**Transcript of the teachings by Khen Rinpoche Geshe Chonyi on *Grounds and Paths of Secret Mantra***

**Root Text:** *Illumination of the Tantric Tradition: The Principles of the Grounds and Paths of the Four Great Secret Classes of Tantra* by Ngawang Palden.

The root text, translated by Ian Coghlan and Voula Zarpani, is included in the course book: *Principles of Buddhist Tantra,* by Kirti Tsenshap Rinpoche, translated and edited by Ian Coghlan and Voula Zarpani, Wisdom Publications, 2011.

The main headings from the book are quoted, indented and in italics, for overall structure.

**Lesson 4 30 March 2017**

Entering the path. Mahayana path of accumulation.

**ENTERING THE PATH**

I will talk a little bit about the meaning of entering the path. When does one enter a path? It is when uncontrived renunciation has arisen in the mind.

In the *Three Principles of the Path*, Lama Tsongkhapa described clearly the measure of having generated renunciation.

Freedom and endowments are difficult to find  
And life has no time to spare.  
By gaining familiarity with this,  
Attraction to the appearances of this life is reversed.

By thinking over and over again  
That actions and their effects are unbetraying,  
And repeatedly contemplating the miseries of cyclic existence,  
Attraction to the appearances of future lives is reversed.

When, by having trained in that way,  
There is no arising, even for a second,  
Of attraction to the perfections of cyclic existence,  
And all day and night the intention seeking liberation arises –  
Then the thought of renunciation has been generated.

In order for this uncontrived renunciation to arise:

* First, one must develop aversion to true sufferings. In short, one has completely given up all hope with regard to anything to do with samsara. One has no interest in anything that is included within samsara as one sees that it is completely pointless.
* But that alone is not sufficient. On top of that, one must know what are the causes (or the origins) that give rise to the true suffering that one is averse to.
* Then one must develop the understanding of and aspiration for true cessations.
* One must have an understanding of how true cessations are to be achieved on the basis of meditating on true paths.

When one gathers all these conditions together, this will drive one to think of liberation constantly. Day and night, one will only be interested in liberation, nothing else. So, when “all day and night, the intention seeking liberation arises,” this is the measure that uncontrived renunciation has arisen.

Such uncontrived renunciation has to arise spontaneously all the time. It must always be there at the back of our mind and in the depths of our heart. We have no other goal in life but this.

When the thought of renunciation arises spontaneously and effortlessly all the time from the depths of our heart, then whether we are walking, eating, sleeping, doing prayers or recitations and so forth, all these activities are said to be conjoined with renunciation. That being the case, these activities conjoined with renunciation will become causes for liberation. In other words, if our daily activities are not conjoined with renunciation, then it doesn’t matter what we do, they will never become causes for liberation.

When uncontrived renunciation arises in one’s heart, one enters the path. There are five paths. It can be the five Hinayana paths or the five Mahayana paths. Whether one enters the Hinayana path or Mahayana path, first, one enters the path of accumulation. If one enters the Hinayana path, then it is the Hinayana path of accumulation. If one enters the Mahayana path, it is the Mahayana path of accumulation. They both have the same name. When a path has arisen in one’s mind, one can accumulate the collections easily with great enthusiasm and whatever one does only become causes for liberation.

With regard to the individuals who have entered the path, there are some who enter the Hinayana path first. After they have completed the Hinayana path, they then enter the Mahayana path. On that basis, they achieve enlightenment. There are also individuals who enter the Mahayana path from the very beginning.

*Renunciation and bodhicitta arise simultaneously*

Remember there was a discussion in the last class on whether renunciation and bodhicitta arise simultaneously or serially. The point is that even if one were to enter the Mahayana path from the onset, before one can enter the Mahayana path, first, one must have abandoned not only attachment to this life but attachment to the entire samsara. One must have reversed all attraction to the appearances of this life and one must have reversed all attraction to the appearances of future lives. One must have aversion to true sufferings, recognizing that anything included in samsara is meaningless and without essence. In particular, one must realize that as long as one appropriates the contaminated physical and mental aggregates, whatever existence one is in does not transcend suffering. It is crucial to understand this.

The person who enters the Mahayana path from the onset without entering the Hinayana path has to train his mind gradually. On the basis of having trained in the manner that we have described, that person generates complete aversion to his personal true sufferings in his existence in samsara. On that basis, he develops empathy for others and seeks to generate that same level of aversion for the suffering of others.

In order to enter the Mahayana path, he has to train in developing bodhicitta right from the beginning—recognizing all sentient beings as his mother and recollecting their kindness, cultivating the desire to repay that kindness, developing affectionate love and great compassion and generating the wholehearted resolve that finally results in the generation of bodhicitta.

The person aspiring to enter the Mahayana path has to feel the need to eliminate the suffering of others, just as he feels the urgent need to eliminate his own suffering in samsara. His sense of urgency is the same whether it relates to his own suffering or the suffering of others.

Here, when we talk about nirvana, we are talking about the higher nirvana, i.e., the non-abiding nirvana or full enlightenment. This person seeks to achieve the non-abiding nirvana in order for him to accomplish his wish to eliminate the suffering of others. Comes the time when this person develops the uncontrived aspiration to achieve this non-abiding nirvana, this is when he has developed the mind of enlightenment (or bodhicitta). This is when he enters the Mahayana path.

As we said earlier, the criteria for positing entry into a path is the development of uncontrived renunciation, the wish for liberation. Likewise, the criteria for entry into the Mahayana path is the mind of enlightenment. We could also say that this is also the time when renunciation is generated. Therefore, we could say that for any individual entering the Mahayana path, renunciation and the mind of enlightenment are generated together.

*Khen Rinpoche: You must understand the question that I asked you in the last lesson. Now I am giving you the answer. Don’t forget the question. If you used your brains and done some thinking, I give you the answer now.*

*If you have not used your brains, the answer won’t mean anything to you. You must squeeze your brain a little bit.*

*So that is the answer. If you think the answer is not correct, then you must say, “What you have said is not correct because of the following reasons.” You must give your reasons. Your brains must be active especially when you are studying Buddhist philosophy. You can’t just sit there. Then nothing will go in.*

For the person who is entering the Mahayana path from the onset, that individual’s generation of the mind seeking liberation and the mind of enlightenment, are these two minds generated serially or together?

If you were to hold the position that they are generated serially, there would be problems. If you assert that they are generated together, then you will not have any difficulties.

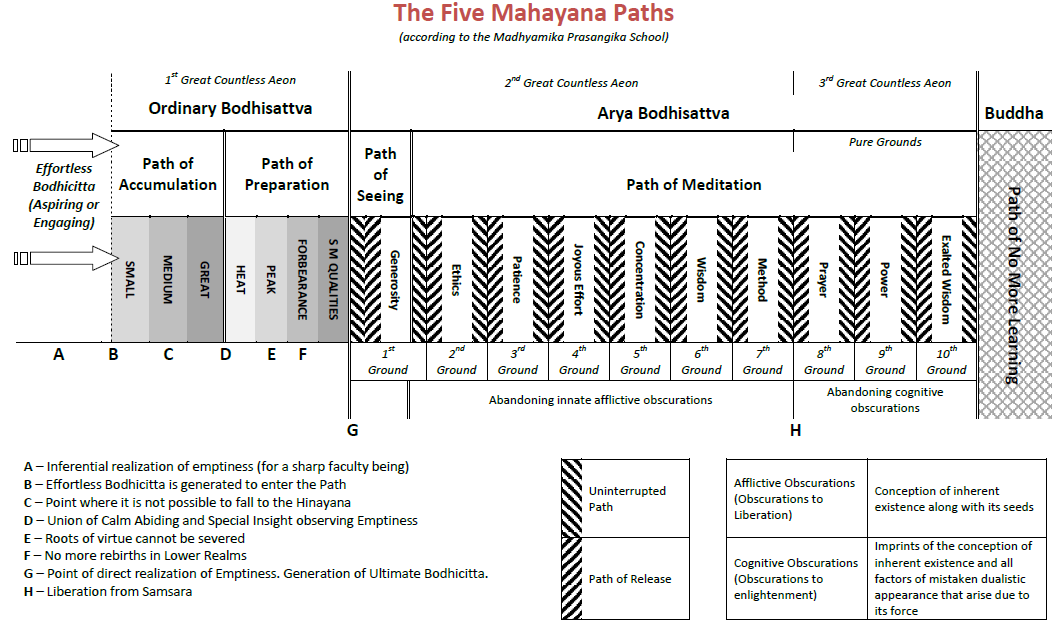
Does the person who enters the Mahayana path from the onset, without going through any other path, have the wish for liberation? Does he need to generate the wish for liberation? Yes or no?

If you say yes, this person who is entering the Mahayana path from the onset definitely has the aspiration for nirvana. He is seeking to achieve liberation. But what liberation is he seeking? He is seeking the great nirvana, the non-abiding nirvana. Such an individual has no interest in seeking nirvana, i.e., the lower nirvana, for himself.

So when does he enter the path? He enters the path when the uncontrived mind of enlightenment (bodhicitta) arises.

When does the uncontrived mind of enlightenment arise? The uncontrived mind of enlightenment arises when the person, without any effort, is always thinking, “I must achieve full enlightenment in order to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings.” This is defined as the mind of enlightenment. When the uncontrived mind of enlightenment arises effortlessly, this is when he enters the Mahayana path. This is also when he develops the uncontrived wish for the great liberation. As such, these two minds are generated simultaneously. Hence, this addresses the question that was posed in the last lesson.

When the uncontrived mind of enlightenment arises, day and night, effortlessly, the individual has the motivation to achieve the non-abiding nirvana, i.e., full enlightenment, in order to accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings.



**MAHAYANA PATH OF ACCUMULATION**

When that uncontrived mind of enlightenment arises, simultaneously, the path arises in his mind. Here, the path is the Mahayana path. Of the five Mahayana paths, it is the Mahayana path of accumulation that arises in his mind. As such, he enters the Mahayana path of accumulation. Such an individual has great courage and determination to achieve the state of full enlightenment. Likewise, he has great courage and determination to accumulate the collections in order to achieve his goal. He has no difficulty in accumulating the collections. Therefore, the first of the five paths is called the Mahayana path of accumulation.

You will recall from the last module that there are different achievings, one of which is called achieving through armour. This refers to that bodhisattva’s unbelievable courage and determination to accumulate the collections. Through the practice of the perfections, he has this tremendous determination to practice all the perfections together.

The Mahayana path of accumulation is divided into three:

1. the small Mahayana path of accumulation
2. the middling Mahayana path of accumulation
3. the great Mahayana path of accumulation

*Small Mahayana path of accumulation*

The bodhisattva enters the Mahayana path of accumulation on the small Mahayana path of accumulation. As the bodhisattva progresses, his mind generation acquires different names. On the small path of accumulation, his mind generation is called the mind generation like the earth. Why is this so? Just as the earth is the basis for crops to grow and for a harvest to be reaped, likewise, the mind generation on the small path of accumulation is the basis for the entire Mahayana path up to enlightenment.

There are two types of individuals who enter the Mahayana path:

1. the sharp facultied
2. the dull facultied

* It is said that the sharp facultied trainees who enter the Mahayana path are those who realize emptiness first before entering the Mahayana paths.
* As for the dull facultied trainees, they generate bodhicitta first followed by their realization of emptiness.

The question then arises: why do the sharp facultied trainees realize emptiness prior to developing bodhicitta?

There is a reason why I ask questions. It is something for you to think about and keep at the back of your mind. It is something that you have to figure out over time. When somebody asks you—“Why?”—you cannot just sit there and keep quiet.

*Student 1*: The self-cherishing is stronger than the self-grasping. This is why they develop the realization of emptiness first before they realize bodhicitta.

*Khen Rinpoche: Self cherishing is stronger than self grasping, therefore, sharp facultied trainees have to realize emptiness before bodhicitta is developed? This doesn’t make any sense.*

At the time of generating bodhichitta, the dull facultied trainees do not have self cherishing anymore. He only has the thought of cherishing others. But why is he unable to realize emptiness? What happened to the wisdom realizing emptiness? Won’t the dull facultied trainee be the reverse of what you said?

All of you are coming here to learn. If you are here to learn, then you need to be able to answer questions. You must also want to answer questions. Otherwise, when somebody asks you a question, “It is said that the sharp facultied trainee realizes emptiness prior to realizing bodhichitta. Why is this so?” you cannot just sit there and keep quiet or say that you don’t know. This cannot be the result of having studied for 4, 5 years.

*Khen Rinpoche: So you must answer. Somebody answer why?*

*Student 2*: I think the sharp facultied trainees are the people who follow reasoning. First, they have to see the reasons as to whether it is possible to achieve emptiness. Then they will have the aspiration, supported by reasoning, to achieve liberation and enlightenment. They will proceed to achieve the wisdom realizing emptiness before achieving bodhicitta.

I think the dull facultied trainees are followers of faith. This is the reason they will achieve the wisdom realizing emptiness later. They will develop bodhicitta first. Is the line of reasoning correct?

*Khen Rinpoche*: Correct. But it is not sufficient just to say that the followers of doctrine or the sharp facultied ones are the ones who follow reasons. You need to show the reason why they have to realize emptiness first. Why?

*Student 2*: The wisdom realizing emptiness is the antidote to eradicate ignorance. So by eradicating ignorance, one will be able to achieve enlightenment. When they see that enlightenment is possible, they will proceed to achieve the wisdom realizing emptiness.

The root of samsara is ignorance. They know that the wisdom realizing emptiness is the only antidote that can eradicate the ignorance that is the root of samsara. Realizing that it is the only antidote, they proceed to practise and attain the wisdom realizing emptiness first.

*Khen Rinpoche: Good.*

*Student 3:* My understanding as to why they would want to realize emptiness first is because when they realize not only the selflessness of persons but also the selflessness of phenomena, that person becomes really brave and has the courage to save all sentient beings. If they don’t realize emptiness first—realising that all phenomena are empty of inherent existence—I don’t think they will have the courage to take on the suffering of all sentient beings and liberate them from their sufferings. I think it is necessary for the Mahayana practitioner to realize the emptiness of phenomena first. Only after that can he develop the courage to go on the Mahayana path to free all sentient beings from their sufferings. This is my understanding as to why they do that first.

*Khen Rinpoche*: This courage is not exclusive to the sharp facultied bodhisattvas. Aren’t the dull facultied bodhisattvas who enter the Mahayana path without the wisdom realizing emptiness courageous too?

*Student 3*: We can say they are.

*Khen Rinpoche*: In fact, you have proven that you don’t need the wisdom realizing emptiness to be courageous.

*Student 3*: OK. I can’t think of any other reason why they would have to realize emptiness first. To me, it will be a logical step that having realized the emptiness of phenomena, then whatever hardships and suffering that come along, they can recall that their nature is emptiness. Then they will have the courage to enter Mahayana path. This is my logical thinking.

*Khen Rinpoche*: In general, the sharp facultied trainees are those who make the promise and set out to do something only after seeing the valid reasons for doing so. The dull facultied trainees are those who don’t see the reasons. They are motivated by faith and on that basis, make the promise to achieve enlightenment.

What Student 2 said is essentially the answer. The sharp facultied trainees have to be convinced that they can achieve enlightenment, i.e., they must be convinced that enlightenment can be achieved and that in particular, they themselves can achieve it, before they will go on to actually develop the wish to do so. This means that they have to see that the non-abiding nirvana can be achieved.

In order to achieve non-abiding nirvana, first, they must see and be convinced that samsara can be abandoned. In order to be convinced that samsara can be abandoned, they have to be convinced with valid reasons that the root of samsara can be abandoned. In order to be convinced that the root of samsara can be abandoned, they must realize emptiness. There is no other way.

When we say that the root of samsara can be abandoned, basically, we are saying the trainee must see that he can abandon ignorance. In particular, the individual must see that he can abandon and destroy the apprehension of true existence, i.e., the grasping at true existence. He must see for himself that this is possible, “My ignorance, the apprehension of true existence, can be destroyed.”

In order to see that the apprehension of true existence can be abandoned, first, he must see that what is being grasped at by this apprehension of true existence does not exist whatsoever. This means that if one doesn’t realize that the apprehension of true existence is an erroneous conception and a wrong consciousness, that it is a mind that views reality in a distorted way, apprehending reality in a way that has never existed, then there is no way to convince oneself that that ignorance, the apprehension of true existence, can be abandoned.

When we are studying Buddhist philosophy, we must actively think about the material we are learning all the time. We have to wonder and question, “Why is it like this? Why is it like that?” Otherwise, if you were to just come here, sit down and listen, you are not going to get much out of the class. The teachings will not go into your mind. So you must actively think about what you are hearing.

This is the reason why I give you questions. Then you can think more deeply about the topic. From your side, if you have tried and given some thought to the questions, then when the answer is given, there is some real impact. That will fire up your interest and energise you. Otherwise, if you are happy with just sitting there, listening without thinking, you will probably get bored, or find the topic difficult and you will not learn.

*Student 4*: For the sharp facultied bodhisattva, when you talk about realizing emptiness before the path of accumulation, that is actually the inferential realization of emptiness. You are not talking about the direct realization of emptiness.

Then for the dull facultied bodhisattva, in order to generate uncontrived bodhicitta, there should also be a minimum criterion for their understanding of emptiness as well as enlightenment. What will that be? Is it the correctly assuming consciousness? It can’t be a consciousness that doubts the possibility of enlightenment and yet still wants to generate uncontrived bodhicitta.

*Khen Rinpoche*: You are talking here about the dull facultied bodhisattvas who generate bodhicitta prior to realizing emptiness. I guess at the very least, in relation to the object, emptiness, the mind they would have would probably be the doubt tending towards the factual.

If they were to have the doubt that is tending towards the non-factual, how can they even conceive of wanting to achieve a goal that they are so doubtful of? Of the three kinds of doubt, maybe the doubt that tends towards the factual could be the minimum criterion you are referring to.

The best outcome is for that person to attain correct belief or the correctly assuming consciousness with regard to emptiness.

*Student 5:* What would be the difference between the attainment of the path shared with a person of medium capacity and uncontrived renunciation seeking the liberation of non-abiding nirvana?

Is it the case that one can generate the wisdom realizing emptiness first without generating uncontrived renunciation because for the sharp facultied person, he generates the realization of emptiness first before generating the uncontrived renunciation at the time of entering the Mahayana path?

*Khen Rinpoche*: There are individuals who enter the Hinayana path or the Mahayana path after realizing emptiness.

If you are referring to a sharp facultied person, even if his goal is personal liberation, in order for him to develop the necessary uncontrived renunciation, he must see that his samsara can be abandoned. In order to be able to see this, he must be able to see that the root of samsara can be abandoned, and so forth. There are sharp facultied individuals who realize emptiness before developing the uncontrived wish for the Hinayana liberation.

What was said in relation to the sharp facultied individuals who enter the Mahayana path—their need to see that the nirvana they are aiming for can be achieved—can also be applied to such sharp facultied individuals who enter the Hinayana path.

*The Three Principles of the Path* encapsulates the spirit of the path that is shared with the person of medium capacity.

When, by having trained in that way,

There is no arising, even for a second,

Of attraction to the perfections of cyclic existence …

The person of medium capacity is one who has no interest at all in samsaric perfections and that path can arise prior to realizing emptiness. On the basis of his total disinterest in samsaric perfections, this person will seriously investigate the causes of samsara. He will gradually come to understand that it is true origins and realise that if he wants to stop cyclic existence, he has to stop the true origins.

When we talk about true origins, coming down to the real source of the entire samsara, it is the apprehension of true existence. Again, we are addressing this same issue. Can the apprehension of true existence be abandoned?

This person will sort that out and then develop the wish to achieve liberation.

* If the person is seeking lower nirvana, he enters the Hinayana path.
* If the person is seeking the non-abiding nirvana, then the person enters the Mahayana path.

*Student 5*: For the person who is entering the Hinayana path, at that time he would have generated uncontrived renunciation whereas for the person seeking non-abiding nirvana, at that point in time, he would have generated the path shared with the person of medium capacity. But he has not generated uncontrived renunciation. At the point when one generates the path shared with the person of medium capacity, that path is not uncontrived renunciation. Am I right to say that?

*Khen Rinpoche: Yes.*

*Student 5:* The moment the person generates the path that is *not shared* with persons of medium capacity, i.e., the Hinayana path, that person has generated uncontrived renunciation in order to enter the path.

*Khen Rinpoche*: Earlier I said, “What is the path that is shared with the person of medium capacity?” Having trained in this way, reversing both the attraction to the appearances of this life and the appearances of future lives, then there is no arising even for a second of attraction to the perfections of cyclic existence. Up to here, this is the path that is shared with the person of medium capacity. Such a person is not necessarily someone who has entered the path.

*Khen Rinpoche: What is your question?*

*Student 5*: (Inaudible).

*Khen Rinpoche:* *Whether it is contrived or uncontrived, it has nothing to do with that.*

“By having trained in that way,/ There is no arising, even for a second/ Of attraction to the perfections of cyclic existence.” Up to this point, this is the path that is shared with the person of medium capacity. The person is thoroughly sick of anything that has to do with samsara but has yet to generate the thought of liberation. So this is the path that is shared with the person of medium capacity. But this doesn’t mean that the person has entered the path.

If on the basis of disenchantment with samsara, day and night, the intention seeking liberation arises, then that is when the person has entered the path. Therefore, the uncontrived aspiration for nirvana is not the path that is shared with the person of medium capacity.

*Student 6*: We already know there is a difference between the dull facultied and the sharp facultied bodhisattvas in terms of their approach—one is driven by faith, the other by reasoning—and the timing of their realization of emptiness when they enter the path.

My question is this: When they both reach the path of seeing—they both have uncontrived renunciation, they have both realized emptiness directly—from that level onwards, is there any difference between the dull facultied and the sharp facultied bodhisattva anymore? Aren’t the power of their bodhicitta and the power of their realizations equal?

I have issues with these terms, sharp facultied and dull facultied. The latter term gives the idea that somehow this bodhisattva is inferior in quality in some way whereas really, to me, it is just that they have different approaches to the Dharma. It is like someone who is good at the arts compared to someone who is good at the sciences.

*Khen Rinpoche*: The sharp facultied trainees are those who, regardless of the subject matter, they are able to understand what is being said and see all the supporting reasons. They are able to recognise, “It is like this and it is not like that.”

As for the dull facultied trainees, no matter what you try to tell them, they never understand what you are saying. They can’t gain an ascertainment and are not able to think.

There are *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras* of different lengths:

* The short *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* contains 8,000 stanzas in one volume.
* The middling *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* contains 25,000 stanzas in three volumes.
* The long *Perfection of Wisdom Sutra* contains 100,000 stanzas in twelve volumes.

These are the three versions of the *Perfection of Wisdom Sutras*. All of them have the same subject matter. If they are all talking about the same thing, why does the Buddha have to talk so much?

When sharp facultied trainees hear these sutras, they understand it right away. As for the dull facultied trainees, they don’t understand anything even after hearing it for three days!

*Khen Rinpoche*: *I am talking about one topic. This pertains to whether you are learning art or dance or whatever.*

It is all relative. You posit someone to be sharp facultied only in relation to someone who is not as sharp and vice versa. If you compare a human being to an animal, generally speaking, a human being will be considered sharp facultied.

I can go back and get more reference materials. I don’t think they become equal even on the path of seeing onwards because there are discussions of the signs of irreversibility, signs of achieving and so forth. Some bodhisattvas achieve these signs on the path of seeing and some don’t. Some only achieve them on the path of meditation. And even on the path of meditation, some only achieve it on the eighth ground and so forth. That means there is a difference between sharp facultied bodhisattvas and dull facultied bodhisattvas.

*Student 7*: The sharp facultied bodhisattvas are able to realize emptiness earlier than the dull facultied bodhisattvas. Could that be attributed to the method the sharp facultied bodhisattvas use to develop bodhicitta? The sharp facultied bodhisattvas develop bodhicitta through the method of exchanging self for others which is based more on an understanding of emptiness whereas the dull facultied bodhisattvas develop bodhicitta through the method of the seven-fold cause and effect. Could that be the reason why the sharp facultied bodhisattvas are able to realize emptiness first?

*Khen Rinpoche*: Whether that can stand as a reason remains to be analyzed.

As for the reason why the sharp facultied trainees realize emptiness prior to bodhicitta, that has already been addressed. The sharp facultied trainees generate renunciation and the mind of enlightenment simultaneously. They then enter the path. They would have realized emptiness prior to developing that renunciation and the mind generation. Once such an individual enters the Mahayana path, we could say that it is certain that they will not fall to the lower path. For the sharp facultied bodhisattvas, after entering the path, we can posit that their wisdom realizing emptiness and their mind generation will never degenerate.

For the dull facultied bodhisattvas who generate renunciation and the mind generation and then enter the path, probably we can say that their mind generation can degenerate. It is possible for the dull facultied bodhisattvas on the Mahayana path of accumulation to lose their bodhicitta. This is on the small Mahayana path of accumulation.

*Medium Mahayana path of accumulation*

The next level is the medium Mahayana path of accumulation. That bodhisattva’s mind generation is called mind generation like gold. Why? This is because gold regardless of the form it takes is still gold. Its entity remains unchanged. Likewise, the mind generation in the continuum of the bodhisattva on the medium Mahayana path of accumulation will never degenerate. Henceforth, it is not possible for the bodhisattva to lose his mind generation.

For the bodhisattva on the medium path of accumulation, has he necessarily realized emptiness?

This is something for you to think about. If you say yes, definitely, on the medium path of accumulation, the bodhisattva has realized emptiness, can we then posit that because of having realized emptiness, his mind generation becomes like gold? Henceforth, he will never lose his bodhicitta.

This is something to think about. Is it alright to say that the bodhisattva on the medium path of accumulation has necessarily realized emptiness? Is there any fallacy in saying this?

In the chart on the five Mahayana paths, there is a milestone on the medium path of accumulation. It is the point where it is not possible to fall back to the Hinayana. This is commonly accepted in the major treatises. There is no argument about not falling back into the Hinayana path after achieving the medium path of accumulation.

By saying this, at the same time, we are also saying that it is possible to fall back into the Hinayana prior to that point, i.e., on the small path of accumulation.

You need to understand what this discussion is about. I am not saying that on the small path of accumulation, definitely, you will fall back into the Hinayana. I never said that! I am saying however that there exists a possibility of this happening.

*Great Mahayana path of accumulation*

We can say that the bodhisattvas on the great path of accumulation have necessarily realized emptiness. We can safely say this is the case. Why? Because on the great path of accumulation, the bodhisattvas necessarily have calm abiding focussing on emptiness. In order to have calm abiding focussing on emptiness, first, the bodhisattva must have realized emptiness. By saying this, what does this imply? Obviously, he must already have realized emptiness prior to the medium path of accumulation.

*Student 4*: The inferential realization of emptiness does not need the union of calm abiding and special insight. “The definition of Mahayana conventional mind generation is a Mahayana special main mental knower distinguished by abiding in a type of path that serves as the door of entry into the Mahayana and that arises concomitant with an accompanying aspiration observing complete enlightenment for the welfare of others.”[[1]](#footnote-2)

As for this Mahayana mind generation, what exactly is its object of observation? I am not sure what the actual observed object condition of this main mind is.

*Khen Rinpoche*: The mind generation (bodhicitta) is a main mind. There is a mental factor of aspiration that is concomitant with this main mind. This is the aspiration that is seeking to achieve full enlightenment. The object of observation is the focus on enlightenment. The individual is focussing on his own object of attainment—the enlightenment that is to be achieved for the benefit of others.

*Student 4*: That enlightenment has yet to be achieved so it is not an existent object yet.

*Khen Rinpoche*: This enlightenment is yet to be achieved but it is a phenomenon that is achievable. That means it can exist.

*Student 4*: Is this uncontrived Mahayana mind generation a direct realization or a conceptual consciousness?

*Khen Rinpoche*: It is conceptual.

*Student 4:* For someone who is on the small path of accumulation, it is possible for this person to lose her bodhicitta. When this person gives up her bodhicitta, does she still have uncontrived renunciation?

*Khen Rinpoche*: Yes.

*Student 4:* Can anyone—be they on the Hinayana path or the Mahayana path— abandon uncontrived renunciation?

*Khen Rinpoche*: No. It is clear that the path does not degenerate.

*Student 4:* In other words, the person of definite Mahayana lineage necessarily has never ever in any of his lifetimes before ever generated a path? This is the criteria for saying that this person is of definite Mahayana lineage.

*Khen Rinpoche: Correct.*

Interpreted by Ven. Tenzin Gyurme; transcribed by Phuah Soon Ek, Vivien Ng and Aki Yeo; edited by Cecilia Tsong.

1. *The Eight Categories and Seventy Topics* by Jetsun Chokyi Gyaltsen, page 8. Translated by Jampa Gendun. Updated May 2011. An FPMT Masters Program Translation. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)