurs when one has achieved such a mastery." The word 'compendium' was not mentioned here, especially with respect to cultivating the Complete aspects application. Does one also need to cultivate the compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers?

Khenrinpoche: If you include the word 'compendium', then in debate, it would be easier and less complicated. If the word compendium is left out in debate, then this would become more complicated.

Khenrinpoche: [Student 7] is very good, at least she is able to say this word, that word, without looking at the text. But many of you [who attend class] do not know nor express the words. This is the very basic [requirement for students]. On top of that, of course, you also have to know the meaning. [So I am encouraging you by showing you] the example. Please put in some effort to remember, otherwise, you go through [the classes] this year, next year, thinking: "I'll do better next year..." but nothing happens. At the end of the day, [your knowledge is] empty. So, when you have opportunity, you must put in effort, hold each word and try to get that into the brain. For example, today in class, what did you [learn]? At least you should know that: "Oh, today, I learned this in class..." Then you can talk about it and discuss. Otherwise, in a way, there is still the benefit of [leaving] imprints, like the story of the 2 pigeons [who heard] Vasubhandu's recitation on the roof. Then in their next lives, they became scholars...

But for me, what I see is that, [you should] put a little bit more effort. Even though there are many things [to understand], but you should get the [essential] point: "Oh, today I understood this, I must know this or that word." So this is important.

Student 4: Since my ignorance is more powerful than Buddha, [so this means Buddha cannot bring all sentient beings to enlightenment].

Khenrinpoche: That is why you are still circling. You have to think carefully who is more powerful. You cannot circle [in samsara] forever, no matter how powerful [your ignorance is], one day Buddha will bring you to enlightenment. This means Buddha is more powerful. [You have accepted that, it is possible that] you can develop renunciation, enter the path, become an arhat and get enlightened. Since you have accepted that, then it is possible that it will happen one day. If that day does not happen, then [you'll have to say] that it is impossible. [Saying that it is] possible means that it will have to happen one day. That means samsara will end one day. It has still not occurred because there are too many...

Therefore, if oneself can become enlightened, then why not others? If one says oneself cannot get enlightened, then that is another matter. But if one says oneself can get enlightened, then everybody else will also be able to do so. Since it is possible, that means it will happen. You just need to work hard.

Student 1: [How are the 37 harmonies with enlightenment] related to the practices of the paths of the Hearers?

Khenrinpoche: In general, the 37 harmonies with enlightenment are common to the Hinayana. When referring to it being ‘common’, this means there are objects to be meditated by both Hinayanists and Mahayanists. If one were to ask whether the Hinayanists meditate on the 37 harmonies with enlightenment of the 4 close placements of mindfulness, the 4 correct abandonings, the 4 legs of magical manifestation, 5 powers, 5 strengths, 7 branches of enlightenment and the 8 paths of the superiors, then one has to say yes, they do.

The reason these 37 harmonies with enlightenment are explained primarily in this context of the Mahayana is that, this is part of chapter 4 of the Ornament for Clear Realizations. The intended trainees/ disciples of this text are those of the Mahayana lineage.

How the names of the 4 levels path of preparation are derived:

The 5 powers are the powers of: faith, effort, mindfulness, meditative stabilization and wisdom. These are meditated primarily on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation.
The 5 powers are so called because, from the Heat level path of preparation onwards, the yogis are essentially knowers that are self-powered with respect to generating the superiors’ path, which is its result.
1) Heat level: The Heat level path of preparation is so called because, just like how heat would be a sign of fire that would soon arise, likewise, the Heat level path of preparation is a sign showing that the yogi will achieve the non-conceptual wisdom of meditative equipoise of the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing.
It is said that, those who have achieved the Heat level path of preparation will never be reborn in any of the inopportune states. This means, whatever rebirths they acquire are necessarily bestowed with freedoms and endowments.
2) Peak level: The Peak level path of preparation is so called, perhaps in that the yogi has reached the ‘peak’ [or ‘end’ of the possibility of his] roots of virtue being destroyed/ severed.
It is said that, on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation, the discordant factors, the opposites of the 5 powers of non-faith, laziness, distraction, forgetfulness and corrupted wisdom can still arise.
Hence, it is clear that in post-meditative equipoise, one can definitely say that it is possible for such discordant factors to arise. However, whether such discordant factors, like non-faith, can arise in say, the meditative equipoise of the Heat level path of preparation, [is to be analyzed].
It is mentioned clearly in <i>Gyaltsab Je’s Ornament of Essential Explanation</i> that, on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation, in the meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, there is dualistic appearance.
The <i>subject</i> meditating on emptiness and the <i>object</i> , emptiness, being meditated upon, are ‘seen’ as separate, distant from each other. The Bodhisattva is aware of such a dualistic appearance.
Such a meditative equipoise is essentially a [union of] calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness. Nothing much has been said in the text whether discordant factors like non-faith can arise. Hence, it would be easier to understand how such discordant factors would not be able to arise in such meditative equipoise. [However, would this necessarily be the case?]
When these 5 powers increase in strength such that, when one reaches the Forbearance and Supreme mundane quality levels of the path of preparation, these are no longer labeled as 5 powers, but are called the 5 Forces. These are essentially the same as the 5 powers, but are an enhanced, stronger version.
3) Forbearance level: Prior to the Forbearance level of the path of preparation, the Bodhisattva will no longer be born the lower realms, but it is said that, on this level, he gains the <i>confidence</i> that he will not be born in the lower realms [confidence of forbearing/ abnegating/ abandoning the lower realms].
Here while in meditative equipoise, he experiences the subsidence of dualistic appearance. There is no appearance of duality between the subject meditating on the object and the object itself being meditated upon. Hence, the sense of ‘self, I, person’ diminishes. Therefore, this is an achievement that is more exalted than the Peak level path of preparation.
4) Supreme mundane quality level: this is so called because, this is the highest level one can achieve as an ordinary being.
On these 2 levels, discordant factors like non-faith, laziness and so forth are said to not arise/ manifest, even in post-meditative equipoise. The 5 Forces of faith, effort and so forth on these 2 levels are so powerful such that, its 5 discordant factors like non-faith and so forth are unable to manifest. Hence, on these 2 levels, these are called 5 Forces/ Strengths.

4-1-3-1-6) 7 branches of enlightenment (of the path of seeing):

Objects of observation: According to the <i>Compendium of Knowledge</i> , these are posited to be the 4 Noble Truths.
a) Branch of enlightenment of perfect mindfulness: That [focuses on] the 4 Noble Truths as its object of observation.
a i) By focusing on true suffering, one knows what is suffering, this causes one not to be distracted from such understanding.
a ii) By focusing on true origins, [one knows what these are and] develops a desire to be separated from them.
a iii) By focusing on true cessations, one understands that [this is what one needs] to actualize. Such a perfect mindfulness causes one to focus on that and not to be distracted from and hence not to forget [such an understanding].
a iv) By focusing on true paths, one understands that this is something one needs to cultivate and meditate upon.
In terms of the manner of meditation, the other [6] branches are explained in a similar way to this branch.
The purpose of meditating on the 5 powers and 5 strengths is to quickly generate the superior's paths. Through cultivating them, one then quickly achieves the superior's paths and enters the path of seeing.
Upon achieving the superiors' path of seeing, the objects of observation are still the 4 Noble Truths. The reason the Bodhisattva superior still meditates on the them is because, they need to meditate on the 4 Noble Truths on the path of seeing to abandon the path of seeing abandonments.

Divisions of the Path of seeing abandonments from the perspective of the Autonomy Middle Way School:

According to this school, there are path of seeing abandonments that are afflictive obscurations, of which there are 112 and there are path of seeing abandonments which are knowledge obscurations, of which there are 108.
Of the 112 path of seeing afflictive obscuration abandonments, 40 [of these] belong to the desire realm and 72 belong to the higher [form and formless] realms.
Of the 40 path of seeing afflictive obscurations of the desire realm, there are 10 [desire realm afflictive obscurations of the path of seeing abandonments] that belong to each of the 4 Noble Truths, making a total of 40.
Of the 10 [desire realm afflictive obscurations of the path of seeing abandonments], 5 are the non-views of attachment, anger, pride, afflictive ignorance and afflictive doubt, the other 5 are the views of the transitory collection, view holding onto an extreme, conception of bad views as supreme, view holding bad ethics and conduct as supreme and wrong views.
Of the 72 [path of seeing afflictive obscuration abandonments], 36 belong to the form realm and 36 belong to the formless realm. When anger is excluded from these 2 realms, the [4 afflictive obscurations of] true suffering that is anger, true origins that is anger and so forth, are excluded, hence, there are 36 of the form realm and 36 of the formless realm.
Hence, this shows that there are no [manifestations of] anger in the higher realms. <i>Khenrinpoche</i> : Only in the desire realm!
There 108 path of seeing abandonments which are knowledge obscurations. Of these, there are 36 of the desire realm, 36 of the form realm and 36 of the formless realm.
Of the 36 belonging to the desire realm, there are 9 conceptions of apprehendeds of the thoroughly afflicted phenomena, 9 conceptions of apprehendeds of the completely pure phenomena, 9 conceptions of apprehenders of substantial existence and 9 conceptions of apprehenders of imputed existence.
In essence, these are the [divisions of the] path of seeing abandonments according to the Autonomy Middle Way School. As can be seen, there is a relation of the afflictive obscurations of the path of seeing abandonments with the 4 Noble Truths.
If one were to analyze deeper, then this becomes more complicated as within the 4 Noble Truths, there are true suffering which is a path of seeing abandonment, true origin which is a path of seeing abandonment and so forth. There are also the explanation on the object of observation of the path of seeing abandonments which are true cessation and true path.
One meditates on the 7 branches of enlightenment which are antidotes to abandon these 2: the path of seeing abandonments that are afflictive obscurations and the path of seeing abandonments which are knowledge obscurations.
Through these, one [progresses] towards <i>Jang Chub</i> , enlightenment. These are called the 7 branches of enlightenment because, enlightenment here refers to great full enlightenment. Hence, the branches here are <i>causes</i> [/aids] which precede it.

Divisions of the 7 Branches of enlightenment:

The divisions of the 7 Branches of enlightenment on the path of seeing, are the branches of enlightenment of:
a) Perfect mindfulness, b) Fine discernment of phenomena, c) Perfect joyous effort d) Perfect joy e) Pliancy f) Meditative stabilization and g) Perfect equanimity.

The stages of achieving calm abiding:

The branch of enlightenment of pliancy here perhaps refers to mental pliancy. The branch of enlightenment of perfect equanimity here perhaps refers to the equanimity which is the last of the 8 antidotes to the 5 faults, [the equanimity] to desist from applying antidotes when the mind is not influenced by laxity and excitement when cultivating calm abiding.
In cultivating calm abiding, there are the 5 faults which are to be overcome by the 8 antidotes. The 7 th and 8 th are Intention and Equanimity respectively. With mindfulness and vigilance, the meditator is able to spot laxity and/ or excitement.
He then uses the antidotes to counteract them. However, when laxity and excitement are absent, the meditator should then leave the mind in equanimity and desist from applying any antidotes. The Equanimity here is perhaps also the mental factor of equanimity listed as one of the 11 virtuous mental factors [among the 51 mental factors].
Perhaps the Equanimity here also refers to the 9 th mental stage of cultivating calm abiding according to the 9 mental stages.
It was explained that, on the 6 th mental stage, laxity and excitement are pacified, while on the 7 th and 8 th stages, it is extremely unlikely that laxity and excitement will arise. Even if these do arise, the meditator will be able to [easily] sense their arising and counteract them with only a little bit of effort. [Laxity and excitement at these levels] will then again be pacified.
It is said that on the 9 th mental stage, the meditator is able to merely place the mind into concentration with ease. Once in it, he is able to abide in it easily without much effort and without being influenced by laxity and excitement. Based on this, therefore perhaps, it is on the 9 th mental stage that, the fully characterized and qualified equanimity arises.
The mind thus becomes serviceable, with which the yogi goes on to achieve mental pliancy, followed by physical pliancy. Due to the close relationship between the mind and the subtle winds in the body, when the mind becomes pliant and serviceable, these bring a sense of peace. This also causes the body to achieve the blissful serviceable physical pliancy.
In essence, the mind becomes serviceable with the achievement of mental pliancy, followed by physical pliancy. When the winds become serviceable due to physical pliancy, the yogi then experiences the bliss of physical pliancy, which is followed by the bliss of mental pliancy. When this occurs, this is said to be the measure of having achieved calm abiding.
Hence, it is clear that, one does not achieve the stage of calm abiding merely by achieving the 9 th mental stage. It happens <i>after</i> that. From the 9 th mental stage, one then proceeds to achieve mental pliancy, followed by physical pliancy, the bliss of physical pliancy and the bliss of mental pliancy. It is only here that, the yogi is said to have achieved calm abiding.

How the 7 branches of enlightenment is subsumed into 5:

a) The function of mindfulness is that, one will not be distracted from the object of observation, but abides on it. Hence the branch of enlightenment of perfect mindfulness is called the branch of abiding .
b) The branch of enlightenment of fine discernment of phenomena is the main cause of enlightenment, the nature of enlightenment, hence it is called the branch of nature .
c) The branch of enlightenment of perfect joyous effort is the branch of definite emergence . One of the explanation for this is this: It is through joyous effort that one definitely emerges from being an ordinary person.
d) Since perfect joy benefits the body and mind, hence, it is called the branch of benefit .
e) The branches of enlightenment of perfect pliancy, meditative stabilization and equanimity are subsumed under the branch without affliction . When one generates equanimity on the 9 th mental stage, there will be an absence of laxity and excitement, hence the afflictions will not manifest. This is also the case with concentration and pliancy. Hence, these 3 are subsumed here

Khenrinpoche's view on why faith from the 5 powers and 5 strengths are not cultivated in the 7 branches of enlightenment:

The power and strength of faith are [cultivated] among the 5 powers and 5 strengths. However, one cannot find [the further cultivation of] faith as one of the 7 branches of enlightenment.
With the exception of faith, the other 4 powers and strengths of effort, mindfulness, meditative stabilization and wisdom [of fine discernment of phenomena] are [further cultivated] among the 7 branches of enlightenment.
During the time of the 5 powers or 5 strengths, when the power or strength of faith is manifest, its opposite, non-faith is suppressed to the extent that it cannot manifest. However, on the path of seeing onwards, perhaps non-faith, particularly non-faith in the Three Jewels, is eradicated. It is impossible to arise.
Due to seeing the truth directly on the path of seeing, this induces a very special faith in the Three Jewels, as well as [a special faith in] cause and effect. The yogi also becomes a Sangha Jewel and an actual object of refuge for others.
When the path of seeing is attained, it is only then that one has within one's hands, the direct antidote to the path of seeing abandonments which are the path of seeing afflictive and knowledge obscurations, according to this system. When one enters the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing onwards, one actualizes and comes to possess the Dharma Jewel.

Due to possessing the Dharma Jewel within the continuum, the yogi is then called a Sangha Jewel. Hence, it is due to possessing the Dharma Jewel in the continuum that, the person who possesses it is a Sangha Jewel. Likewise, whether one is a Buddha Jewel also depends on whether one possess the Dharma Jewel as well.

Hence, among the three objects of refuge, the Dharma Jewel is said to be the actual refuge.

Student 2: Why is faith [needed as one of the practices] of the powers and strengths of the path of preparation, as without faith, one does not even enter the Mahayana in the first place?

How having different types of faith enable the yogi to progress:

Khenrinpoche: There is no need to mention about the importance of faith as it is really important. Whether it is prior to entering the path or when one is actually on the path, faith is important in all context.

In the context of cultivating calm abiding, one of the very first antidote is faith. One needs strong faith in the benefits of calm abiding and so forth before one even has a chance to possess the wish to develop it.

The 4 close placements of mindfulness is primarily explained in relation to the Small level path of accumulation. The 4 correct abandonings is primarily explained in relation to the Middling level path of accumulation. The 4 Magical manifestations is primarily explained in relation to the Great level path of accumulation. However, this does not mean that, these cannot exist prior to entering the paths/ outside the paths.

To be a *power*, the knower must have the potential to produce an arya path. One must be “self-powered” with respect to generating its path, an arya’s path. A *strength* is so called because, it has the strength to quell its discordant class. Hence, the power of faith does not exist prior to there being a power. However, faith itself does exist prior to that, but such a faith is not necessarily the power of faith. To be considered as the power of faith, it must be self-powered with respect to generating its result of an arya’s path.

The path of accumulation is explained as the time when the yogi is accumulating the collections. This is done primarily through the force of hearing and reflection on the path of accumulation. Just as there are the wisdom arisen from hearing and the wisdom arisen from reflection, there are also the faith that arise from hearing and reflection.

On the path of preparation, whatever wisdom generated here are those that arose from meditation. Likewise, the faith that arose through meditation are obviously stronger than the faiths that arose from hearing and reflection. [Compared to the concentration on the path of accumulation, the concentrations of the] 5 powers and 5 strengths [on the path of preparation] are also stronger.

Although the faith on the Heat and Peak levels of the path of preparation are very strong, nevertheless, it is said that, it is still possible for non-faith to manifest, despite having the power of faith. Through the force of meditation, when the Bodhisattva reaches the Forbearance and Supreme mundane quality levels, his strength of faith would enable him to quell any manifestations of non-faith, even in post-meditative equipoise.

When he reaches the path of seeing, as explained earlier, the faith that the Bodhisattva possesses is very different and special.

On the Heat level path of preparation, the Bodhisattva has the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness, investigating say, the nature of the physical and mental aggregates. In meditative equipoise, he realizes that these are empty and so forth. However, in post-meditative equipoise, it is still possible for him to develop a lack/ an absence of conviction [of what he has realized while in meditative equipoise]. On these levels while on meditative equipoise, there is still coarse dualistic appearances. The Bodhisattva is also aware of that. Hence, perhaps in post-meditative equipoise, it is possible for him to develop the lack of conviction.

Khenrinpoche: In post-meditative equipoise, does such a Bodhisattva experience appearance of true existence? Yes. Does he have the apprehension of true existence? Yes, as he has not even started abandoning it. Therefore, it is possible for him to wonder whether [what he experienced in meditative equipoise] is really empty or not.

The importance of prayer before the teachings:

At the beginning of the class, we usually chant the praises to Shakyamuni Buddha and then the Heart Sutra. This is part of the class practice.

In the monastery, before we debate, we would recite the prayers for almost 2 hours. Even the Heart Sutra is sometimes chanted 21 times. [Occasionally] they [would do so with a] long tune, which takes 45 minutes to complete. [They would also chant] the 21 Praises to Tara 70 to 80 times. Therefore, before the debate, we would normally do 2 hours of prayers.

Here, we only do 10 to 15 minutes [of prayers]. Even that, we don't have energy to chant. Since this is part of your practice, then you should put some energy there, doing so with joy. When you recite Buddhist prayers, of course you would think of Shakyamuni Buddha first, put your palms together while remembering his kindnesses and qualities. Then when you praise Him well in each verse from your heart, [imagine] how much benefit you would get! So it is important to do the prayers at the beginning [of the class. One of the] benefits you will get is peace in your mind before listening to the teachings.

So first, do the meditation by visualizing nectar coming from Buddha Shakyamuni that purifies your emotional, negative, difficult, jealous or angry mind. Whatever [negative] minds that you have, [visualize them being] purified by such a meditation. You would then calm down, [be able to] bring forth some [positive] energies to listen to the teachings.

Reciting the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra is [the most] powerful sutra [you can find,] as you cannot find any other [more] powerful sutras than that. As you have gone through its topic before, [it is mainly explaining] about emptiness. So, look [within] oneself, everything is empty. As much as possible, [try to] understand and contemplate on impermanence and emptiness while you are reciting it. [You can do either] that, or when you are reciting, you can think and visualize that, you are also listening to the Heart Sutra [directly] from Buddha Shakyamuni [Himself]. This then becomes very very powerful merit that one creates, just by reciting the Heart Sutra. If on top of that, you can contemplate on its meaning, then of course you get much more benefits.

In the monastery, [my] teacher used to say all the time:

“You don't need any other separate pujas for yourself. If you chant [the Heart Sutra] yourself when you come for class, [Being able to] think and chant well, then this becomes the best puja for yourself. You don't need others in the monastery to do pujas for you to clear obstacles, as you can do it yourself.”

That is why, when you chant the prayers in a group, it should be a little bit louder. Of course when you are alone in the house, whether you are making noise or not, it does not really make any difference. But as a group, whether it is a class or in a puja, you should chant any kind of prayers loudly. [This is because,] a group energy is needed. Again, when I say 'louder', [your voice] should match with the group. [Therefore,] 'louder' does not mean that you [drown out/ overwhelm] others' voices.

[What I mean is] to bring your voice together [with others] to create a group energy that is pleasant. [This is because,] if you chant and think well, the chanting has the power to [pacify / subdue / calm] our minds.

[There is a way to] chant the Heart Sutra in a very very long tune in Tibetan. They say that, if you start to chant it, then [it will take the time to] walk from Sera in Tibet to Lhasa and back [in order to complete it!] I don't know how long it will take, [perhaps this] will take 1½ to 2 hours. Anybody knows [how to get from] Sera to Lhasa? I don't know. So, in the past they mentioned about that kind of [time it takes to walk to and fro between these two places to complete the sutra]. We only [chanted] that [way] once in Sera [in South India, lead by] the chant master from Tibet. He did that one time, which took a long time [to complete]. Of course, we were not used to it: “Thus.....did.....I.....hear.....”

Of course, there could be some reason [for doing it this way], I don't think it is about merely passing the time. Those with good understanding [would know that, even in the first phrase,] “Thus did I hear at one time...” there could be many different ways to think and contemplate on that. Then of course [when it comes to meditating on] emptiness, you can contemplate on that.

Therefore, I don't want to repeat this again, but sometimes it is good to tell and remind: “Please chant loudly with the group energy. I think this is important.”

Then of course, when you do mandala offering, it is also good to chant. It is not about making mandala offering to me, this has nothing to do with me. You can visualize Guru-Shakyamuni or His Holiness, then of course you create the merit when you do it well. Hence, [making mandala offering] here has nothing to do with myself. So, think well and you create the merit for yourself.

Even though [this module] is finishing soon, but I think [if you look at it] from every angle, [maintaining] the group energy is important to successfully complete the [program]. I myself [alone] cannot do much, as we all need this energy to go through these classes [together].

Also, Rinpoche and His Holiness have always mentioned that, studying [the Dharma] is the most important thing. Those of you who have been to Dharamsara [will know that] His Holiness has always mentioned that. Also, Rinpoche always mentioned that, ABC exists [for the purpose of] Dharma study. Then of course, [the purpose of] studying the Dharma again all boils down to practicing it.

Hence, from every angle, we need [to put in effort]. From [the side of the] students, we need [to put in] some effort to learn, listen and do prayers. Of course I know, as mentioned before, studying Buddhist philosophy is extremely challenging. This is because, I have gone through this myself, studying for about 19-20 years full time. Of course it is not easy.

I mentioned this before, we have about 30 monks in my class. Not everybody can study, complete their studies and become geshe. Therefore, it is not easy but challenging. [Starting with] 36-7 of us, when we completed our studies, those of us who really completed it, like going for all the exams and so forth, only 4 of us [managed] to complete it. This is not a joke as it is really difficult. From [the 36-7 monks,] half of them also disrobed, the rest couldn't complete their studies, some didn't study well, even though they do come to class but are merely sitting there, debate a little bit here and there. But as time goes, in the end, they didn't get to learn much.

So, I do see the challenges there, but of course, there could be individual karma. You could be putting in your own effort and interest, among many other factors, [for you] to complete your study. So, it is not easy, [even when] you are not studying full time but doing part time. I do know that you are all working from 8 in the morning till 6 [in the evening], so of course I can't expect much. When you [get off from work], you will feel tired and have no time to read. You have a little dinner and then come to class. This is wonderful.

Hence, not everybody can [study]. So I [do see the situation] in a different way. Some people just come and listen, that is fine and wonderful. As mentioned before, sometimes I really do think about the story of Vasubandhu and the pigeons. Of course, it's wonderful, [when the pigeons were perched on the ceiling trestle] of his house [while listening to him recite the perfection of wisdom sutras], and [you coming here] listening to 1 or 2 words while leaving some imprints, or just coming here to recite the Heart sutra together. [From this perspective,] when you think about it, this is wonderful. Above that, if you read, think and study [the texts], then of course you get that much more benefit, you can understand the Buddha's teachings.

That much [more benefit means] that much [more conditions] may help you change your mind.

I've mentioned this before, studying is to learn [and gain] knowledge. But merely knowing the knowledge [alone] does not mean much. Of course in a way, having more knowledge is definitely helpful. Even for myself, when difficulties and problems come, I have 10 ways to think [that help overcome] the problem. But if [one] really puts in deep practice, then of course, there's no question that, one will be able to change oneself. But merely due to the power of hearing [alone] is already extremely powerful. Therefore, I see the benefit [of listening to the teachings].

I've mentioned this before, when I was young, I didn't know what killing was. My parents told me not to kill as it was not good to do that. I have no idea [what they meant] but it was only because of that, that helped me not to kill [as a child] before I became a monk. I didn't have much knowledge about what happens if one kills. This is just an example of the power of hearing [the teachings], which is extremely powerful in helping one [refrain from nonvirtues, for example].

I've also mentioned this before, in the first round of the Basic program, we did some pujas with the collection of some small amount of money. In this second round, we didn't do that many. This is okay, but what I am saying is that, when you do the prayers, please do so with a joyful, happy feeling. Even when you are doing the three prostrations, you should do so with joy, believing in the benefits. So, do [bring up] some kind of feeling in the heart, I think this is important. [For example, when you do] praises to Buddha Shakyamuni, recite the Heart sutra, then making mandala offering, and so forth, whatever you do, in dependence on the object of the merit field, these are all part of the 7-limb practice that can be done before class. This is very very powerful as your mind becomes more purified, more subdued. Then when you listen to the Dharma according to the Lam Rim, you all know about setting the motivation:

The whole point is to subdue your own mind.

There is nothing so much about other [factors]. Whatever topics you are learning, even if it is a big topic, try to put the topic [that you have learned] into the Lam Rim as much as possible. After you have learned the topic, then go back and put whatever that fits [your mind] into the Lam Rim and then try to meditate [on them]. This is extremely helpful.

So, when you do the prayers, I request to please do so with the group energy, this is needed. This [enables] this [batch of Basic program] to complete successfully. From every angle [/perspective, a positive] energy is needed if you want to complete [the rest of the modules] after this [module].

Otherwise, we just do some particular Buddha practices once a week, which is easy. Once a week, we just come together and do some pujas. This [may suit some] people, so we can do that also. This is much easier, we don't need to 'squeeze your brain' so much [by learning] this and that topics. You just do your simple practice like [prostrations] to 35 Buddhas and so on.

However, this is not Rinpoche's wish. He wants the center to [provide deeper levels of] study [programs]. He even mentioned about starting the master program three times. So far we haven't started. So, those who want to further their studies, who wish to learn more, please [develop] some courageous [aspirations] and make strong prayers [for this to happen]. So we all need [to do] that. I think it is important so that is why I am telling [you] now.

Sometimes I feel that, what you are studying here and [what you] study in the monastery for the geshe degree, [these are the] same things, as there are nothing more [than what you are doing here]. Sometimes I feel you people are better than the geshe! Really, I am not kidding you. As I've mentioned before, in my class of 37-8 monks, when you ask them questions, not everybody would know [the answers]. So in a way, I do appreciate what you are doing as it is not easy. After a long working day, then coming to class, putting in some effort to listen. So I cannot hope [for] much, but my job is to push. How much I can do that I don't know, I cannot [use the cane or my mala...]. When the school children are taking their PSLE, I heard that this even become like an exam for the mother! The parents become so stressed up. The children become stressed, the parents become stressed. So in a way, [what you are doing is] wonderful, but [in another,] you still need to work harder. This is the most that I can say.

Sometimes when we do the prayers, I find that we are a little bit down. I think, when we chant, please chant loudly. When you are loud, it is also [beneficial as it is] some form of exercise.

The chant leaders normally chant very loudly and they live very long [lives]. This is true. Almost all the chant masters live quite long. They really put a lot of energy to chant. When you do that, your lungs get to be expanded! Then you get to live longer. So, if I know the tune of the 2-hour long Heart sutra, we'll recite that one day! We only did that one time [in Sera], but it was extremely boring! At that time, we were young so we didn't know what was going on, which word or sentence they were chanting we didn't know. We normally recite very quickly, so when they [drag the sentences] then we were lost as we really couldn't hear the word [they were chanting]. Of course, we didn't know much about the meaning, no meditation, [plus not being able to follow] the chanting, then it became boring.

So, before the teachings, make your prayers enjoyable, whatever [difficulties you may have,] just put it aside, as much as possible, bring forth your [positive mental] energy to listen to the teachings. Of course sometimes you may be tired, you can't do much [about it], but [try to be] a little alert [in wanting to know] what [the teacher] is trying to explain. I have never ever [considered] myself as a good teacher in my [entire] life, but what I feel is that, I try my best [to teach]. So, I have no regrets in not trying my best.

So, from your own side, I want to say the same thing:

Never [reach a point where you] regret for not putting in effort when you have had the opportunity [to study].

Of course, everybody has different levels of intelligence. Someone can learn [the teachings] just by hearing it once, others may have [to learn them] by repeatedly hearing [the teachings] a hundred times. I myself am not a fast learner, I am a very slow learner. So, according to my [level of] wisdom, I need to work harder. Those who have the intelligence may not need to work as hard because it is easy to learn. But for me, I don't have that much intelligence so I need [to put in] more effort to learn. [By putting in whatever] effort, you will be able to learn, however small [a knowledge it may be]. Therefore, it is good to put some effort [to learn]. At the end of the day, don't have regrets for not putting in the effort: "Oh, this time round I didn't put in the effort!" [Such a situation] can happen, when we go to regular teachings or come to regular classes, we don't think so much [about how important or precious these are, each session] goes [uneventfully]. Your mind just doesn't want to listen [to the teachings, then you think: "Since in] this class I am not [paying so much attention,] maybe next year I'll do [better], I'll put in more effort, I'll study [more in depth]. But as time goes [such a wish would not happen]. So, sometimes we really need to tell oneself:

"TODAY, NOW, I must do something and not wait for next time!"

So, when you have the opportunity now, put in effort as much as possible to learn even some words. Even if you don't know the meaning, you just learn the words. For example, [in one of the division of] the 37 Harmonies to enlightenment, [if you could learn and say:] "The 4 close placements of mindfulness." Then [on this basis,] you go deeper, what it is, how to meditate on that and then able to explain it. That is the way to learn. Otherwise, it's not [going to be] easy. Sometimes, when we are not mindful, [we may think:] "Oh, today [was the same as usual], this was difficult, that was difficult..." Then some parts of your mind would just shut down. When you go to another topic, [the same thing would happen:] "This is difficult..." and again your mind would just shut down. [Then when you] go on and on [with the same attitude], you will become totally tired.

However, at the same time, I do understand that this topic is extremely difficult. But we all want to learn something new [isn't it?] You don't want to [repeatedly attend] the Lam Rim topics every year isn't it? If I [were to] repeat the Lam Rim every year I don't think you want to learn that. Since you want to learn some new topics, even though these may be very difficult, but if you really want to learn that, then put in some effort, at least [learn how to] say the names [of say, the 4 close placements of mindfulness and so forth].

While working hard at this, at the same time also pray [for success], bring [forth] your own [positive mental] energy. It is only then, would we be able to achieve success, otherwise it will be difficult. So think about it, do the prayers with joy and as much as possible, put some effort to listen to the teachings to know what the topics are all about. [After doing this,] when you still don't understanding, then you can ask questions or discuss with each other. This helps you to succeed in your studies, this is what pleases Rinpoche, this is what pleases His Holiness. So, we all need to think well about this. This is not about any particular individual, as we are all working for Rinpoche's center.

So by studying, this is the only thing we can do to please Rinpoche, to please His Holiness, as this is their main [intention for us] and [had given the] same advice all the time. So, to not disturb but only pleasing Rinpoche, [fulfilling his holy] wishes, therefore, [a positive] energy is needed to succeed in [completing] your studies.

So everyone, [and that] includes myself, please think about that. I also do think a lot [about this]. So, this is important. I don't want to repeat this again and again, so please keep this in mind:

Study with joy, in fact, everything you do, do it with joy. Otherwise, sometimes it will not be easy.

Coarse and subtle self of persons and phenomena, afflictive and knowledge obscurations:

The 7 Branches of enlightenment are the branches of enlightenment of perfect: a) Mindfulness b) Discernment of phenomena c) Joyous effort d) Joy e) Pliancy f) Meditative stabilization and g) Equanimity. These 7 branches are said to be mainly meditated on the path of seeing and its purpose is to abandon the path of seeing abandonments.

With regards to the path of seeing abandonments, there are afflictive obscurations and knowledge obscurations.

Presentation of the coarse and subtle self of persons and phenomena according to the Autonomy Middle Way School:

According to the Autonomy Middle Way School, the afflictive obscuration is primarily posited as apprehension of a self-sufficient substantially existent person together with its seeds. Whereas the knowledge obscurations are posited as the apprehension of truly existent [all other phenomena] and its seeds.

When these 2 obscurations are further elaborated into its coarse and subtle forms, then the coarse apprehension of a self of person would be the apprehension of a permanent, unitary and independent self, whereas the subtle apprehension of a self of person would be the apprehension of a self-sufficient substantially existent person.

With regards to the self of phenomena, there are also coarse and subtle forms as well. The apprehension of subject and object as different substantial entities constitutes the apprehension of a coarse self of phenomena. The apprehension of a truly existent [phenomena] constitutes the apprehension of a subtle self of phenomena.

Since there are both the coarse and subtle forms of the apprehension of persons and phenomena, hence there are the [assertions of] the coarse and subtle self of persons, as well coarse and subtle self of phenomena.

Presentation of the afflictive and knowledge obscurations that are abandoned on the path of seeing:

With regards to the afflictive obscurations, there are afflictive obscurations which are abandoned on the path of seeing, there are also afflictive obscurations which are abandoned on the path of meditation.

Here [on the 7 Branches of enlightenment], there are a) path of seeing abandonments that are afflictive obscurations, but there are also b) path of seeing abandonments which are knowledge obscurations.

There are 112 Path of seeing abandonments that are afflictive obscurations, and 108 path seeing abandonments that are knowledge obscurations. The [subdivisions] were already explained in the previous lesson.

The path of seeing abandonments that are [both] afflictive [and knowledge] obscurations primarily refers to the intellectually acquired/ artificial afflictions/ conceptions. This is because, there are innate afflictions as well. Hence, the path of seeing abandonments are primarily the artificial/ intellectually acquired afflictions/ conceptions.

Of the 112 intellectually acquired afflictive obscurations, 40 belong to the desire realm. This is because, these are explained in relation to the 4 Noble Truths.

Using true origins as an example: there are 10 afflictions that are path of seeing abandonments of the desire realm that focus on true origins – attachment, anger, pride, ignorance, afflicted doubt, view of the transitory collection, view holding to an extreme, conception of bad view as supreme, view holding bad ethics and modes of conduct as supreme and wrong view.

[One then extends such an understanding to] true suffering, true cessation and true path, with 10 [afflictions] focusing on [these 3 noble truths, making a total of] 40 [intellectually acquired afflictive obscurations belonging to the desire realm].

Khenrinpoche: Okay? Students: Yes. **Khenrinpoche:** You are all so intelligent, you hear it once and you understand! When I was young, my teacher would repeat [some teachings] 10 times and still I wouldn't understand. As a child, [the way we] study is different as we don't know anything. We can say the word but we have no idea at all what are ignorance, transitory collection, this and that views. We know, we can say and even debate on the words, but you people have [a better] idea. That depends on age, when you are older, you have more knowledge and can think better. When we were kids, somehow we were not able to think.

My teacher, who has since passed away, when we went for his class, he would repeat [the same teachings] sooo many times! Sometimes we would feel very bored: "Oh, I already know this, why is he repeating it again [and again]?" So, whatever topics he felt were important, he would repeat again and again like 10 times. At that time I didn't know why [he was doing that], but now I know why. Because of that, [whatever he had repeated] is still in my memory. Some of my teachers don't do that. They would just explain once, at that moment you would understand, but [after a while] you would forget. Since I am not that intelligent, when my teacher repeated many times what he had said, [that helped to keep what he had said] in my memory.

Accounting for the acquired 112 afflictive and 108 knowledge obscurations:

Since there are 3 realms of cyclic existence, therefore, there are also 36 afflictions of the form realm and 36 afflictions of the formless realm, making a total of 72 [afflictions of the higher realms].
Since there are 40 afflictions of the desire realm, then why are there only 36 for both the form and formless realms? This is because, anger is excluded as there are no anger of the form realm that observes the 4 Noble Truths. Therefore, 40 less 4 makes 36. This also applies to the [afflictions] of the formless realm.
Hence, [40 plus 72] makes 112 acquired afflictive obscurations that are path of seeing abandonments.
According to the Autonomy Middle Way School, there are also path of seeing abandonments that are [acquired] knowledge obscurations. They posit 36 for each realm, making a total of 108 acquired knowledge obscurations. Taking the 36 acquired knowledge obscurations of the desire realm as an example, there are:
9 conceptions of apprehendeds of thoroughly afflicted phenomena [as truly existent objects of use], 9 conceptions of apprehendeds of completely pure phenomena [as truly existent objects of use], 9 conceptions of apprehenders of substantial existents [as truly existent utilizers] and 9 conceptions of apprehenders of imputed existents [as truly existent utilizers].
In general, one can examine phenomena in 2 divisions: thoroughly afflicted and thoroughly pure phenomena. Taking an example of the conception of an apprehendeds of a thoroughly afflicted phenomena: there is an acquired conception of truly existent ignorance [subject] focusing on ignorance [object].
Of the 2 [types] of afflictive obscurations and knowledge obscurations, this is an knowledge obscuration. Within [the 2 types of] knowledge obscurations, this [example] is an acquired knowledge obscuration.
The reason there are 9 conceptions, not more nor less, is because this was said in the sutra, which gave 9 examples that posit the objects of observation. Hence, there are 9 apprehensions of true existence apprehending these 9 objects of observation.
Hence, the 108 [acquired knowledge obscurations comprise] of the 36 acquired knowledge obscurations/ conceptions of the desire realm, 36 likewise of both the form and formless realms.

How the 7 Precious emblems of a universal monarch are symbolically related to the 7 Branches of enlightenment:

a) Branch of enlightenment of perfect mindfulness: This is symbolically related to the <i>Precious golden wheel</i> (Skt. <i>cakraratna</i> ; Tib. <i>'khor lo rin po che</i>). Just as the wheel is victorious and overcomes that which is to be conquered through moving, likewise, with mindfulness, one is able to overcome that which is to be overcome.
b) Branch of enlightenment of fine discernment of phenomena: This is likened to the <i>precious elephant</i> (Skt. <i>hastiratna</i> ; Tib. <i>glang po rin po che</i>). Just as this wisdom is able to overcome the apprehension of signs/ true existence, likewise, the powerful precious elephant can overcome the many discordant factors.
c) Branch of enlightenment of perfect joyous effort: This is likened to the <i>precious horse</i> (Skt. <i>aśvaratna</i> ; Tib. <i>rta mchog rin po che</i>). The precious horse is able to traverse around the world within a morning. This is done with effort and striving.
Likewise, joyous effort that strives to develop the different concentrations, clairvoyances and supernatural powers is needed. Hence, to achieve enlightenment quickly, joyous effort is needed.
d) Branch of enlightenment of perfect joy: This is likened to the <i>precious wish-fulfilling jewel</i> (Skt. <i>maṇiratna</i> ; Tib. <i>nor bu rin po che</i>). With perfect joyous effort as a condition, one is then able to develop the various concentrations, clairvoyances and so forth. One is then able to engage many different aspects of Dharma, thus bringing benefits of joy to the body and mind.
This is likened to how the precious jewel is able to confer happiness upon sentient beings. It is said that, even merely emitting light from it is able to do just that.

e) Branch of enlightenment of perfect pliancy: With perfect pliancy, one is able to pacify all physical and mental dysfunctional tendencies. Due to that, one comes to experience the great joy of bliss. This is symbolized by the <i>precious queen</i> (Skt. <i>strīratna</i> ; Tib. <i>btsun mo rin po che</i>), who is said to be able to bestow uncontaminated bliss.
f) Branch of enlightenment of perfect meditative stabilization: When one possesses this, one can achieve many goals. This is symbolized by the <i>precious householder</i> [or <i>precious general</i> (Skt. <i>Khadgaratna</i> or <i>senāpatiratna</i> ; Tib. <i>Tib.khyim-bdag rin po che</i> ; or <i>dmag dpon rin po che</i>)]. The precious householder is said to satisfy whatever necessities that one needs.
I don't remember which text that I have read from, but it was mentioned in one text that, when one achieves the Mahayana path of seeing, one achieves the space/ sky-treasury. From then on, one will never experience any poverty of materials. <i>Khenrinpoche</i> : Then you become real <i>Dzumbala</i> !
If you remember, the first ground is called <i>Very Joyful</i> . This is because, the Bodhisattva on the first ground is very joyful, as he sees at that time that, he will soon achieve enlightenment and be of benefit to many sentient beings.
g) Branch of enlightenment of perfect equanimity: Perhaps the perfect meditative stabilization mentioned earlier refers to meditative equipoise, whereas the perfect equanimity here perhaps refers to post meditative equipoise.
In post meditative equipoise, one has to continue to realize those that one has yet to realize. Through knowing what to adopt and discard, one strives to abandon that which is to be discarded and cultivates that which is to be adopted.
This is perhaps related to the <i>precious minister</i> (Skt. <i>Puruṣaratna</i> or <i>pariṇāyakaratna</i> ; Tib. <i>blon po rin po che</i>).

4-1-3-1-7) 8 Branches of a superior's path:

These 8 branches of a superior's path are primarily meditated on the path of meditation, the purpose is to overcome the path of meditation abandonments. According to this school, the path of meditation abandonments are also divided into 2: the afflictive obscurations and knowledge obscurations [of the path of meditation].
There are path of meditation abandonments which are innate afflictive obscurations, there are also path of meditation abandonments which are knowledge obscurations.
Presentation of the path of meditation abandonments which are innate afflictive obscurations:
Of the path of meditation abandonment innate afflictive obscurations, there are 16. The path of [seeing] abandonments which are afflictive obscurations number 112, but here there are only 16. Among these [16] afflictions, 6 belong to the desire realm.
The 6 afflictions of the desire realm are attachment, anger, pride, afflicted ignorance, view of the transitory collection and view holding to an extreme. This is unlike the path of seeing abandonments that are afflictive obscurations, as there are 10 [non-views and views].
This is because, 1) afflicted doubt, 2) conception of bad view as supreme, 3) view holding bad ethics and modes of conduct as supreme and 4) wrong views were all abandoned on the path of seeing. This means that, these [4 afflictions] are acquired and there are no innate forms [of these 4 types of afflictions].
There are 5 path of meditation abandonments which are afflictive obscurations of the form and formless realms each. [There are not 6 afflictions] because, again as explained for the path of seeing abandonments, anger is excluded.
These are the [breakdown of the] 16 path of meditation abandonments which are afflictive obscurations.

Presentation of the path of meditation abandonments which are innate knowledge obscurations:

As with the path of seeing abandonments that are knowledge obscurations, there are also 108 path of meditation abandonments that are innate knowledge obscurations. Among these, 36 are of the desire realm, 36 of the form realm and 36 of the formless realm. The enumerations are exactly the same as the path of seeing abandonments.
However, the intellectually acquired/ artificial forms of conceptions are abandoned on the path of seeing, while the innate forms [of conception] are abandon here on the path of meditation.
Hence, according to the Autonomy Middle Way School, there are path of seeing abandonments that are afflictive obscurations and knowledge obscurations, there are also path of meditation abandonments that are afflictive obscurations and knowledge obscurations.

How one uses mindfulness to study and learn the materials through repeated recollection:

As mentioned earlier, if one is attending the classes, one should at the minimum be able to say/ list the 37 Harmonies to enlightenment individually. For example, one should be able to say what the 7 Branches of enlightenment, the 8 Branches of a superior’s path and so forth, are. [Above that,] if one is able to explain what these mean, then that will be excellent.
At the minimum, one should at least be able to enumerate and list them. One must put in effort [to do so].
When referring to the symbol [of the Golden wheel] in relation to the Branches of enlightenment of perfect mindfulness mentioned earlier, the point about [cultivating] mindfulness is that, one would become victorious over [the afflictions] one was not victorious before. Hence, [having] mindfulness is very important as [this is adopted in almost all cultivations].
From the beginning [of the 37 Harmonies of enlightenment,] there are the 4 close placements of mindfulness. In the 5 powers and forces, mindfulness [is cultivated] again. In the 7 branches and here in the 8 Branches of superior’s path, mindfulness is again cultivated. Hence, [being] mindful is very important.
With regards to the materials, one has to memorize them. The next day, one has to refresh one’s memory again through one’s own power by thinking. This is how [one is able to remember the materials, doing so] day after day. Due to mindfulness, one is used to it and [is able to remember it].
Someone asks me: “I do remember [the materials], but why do I forget it so easily?” The answer is very simple: This is a sign that one is not mindful, one did not rely on mindfulness and memorize the materials.
This is because, if one recollects and memorizes the materials, doing so by reviewing them daily, then the imprint left in the mind becomes very strong. Then there is no way to forget. Otherwise, if one merely recalls them once or twice, then of course [the recollection] would slip away quickly. This is one’s own evident experience.
With regards to learning in general, one has to review them now and then to not forget them. Otherwise, one would never be able to remember anything. So whatever that has been explained, one has to review it using mindfulness, which is recollecting them over and over again. One then starts accumulating [the knowledge] over time.
Due to this, the interest will come as one sees the connections [between the materials being explain as one starts to discover them]. One then becomes more encouraged and thus more interested. One then really wants to [study more].
This is how one starts to be able to learn more and [remembers them in one’s mind]. Other than [putting in] effort, there is no other [methods]. One has to do just that.
As explained before, if one [is attending the] classes, then one has to do something. At the minimum, one has to put in effort to memorize the materials. This is not even referring to the meaning but merely the words.
If one fails to do so, then [attending] the classes is merely about [collecting] imprints. However, for [the imprints] to be strong, one really has to work [hard] at it, memorizing the words at the minimum.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> If you have strong imprints then it will be easier [to study and learn] in the next life. [By listening once or twice,] you will understand [easily, by then] there is no need to work hard like now.

The benefits of reciting prayers with a good motivation and enthusiasm at the beginning of any Dharma activities:

It is mentioned in the sutra that, if one compares the merit of making offering of divine clothes and food equaling in number to the sand grains in the Ganges River to numberless sentient beings, to the merit of hearing Buddha's name just once, the merit of the latter surpasses the merit gained from [the former's] offering.

[Since that is the case,] then it goes without saying that, if one recollects or visualizes the Buddha's holy body, then the merit is even greater than hearing the Buddha's name.

For example, when one recites praises to Buddha Shakyamuni, if one visualizes Buddha and recite His praises within the state of devotion, putting one's palms together, then of course one only stands to profit. Therefore, the idea is that, before one hears and learns the Dharma, if one does so enthusiastically with joy and devotion, then one stands to benefit.

However, if one listens to and learns the Dharma without much interest, enthusiasm and faith, then it will be difficult for the Dharma to benefit one's mind. Hence, it is important to adjust one's motivation in the beginning for listening to and learning the Dharma. One should listen to and learn the Dharma with a good motivation.

When one recites the praises to Buddha, since one is already present here, then one might as well accumulate merit by doing so with delight, joy and faith. One only stands to gain merit.

After the praises, there is the recitation of the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra, which is the essence of the perfection of wisdom. If one is able to recite it well, one will also be able to accumulate the collections and purify one's mind of obscurations and negativities.

How the 4 divisions of the perfection of wisdom enables one to understand one's tathagata essence, thus engendering enthusiasm to achieve the Resultant perfection of wisdom:

In the terminological division of the perfection of wisdom, there is the Natural perfection of wisdom which is essentially the object, emptiness. The texts that teach emptiness as its subject matter are called the Scriptural perfection of wisdom.

When one recites or study these perfection of wisdom sutras, concurrently one can reflect on its meaning with one's understanding of emptiness, such a reflection on its meaning would be likened to the Path perfection of wisdom. Eventually, one will achieve the Resultant perfection of wisdom, which comes in dependence upon the Path perfection of wisdom.

Hence, the generation of the path perfection of wisdom is dependent on the Scriptural perfection of wisdom. Therefore, for the path perfection of wisdom to be generated in one's continuum, one has to depend on the scriptural perfection of wisdom.

Without depending on the scriptural perfection of wisdom, there is no way to actualize the path perfection of wisdom, without which there is no resultant perfection of wisdom. In the absence of the resultant perfection of wisdom, this means that one would not be able to do perfect work for all sentient beings.

Therefore, to achieve the resultant perfection of wisdom, one needs the path perfection of wisdom, which means one needs to depend on the scriptural perfection of wisdom. However, relying on the scriptural perfection of wisdom does not mean merely reciting texts or reading them.

Relying on the scriptural perfection of wisdom means that, on the basis of knowing its words, the main essence is to think, reflect on and analyze its meaning. By relying well on the scriptural perfection of wisdom, which means reflecting and analyzing [its meaning] well, one would derive a good understanding and get at its object, emptiness, correctly.

This is then the start to knowing what one's own tathagata essence is all about. This is possible only when one comes to understand and know one's own Buddha nature/ tathagata essence through depending on the scriptural perfection of wisdom.

This is only possible because one [already] possesses the tathagata essence in the first place, being one's deepest nature. Due to possessing it since time without beginning as it has always there all the while, it is possible for the mind to develop.

In dependence upon the scriptural perfection of wisdom, one gains a correct understanding and experience of the natural perfection of wisdom, emptiness. Here, one comes to gain a correct idea of one's own Buddha nature/ tathagata essence.

It is only when one has a correct understanding of the tathagata essence that, one understands the meaning of the statement:
"The mind is clear light and the defilements are adventitious."

This is because, it is only when one has some correct understanding of emptiness that, one sees the nature of the mind is clear light and, although the defilements are present [in the mind,] these are actually adventitious in that, they can be removed.

When one sees that these can be removed, one would be really interested to work hard to actualize the path perfection of wisdom. When one achieves this, it is only a matter of time that one would achieve the resultant perfection of wisdom.

With a good understanding and experience of the object, emptiness of true existence, particularly, the emptiness of true existence of the mind, essentially the tathagata essence, one would then really come to understand how one's mind is in the nature of clear light and that the defilements are adventitious.

This means that it is possible for the defilements to be separated from the mind. Due to one's understanding or realization on a personal level, such an understanding can thus be extended to other sentient beings in that, other sentient beings also have their tathagata essence and that their defilements/ afflictions are adventitious.
It is just that, at the time being, these sentient beings are unable to control their afflictions due to not realizing their tathagata essence. One then understands that, if sentient beings are able to realize their own tathagata essence, then they will be able to free themselves from their own defilements as well.
Hence perhaps, when one has a personal understanding or realization of emptiness, the experience of compassion and how one views sentient beings will be markedly different.
Based on the same reason, those who have generated the mind of enlightenment [with such an understanding of emptiness] see that sentient beings can free themselves from their defilements. Hence, they are able to work for sentient beings as they see the possibilities [for others to become enlightened].
Those who see that the defilements are adventitious due to seeing that the nature of the mind is clear light, are therefore able to generate the <i>Wholehearted resolve</i> , the step before generating bodhicitta. They see that it is possible [for sentient beings to become enlightened]. Hence, they take on the personal responsibility [that thinks]: "I will do it myself alone!"
Hence, when one has the opportunity to recite the perfection of wisdom sutras, like the Heart of the perfection of wisdom sutra, if one can meditate on it as one recites the words, then it will be very good.
Even though the subject matter is emptiness, but one can take one's own 'self, I, person' as the basis and get an understanding of the emptiness of one's own 'self, I, person'. If one can do this, then there will be a lot of benefit.
Hence, one just has to try one's own individual best, think, reflect and meditate on what one has learned. This in turn will cause one to want to learn [more]. This is how change can occur. Otherwise, merely learning the Dharma without reflecting and meditating on them, sometimes causes one's mind to be even more hardened. Then there is no benefit.
Hence, the point is, from one's own side, one just has to try one's individual best. If one learns the Dharma willingly and happily with joy, wanting it from one's own side, [learning the Dharma] with such an attitude, one [only] gets the benefit.

8 Branches of a superior's path – its observed object, manner of meditation, entity and division:

In the Pali tradition, these eight branches of a superior's path are called the Eightfold Noble Path. This is essentially an explanation related to true paths. According to the <i>Compendium of Knowledge</i> , the 8 Branches of the superior's path have the 4 Noble Truths as its observed object.
The manner of meditation is similar to the [manner of meditation of] the 7 Branches of enlightenment. For example, by focusing on true suffering and true cessation, one comes to generate the wish to discard them. Through focusing on true cessation and true path, one develops the wish to actualize/ manifest them.
The purpose of meditating on the 8 Branches of the superior's path is to abandon the path of meditation abandonments. As explained before, [these abandonments have] both the afflictive and knowledge obscurations.
The entity of a branch of a superior's path is essentially a cause of its result, a superior's path.
The divisions are: a) Correct view, b) Correct thought, c) Correct speech, d) Correct aims of action, e) Correct livelihood f) Correct effort g) Correct mindfulness h) Correct meditative stabilization.
By coming to class, the minimum target one should aim for is to be able to say what these 8 [divisions] are. One has to put effort to list them [initially]. Khenrinpoche: Can you [meet the target]? You must be able to list the 8 [divisions].

How the 8 Branches of a superior's path are condensed into the 3 Higher Trainings:

1) c) Correct speech, d) Correct aims of action and e) Correct livelihood are condensed into the Higher training of ethics .
2) h) Correct meditative stabilization is the Higher training of concentration .
3) According to my text, there are 4 of the 8 branches that are condensed into the Higher training of wisdom : a) Correct view, b) Correct thought, f) Correct effort and g) Correct mindfulness. Khenrinpoche: It is obvious that Correct view and thought are condensed here, but how are Correct effort and Correct mindfulness condensed here?
As explained before, the 4 close placements of mindfulness are included into the category of wisdom. Hence here, for Correct mindfulness to be condensed into the Higher training of wisdom would then make sense.
As for Correct effort, perhaps one can examine it this way: Before one works hard at and strives in effort, one needs to see the purpose and benefit. Effort here does not refer to [possessing] blind faith, doing it just because someone says so and not really sure what one is doing and so forth. Correct effort [possesses] a faith that is engendered through knowledge.
One then generates belief, hence, one strives at it, seeing the reason, the point. Hence, [such an effort] involves possessing wisdom, as one needs to have [thought about and reflected well] on it.
Perhaps there are also other ways to condense these 8 divisions of the superior's path.

<p>1) Correct speech is the speech of karma [verbal karma/ verbal actions], Correct aims of action is bodily [physical] karma, Correct livelihood refers to behavior, which can be included in ethical discipline.</p>
<p>In the context of the 3 higher trainings, it is always explained that the former acts as the basis for the latter. For one to [develop] any trainings of concentration, one first must have a strong foundation in ethical discipline.</p>
<p>Hence, the higher training in ethical discipline is the foundation for the higher training in concentration. The higher training in concentration [in turn] is the basis for the higher training in wisdom.</p>

How the 8 Branches of a superior's path are subsumed under 4 Branches:

<p>1) Correct view is the branch of affirmation/ thorough analysis. Generally, Correct view refers to the wisdom realizing emptiness. Here, Correct view specifically refers to the wisdom <i>directly</i> realizing emptiness.</p>
<p>There is the view that directly realizes emptiness that is sustained in meditative equipoise. When the [yogi] arises from it in post-meditative equipoise, he continues to analyze. Of the two mental factors of investigation and analysis, it is analysis which is thinking about [its object] in a more refined and detailed manner.</p>
<p>Hence, in post-meditative equipoise, [the yogi] continues with a detailed analysis of the truth of emptiness which sustains the [same] view that was realized in meditative equipoise. Hence, this is a very good understanding of emptiness through experience. Therefore, Correct view here is subsumed into the branch of affirmation/ thorough analysis.</p>
<p>2) Correct thought is the branch that brings about understanding. With a good understanding of emptiness through experience in post-meditative equipoise, the Bodhisattva thus wishes to cause others to come to the same understanding.</p>
<p>Hence, Correct thought here refers to the motivation that drives the Bodhisattva's wish to teach/ share his realizations of the truth of emptiness to others. With Correct view, the Bodhisattva is able to have Correct thought. Based on this, there is the:</p>
<p>3) Branch that brings about belief in others: Includes Correct speech, Correct aims of action and Correct livelihood. Correct speech refers to others' [belief in one's speech]. When they listen to the Bodhisattva explaining the truth of emptiness, they are able to believe that he is making sense because he must know something, knowing that he has Correct view and thought.</p>
<p>Correct speech can be understood as the 4 virtues of speech, the opposite of the 4 nonvirtues of speech.</p>
<p>Correct aims of action refers to not [engaging in actions] that are not good [/not supposed to be engaged in].</p>
<p>This essentially refers to having pure ethical discipline/ virtues of bodily/ physical actions, the 3 virtues of body which are [the opposite of the 3 physical nonvirtues.] Due to abandoning such nonvirtues as killing and so forth, others will believe [develop faith] that the Bodhisattva has the pure ethical discipline of correct aims of action.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Is 'correct speech' speech itself? The purpose is this: The 8 Branches of a superior's path are exalted knowers. Hence, if one says that 'correct speech' is speech [verbal activity] and 'correct aims of action' is physical [activity], then how does one explain correct speech and aims of action to be exalted knowers/ paths?</p>
<p>This is because, the definition of a superior's path is an exalted knower in a superior's continuum that is a cause of its result, a superior's path. This means, these branches are exalted knowers.</p>
<p>In the Lam Rim section on the 10 nonvirtues, there are the explanations on physical karma [/action] and verbal karma [/action]. However, was there any explanation about mental karma [/mental actions]? It explains that there are 3 [physical] nonvirtues, 4 verbal nonvirtues and 3 mental nonvirtues. However, it explains that the 3 mental nonvirtues are not karma.</p>
<p>Covetousness, ill will and wrong views are not karma [/actions]. This is because, these are afflictions. Khenrinpoche: For example, one has a thought of harming someone. Is such a thought an affliction or not?</p>
<p>Vasubandhu's Treasury of Knowledge explains that, the first 7 physical and verbal nonvirtues are both karma [/actions] and paths of karma [/paths of action]. The last 3 [mental nonvirtues] are not karma [/actions] but paths of action.</p>
<p>Therefore, for the 7 physical and verbal nonvirtues, there are instances where these are both karma [/actions] as well as paths of action. However, this does mean that these definitely have to be so.</p>
<p>Correct livelihood means sustaining and living one's life without involving wrong livelihood, which can occur with one's body and speech. This means to guard one's body and speech. In the Lam Rim, the 5 wrong livelihood are listed as:</p>
<p>a) Flattery (<i>kha gsag</i>): Motivated by attachment or ignorance, a non-virtuous action of speech that says nice words, being politically correct and so forth, essentially flattering others just to achieve [one's aims].</p>
<p>b) Hinting (Soliciting <i>gzhogs slong</i>): Motivated by attachment wishing to possess something, one [uses non-virtuous speech] for example, by saying to a potential benefactor: "This person has something very nice, it'll be good if I have it."</p>
<p>c) Baiting (calculated generosity <i>rnyed pas rnyed pa 'dod pa</i>): Motivated by attachment wishing to acquire something, one gives a small gift to make someone happy just to get something more valuable in return.</p>
<p>Another example of baiting is that, one already has gotten something from someone but wanting more of that again. One then tells the benefactor: "Oh, you gave me something last time that was very useful."</p>

d) Expropriating (<i>thob kyi 'jal ba</i>): Repeatedly insisting and pressuring others [to achieve one's own aims].
e) Hypocrisy (<i>tshul 'chos</i>): A physical nonvirtue pretending to be holy even though one is not. Motivated by the desire to acquire something from a benefactor, in his presence, one pretends to be holy, showing an aspect which is not what one is.
Essentially, Correct livelihood means to guard and protect one's body and speech from [its respective] nonvirtues.
4) Correct effort, Correct mindfulness and Correct meditative stabilization are included in the branch of antidote .
Correct effort refers to a mind of [indomitable] attitude with regards to abandoning the path of meditation abandonments, which includes both its afflictive and knowledge obscurations. One needs a very long time to do so, starting with [abandoning] the afflictive path of meditation abandonments.
Hence, the Bodhisattva needs such an [indomitable] correct effort that works at abandoning them over such a long time. He also possesses the same attitude to overcome his knowledge obscurations.
In essence, Correct effort refers to an exertion to cultivate the antidotes to the knowledge obscurations.
Correct mindfulness: When one notices that excitement has arisen or is about to arise, then correct mindfulness brings the mind to [recollect] the faults of cyclic existence, the fact of ugliness and so forth. These are all antidotes to counteract excitement. Hence, mindfulness here means to not forget [applying these antidotes].
If laxity is arising or has arisen, then mindfulness here means to [recall] the benefits of having concentration and keeping the mind on that without forgetting it.
If the mind is neither affected by excitement nor laxity, then correct mindfulness here means to not forget to keep the mind in such a natural state, desisting from applying any antidotes.
Correct meditative stabilization: For the purpose of achieving the qualities of clairvoyances and so forth, one needs to overcome discordant factors in the process. To do so, one relies on antidotes [of such meditative stabilizations] to quell any discordant factors.
This is how the 8 Branches of a superior's path are subsumed under the 4 Branches, as explained in [<i>Asanga's Compendium of knowledge</i>]. In this specific context, the real meaning of these 8 branches refer to [the trainings] on the path of meditation.

How the 8 Branches of a superior's path can be applied to one's own level:

Although the 8 Branches of a superior's path mainly refer to the [trainings on] the path of meditation, generally, perhaps one does not need to limit one's perspective of [such a training] merely to the path of meditation.
For example, one can regard correct view as not being restricted only [to realizing] emptiness, but to mean possessing a correct understanding and conviction of impermanence, the 4 Noble Truths, karma and its effects and so on.
The point is that, here, correct view refers to a wisdom that is able to discriminate between [phenomena], particularly, the ability to discriminate between what is true/ correct and what is false/ wrong.
This can mean in general, the common understanding and belief of what is harmful to oneself and others and what is not, as well as what is beneficial to oneself and others [and what is not]. Nevertheless, there will definitely be people who will have their own views as to what is good and bad, what is harmful and beneficial. This then becomes very complicated.
<i>Anyway, this is the wisdom [that discriminates] between what to adopt and discard, what is right and wrong. If one possesses [such a] wisdom, then one will be able to [adopt the] correct motivation.</i>
With wisdom, then it is possible to possess correct motivation. With a correct motivation, then it is possible to possess correct speech and correct aims of action. This means having suitable and appropriate physical and verbal conduct [/ behavior].
With correct speech and correct aims of action, one would be able to guard one's body and speech from nonvirtue. One would be able to live a correct life, correct livelihood. With that, one would be able to strive correctly in whatever one does.
If there is correct aims of action, correct livelihood and correct effort, then it will be easier to cultivate and maintain mindfulness. If there is some mindfulness, then it is easier for one's mind to be stable, for one to focus one's mind.

How the 8 Branches of a superior's path is applied on the level of a superior's path:

If there is correct and good meditative stabilization, then this will help in developing and gaining wisdom, a wisdom that is much more powerful than ever, something different and special. Here, it will be the wisdom that leads to and culminates in achieving the correct view, the direct perception of emptiness.
Perhaps, having correct meditative stabilization in one's ordinary continuum will lead to the actual correct view of the direct perception of emptiness. When those who have reach this point on the path arise from such a correct view, due to such an experience, this would again affect and enhance their motivation.

<p>This in turn [enhances] their correct thought to a higher level. This in turn affects their speech in a much more positive manner. This becomes an ever increasing quality.</p>
<p>Therefore, one should not think of the 8 Branches of the superior's path only in the context of the path of meditation and has no bearing nor [has anything to do with oneself]. When one examines [these 8 branches] generally, one would [easily discover] some relevance to oneself at one's own level.</p>
<p>One starts with correct view, essentially a wisdom, the mental ability to cognize and know what is good and bad. When one sees the positive results of the ability to know what is right and wrong, [above the ability to know what is right and wrong, such an ability to see its positive results is also] wisdom.</p>
<p>This is because, this would enable one to [adopt] a better motivation that will affect one's speech in a positive way and so on.</p>
<p>One can also examine this in terms of its absence, the consequences of not having wisdom. <p style="text-align: center;"><i>This means not knowing how to think.</i></p> </p>
<p>If one does not know how to think, not having such a wisdom, then it will be difficult for one to have good motivations. Without good motivation, one will have non-virtuous speech, [physical conduct], wrong livelihood, not exerting oneself [in virtue], no mindfulness, no concentration. One then [circles] in samsara over and over again.</p>

Perspective of the 37 Harmonies of enlightenment:

The 37 Harmonies of Enlightenment, [the 37 aspects of an exalted knower of aspects concordant with Hearers, is one of the three divisions of the] 110 knower-aspects that is an exalted knower of all aspects, [which itself is one of the three divisions of] the knower-aspects [of the antidote class indicated in this context].

Examining whether correct aims of action & correct livelihood are forms or not:

There are 2 different views whether karma can be form or not: The Great Exposition School asserts that there is karma that is form. The Consequence Middle Way School also asserts that there are karma that are form. All other Buddhist tenets assert that karma is necessarily the mental factor of intention, [that is, a consciousness but not form].

Category 8: Resultant Truth Body:

Among the 8 Categories, there are the 3 Knowers, the 4 Applications, the last [category being] the Resultant [truth body], where the 4 Bodies of Buddha are presented. Hence, the result of cultivating the 4 Applications is the [Resultant truth body].

[Of the 4 divisions of the resultant bodies of Buddha, the first is the **1) Nature body**, which has 2 divisions:]

a) Naturally pure nature body and b) Adventitiously pure nature body.

According to the Autonomy Middle Way School: a) Naturally pure nature body refers to the emptiness of Buddha's mind, whereas the b) Adventitiously pure nature body refers to the factor of purity which is the purity of the adventitious stains. This [b)] is a conventional truth and not an ultimate truth. [Whereas a) is an ultimate truth].

[The second division of the resultant body of Buddha is the] **2) Enjoyment body**, which is explained as:

The final form body that possesses the 5 certainties.

Of these 5 certainties, the first is the i) Certainty of abode: It is certain that the Enjoyment body *resides only in Akanista*.

ii) Certainty of body: It is certain that the Enjoyment body is *always adorned with the signs and exemplifications*.

iii) Certainty of retinue: It is certain that the Enjoyment body is *only surrounded by Bodhisattva superiors*.

iv) Certainty of doctrine: It is certain that the Complete Enjoyment body *teaches only the Mahayana Doctrine*.

v) Certainty of time: It is certain that the Complete Enjoyment body *remains as long as cyclic existence exists*. Hence, as long as cyclic existence exists, [the Complete Enjoyment body] will not show the aspect of passing into the sorrowless state.

Khenrinpoche: Is Amitabha Buddha a Complete Enjoyment Body?

When one performs the 7 branch of worship, the usual practice is done from the perspective of relating to the Emanation body. This is because, in the branches of request and beseech, there are the practices of requesting the Buddha to turn the wheel of Dharma and beseeching Him not to pass into parinirvana. This is done in relation to the Emanation body.

Such practices [of requesting and beseeching] are not done in relation to the Enjoyment body. Hence, in the practice of tantra, there are no practices [in the 7 branch worship that involve] requesting the turning of the wheel of Dharma and beseeching not to pass into parinirvana. Hence, this is one of the difference [between the sutra and tantra practices of 7 limb].

Hence, an Enjoyment body is the final form possessing the 5 certainties, whereas the Emanation body does not possess these.

Since there is no certainty that an Emanation body will teach the Mahayana Dharma, nor will it remain [until cyclic existence ends], hence, in relation to the Emanation body, there is the practice [in the sutric 7-limb] to request the Emanation bodies to turn the Wheel of Dharma and imploring them not to pass into parinirvana.

It is also not definite that the Emanation body resides in Akanista, shows the signs and exemplifications, nor being surrounded by Bodhisattva superiors.

Hence, **3) Emanation body** is explained as: ***The final form body that is distinguished by not possessing the 5 certainties.***

There are 3 divisions: a) Supreme Emanation body b) Incarnate/ birth Emanation body c) Artisan Emanation body.

a) A supreme emanation body is the form body that performs the 12 deeds. An illustration is one's kind founder Shakyamuni Buddha, who descended in this world and displayed all the 12 deeds.

Buddha and the resultant truth body are mutually inclusive.

Summary overview of the 8 Categories:

<p>The 8 Categories were taught by Buddha Himself in the perfection of wisdom sutras, which consist of the extensive, middling and brief perfection of wisdom sutras. In these sutras, the Buddha taught these 8 Categories.</p>
<p>Even though the explicit subject matter of the perfection of wisdom sutras is emptiness, but the implicit or hidden subject matter taught in these sutras are the various stages of clear realizations.</p>
<p>In Maitreya's <i>Ornament of Clear Realizations</i>, these 8 Categories are explicitly taught. These are primarily presenting the implicit subject matter of the perfection of wisdom, which are the various stages of the clear realizations. The stages of [cultivating] emptiness are [in turn] implicitly taught in the Ornament of Clear Realizations.</p>
<p>At the beginning of the Ornament of Clear Realizations, it is stated that, <i>The Perfection of Wisdom is perfectly explained by the 8 Categories</i>. Since the phrase perfection of wisdom appears in this text, then there is the need to explain what it is.</p>
<p>When the perfection of wisdom is terminologically divided, there are 4: 1) Natural perfection of wisdom, 2) Scriptural perfection of wisdom, 3) Path perfection of wisdom and 4) Resultant perfection of wisdom.</p>
<p>1) Natural perfection of wisdom refers to the ultimate/ real nature/ truth of all that exists, the final/ deepest mode of abiding of all phenomena: emptiness, which is by nature pure. Hence, it is explained as a perfection.</p>
<p>Since this is reality, then one needs an explanation of such a reality. Hence, one needs the teachings/ texts/ instruments to show such a final nature of abiding of all phenomena. Hence, there is the 2) Scriptural perfection of wisdom.</p>
<p>The practice of taking to heart the meaning of the Scriptural perfection of wisdom is the 3) Path perfection of wisdom. This is explained to exist <i>only</i> in the continua of Bodhisattvas.</p>
<p>When such a cultivation of the path perfection of wisdom is brought to culmination, then one achieves [its fruit,] the 4) Resultant perfection of wisdom. This exists <i>only</i> on Buddha ground.</p>
<p>At the beginning verse of homage of the Ornament of Clear Realizations, one sees that salutations and praises are offered to the 3 Knowers: a) the knower of bases, b) the knower of paths and c) the exalted knower of aspects.</p>
<p>a) The <i>knower of bases</i> is primarily the wisdom directly realizing selflessness. This is cultivated mainly for the purpose of achieving the sorrowless state.</p>
<p>b) The <i>knower of paths</i> is primarily the wisdom directly realizing emptiness. This is primarily taught to enable the Bodhisattvas to take care/ work for the welfare and guide the trainees/ disciples of the 3 lineages. Such a knower exists only in the continua of Mahayana superiors.</p>
<p>c) To be able to fully/ completely turn the wheel of Dharma for the 3 types of trainees, one needs to achieve the exalted knower of aspects [enlightenment]. Hence, the <i>exalted knower of aspects</i> is taught.</p>
<p>One needs to cultivate the Knower of Paths to actualize the Exalted Knower of Aspects. Hence, one relies on the path perfection of wisdom to achieve the resultant perfection of wisdom. Hence, there are the explanations of the 4 applications.</p>
<p>Of the 4 Applications, the first is the Complete aspects application. The phrase indicates that [such a practice involves cultivating] all the aspects in a full and complete manner. The aspects being cultivated are the aspects of the 3 knowers, which have 173 aspects in total.</p>
<p>It is said that a Complete aspects application is a cultivation of the aspects of the three exalted knowers being cultivated in a compendium. At the beginning, [the Bodhisattva] cultivates the Complete aspects application for the purpose of gaining mastery over the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers.</p>
<p>On the path of accumulation, through cultivating a compendium of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers, the Bodhisattva will eventually attain the path of preparation. At that time, he achieves the Peak application.</p>
<p>Upon achieving the path of preparation, the Bodhisattva is <i>still</i> cultivating a compendium of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers. However, his manner of cultivating such a compendium of the aspects of the three exalted knowers is more exalted than the manner of cultivating [the Complete aspects application] on the path of accumulation.</p>
<p>Due to this, he is said to have achieved mastery of the aspects of the three exalted knowers. Hence, his cultivation on the path of preparation is given the name Peak application.</p>
<p>On the path of preparation, the Bodhisattva attains the Peak application and achieves the mastery over the aspects of the three exalted knowers. Such a mastery is a result of cultivation while on the path of accumulation, it is only due to that, that he is able to achieve the path of preparation and master the aspects of the three exalted knowers.</p>
<p>While the Complete aspects application is the mind that cultivates a compendium of the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers collectively, whereas a Serial application is a mind/ wisdom/ knower in the continuum of a Bodhisattva that cultivates the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers serially.</p>

Hence, even on the path of accumulation, a Bodhisattva has 2 ways of cultivating the aspects of the three exalted knowers:
On one hand, he has a knower/ mind in his continuum that cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers collectively as a compendium, but at the same time, he also has a mind/ knower that cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers serially. In short, he cultivates the aspects of the three exalted knowers collectively and serially.
The purpose of meditating on the aspects of the three exalted knowers serially is to achieve steadiness with respect to these aspects. Hence, there is the Serial application. Such an application is cultivated on the Mahayana paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing and meditation up to just before its last moment, the wisdom at the end of the continuum.
It is only at the very last moment of the path of meditation that, the Bodhisattva's cultivation achieves steadiness with respect to the aspects of the three exalted knowers.
This means that, in the shortest moment of a complete action [the time it takes to snap a finger], the Bodhisattva has the power to bring his mind to manifest any fully-ripened phenomenon, as well as to manifest all other concordant phenomena.
Simply stated, at the end of the continuum of a sentient being, the last moment of the path of meditation, the Bodhisattva has the power to meditate on the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers serially in the correct order without missing anything within the moment it takes to snap a finger, called an instant of a complete action.
The Bodhisattva who is on the last moment of the path of meditation is someone who is about to achieve enlightenment. Hence, by such a time, he definitely must have achieved the power/ potential/ ability to meditate on the 173 aspects of the three exalted knowers serially without missing the order and so forth, doing so within the time it takes to snap a finger.
It is only after having achieved [such an attainment] will the resultant truth body, the 8 th Category, occur.
The Buddha is omniscient, able to see every single phenomenon like that as it is [without even the need to take the time to snap a finger].

End of module