

Transcript of the teachings by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi on *The Eight Categories and Seventy Topics*

Root Text: *The Eight Categories and Seventy Topics* by Jetsün Chökyi Gyaltsen, translated by Jampa Gendun. Final draft October 2002, updated May 2011. © Jampa Gendun & FPMT, Inc.

Lesson 9

7 July 2016

Exam Presentation for Module 8. Discussion: How far can the six types of the migrators of the desire realm progress on the path. The support for Hinayana arhathood.

EXAM PRESENTATION FOR MODULE 8

I mentioned the four reliances in the last session, especially where it says, “Do not rely on the person but rely on the doctrine.” In this case here, you are not looking at who the speaker is. Rather you should pay attention to what the person says and why he is saying certain things.

(A student presents his chosen verses from Chapter Eight of *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*).

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#### **DISCUSSION: HOW FAR CAN THE SIX TYPES OF MIGRATORS OF THE DESIRE REALM PROGRESS ON THE PATH**

*Student 1:* In the last class, it seems that we have come to the conclusion that the gods and humans in the desire realm are suitable bases for entering the path of seeing. However, all the beings of the six realms are able to develop bodhicitta and enter the path of accumulation. If that is the case, which is the highest path they can attain until their basis will not allow them to carry on any further?

*Khen Rinpoche:* Do you understand what she’s asking? Do you understand her question? No? First, you must understand the question. If you don’t understand the question then there is no point in me giving the answer. I think if I’m not wrong, I do understand a little of what she is asking.

All the six types of migrators in the desire realm can generate bodhicitta and enter the path of accumulation. The basis for *newly* generating the path of seeing is the support of either a human or a desire realm god. We have looked at this already.

Her question is that if all the six types of migrators can enter the Mahayana path, how far can they go with their individual support? How far can a hell being go after generating bodhicitta? How far can a preta or an animal go? Can they enter the path of seeing or the path of meditation?

*Khen Rinpoche: Now that you have got the question, come up and say something. How far they can go?*

*Student 2: If they are not humans or gods, then once they generate bodhicitta while they are in the lower realms, their negative karma should be exhausted. They should no longer be in the lower realms. They should go up. Because their bodhicitta is so powerful, they will get a good rebirth and maybe go further. Maybe, to the path of accumulation and so on.*

*Khen Rinpoche: I understand what you are saying. Great! Good. Anybody agree with what he said? You understand what he is saying? He said that once you develop the bodhicitta mind, you won't stay long as a hell being. You will come up from the hell realm and take a better rebirth. He doesn't have to stay for a long time in the hell realm. It is a very good idea.*

*Anybody else? What do you think? Is he right? How long will you stay there? Everybody is free to come up and say your piece.*

*Student 3: I generate bodhicitta for the first time as a hell being. I see so much suffering around me and I want to help them. I want to stay until they are all liberated from the hell realms.*

*Khen Rinpoche: He is saying that the bodhisattva will stay in the hell realm for a longer time. He is saying something like that. His idea and logic is that you stay for a long time there because you want to help all the other hell beings. This is why you stay for a long time. That is his reason, isn't it? Student 2 said you will come out quickly. Student 3 said he will stay for a long time.*

*Anybody else? This is very good. You should exercise your mind. Then you will have a lot of ideas. Otherwise, I just say the six realms and bodhicitta. That's it. It's finished. You don't really get to use your brain. So here, there are two different ideas. What do you think?*

*Student 4: You are saying that actually, you will stay as long as you want because as a bodhisattva, you want to alleviate the suffering of the other hell beings. But isn't it the case that at a certain point, the bodhisattva will not fall into the lower realms? My thinking is similar to what Student 2 said earlier. Once you generate bodhicitta, you enter the path of accumulation and you will free yourself from the lower realms. When you start to practise and enter the medium level of the path of accumulation, you will not fall back into the lower realms.*

*Khen Rinpoche: The medium level of which path?*

*Student 4: The path of accumulation.*

*Khen Rinpoche: What did you say about not falling back into the lower realms?*

*Student 4: It is supposed to be like this according to the chart (on the Mahayana paths and grounds).*

*Khen Rinpoche: According to your chart, what does it say?*

*Student 4: The chart actually said that at point C (the middle level of the path of accumulation) it is not possible to fall ... Oh sorry, I see wrongly.*

*Khen Rinpoche: You have to read your chart carefully.*

*Student 4: It only happens at point F (the level of forbearance of path of preparation).*

*Khen Rinpoche: Points C and F are different. Not point C, right?*

*Student 4: No, not point C.*

*Khen Rinpoche: Hup Cheng, if you come to class every day, you will be the best student. He is very good. He comes only for a few classes but I notice his mind works differently compared to the rest of you. Really, it is true. You all come to every class but your brains are not working.*

*Student 5: When a person dies, he goes to the hell realms during the intermediate state. Then we make a lot of prayers and accumulate a lot of merit for him. There was a discussion that that person, due to the power of merit, the karma of him going to the hell realms is exhausted. He finishes quickly his karma to remain in the hell realms. He then has a good rebirth. So when Student 3 said, "I generate bodhicitta in the hell realms and due to my bodhicitta, I want to stay in the hell realms," even if he wanted to remain in the hell realms, due to the merit accumulated and the power of his bodhicitta, maybe that bodhisattva will totally exhaust the karma to remain in the hell realms. Due to the power of his karma, without choice, he actually takes a good rebirth.*

*Khen Rinpoche: She is saying the same thing. The bodhisattva doesn't stay for a long time as a hell being. As a bodhisattva, the bodhisattva will come up quickly. She doesn't agree with what Student 3 said.*

*Student 6: Technically, I think they should only be able to reach the border of the path of accumulation. I think these hell beings and animals cannot develop calm abiding because they can't sit still on the hot iron ground!*

*Khen Rinpoche: What?*

*Student 6: I think hell beings and animals cannot develop calm abiding so they can only reach the border of the path of accumulation even if they don't die and continue practising.*

*Khen Rinpoche: OK.*

*Student 7: I don't think that if they develop bodhicitta they can choose to stay in the lower realms to help others because it would imply that they can choose their rebirth. I think to choose their own rebirth, they will need bodhicitta plus the realization of emptiness and not just bodhicitta alone.*

*Khen Rinpoche: So what are you trying to say? The conclusion is that bodhisattvas go up faster and they don't stay for a long time in the hell realm because ...*

*Student 7: Because if they only have bodhicitta but not the realization of emptiness, they cannot choose to stay in the hell realm.*

*Khen Rinpoche: In other words, they can't choose to come up either because they don't have the wisdom realizing emptiness. How can they choose another rebirth? They have no choice but have to stay (in the hell realm) for a long time.*

*Student 7: But they have bodhicitta.*

*Khen Rinpoche: Why does that make them come up faster?*

*Student 7: Why can't that make them come up faster?*

*Khen Rinpoche: Because of the same reason...*

*Student 7: Because they have too much merit to stay in the hell realm.*

*Khen Rinpoche: It is the same reason. Student 3 says that mind makes him stay for a long time. Using the same reason, you say that this mind makes him come up faster. So two things. It is very interesting. Think carefully. You are saying the same thing. Because of this reason, Student 3 says, stay longer. Because of this reason, you say come up faster.*

*Student 7: Maybe I should try one more time. I understood the situation to be like an animal developing bodhicitta.*

*Khen Rinpoche: Huh? An animal developing bodhicitta?*

*Student 7: An animal develops bodhicitta. The question then is: Does it stay for long as an animal or can it go up to the next level? I say that it automatically goes up because it has bodhicitta and it has too much merit to stay as an animal. If it were to stay as an animal to help other animals, it would have to choose to do so and the only way that it can make that choice is if it also has the realization of emptiness. But it doesn't have this realisation. It only has bodhicitta. Does that make sense?*

*Khen Rinpoche: When you say choose, then I don't understand. It can't choose. That part is a little bit ... So two persons against one. Anybody else?*

*Student 8: I have the same question in my mind as Student 5. I have a question.*

*Khen Rinpoche: Are you asking a question?*

*Student 8: I want to ask a question before I answer. Can the six realm beings other than the humans and the gods realize emptiness? Can an animal, hell being or hungry ghost have an inferential realization of emptiness?*

*Khen Rinpoche: OK. I will answer that later. What do you want to say?*

*Student 8:* If the answer is no, then to answer Student 5's question, the rest of the six migrators other than the humans and gods will not be able to pass beyond the small level of the path of accumulation. Because at the medium level of the path of accumulation, beings on the path would have necessarily realized emptiness.

With regard to whether they will stay long or not, I don't know. It depends on their karma.

*Khen Rinpoche:* OK. That is good. Basically, she is saying that the path of accumulation has three divisions—the small, medium and great. At the small level of the path of accumulation, one can be in the lower realms. After that, one has to come up. On that basis, no hell being can develop the medium level of the path of accumulation because of the need to realize emptiness.

*I don't have the exact answer. I need to think about whether the hell being is able to realize emptiness. I mean the text is very clear. They can develop the bodhicitta mind in the six realms. Many sutras mention hell beings, hungry ghosts, animals and some nagas developing the bodhicitta mind. This is very clear in the sutras. The Buddha mentioned this. But I haven't seen any quotations that hell beings can realize emptiness. So I'm not sure. Also you have to ask, "Why can't hell beings realize emptiness?" Many questions will come up.*

*Student 9:* Student 6 talks about calm abiding. Technically to enter the path, you need calm abiding. So for that person to be able to generate uncontrived bodhicitta even as a hell being, he has to have calm abiding—calm abiding and special insight focussing on bodhicitta. So if you can have calm abiding focussing on bodhicitta, why can't you have calm abiding focussing on emptiness?

*Khen Rinpoche:* OK. This is a good exercise for your mind.

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It is said that if one generates bodhicitta, there is almost no way that one can fall to the lower realms. Even if there is a possibility of a being who has bodhicitta falling into the lower realms, he would stay there only for a very short time, i.e., he won't stay long. I think this is mentioned in Chapter One¹ of *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*.

I'm inclined to think that they will not stay a long time in the lower realms after bodhicitta is generated. Even if the hell being who has generated bodhicitta makes the prayer to live in the hell realm forever until each and every single hell being is freed, they will not stay in the hell realms for a long time. In fact, because of making such a prayer with this kind of strong aspiration, it purifies so much negativities. That hell being bodhisattva will be liberated very quickly from his hell rebirth.

In general, one ends up in the hell realms because one has accumulated the karma to be born in the lower realms, in this case, the hell realms. As to how long one will stay in the

¹ Verse 13.

hell realms or how quickly one will be freed from the hell realms, it all depends on how much negativities are purified and how much merit is accumulated. I'm more inclined to take this position. Perhaps it is better to say that once bodhicitta is generated with a lower realm support, that individual will not remain in that support for a long time.

It is stated quite clearly in the teachings that once the forbearance level of the path of preparation is achieved, there is no going back to the lower realms. Of course, people would ask: Is it possible then for the individual on the heat level and the peak level of the path of preparation to go to the lower realms? This is something you have to think about.

In the previous lesson, it was stated that it is not possible to *newly* attain the path of seeing and the path of meditation with a form realm support. But at the same time, we have to say that there are bodhisattva superiors with a form realm support.

As for the formless realm, it is stated clearly in the sutras that there are no bodhisattva superiors in the formless realm.

In Asanga's *Compendium of Knowledge*, the *Abhidharmasamuccaya*, he said that there are bodhisattvas superiors who take rebirth in the desire realm and the form realm but they do not take rebirth in the formless realm. Why? Because it is not an abode where one can ripen sentient beings. Since bodhisattva superiors have control over where they want to be born to be of benefit to others, the bodhisattva superiors do not choose to be born in the formless realm. Instead, they choose to be born within the desire realm or the form realm.

Since bodhisattva superiors have control over where they wish to be born and they choose to be born in the desire realm, this means we have to say that the bodhisattva superiors can choose to be born as any of the six types of migrators, including to be born as a hell being in the hell realm. Their being born in the hell realm is not due to karma and afflictions but is done intentionally, out of choice. But they are not lower realm beings because that rebirth is made out of choice. They take on a support that is *similar* to the support of a hell being but they are not an actual hell being. This means they may look like actual hell beings but they are not hell beings.

Because bodhisattva superiors have abandoned all negativities, they will not experience physical suffering. Because they have realized emptiness directly, they will also have no mental suffering. Remember there is a quotation in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*? What we have just said can be found in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*. As such, there can be bodhisattva superiors who take on a form realm support.

The support for Hinayana arhathood

What about the Hinayana arhat? What are the supports or realms in which they can manifest the state of becoming an arhat achieving the Hinayana nirvana? It is said clearly in the teachings that it is the support of the three realms. One can become a Hinayana arhat and achieve liberation from cyclic existence on the basis of a desire realm support, a form realm support and a formless realm support.

The support for achieving a Hinayana nirvana on the basis of a formless realm support must be the same support prior to achieving nirvana, i.e., when he was on the Hinayana path of meditation.

Similarly, if you say that one can achieve nirvana on the basis of a form realm support, this support must be the same support as when that individual was on the Hinayana path of meditation, which necessarily precedes the achieving of nirvana.

Earlier on, we talked about how one *cannot newly* generate the path of seeing and the path of meditation in the form realm. This is talking about the Mahayana path of meditation.

We also talked about the Mahayana path of seeing in which it is not possible to *newly* generate the path of seeing on the basis of a form realm support. It doesn't matter whether it is the Mahayana path of seeing or the Hinayana path of seeing. The basis for newly generating the path of seeing—be it the Hinayana or Mahayana path of seeing—has to be a desire realm support. Within the desire realm, we say that the supreme support is that of a human being but there are also desire realm gods who can newly attain the path of seeing. This being the case, we can establish that the desire realm support has to be the support for *newly* generating the path of meditation, be it the Mahayana or Hinayana. It doesn't matter which vehicle.

Are there bodhisattva superiors with a form realm support? Yes.

Are there bodhisattva superiors in the formless realms? No.

Back to what I said earlier. I am saying that there are people with a formless realm support who have achieved the path of meditation. So, there is a Hinayana superior on the path of meditation with a formless realm support. Why do we say that there are Hinayana superiors on the path of meditation with a formless realm support? It is said clearly in the teachings that one can achieve nirvana—let's say the hearer's nirvana and becoming a hearer's arhat—with a formless realm support.

Remember, in the context of the eight freedoms, one of the freedoms is the freedom from being a long-life god. One of the long-life god here is the *ordinary being* of the formless realm. It doesn't say *all* beings in the formless realm. This is the reason why a long-life god is posited as an ordinary being in the formless realm. It doesn't say *every* being who has a formless realm support.

- There are individuals who attain the Hinayana path of seeing and the Hinayana path of meditation with a desire realm support and with that support, manifest the state of arhatness by attaining the Hinayana path of no more learning.
- But there are individuals who attain the Hinayana path of seeing and the Hinayana path of meditation with a desire realm support but are unable to manifest the Hinayana path of no more learning on the basis of a desire realm support.
- For such individuals, they reach the Hinayana path of meditation on the basis of their desire realm support but they *cannot* actualize the Hinayana path of no more learning with that support. So they take rebirth in the form realm and with a form

realm support, they achieve the Hinayana path of no more learning.

- However, there are some individuals with the form realm support who are *still* unable to achieve the Hinayana path of no more learning. Again, they take rebirth in the formless realm where they achieve the Hinayana path of meditation with their formless realm support. Then with that formless realm support, they achieve the Hinayana path of no more learning and become an arhat.

Actually in the second topic that characterizes the exalted knower of all aspects called precepts, when divided in a certain way, there are ten divisions. The third division is called the precepts that instruct on the basis, the Three Jewels. At this point in the treatise, there is a very extensive explanation on this topic called the *Twenty Sangha*. The detailed explanations of the different kinds of Hinayana superiors and the realms where they can be found are in the *Twenty Sangha*. Perhaps in the future, if there is interest and the determination to learn, then maybe we can look at this topic.

There is no limit when it comes to learning the Buddhadharma, especially these philosophical subjects. Actually, it is not the case that the more you learn the easier everything becomes. This is not how I see it. In fact, when you learn more and more things, then things get deeper and deeper, subtler and subtler, more and more profound, and more and more difficult.

Just to give you an example. If you manage to get an understanding of all I have said so far together with your prior understanding of the paths and grounds—how to achieve liberation, who can achieve what, the kind of support required to realize emptiness and so forth—then when you look at the lam-rim topic of a human life of freedoms and endowments, you have a far better understanding of what a freedom is. You can really feel that this precious human rebirth is indeed truly precious.

Otherwise, without studying in-depth and gaining an understanding of so many other topics, when you look at the lam-rim, you will just tick off the checklist. “Yes, I am free from this and that. I am a human being and so forth.” Then you just sit there and think, “So what is the big deal about all this?” You don’t get have any feeling and understanding (of the value of the precious human rebirth).

However, when you have an overall understanding of many things, you know the importance of the precious human rebirth in order to realise emptiness directly. You cannot do that with the formless realm support nor can you do so with the form realm support. To see the truth directly for the first time, you need to be a human being of the desire realm. Based on this fact, then it is not so special to be a god, be it a desire realm god, a form realm god or a formless realm god. After seeing all this, you will understand that having this precious human rebirth makes a big difference. This is an example of how knowing and learning many topics reinforce and help our understanding of the lam-rim.

This human life of freedoms and endowments that we have achieved did not happen without causes and conditions. There were so many causes and conditions that must come together before we can achieve this extremely rare and precious human rebirth. We had to work so hard in our past life to accumulate so much merit.

The cause for the opportunity that we have now is our practice of pure ethical discipline. Somehow it happened and along the way, our practice was supported by the practice of generosity and so forth. At the same time, we made many stainless, pure aspirational prayers. We took a very long time to gather all these causes and conditions. Now, we are experiencing the result.

But just having a human life of freedoms and endowments in itself is not the point. We have to use it well. Only then does it become meaningful. If we put together what we have learnt about how we cannot achieve the realization of emptiness with any other support, we will realise how precious this human life is. At the same time, if we were to look at how difficult it is to get such a rebirth, then perhaps there is some real feeling in the mind that what we have now is very special indeed and we should use this opportunity to do something meaningful with it.

There is an analogy that appears in the teachings. There is a person who travels to a treasure island with the help of a guide. This person reaches the treasure island with the help of this guide. But although there is so much treasure there for the taking, he returns empty-handed. He found the right person to guide him and he took so much effort to reach the treasure island. Yet somehow, this person didn't take advantage of the opportunity and returned empty-handed. This person is really foolish!

Likewise, we have worked so hard and have created all the necessary conditions in the past. We have the guide. Now we have achieved this perfect human rebirth that is likened to having reached the treasure island. If we were to do something with this precious human rebirth, we can even realize emptiness and see the truth directly. If we don't practise, we will return empty-handed. Where do we return to? We return to an inopportune state, a rebirth where there is none of the opportunity we have now. That indeed is very foolish.

For those of you who consider yourself to be practitioners, you must put aside some time to think about this topic. It is very important. After having achieved this precious human rebirth, we should not waste it. We should use it to practise the Dharma. In fact, if we put effort into the practice, we may attain a path, perhaps, even the path of seeing.

But even if we do not manage to achieve a path, at the very least, we should work hard, practise and plant as many imprints as possible in our mind. At the same time, we should make aspirational prayers to be able to actualize the path in our future life.

When we realize for ourselves that we have this precious opportunity, we should motivate ourselves, "Now I have this opportunity. What should I do with it? As much as possible, I am going to aim to generate the three principal aspects of the path in my mind—first, renunciation, then bodhicitta and the wisdom realizing emptiness."

We have to think about this topic. We have to be able to feel that with each and every moment and every single day that passes, if we do not use it to learn and practise the Dharma, that is a wasted day. We need to develop this kind of feeling, "It is such a waste that I didn't get to learn the Dharma. I didn't get to practise." This is what we really need to work at.

In the practice of rejoicing in our own merit, we rejoice in the merit that we have accumulated in the past. This precious human rebirth we have now is the special basis that came from its own cause. We did something positive in the past. We have accumulated a lot of merit and all the causes. This is the reason why we have achieved this basis. We need to have the conviction that the precious human rebirth we are experiencing now is incontrovertibly and without doubt the result of the positive actions we did in the past. We need this kind of ascertainment. It is only on the basis of such ascertainment that we can rejoice in our merit of the past. Otherwise, there is no real rejoicing when we don't cherish the result of that merit. There is no way to say sincerely, "I rejoice in the merit that I have accumulated in the past."

The study of the deeper aspects of Buddhist philosophy, the great treatises, is very helpful as it aids our understanding of the practice of lam-rim. We can use what we learn in Buddhist philosophy to help us understand and practise the lam-rim better. What is the lam-rim after all? It is the stages of the path that gathers the essence of all the great treatises.

It is very important to know how to use what we have learnt in the great Buddhist philosophical treatises and use them to improve our understanding and practice of the lam-rim. This is very important. Otherwise, we become like the example I gave you before. You don't have many containers. With only one or two containers, when somebody gives you a gift, either you don't know where to put it or you may just throw it away.

One of the greatneses of the lam-rim is that if you know the lam-rim well:

- You will be able to see every single scripture as instructions to be practised and not merely as intellectual knowledge. This will not happen to you.
- You will know how to apply everything you have learnt in the lam-rim.
- You will know how to apply everything you study in the philosophical subjects and where they fit in.

But if you do not know the lam-rim well, I think it may be very difficult for you to apply what you have learnt in Buddhist philosophy.

I guess there are many people who think that there is no real purpose to studying all these Buddhist philosophical treatises. They think, "What is the point of studying all this? It has nothing to do with my practice. It has nothing to do with the lam-rim." But how can that be? The lam-rim is the very essence of all the great treatises but we don't see that. In a way, this is understandable because the great treatises are both extensive and very profound.

You know I have been saying this over and over again. You should not be so easily and quickly discouraged when you find the going tough and when it is difficult for you to understand some of these topics. If you don't have any real interest in the Dharma in the first place, of course this doesn't matter. But I am not talking to such people. If you have a sincere interest in and really want to know the Dharma well, then you must remember not to be discouraged easily and quickly because when you are discouraged, you are only blocking your own progress. Nobody else is blocking your progress, only you.

You have to know clearly that what we are undertaking here are not short-term studies. We are not here to find out a little bit about the Buddhadharma or doing this for just one month or a year. These are very long-term studies.

For those of you who are engaged in long-term studies, if you want to continue with them, then it is extremely important to be consistent in coming to class. If you come to class once and then skip classes, returning after some time and so forth, you are not going to learn because, in the first place, the subject matter is really challenging. So, it is not going to work if you are inconsistent in coming to class. For those of you who really want to learn, you have to be consistent in coming to class.

You also have to be consistent in your studies. You have to learn all the different subjects. I guess by now you should be able to see that all the different subjects are similar but not the same in the sense that they are interconnected. When I am teaching you, one of the difficulties I find is that there is no consistency. Some of you know this topic while others do not so it becomes very difficult to teach since the topics are all interconnected.

For example, we have been going over this small little topic over and over again. In fact, this shouldn't happen and it won't happen if you had been consistent in your studies. We have been going over this repeatedly and are stuck. I have been explaining the same thing over and over again.

Khen Rinpoche: Sometimes I am a little confused myself as to how to teach and what will be most beneficial for you. I don't know. Today, we didn't go to the root text.

Anyway, in the next class, I will finish the knower of paths. I will complete that section. Then I will see whether I will go over all the other topics one by one. I am not sure. If you are really interested, I will do that. We will take a longer time and it is challenging. Otherwise, I just make it short and sweet.

Ask one or two questions if you don't understand. I won't repeat this again. I have only repeated this three times. If you notice, I repeated the same topic in three classes.

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*Student 3: Does the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School assert a post-meditative equipoise after the path of release of the Mahayana path of seeing before initially entering the meditative equipoise of the path of meditation? In other words, between the path of seeing and the path of meditation, does the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School assert a post-meditative equipoise or subsequent attainment?*

*Khen Rinpoche: I can find out more but for now, I guess perhaps not necessarily so from the perspective of the paths and grounds of the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School. I think perhaps it is just a meditative equipoise.*

*Student 3: If it is only meditative equipoise and there is no subsequent attainment, if that is the case, then you can assert that you don't need the rest of the meditative equipoise to accumulate the merit to make your mind more powerful to enter into your next level of meditative equipoise for the rest of the grounds. Because you need the*

subsequent attainment to accumulate merit to make your mind more powerful in order to enter the next level of meditative equipoise to overcome the afflictions. If there isn't a subsequent attainment here, the consequence is that the same reason will apply and there is no need for the rest of the subsequent attainments on the other grounds either.

*Khen Rinpoche:* If we assert that there is a subsequent attainment, a post-meditative equipoise, it will be difficult to account then for why you cannot newly generate the paths in the higher realms. This is the consequence. This is something to think about.

I will check again because there is a presentation of the paths and grounds according to the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School. It is different and not what we have studied in class.

*Student 3:* Can I say that the bodhisattva superior, when they manifest in the six realms, will take on the aspect of the support of that particular realms? But by conventional nature, they have mental bodies. I have problems reconciling the fact they have mental bodies with the aspect that they will manifest.

*Ven. Gyurme* (clarifying student's question): What the entity of support does the bodhisattva superior take if he manifests, say, as a hell being? Does he have the aspect of the hell being?

*Khen Rinpoche:* It is said clearly that when the bodhisattva superior takes rebirth in the hell realm, he takes on the support of a hell being. He looks and behaves exactly like a hell being. When the bodhisattva superior takes on the support of, for example, the body of a dog, if we happen to see a bodhisattva in that aspect, we would not be able to tell that it is not a dog. They will do whatever a normal dog does. This is what we will see—it is born, grows and dies in the same manner as a normal dog. If they take on this aspect, they will behave exactly like a dog.

So, they will behave exactly according to whatever aspect they take on. This is how people would expect them to behave. Of course, the bodhisattva superior may be in the aspect of an animal but he is not a real animal.

*Student 9:* This is a question about subsequent attainment. If the Consequence Middle Way School asserts a subsequent attainment, then the basis that we have been talking about will no longer follow. The requirement for a desire realm basis would not hold for the Consequence Middle Way School, invalidating the position regarding generating the superior path in the higher realm.

*Khen Rinpoche:* We are talking here about moving from path to another. When you are moving from one path to the next, there is no subsequent attainment. It is from meditative equipoise to meditative equipoise.

*Khen Rinpoche:* You read from the chart on the paths and grounds. Last time, we gave out the chart on the paths and grounds.

*Student 11:* With regard to the path of seeing and the path of meditation, from the path

of release, then there is a subsequent attainment followed by the next uninterrupted path. Student 3 was asking whether it is a meditative equipoise all the way through? It was said that it is most likely a meditative equipoise throughout because otherwise, the explanation with regard to saying that it must be on the basis of the desire realm being and not on the form realm being will not hold. But if the Consequence Middle Way School posits a subsequent attainment, then it will not hold.

Basically, this is to extrapolate from what Student 3 was asking about. Just now it was according to the Yogic Autonomy Middle Way School.

*Khen Rinpoche: OK. We talk about this the next time. I don't know how to read the chart.*

*Student 7:* It is said in the lam-rim if we were born as a human being and we die, we will not come back as a human being. If we don't generate bodhichitta or realize emptiness in this life, then in our next life, we will fall into the lower realms. I don't understand why this is so.

*Khen Rinpoche: Which lam-rim did you read? Go back and you read it again.*

If you look at the path of the person of small capacity—somebody who is looking for a good rebirth in future lives—the main method to achieve that is to practise the ethical discipline of restraint from the ten non-virtues. As a Buddhist, that practice ties in with refuge in the Three Jewels. Since you have these two, you will achieve the goal of the person of small capacity, a good rebirth. It doesn't say that right from the beginning, you will need bodhichitta, you will need wisdom.

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