

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 Buddhadharmā, no way to see the intent of the Buddha. There is also no way to see how the Buddhadharmā is different, special and a class of its own from other beliefs/ traditions.
The ability to see that the Buddhadharmā 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 Buddhadharmā.
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 <i>Complete Aspects Application</i> .
Those whose meditation have achieved mastery over the cultivation on the aspects of the Three Exalted Knowers is called <i>Peak Application</i> .

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</i> , and 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 Buddhadharmā.

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 Buddhadharmā.

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 is mutually inclusive.

Hence, any path 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: "***If it is a mind in the continuum of a Mahayana superior, is such a mind necessarily conjoined with the wisdom directly realizing emptiness?***"

Khenrinpoche: What I asked in the 1st and the 2nd questions are not the same. [For the 2nd 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 2nd 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 just not 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.

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:
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) Bowing to all beings: Due to such a thorough pacification, externally, one pays respects, literally, bowing 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>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>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>“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.”</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>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>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."

Divisions of the Mahayana path of meditation:

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 *best* are the humans of the southern continent.

In the *Lam Rim Chen Mo*, 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 *Lam Rim*] 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 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) Both 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 praise, 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 karma 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 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 all asserts 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 is taken by a Hinayanist as his 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 do 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:
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> .
Hence, whatever that abides within a lesser vehicle class of realizations is necessarily a Hinayana path.
However, if something is abiding within a Mahayana class of realization, it is necessarily a Mahayana path? No.
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.
Is the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior a Mahayana path? No.
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.
Reply: No pervasion. Just because something abides within a Mahayana class of realizations does not necessarily make it a Mahayana path.
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.
Boundary: It exists in the continua of all superiors. Hence, this also include Buddha superiors. As long as it is a superior, it is definite that the Knower of Bases exists in such a continuum.
Student 1: In the definition, is the wisdom directly realizing selflessness necessarily a wisdom directly realizing the selflessness of persons?
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].
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 negation, 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].
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.
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.
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.
Khenrinpoche: Please give some illustrations of a path in the continuum of a superior which are <i>not</i> Knower of Bases.
Student 2: An inferential realization of emptiness in the continuum of a Hinayana superior. Khenrinpoche: Why is that?
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?
Student 2: [Realizing] selflessness is in the definition, which is missing in this case.
Khenrinpoche: I am not saying that it has to be a wisdom directly realizing selflessness of persons, rather, [a Knower of Bases] must be conjoined 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.
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!
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.
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.
The reason that these [two knowers] do not abide in the Hinayana class of realizations was explained earlier.

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 Hinayana 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 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 when each 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 was 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 worshipped. 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 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.***