

## **Transcript of teachings by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi on the *Heart Sutra and Stages of the Path* (the Six Perfections)**

### **Lesson 2**

**27 June 2013**

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Review of Lesson 1. Continuation of the Mahayana path of accumulation from the great path of accumulation to the path of seeing.

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*Question:* Why does it take so long—three great countless eons—to achieve enlightenment? Is there a logical reason behind this?

*Answer:* The logical reason is that you have to work harder. If you work harder, it is faster.

*Question:* Human beings will not always exist. Because the paths take such a long time, when humans no longer exist, what happens to the bodhisattva on the path of accumulation moving on to the path of preparation?

*Khen Rinpoche:* So they will disappear? We talked in tenets about nirvana without remainder. You are thinking it is like that?

*Student:* No. Before humans, there were dinosaurs so after humans are gone, there could be something else.

*Khen Rinpoche:* For the tourist who goes to climb Mount Everest, it takes three months to climb the mountain. You may ask, “Why does it take three months to reach the top of the mountain?” This is something like your question.

*There are many reasons why it takes three months to climb Mount Everest. Similarly to get enlightened, it will take three great countless eons. If you have the merit, you can get into a helicopter and reach the top of Mount Everest in one hour. Buddhists also have that. When you follow tantra, you do not need to take three great countless eons. It is like taking a helicopter, using a shorter route.*

According to sutra, in order to achieve enlightenment, it takes three great countless eons in order to complete the accumulation of the two collections. What that means is that, in order to completely eradicate and abandon the afflictive obscurations and knowledge obscurations—i.e., in order to destroy the seeds of the afflictions together with their imprints—we need to work very hard to accumulate the two collections.

The second question was about this world going out of existence. What happens when you are on the way to enlightenment, accumulating the collections and the world disappears or disintegrates? Well, there are numberless world systems. Earth is not the only planet. In fact there are billions of universes.

*Khen Rinpoche:* Okay? So don't worry.

The realms of existence consist of the desire realm, the form and the formless realms. Sentient beings can be born in the form and formless realms besides the desire realm that we are in now. It is mentioned in the teachings that when our world disintegrates, the sentient beings of this world can be reborn in the form and formless realms. When a particular world system is created again, the sentient beings in the upper realms can be reborn into that world system again. A world system such as ours comes and goes. When it goes, it is not as if another world system will not come about. When a world system is destroyed, it can come back again. When it comes back again, sentient beings in the upper realms can be born in the desire realms. When a world system goes out of existence, the sentient beings in that particular world system can be reborn in the form and formless realms.

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## DIVISIONS

As shown in the chart<sup>1</sup>, the five Mahayana paths can be divided into:

1. the paths of an ordinary bodhisattva
2. the paths of a superior or an arya

The paths of a Mahayana ordinary bodhisattva consist of:

1. the Mahayana path of accumulation
2. the Mahayana path of preparation

The paths of a Mahayana bodhisattva superior or arya bodhisattva consist of:

1. the Mahayana path of seeing
2. the Mahayana path of meditation

The paths of a Mahayana superior consist of:

1. the Mahayana path of seeing
2. the Mahayana path of meditation
3. the Mahayana path of no more learning

There *is* a difference between a Mahayana bodhisattva superior and a Mahayana superior. Did you notice that, in the context of the Mahayana, these five paths are called the Mahayana paths and not the five paths of the bodhisattvas?

| MAHAYANA ORDINARY<br>BODHISATTVA                                    | MAHAYANA BODHISATTVA<br>SUPERIOR                             | MAHAYANA SUPERIOR                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Mahayana path of accumulation.<br>2 Mahayana path of preparation. | 1 Mahayana path of seeing.<br>2 Mahayana path of meditation. | 1 Mahayana path of seeing.<br>2 Mahayana path of meditation.<br>3 Mahayana path of no more learning. |

## PATH OF ACCUMULATION

The path of accumulation is divided into three:

<sup>1</sup> Refer to chart on *The Five Mahayana Paths* that can be downloaded from <http://www.fpmtabc.org/download/teaching/geshe-chonyi/bp/heartsutra/Handout/>.

1. the small path of accumulation
2. the medium (or middle) path of accumulation
3. the great path of accumulation

#### *1. Small path of accumulation*

When an individual achieves the Mahayana small path of accumulation, that individual becomes a bodhisattva. That is simultaneous with his uncontrived realisation of bodhicitta (or effortless bodhicitta). That individual:

- enters the Mahayana path
- enters the Mahayana path from the Mahayana small path of accumulation
- becomes a bodhisattva
- becomes a Mahayanist

If you were to ask, “Does the bodhisattva at this point necessarily have to realise emptiness?” the answer is no. At this point, there could be bodhisattvas who have realised emptiness but there could also be bodhisattvas who have not realised emptiness yet. Based on this, you could say, in general, that there are bodhisattvas who have not realised emptiness.

#### *2. Medium path of accumulation*

When the bodhisattva reaches the Mahayana medium path of accumulation, whatever mind generation he has achieved becomes very stable and will never degenerate. From that point onwards, it is not possible for that bodhisattva to fall into the Hinayana.

Anyone who will become a bodhisattva has to work very hard in accumulating merit and training the mind in generating bodhicitta based on instructions such as the seven-fold cause and effect; starting from recognising all sentient beings as one’s mother, remembering their kindness, generating the wish to repay their kindness and generating the love that considers all sentient beings to be very lovable, attractive and precious. On that basis, one first generates great compassion followed by a wholehearted resolve.

Only on that basis, through great effort and perseverance, does one generate the actual realisation of bodhicitta, a realisation that is effortless and uncontrived. Only then does one enter the Mahayana path of accumulation and become a bodhisattva and a Mahayanist.

Even so, this bodhisattva on the Mahayana small path of accumulation can fall back in terms of his realisation. His bodhicitta can degenerate if he is not careful. It is also possible for such a bodhisattva to fall into the lower realms even though he has bodhicitta. When you think about this point carefully, it becomes very clear that for us, there is no doubt that falling into the lower realms in our next life is almost a certainty.

I have already completed explaining the milestones “A”, “B” and “C.” What I have said is a review of what I covered in the previous lesson. Let us now move on to the Mahayana great path of accumulation.

### 3. *Great path of accumulation*

One of the qualities that a bodhisattva gains upon actualising the Mahayana great path of accumulation is a special kind of concentration (or meditative stabilisation) called the meditative stabilisation of the stream of doctrine (or the stream of Dharma). It is said that when a bodhisattva achieves the meditative stabilisation of the stream of doctrine, coarse obscurations—such as feeling that he does not want to hear the teachings that hinders the hearing of teachings— are purified.

The bodhisattvas who achieve this meditative stabilisation of the stream of doctrine are able to listen to many, many teachings. It is said that they can even receive teachings from representations of the buddhas such as statues and so forth. They are also able to remember every single word and the meaning of the teachings of the Buddha that they hear.

*Khen Rinpoche: How wonderful that is! For us, we hear the teachings today and we forget them today.*

Achieving the meditative stabilisation of the stream of doctrine is no easy feat as many prerequisites apply:

- The person must be of Mahayana lineage.
- The person must have accumulated a huge collection of merit.
- The person must abide in pure ethics.
- The person must have engaged in extensive hearing of the teachings of the Buddha.

The Mahayana path of accumulation is the time when the bodhisattvas are accumulating the collections. The primary ways that they do this while on the Mahayana path of accumulation is through extensive hearing and reflection. After having achieved the Mahayana great path of accumulation, they move on to the Mahayana path of preparation.

## **PATH OF PREPARATION**

The Mahayana path of preparation is divided into four stages:

1. heat
2. peak
3. forbearance
4. supreme mundane qualities

The bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of preparation primarily focus on meditation, achieving the wisdom arising from meditation. From the three-fold activities of hearing, reflection and meditation, meditation is their main activity. It is not that they do not engage in hearing and reflection at this juncture, but the primary activity is the meditation from the three-fold activities of hearing, reflection and meditation.

### 1. *Heat stage of the path of preparation.*

Why is it given the name *heat*? Imagine that you are trying to start a fire. Before you see the actual fire, you first feel the heat that comes before the fire. When you sense the presence of heat, that is a sign that the fire is about to start. Likewise the heat

stage of the path of preparation is like a sign that soon one will perceive emptiness directly. It is a sign that the Mahayana path of seeing is going to come.

At the point of achieving the heat stage of the Mahayana path of preparation, one achieves a special concentration that is a union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness, the ultimate nature of reality. This is indicated by “D” in the chart. Achieving this special concentration that is a union of calm abiding and special insight observing emptiness is *simultaneous* with achieving the heat stage of the Mahayana path of preparation.

Before you can achieve the concentration that is a union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness, first you must achieve the calm abiding focusing on emptiness. As this has to happen on the Mahayana great path of accumulation, you could say that the bodhisattva on the Mahayana great path of accumulation has necessarily realised emptiness.

As for the bodhisattvas on the Mahayana small path of accumulation, there are those who have and those who have not realised emptiness. But I do not know what to say about the bodhisattvas on the Mahayana medium path of accumulation. Do we say that the bodhisattvas on the Mahayana medium path of accumulation have necessarily realised emptiness? This is something for you to think about.

Comes the time when a bodhisattva achieves the special concentration that is a union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness, that bodhisattva simultaneously achieves the heat stage of the Mahayana path of preparation. With regard to this special concentration, if you were to relate to our study of *lo-rig* (the study of minds and awarenesses), among the seven kinds of awarenesses, which awareness is this special concentration that is a union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness? Those of you who wish to relate this to the topic of *lo-rig*, it would be good if you can identify this awareness.

## 2. *Peak stage of the path of preparation*

Then the bodhisattva moves on to the peak stage of the Mahayana path of preparation. At this point, it is said that the roots of virtue can *never* be severed or destroyed, i.e., up to just before this stage, the roots of virtue of that bodhisattva can still be severed. Reaching the end of the possibility of having his roots of virtue severed, in that sense, the bodhisattva has reached the peak. So this is called the peak stage of the Mahayana path of preparation.

The bodhisattvas who have achieved the peak stage of the Mahayana path of preparation will never have their roots of virtue severed or destroyed by wrong views and these bodhisattvas will *never* be reborn in the lower realms. They will only have good rebirths although, at this point in time, they will still take rebirth under the power of their karma and afflictions. Having said that, the rebirths that they will take in samsara will only be good samsaric rebirths. There will be no more lower realms for them.

## 3. *Forbearance stage of the path of preparation*

At this stage, the bodhisattvas acquire the *confidence* that they will never be reborn

in the lower realm. It is guaranteed that the bodhisattvas on the peak stage of the Mahayana path of preparation will not be reborn in the lower realms, but at that stage, they have not achieved this confidence that they now have on the forbearance stage.

Having said that, you may wonder why the milestone “F,” i.e., there being no more rebirths in the lower realms, is placed at the forbearance and not at the peak stage. The bodhisattva on the forbearance stage of Mahayana path of preparation acquires this confidence whereby they are absolutely sure and they know, “Now there is *no way* that I will be reborn in the lower realms ever again.” This is the meaning. Otherwise when you look at milestone “F” on its own, you may get the idea that the bodhisattvas prior to the forbearance stage may still be reborn in the lower realms. It is not like that. What “F” indicates is that not only are there no more rebirths in the lower realms but that the bodhisattvas now acquire this confidence that they will *never* be reborn there.

When you think about this, it is most likely that a bodhisattva who has achieved the path of preparation, even those starting at the heat stage, will never be reborn in the lower realms.

- As long as the bodhisattva is on the Mahayana path of preparation, probably you could say that the bodhisattva will never be reborn in the lower realms.
- This being so, it is certain that a bodhisattva on the forbearance stage of the Mahayana path of preparation will not be reborn in the lower realms.
- For bodhisattvas on the peak stage, it is also certain that they will not be reborn in the lower realms because their roots of virtue can never be severed. This means that they will only get good rebirths because they cannot destroy the roots of virtue. All they have is virtue. Their virtues are so strong that they cannot be destroyed.

There are some texts that mention that the bodhisattvas on the heat stage of the path of preparation will not fall into the lower realms.

If someone were to say, “A bodhisattva on the Mahayana medium path of accumulation will not fall into the Hinayana,” you would have to agree and say yes.

This person continues, “If that is the case, they shouldn’t be falling into the lower realms either, right?” What are you going to say? Are there bodhisattvas on the Mahayana medium path of accumulation who fall into the lower realms? If the bodhisattva on the Mahayana medium path of accumulation will not fall into the Hinayana, why should they fall into the lower realms? Once they have generated bodhicitta, how is it possible to fall into lower realms? What are you going to say?

#### 4. *Supreme mundane qualities stage of the path of preparation*

Why is this stage called the *supreme mundane qualities* (or the *supreme Dharma*)? This is because, among all the paths of an ordinary being, this is the highest path that one can achieve.

*~ Realising emptiness on the path of preparation*

The notes<sup>2</sup> pertaining to what is abandoned on the Mahayana path of preparation—the manifest forms of the different conceptions and so forth—is written from the perspective of the Sutra (or *Sautrantika*) Middle Way Autonomists. In general, most of the time, the paths and grounds are presented according to the assertions of the Autonomists. You need to take note of this. Whether everything in this section accords with the assertions of the CMWS is something that you have to look at and think about.

The heat, peak, forbearance and supreme mundane qualities stages of the Mahayana path of preparation are the paths of an ordinary bodhisattva. The bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of preparation have already realised emptiness but are *not* able to realise emptiness *directly* as yet. They realise emptiness but they have not realised it directly. By going through the four stages of the Mahayana path of preparation, the bodhisattva is trying to weaken and diminish the manifest conceptions of true existence. The bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of preparation depend mainly on the wisdom arisen from meditation to overcome the manifest conceptions of true existence.

The bodhisattvas on the heat and peak stages of the Mahayana path of preparation realise emptiness but do not do so directly. While they are in meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, what appears to the perspective of the meditative equipoise is *not* the subsidence of dualistic appearance, i.e., the bodhisattvas at this point have and are aware that they have dualistic appearance. There is still dualistic appearance in their meditative equipoise and they know this.

For the bodhisattvas on the forbearance and the supreme mundane qualities stages of the Mahayana path of preparation who are in meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, there is *the appearance* of the subsidence of dualistic appearances. However in reality, dualistic appearance has not subsided. The bodhisattvas are not aware of this fact. When you compare their experiences with the experiences of the bodhisattvas on the heat and peak stages, their experiences are subtler.

The manifest conception of true existence gradually diminishes as one moves through the Mahayana path of preparation. When the bodhisattvas on the supreme mundane qualities stage of the Mahayana path of preparation are in meditative equipoise focusing single-pointedly on emptiness, what appears to them *seems to be* the subsidence of dualistic appearance. In fact there is still dualistic appearance. It is just that they are not aware of this.

The bodhisattvas on this supreme mundane qualities stage of the Mahayana path of preparation realise emptiness albeit not directly. In this case, the mind that realises emptiness is a conceptual mind. If it is a conceptual mind realising emptiness, that realisation of emptiness is necessarily through a meaning generality or mental image of the object; in this case, emptiness itself.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to *Mahayana Paths and Grounds according to the Consequence Middle Way School* that can be downloaded from the link in footnote (1).

When the realisation is arrived at through a meaning generality, there has to be dualistic appearance. Although there is still dualistic appearance, the bodhisattvas are not aware of this. What they experience is as if all dualistic appearance has subsided. Their minds have become very subtle at this point.

### **THE DIRECT REALISATION OF EMPTINESS, THE DHARMA JEWEL AND THE SANGHA JEWEL**

In dependence on the wisdom arisen from meditation, the bodhisattva on the Mahayana path of preparation overcomes the manifest conceptions of true existence. The mind that realises emptiness is a conceptual mind but there will come a time when this mind will transform into the entity of a direct perceiver. When the bodhisattva generates the direct perception apprehending emptiness, the bodhisattva achieves the path of a superior.

When the bodhisattva first achieves the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, this is the very time that the true path comes into being. When we talk about the Three Jewels—the Buddha Jewel, the Dharma Jewel and the Sangha Jewel—the Dharma Jewel consists of the true path as well. When the bodhisattva first generates the wisdom directly realising emptiness, this is when the true path of the Dharma Jewel comes into being. When the bodhisattva newly achieves this mind, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness becomes the actual refuge that truly protects an individual.

Why is this a true path in the mental continuum of the bodhisattva superior? Why is this wisdom directly perceiving emptiness called the actual refuge that protects all beings? This is because the root of all our problems and suffering is ignorance, the conception of persons and phenomena to be inherently existent. The one and only antidote that is powerful enough to counteract this ignorance is the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness.

Comes the time when the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness is newly generated, that is the birth and the start of the true path. It is the birth of the Dharma Jewel that is the actual refuge. This is the time when one possesses in one's mind the wisdom that is the actual refuge, the Dharma Jewel.

An individual who has actualised the true path becomes a superior Sangha and therefore becomes a Sangha Jewel. This is the start of becoming an actual refuge for oneself and an object of refuge for other sentient beings. It is only when the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness is generated that one starts to become a source of refuge for oneself. When one starts becoming one's own saviour, then one possesses some ability and power to be of some help and a real object of refuge for others. When we are not even able to save ourselves, when we cannot really be our own saviours, it is quite difficult to be an effective object of refuge for others.

### **PATH OF SEEING**

The time when the bodhisattva newly realises emptiness directly:

- He becomes a Mahayana superior.



- He becomes a bodhisattva superior.
- He becomes a person of the Mahayana path of seeing.

Why is it called *the path of seeing*? Because the path of seeing is the very first time that an individual sees the truth directly. Prior to the achievement of the path of seeing, one will not be able to see the truth directly. *The path of preparation* is so called because it prepares an individual to see the truth directly. When one is prepared to see the truth directly for the first time, then one achieves the path of seeing.

When an individual realises emptiness for the first time, in the meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, nothing appears to the perspective of this mind except emptiness. There is *no* dualistic appearance at all. *All* dualistic appearance has subsided. Only the emptiness of inherent existence appears. In the perspective of this wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, there is no dualistic appearance, there is no appearance of true existence, no appearance of inherent existence and no appearance of conventional phenomena.

According to the CMWS, this mind, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, is the real unmistakable mind. According to the CMWS, all minds in the continua of sentient beings are mistaken consciousnesses *with the exception* of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. Why is this so? Because all minds in the continua of sentient beings, with the exception of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, are necessarily pervaded by the appearance of true existence.

If someone were to ask you or if you are wondering to yourself, “Why is it that every mind in the continua of sentient beings, with the exception of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, is necessarily mistaken?” the answer is this: Because all other consciousnesses in the continua of sentient beings, with the exception of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, are necessarily pervaded by the appearance of true existence. It is for this reason that, according to the CMWS, there is a common locus between a mistaken consciousness and a valid cogniser.

Why have I brought so many different things into this discussion? This is to show you that, in order to really understand the teachings of the Buddha, even just the teachings on the paths and grounds, you must know many things because everything is interconnected.

If we were to talk about the wisdom realising emptiness, the question arises, “What kind of wisdom is this? A direct wisdom or a conceptual wisdom?” In order to understand this, you have to understand the presentation of *lo-rig* on the different kinds of minds: conceptual and non-conceptual consciousnesses, direct perceivers and so forth. You also have to understand the assertions of the tenets. It is all interconnected. It is not as if we do not have to look at other topics. If you really want to know and to learn, then you have to look at all these topics.

When the bodhisattva newly generates the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, this wisdom is a very powerful mind and therefore it can act as a direct antidote to the afflictions. This bodhisattva has entered the Mahayana path of seeing. This mind

realising emptiness directly is called, in general, *an uninterrupted path*; specifically, it is called *an uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing*, i.e., the uninterrupted path of Mahayana path of seeing is the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness.

The uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing is a direct antidote to the obscurations and the afflictions. It is insufficient just to say this. When we talk about the obscurations, there are either afflictive obscurations or knowledge obscurations. The uninterrupted path of Mahayana path of seeing *cannot* act as the direct antidote to the knowledge obscurations. The abandonment of the knowledge obscurations starts only from the eighth ground. Therefore the uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing can only act as the direct antidote to the afflictive obscurations.

Essentially we are saying that the uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing is the antidote to the afflictions (or delusions, afflictive or destructive emotions). Afflictions can be further divided into:

1. innate afflictions
2. intellectually acquired afflictions

The uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing *cannot* act as the direct antidote to the innate afflictions; it acts as the direct antidote to the intellectually acquired afflictions.

But this is still not sufficient. What exactly is an intellectually acquired affliction? What is an innate affliction? So you can see that it requires knowing many things in order for you to be able to learn and to practise. My point of bringing this up is this: If you had studied and learnt the tenets, this would not be complicated. You will not be confused by what I am saying now, because we would have covered it all before. My point is to show you that all this is interconnected. If you hadn't learnt these topics, when you look at this now, it becomes difficult.

When we look at the chart, in one way, it is quite simple. If you want to look at it in a simple way, you can probably do a general presentation. But if someone were to ask, "What is this? What is that?" then it becomes a complicated. If someone were to ask you for more details, you will not be able to answer him.

The whole point of studying is to make these things crystal clear in your own mind so that the path is very clear. You are not confused and you do not mix things up. That is the whole point of learning. The only way to be clear about all this is through education. I do not see any other way. What other methods are there? I understand that learning is challenging. It is not easy. It requires time and effort. It is difficult at times. But what other alternatives are there?

Therefore I would like to encourage you all, as much as possible, to continue to learn and to see the necessity of learning in accordance with your own time and intelligence. We will complete the rest of this chart in the next lesson. After this we will look at *The Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*.

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*Question:* Can the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness be reversed? After you have entered the path of seeing, do you remain in that state all the time even when you come out of meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness?

*Khen Rinpoche:* Are you saying that that person will stay there forever and never become enlightened? That there is no improvement after that? Are you saying that?

*Student:* No. But does this state of the path of seeing only last as long as you stay in meditative equipoise? When you are in post-meditative equipoise, you will not be able to sustain that state?

*Answer:* Once an individual becomes an arya bodhisattva, it is impossible for that person to become an ordinary being again. He or she will not lose that realisation. That means that the realisation will not degenerate and will not be lost.

When a bodhisattva achieves the Mahayana path of seeing, it is definite that the bodhisattva will achieve enlightenment. It is just a matter of time. This will be explained later.

The first bodhisattva ground is called *Very Joyful*. The bodhisattva has such great joy because finally he sees his own enlightenment. He is so sure of that. It is definite. For that reason, we could say that such an arya bodhisattva will definitely never degenerate into a worldly being again. It is impossible for him to lose that realisation of emptiness.

This is stated very clearly by Chandrakirti in his auto-commentary to his own text called *Engaging in the Middle Way*. When a bodhisattva enters the Mahayana path of seeing, he enters through the uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing that is a state of meditative equipoise focusing directly on emptiness.

But the bodhisattva does not remain in that meditative equipoise directly perceiving emptiness forever. He still has to arise and enter into post-meditative equipoise. During post-meditative equipoise, the bodhisattva strives and works very hard to accumulate merit. The details will come later.

| PATHS OF ORDINARY BODHISATTVA |        |  |
|-------------------------------|--------|--|
| PATH<br>OF ACCUMULATION       | Small  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When one generates uncontrived bodhicitta, one enters the Mahayana path, one becomes a bodhisattva and one become Mahayanist.</li> <li>• At this stage, bodhisattvas may or may not have realized emptiness.</li> <li>• At this stage, the bodhisattvas' bodhicitta can degenerate and they can fall into the lower realms.</li> <li>• One's bodhicitta is likened to the earth.</li> </ul> |
|                               | Medium | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One's bodhicitta becomes very stable and will never degenerate.</li> <li>• From this point onwards, it is not possible for the bodhisattva to fall into the Hinayana.</li> <li>• One's bodhicitta is likened to gold.</li> </ul>  |
|                               | Great  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One achieves the meditative stabilisation of the stream of doctrine.</li> <li>• Coarse obscurations that hinder the hearing of the</li> </ul>   |

| PATHS OF ORDINARY BODHISATTVA |                           |   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------|---|
|                               |                           | <p>teachings are purified and one can receive teachings even from representations of the buddhas such as statues and so forth. One is able to remember every single word and meaning of the Buddha's teachings that one has heard.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One achieves the calm abiding focusing on emptiness.</li> <li>• One necessarily has realised emptiness but has not done so directly as yet.</li> </ul>  |
| PATH OF PREPARATION           | Heat                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One achieves a special concentration that is the union of calm abiding and special insight focusing on emptiness.</li> <li>• While in the meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, one still has dualistic appearance and one is aware that that is so.</li> </ul>  |
|                               | Peak                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One's roots of virtue can never be severed by wrong views.</li> <li>• One will never be reborn in the lower realms.</li> <li>• One can still take rebirth under one's own karma and afflictions but these will only be good samsaric rebirths.</li> <li>• While in the meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, one still has dualistic appearances. One is aware of this.</li> </ul>   |
|                               | Forbearance               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One acquires the <i>confidence</i> that one will never be reborn in the lower realms.</li> <li>• While in meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, one has the <i>appearance</i> of the subsidence of dualistic appearances but, in reality, dualistic appearance has not subsided. One however is not aware of this fact.</li> </ul>   |
|                               | Supreme mundane qualities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This is the highest path that one can achieve as an ordinary being.</li> <li>• While in meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, one has the <i>appearance</i> of the subsidence of dualistic appearances but, in reality, dualistic appearance has not subsided. One is not aware of this fact.</li> </ul>   |
| PATHS OF BODHISATTVA SUPERIOR |                           |   |
| PATH OF SEEING                | First Ground              | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One realises emptiness directly for the first time.</li> <li>• One becomes a Mahayana superior.</li> <li>• One becomes a bodhisattva superior.</li> <li>• One becomes a person of the Mahayana path of seeing.</li> <li>• When one realizes emptiness for the first time while in the meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness, nothing appears except emptiness. There is no dualistic appearance, no appearance of true existence, no appearance of inherent existence and no appearance of conventional phenomena.</li> <li>• When one newly realises emptiness directly for the first time, that mind realising emptiness directly is called the uninterrupted path of the Mahayana path of seeing.</li> <li>• This uninterrupted path on the Mahayana path of seeing acts as a direct antidote to the intellectually acquired afflictions.</li> </ul> |

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