

How understanding dependent-arising frees one from all sufferings:

<p><i>Lama Tsongkhapa's Dependent Arising- A Praise of the Buddha:</i> <i>Having seen the truth, you taught it.</i> <i>Those following you will leave all troubles far behind,</i> <i>For they will cut to the root of every fault.</i></p>
<p>His work “In Praise of Dependent-Origination” is essentially a praise to Buddha Shakyamuni. Here, he is praising Buddha as someone who sees all phenomena, both the ultimate and conventional natures of phenomena, directly.</p>
<p>Particularly, he praises Buddha as having correctly understood the principles of dependent-origination. He praises Buddha for His excellent presentation of this principle, particularly, His detailed explanation of subtle dependent-arising.</p>
<p>In this verse, Lama Tsongkhapa says that, if he were to correctly follow what the Buddha has taught in relation to subtle dependent-arising, listen to the teachings, reflect on the meanings and familiarize his own mind with whatever that has been ascertained, then he would be able to leave 'all troubles behind'.</p>
<p>'Troubles' here include the sufferings of all future lives, like being reborn the hells and so forth, as well as all the sufferings of cyclic existence.</p>
<p>'For they will cut to the root of every fault': Lama Tsongkhapa is saying that if anyone were to correctly follow, practice and then realize the teachings of subtle dependent-arising, they will be able to free themselves from problems and sufferings.</p>
<p>This is because, they will be able to eradicate the root of every single problem: the ignorance mistakenly apprehending a self.</p>
<p>This is the reason why one listens to, reflects on and familiarizes with meditation one's mind with the teachings.</p>
<p>This is the same in our case here, when we are going to examine this topic, the buddha nature or buddha potential, technically translated as Tathagata Essence, which is essentially a presentation of 'The Lineage'.</p>
<p>To be able to reflect and then meditate on the teachings, one must firstly know them. This is done by hearing the teachings.</p>
<p>The root of every single problem and suffering, such as the problem of birth, death, sickness, aging and so forth, lies in one's ego/ ignorance, which is an apprehension of a self.</p>
<p>The only antidote to such an ignorance is to realize emptiness through an understanding of subtle dependent-arising.</p>
<p>One then comes to realize emptiness. When such a realization of emptiness, whose mode of apprehending the person and reality to be completely opposite and directly opposed to the mode of apprehension of one's ignorance, occurs, this is how one's ignorance, a mistaken apprehension of a self, can be weakened over time.</p>
<p>This is an essential point that one has to understand and ascertain for oneself, how, through the understanding of emptiness via the understanding of subtle dependent-arising, will enable one to overcome and oppose ignorance directly.</p>
<p>When one sees this [reason] for oneself, one would then come to feel that there is really an end to all of one's problems and cyclic existence. One would then feel that nirvana, the liberation from all sufferings, is really possible and does exist.</p>
<p>This verse [summarizes well] the reason one listens to, reflects on and then puts this crucial point of dependent-arising into practice. One would then be able to overcome all of one's faults and problems.</p>
<p>To see for oneself the truth behind this verse, one needs a reasonable understanding of dependent-arising, particularly subtle dependent-arising. Through this, one also needs to experience and feel, internally at least, a slight weakening of ignorance.</p>
<p>When one has some slight experiences, then this will engender more enthusiasm, which will spur one on in continuing one's quest on the path. It is with such an experience that one comes to develop a special faith and trust in Buddha.</p>
<p>Therefore, one really needs to 'taste' the teachings for oneself. This has to come through reflection, thinking about the subject.</p>
<p>When one actually does experience the teachings to be effective, then an inborn enthusiasm and yearning for the teachings will naturally arise. Until then, no matter how much study or reflection one does, it is probably difficult to engender such a form of sustained enthusiasm to carry on with one's practice.</p>
<p>Therefore, one really has to 'taste' the teachings for oneself, which has to come from thinking/ reflecting.</p>
<p>Those following you will leave all troubles far behind: When one reflects well on the meaning of this verse, come to taste, understand and experience subtle dependent-arising, one will gradually leave all problems far behind.</p>
<p>This is because, such an understanding of subtle dependent-arising is the only antidote to one's ignorance apprehending a self, the root of one's every single problem and mistake.</p>
<p>Therefore, one needs to think about it, as without thinking, one will not see how this is so. The more one thinks, the more one will come to see how this is the case.</p>

One will then come to realize that in this world, it is only the Buddha who taught subtle dependent-arising, no one else:
<i>Those, however, outside your teachings, Though they practice long and hard, Are those who beckon back faults, For they are welded to views of self.</i>
There are many religious traditions in this world with their own founders, who teach [their followers] to be ethical, to avoid harming others, for example, through the practice of giving up the ten nonvirtues.
There are also some religious traditions that teach the achievements of various elevated states of concentration and so forth.
Even though this is the case, when one analyzes well, merely practicing such teachings alone and achieving those goals in themselves, do not bring about much great benefits.
When one were to analyze well, if whatever one does, this does not harm one's ego/ ignorance, a mistaken apprehension of self, then no matter what one does, due to the presence of one's ignorance, the root of all other misconceptions and mistakes, then the faults will always be there and one will always make mistakes.
All the practices mentioned earlier: ethical disciplines of giving up harming others, as well as cultivating the elevated states of concentrations and so forth, will do nothing at all to harm one's ignorance.
In fact, sometimes, if one is not careful, such practices may even seem to increase one's ego/ ignorance.
If one does not understand well the presentation of dependent-origination, then this is what Lama Tsongkhapa says [in the second verse here.]
Those [who practice] outside the [Buddha's] teachings, no matter how hard and sincere they may be in working at their practices for a long period of time, such practices will merely bring back faults over and over again.
This is because, they are still bonded to the view of a self. Lama Tsongkhapa then says:
<i>Ah! When the wise see the difference, How could they not revere you From the very depths of their hearts!</i>
As a Buddhist, one has faith, devotion and respect for Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of the Dharma in this world.
One then has to understand, even though there are many religious traditions with their respective founders, why Buddha deserves such respect, is so special, different and distinct from others.
When one analyzes His presentation of subtle dependent-arising, one will come to understand that the Buddha was not someone who taught a path that leads to a mere temporary elimination of faults.
Rather, He is someone who has shown the path to a total a permanent eradication of all faults and mistakes through the eradication of the root of those mistakes.
Lama Tsongkhapa is saying that, the wise person who understands all the points mentioned, are the ones who would respect the Buddha from the very depths of their hearts.

Short account of root author- Maitreya Buddha:

There is a collection of texts called ' <i>The Five Treatises</i> '. These texts were taught by Maitreya Buddha:
1) The Ornament of Clear Realization (<i>Skt. Abhisamayalankara</i>) 2) The Ornament of the Mahayana Sutras (<i>Skt. Mahayana-sutralankara</i>) 3) Distinguishing the Middle from the Extremes (<i>Skt. Madhyanta-vibhaga</i>) 4) Distinguishing Dharma and Dharmata (<i>Skt. Dharmadharma-vibhaga</i>) 5) The Sublime Continuum (<i>Skt. Mahayana Uttara-tantra Shastra</i>)
The text [in this module] is called [Mahayana] Uttara-tantra [Shastra], [Great Vehicle Treatise on] the Sublime Continuum . This is one of the five famous treatises attributed to Maitreya.
Before Shakyamuni Buddha manifested appearing in [the southern continent], He enthroned Maitreya Buddha as His regent in the pure land of Tushita. After which, He manifested being born here, accomplishing the achievement of enlightenment and so forth. In the future, Maitreya, the fifth of a thousand Buddhas of the fortunate eon, will descend into this world.
According to some masters, they assert that Maitreya is a Buddha, while others assert that he is a tenth ground Bodhisattva.
The five treatises of Maitreya were made available in this world through Arya Asanga.
About nine hundred years after the parinirvana of Shakyamuni Buddha, Arya Asanga appeared in this world, received these teachings directly from Maitreya Buddha and disseminated them. He was also the trailblazer of the Mind Only School.

Short life story of Arya Asanga:

When Arya Asanga was born, it was his mother who mainly took care of him, taught him the various traditional arts and sciences. One day, he asked his mother what his father did.
His mother replied that the purpose of giving birth to him was not so much as to follow his father's footsteps. Rather, his mother's motivation was for Asanga to [propagate] the Buddha's teachings again, as it was in decline.
His mother told him that she hoped he would make extensive benefits of the teachings of Buddha. She then encouraged him to give up the lay life and become a monk.
It was said that Arya Asanga's mother was a special person being blessed and guided by Avalokiteshvara. She herself had wanted to revive Buddha's teachings, which were in decline then.
But due to the social norms during those times, she knew that she would not be able to do much for the Buddha's teachings on the basis of being a woman. She thought it would be better to give birth to a son and have him work for the teachings of the Buddha. With that motivation, she married a person of [ruling and military elite] and gave birth to Arya Asanga.
He grew up, took full ordination to become a <i>Gelong</i> monk and engaged in the study of the teachings for five years.
It was said that in each year, he was not only able to internalize the words of about one hundred thousand verses of the teachings, but also the meanings as well.
Arya Asanga then engaged in hearing and reflections on the teachings of the Buddha, primarily on the scriptural collections, <i>Tripitaka</i> . Particularly, he had a great interest to understand the extremely difficult to fathom teachings on the <i>Perfection of Wisdom Sutras</i> , especially the <i>Stages of Hidden Meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras</i> . * See Page 10
Therefore, he decided to rely on a particular Buddha figure who would help him achieve his wish. After checking, he discovered that, if he were to practice and accomplish Maitreya Buddha, he would be able to receive and understand those teachings. It was said that, he entered into retreat for twelve years focusing on Maitreya Buddha.
After the first three years, putting aside not seeing Maitreya, he did not even get any signs of having contact with Maitreya Buddha. He then became discouraged and decided to end his retreat.
However, something happened and that made him entered into retreat again. After the sixth year, the same thing happened and again, after the ninth year.
Finally, at the end of the twelve year, putting aside seeing Maitreya, he did not even get any good signs. This time, he really decided to end his retreat. One day [along a path], he saw a dog which was suffering from wounds infested with maggots.
He then developed great compassion for this dog. As a result of the arising of great compassion for this dog, he purified so much of his own negativities and obscurations. There and then, in place of the sick dog, he saw Maitreya Buddha.
When he saw Maitreya Buddha, [recalling how] he was utterly discouraged, he wept: "I worked so hard for twelve years but I could not see you. Where were you?"
Maitreya replied: "No matter how much the rain may fall, if there is no <i>seed</i> , nothing will grow. Not being able to see me for the past twelve years was a result of your own obscurations. I was there all the time! Due to the arising of your great compassion for the sick dog, your obscurations were purified. Now you are able to see me."
While Arya Asanga was in retreat for twelve years, he endured a lot of hardships through meditation and recitation.
Combining those [practices] with the arising of heartfelt great compassion for that sick dog, his obscurations preventing him from seeing Maitreya Buddha were finally purified. Maitreya then asked: "Now that you have seen me, what is it that you want?" Arya Asanga said: "My wish is to disseminate and spread the Mahayana teachings."
Maitreya then said: "If that is what you want, then grab hold of my robes." Asanga did that and Maitreya took him to Tushita.
In some accounts, it is said that, Arya Asanga stayed there for fifty human years while others state twenty five.
Whatever this may be, during that time, he listened to the teachings from Maitreya Buddha, particularly, the five treatises which are now famed in this world.
He was able to retained the teachings in his mind due to having attained the dharani of non-forgetfulness then.
He then physically returned to this world. The teachings that he had heard from Maitreya Buddha were gradually written down and then disseminated.
These five treatises of Maitreya clarified the <i>Stages of the Hidden Meaning of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutras</i> .
During Arya Asanga's lifetime, there was a king who used to recite daily the perfection of wisdom sutras. This king heard about Arya Asanga and thought: "If he really is an arya, a superior being, then he must be able to read the minds of others."
He then summoned many teachers and a great assembly of sangha with the intention to check on Arya Asanga to see if he was really clairvoyant. The king decided that if Arya Asanga was really so, then he would honor him well, if not, then the king would disparage him.

The king had a buffalo painted white and had it locked up in a house. In a golden vase, he filled the bottom half with excrement while the upper half was filled with honey. He then asked Arya Asanga: “What is in the house and in this vase?”

Then there was an account of how he answered the king. The king then asked Arya Asanga questions on the perfection of wisdom sutras and was very impressed with the answers. Through that, the king developed great faith in Arya Asanga.

From then on, Arya Asanga became very famous. This allowed the five treatises of Maitreya to be disseminated widely.

There was also the history of him going to central India and several accounts of him founding many dharma communities and monasteries and so forth. In the later part of his life, he became the abbot of Nalanda monastery for twelve years.

One of the lessons one can draw from this short account of Arya Asanga's life is that: if one really wishes to achieve something, in one's case, understanding the Buddha's teachings well, *one needs to work hard, put up and endure difficulties.*

The fact that one has such an opportunity to come into contact with these five treatises of Maitreya Buddha is really due to the kindnesses of Arya Asanga and Maitreya Buddha.

The [fortunate] fact that such teachings exist in this world, being sustained and preserved uninterruptedly over many centuries, that one has the opportunity to come into contact, examine the words, meanings of these [sacred] texts and attain a reasonable understanding and so forth, these are all made possible through their kindnesses.

Explanations on the title:

The title of the root text in English is: ***The Tathagata Essence-Great Vehicle Treatise on the Sublime Continuum differentiating the Lineage of the Three Jewels.***

The text begins with: *Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas.*

'Great Vehicle' (tib: *theg pa chen po*, skt: *mahayana*): There are two vehicles, causal and resultant vehicles. * See page 10

Here, the text is primarily about the effect/ **resultant vehicle**: the '*yana*' is a platform/ vehicle on which one can be delivered to the resultant stage of Buddhahood.

Perhaps in this case, with respect to '*yana*', this can be understood to be in the sense of result, effect, platform or the vehicle that brings one to the destination, achievement.

Therefore, this has to do with the Mahayana path in that, it is this path, platform or vehicle that carries, delivers one to the result of full enlightenment.

'Continuum' (tib: *rgyud*, skt: *tantra*): This is an explanation of the Tathagata Essence. A rough translation is **'buddha nature, buddha potential, [buddha lineage]'**. If one is specific, it is called **'Tathagata Essence'**.

The tathagata essence continues forever uninterruptedly as it has always been there. This is the meaning behind the word '*continuum*': It exists at the time of the basis and also at the time of the path, when one is traveling towards enlightenment, the tathagata essence is also there as it continues.

Expressions like *The nature of the mind is clear light; the factor of awareness and clarity; the emptiness of true existence of the mind*, whichever way expressed, it exists in an uninterrupted flow of continuum at the time of the basis, path and result.

Such phenomena exist at the time of being a sentient being and at the time of the path, when one is traveling towards enlightenment. These also exist at the time of full enlightenment, when one becomes a Buddha.

These exist uninterruptedly in an endless flow, but since the base which holds such an attribute differs at different times of the basis, path and result, they are therefore given different terms at different stages of a sentient being's development.

'Sublime' (tib: *bla ma ma'i pa*, skt: *uttara*): literally means **unexcelled**, which means that there is nothing higher than that.

There are different ways to explain how this text is unexcelled, unparalleled, nothing higher than this: one is that, due to the subject matter of this treatise being the **Seven Vajra Topics**, therefore this text is unexcelled, there is nothing higher than this.

According to *Gyaltsab Je*, one of the two chief disciples of Lama Tsongkhapa, he reads *uttara*/ unexcelled, to mean *the latter*.

Perhaps what *Gyaltsab Je* is saying is that, *the latter* here refers to *The Third/ Final Turning of the Wheel of Dharma*, that this text comments on the teachings belonging to that turning.

'Treatise' (tib: *bstan bcos*, skt: *shastra*): the word '*shastra*' brings together '*shasa*' and '*treya*'. '*Shasa*' has the connotation to mean 'to amend, to change'. '*Treya*' has the connotation of 'to rescue, to save, to protect'.

When these two words are combined together, then the meaning of '*treatise, shastra*' is: something that is a cure, a fix for one's afflictions and that which protects one from the suffering of the lower realms and cyclic existence in general.

Therefore, for something to be a buddhist treatise, it must perform these two functions, the subject matter of that treatise must be able to: 1) Cure one of one's afflictions, and 2) Protect one from the fears of the lower realms and cyclic existence.

Translator's homage:

Homage to all Buddhas and Bodhisattvas: this is a verse of homage by the *lotsawa*, the translator who originally translated this text from Sanskrit into Tibetan.

There are many reasons translators of the past always pay homage at the beginning of their works.

One is that, whenever one engages an activity like this, it has to be conjoined with *refuge*.

Whatever practice one does, these have to be conjoined with the mind of refuge. Likewise, when the *lotsawas*, the translators of the past, first embark on any translation work, they will go for refuge to the Three Jewels.

Through the act of paying homage to various special objects, the merit created would help to ensure that the translation project be brought to successful culmination without any obstacles along the way.

Subject matter- The Seven Vajra Topics:

The subject matter of this treatise is the **Seven Vajra Topics**, or the *Seven Essential Points*, of which the number of topics is definitely [fixed] as seven:

- 1a. Buddha, doctrine, community, basic constituent, enlightenment,
1b. Qualities, and finally, Buddha activities.**

This is the identification of the Seven Vajra Topics. Of these seven, only the first four will be covered: Buddha, doctrine, community and basis constituent.

These seven vajra essential points are treated, explained from two perspectives: conventional and ultimate. The reasons for such an order, sequence will also be explained later.

How the mind's factor of clarity and awareness is impermanent while its existence is eternal:

Student: Is the clear light nature of the mind a permanent phenomenon?

Khenrinpoche: *The factor of awareness and clarity* exists all the time: it exists at the time of the basis like, in the past and the present. It continues to exist when one enters the path. It will also continue to exist even after achieving enlightenment.

In that sense, its continuum is eternal as it has always existed and will always exist. But its nature, entity is impermanent.

It is like the 'self, I, person', which is imputed in dependence on any of the five aggregates. It has always been there since the past, it is here, and it will always exist even when one becomes enlightened. Therefore, in that sense, it is eternal.

But the person itself is always changing, therefore the nature, entity of the person is impermanent. Therefore, while it exists forever, it is impermanent.

If one analyzes the smallest possible atomic particle, this will never cease to exist. It will always be there and will continue to exist forever in that, even though it does aggregate [with other particles] to form coarser particles, which in turn, forms objects, the fundamental basic building block of matter will exist forever.

The *Factor of Awareness and Clarity*, which is the mind's natural ability to understand, comprehend objects and events, and for objects to reflect themselves back to the mind such that the mind is aware of them, cannot be permanent.

For if it is, then one cannot attribute how it undergoes changes and experiences things differently at different times.

Likewise for the person, although it has always existed and will continue to exist forever, but it is not permanent. For if it is, then one would not be able to explain how it experiences happiness at times while experiencing suffering at others.

One has to be able to account for one's 'self, I, person', how it exists. It does obviously exist: there is an 'I' that is suffering and is happy. Especially, one would have to account for how the 'I' has come from the previous life and moves on to the next.

According to some non-Buddhist traditions who assert reincarnation, they also assert something that can endure from life to life, moving from the past to the present and onto the next. But they assert the person to be permanent and unchanging.

Even though they accept that the lives can be different, but they assert that the person which moves from life to life must be the same and unchanging.

However, all Buddhist [philosophical tenets] refute the permanent 'I'. Such an 'I', the experiencer of suffering and happiness cannot be unchanging. For if it is, then one cannot account how it can experience happiness and suffering at different times.

Although the 'self, I, person' is impermanent, undergoes change, but its continuum is eternal.

Likewise, the mind's factor of clarity and awareness is impermanent and undergoes change, but its existence, continuum, is eternal.

That which is clear and knowing (the definition of mind) is eternal, as opposed to permanent. Eternal because it never ceases; it continues in its momentary, ever-changing (impermanent) flow into eternity. So, it is eternal and impermanent.

- Lama Thubten Yeshe

The correct order of learning and practice on the basis of faith in Buddha:

Lama Tsongkhapa mentioned in one writing that, without being easily satisfied by meager amounts of learning, he looked and studied extensively the text composed by the *Two Supreme and Six Ornaments*, the Great Indian Masters: [Nagarjuna, Aryadeva, Asanga, Vasubandhu, Dignaga, Dharmakirti, Gunaprabha and Shakyaprabha.]

He said that, to free oneself and sentient beings from the three kinds of suffering of cyclic existence and to place oneself and others in the *City of Liberation*, one must undertake the three-fold activities of hearing the teachings, reflecting on its meaning and familiarizing one's mind with what one has ascertained.

The final, highest, ultimate aspiration, a goal that anyone can achieve, is the non-abiding nirvana, a state where one's purpose and the welfare of others are both completely fulfilled. To achieve this, one must know the path that brings one to that state.

To do that, one has to **1)** learn and understand such a path. One must always remember that this is the reason one studies, listens to, educates oneself in and reflects on the Buddha's teachings.

One's education is unlike an ordinary education: one is not here to accumulate facts nor to be intellectual. One is doing extensive learning and reflection with the goal of achieving this non-abiding nirvana in mind. One has to remember this at all times and keep this in one's heart.

Lama Tsongkhapa mentioned that, it is not correct to be satisfied with some meager learning, knowing one subject matter or a mere portion of the Buddha's teachings. Rather, one has to know and learn everything.

Therefore firstly, one has to learn extensively and correctly so that one comes to know what one is going to practice.

After one has come to know through learning, one is then supposed to **2)** analyze and reflect on what one has studied, to gain a definite and certain conviction on what one has learnt. This can only come from analysis.

Through reflecting and analyzing, when one gains a definite heartfelt conviction in what one has learnt, that it is the case, such a heartfelt conviction would naturally cause one to be hardworking. One will naturally take an interest in one's practice.

Such a joyous perseverance will naturally arise. It is with such an enthusiasm that one **3)** meditates on the teachings, familiarizing what one has ascertained. It is through such a process that experiences and realizations of the path will arise.

This **[1) 2) 3)]** is the order of progression, how one is supposed to do one's learning and practice. Through such a process, one continues to familiarize one's mind with what one has already ascertained. Through this repeated familiarization, then the experiences and realizations of the path will arise in the mind, continue to evolve and grow.

As mentioned in the previous lesson, on the basis of thinking well about the root source of all of one's problems and miseries, when one comes to see for oneself that, it is only the Buddha who has presented this clearly and also shown the way to eradicate all of these problems, that a very special trust and devotion in Him will arise.

One will also come to see how the Buddha is really unsurpassed and unparalleled compared to the founders of other religious philosophical traditions. It is through this, that one comes to ascertain for oneself that the Buddha is valid and trustworthy.

Similarly, with respect to the presentation of the Four Noble Truths, when the Buddha taught true suffering and true origin, He explained that the true origin, the root of all of one's problems is the ignorance apprehending a self.

The only solution, antidote to that is the wisdom realizing selflessness. One has see for oneself, through thinking and analyzing, how this is the case, that the only way out is understanding and realizing this very special wisdom that realizes selflessness. This is why it is so important to continually work at this and arrive at such an understanding.

Therefore, it is not enough merely to hear and study the teachings. One has to [spend time] reflecting and critically analyze with reasoning what one has learnt, whether what one has learnt is really [the reality or not].

One has to think deeply until one gains a conviction. This is what one needs to do, one must think and analyze. For this purpose, one must firstly hear the teachings

How to listen to the teachings:

I have the [responsibility] here to explain the materials to you, in the course of this, if there is anything that you are unsure of or unclear about, or that you find to be not so correct, then you should ask. Through questions, answers and discussions, we can then understand the materials better. Therefore, it is important that you must think, have doubts, qualms and questions.

To have questions, you must be thinking. Merely [accepting] the information will not bring this about. To be able to think, your mind has to be fresh and alert.

Also, when we progress with the subject matter, if you forget what was taught previously, then you will also not have any questions as well.

You have heard many times how you should listen to the teachings and how it should be taught as mentioned in the *Lam Rim* teachings. Since you already know them, you need to refresh and remember those teachings and put them into practice here.

The purpose of listening to and meditating on the teachings:

As mentioned before, the meaning of *shastra*, treatise, refers to that which contains the subject that would 1) pacify the enemy, one's afflictions, in one's mind and 2) protect one from the sufferings of the lower realms and cyclic existence.

This is what the treatises can do for oneself. Therefore, when one listens to the teachings, one needs to do so in a way that these two factors can have an effect on oneself in that way.

It is mentioned in the *Advice of the Great Kadampa Masters* of the past that, the **A) sign of having learnt extensively** is being **subdued and disciplined**. This means that, the more one learns over time, the more subdued, calm and peaceful one would become. One would become less arrogant and proud. This is something that all of us need.

It is said that one's studies have gone wrong if, this promotes one's arrogance, pride, jealousy and negative competitiveness.

Therefore, it is important that this does not happen. This is because, the goal behind learning is to pacify the enemy, one's afflictions, in one's mind.

Likewise, these great masters also said that, the correct **B) sign of having meditated** on the teachings is the **weakening of one's afflictions**. If one discovers that one's afflictions have become weaker over time as a result of meditation, then this is a clear sign that one is really meditating.

When one says that a certain person is a great meditator, this depends on whether his afflictions have weakened over time or not as a result of his meditation. This must be the sign of a correct meditator. This is because, that which has been tormenting one, making one suffer and keeping one in cyclic existence, is none other than the enemy, one's afflictions.

Correcting one's motivation for listening to the teachings:

One's accumulation of karma is commensurate with the strength of one's afflictions. If this is very powerful [and long-lasting], one tends to accumulate more and stronger karma.

Likewise, if one's afflictions are weaker [and short-lived], then correspondingly, the frequency and intensities of the karma that one accumulates would be also be weaker [and lesser].

I do not have to repeatedly remind you on the importance of setting up a correct motivation for learning. You have to keep this in mind and be reminded to adjust and watch it every time when you have an opportunity to learn the teachings.

You have learnt this already, but merely knowing them does not help at all. What helps is to use what you have heard, known, learnt, understood and been explained to, to discipline and subdue your own mind. This has to be the motivation.

This is why, the setting of a correct motivation at the beginning of a teaching is always emphasized.

When one adjusts one's motivation, this makes a big difference as this helps one to nudge one's mind in the correct direction.

The Seven Vajra Topics, Seven Essential Points:

The subject matter of this treatise, the *Sublime Continuum*, is the *Seven Vajra Topics, Seven Essential Points*:

**1a. Buddha, doctrine, community, basic constituent, enlightenment,
1b. Qualities, and finally, Buddha activities.**

1) Buddha Jewel: the Buddha one will become but has yet to attain. Divided into ultimate and conventional Buddha Jewel.

1a) Ultimate Buddha Jewel, Dharmakaya, Truth Body: the true cessation and true path included in the continuum of Buddha superior.

This is also divided into two: **a) Nature Truth Body, Svabhavikakaya**, true cessation in the continuum of Buddha superior: an abandonment of afflictive obscurations, & **b) Wisdom Truth Body, Jnanakaya**, true path in the continuum of Buddha superior: the wisdom of Buddha directly perceiving all phenomena.

When one considers what a Buddha is, one usually thinks that it is the *form* of a Buddha. Like how one perceives another person, it is usually in relation to the body of the person. This happens when one does not have a good understanding of what Buddha really is. Therefore, one has to think deeply.

1b) Conventional Buddha Jewel, Rupakaya, Form Body: a) Complete Enjoyment Body, Sambogakaya, & b) Emanation Body, Nirmanakaya.

To know all of Buddha's teachings, one has to learn and know widely. To accomplish this, when one has completed one topic and is moving on to another subject matter, one cannot forget what one has learnt earlier. If one forgets what one has learnt, then there will be no way one can make any connections and build up a complete picture of the Buddha's teachings.

2) Dharma Jewel: is divided into ultimate Dharma Jewel and conventional Dharma Jewel.

2a) Ultimate Dharma Jewel: generally, it is the true paths and/ or true cessations in the continua of superiors. In the context of this Mahayana treatise, due to it being a Mahayana presentation of the Three Jewels, then it is the true paths and/ or true cessations in the continuum of a bodhisattva [/Mahayana] superior.

2b) Conventional Dharma Jewel: for example, the <i>Short, Middling and Extensive Perfection of Wisdom Sutras</i> .
3) Sangha Jewel: divided into ultimate and conventional Sangha Jewel.
3a) Ultimate Sangha Jewel: In the context of this Mahayana treatise, this refers to the true paths and/ or true cessations in the continuum of a bodhisattva [/Mahayana] superior.
3b) Conventional Sangha Jewel: Mahayana superiors.
Those unfamiliar in the Buddha's teachings will think that the Dharma Jewel refers only to the Buddha's teachings or a scripture of Buddha. The real, ultimate and actual Dharma Jewel is <i>true path and true cessation</i> .
This has to be the case, as it is the true path and true cessation that serve as the actual refuge. It is the true path leading to the true cessation that brings one the freedom from one's afflictions and protects one from problems and sufferings.
It is mentioned in the teachings that, of the Three Jewels, Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, it is the Dharma Jewel that is the actual refuge, that which actually protects one. The Dharma Jewel here refers to the true paths and true cessations.
If one thinks well, one will ascertain how this is the case.
The actual, real Sangha Jewel is the mental quality of true path and true cessation as well. But for many who are unaware, they would merely consider the sangha as ordained persons.
From here, one can see how important it is to learn widely, the more information at one's disposal for critical analysis, the more one can analyze. Likewise, the more one knows about the Three Jewels, this would definitely help in [strengthening] one's faith and devotion towards the Three Jewels.
Having an extensive learning can help make one's faith and devotion much more stable.
But as mentioned earlier, all of such benefits will not occur merely by listening to the teachings. On the basis of having heard, read and analyzed, when one comes to the point of utmost certainty that this is the case and cannot be anything else, then this will definitely promote faith, trust and devotion.
4) Basic Constituent, Tathagata Essence: this is also divided into ultimate and conventional.
4a) Ultimate basic constituent: the emptiness of inherent existence of the minds of sentient beings.
4b) Conventional basic constituent: the potential in sentient beings' mind that is amenable to the development of both the worldly and transcendental qualities.
5) Enlightenment: the Buddha that has already been attained by others, this is also divided into ultimate and conventional.
5a) Ultimate Enlightenment: Buddha's Truth Body, Dharmakaya, in the continuum of someone other than oneself.
5b) Conventional Enlightenment: Buddha's Form Body, Rupakaya, in the continuum of someone other than oneself.
6) Qualities: also divided into ultimate and conventional qualities.
6a) Ultimate Qualities: 32 qualities of Buddha- 10 powers, 4 perfect knowledges and 18 unshared qualities of Buddha.
6b) Conventional Qualities: 12 ripened qualities of Buddha like the 32 major signs of the Buddha.
7) Enlightened Activities: also divided into the ultimate and conventional.
7a) Ultimate Enlightened Activities: activities of wisdom like the wisdom of accomplishment.
7b) Conventional Enlightened Activities: activities of Buddha teaching the Dharma.

Explanation of the ultimate and conventional from the perspective of *basis, path and result*:

From the perspective of the basis, there are the two truths:
Student 1: Why is there a need to differentiate between the ultimate and the conventional?
Khenrinpoche: before one can appreciate such a treatment, one needs to have some understanding of the <i>two truths</i> , which is an explanation on what constitutes reality, what really exists. The presentation of the entire reality can be subsumed into these two levels of truths of anything that exists. This is called the <i>ultimate truth</i> and the <i>conventional truth</i> .
On the basis of any chosen object of a phenomenon that exists, such an object has two levels of truth to it:
There is an ultimate level of truth where there is [<i>parity</i>] between how the object appears and how it exists, the ultimate truth. There is another conventional level of truth where there is a <i>disparity</i> between how the [same] object appears and how it really exists, the conventional truth. These two facets of truth applies to any one phenomenon.
Since this is the case, then there are two different minds that apprehends these two different phenomena [separately]: Therefore, there is a valid cognizer that distinguishes an ultimate, and a valid cognizer that distinguishes a conventionality.
Understanding these two levels of truth constitutes the reality of existence, which is characterized by these two truths.

This is how things are by nature. The presentation of the Four Noble Truths is therefore made on the basis of these two truths.
This is because, since there is a level of truth where there is a fundamental disparity between how things appear and how it actually exists, then there will be states of consciousness that will misperceive, follow and then engage in the object erroneously. The result of which brings suffering. Such distorted states of mind constitutes what true origin is.
Due to such distorted states of mind, [true origin], then the only result is suffering [true suffering].
One can take the 'self, I, person' as an example to understand how there are these two levels of truth to a person:
Whether this is referring to holding onto oneself or someone else, the [fundamental problem] is holding onto something real, existing right there independent from its own side, existing inherently, truly.
Not only is there of such an appearance, one also assents to, believes in such an appearance, holding onto it as really true.
Whatever appears, one believes it is how it exists. Such [a misapprehension] then becomes the source for anger, attachment and so forth. When these afflictions arise, one follows after them and thus accumulates karma.
When one accumulates karma, one has to experience its results, as well as being propelled into further cycles of death and rebirth. This is how one circles in samsara.
Through not understanding how there is a disparity between appearance and reality, not knowing that such an appearance is false, one is then lead into true origins and true sufferings.
Based on the deeper and final nature of reality, the ultimate truth, where there is [parity] between appearance and existence, then [one can attain] the true cessations through the true paths.
Therefore, the two truths constitutes what reality is. For anything that exists, there are these two levels of truths.
From the perspective of the path, there are the two aspects of the path, method and wisdom:
Hence, to engage in a path that leads to a permanent freedom from all problems and sufferings, one needs to cultivate a path that combines both [aspects of] method and wisdom.
Wisdom here is mainly understood from the perspective of the mind that understands the ultimate nature of reality, the ultimate truth.
Examples of the method aspect of the path would be the mind of great compassion and bodhicitta. By depending on the method aspect of the path, this will culminate in the achievement of conventional Buddha Jewel, the Form Body, Rupakaya.
From the perspective of the result, there are two Bodies:
Since there is the path of method and wisdom, what one achieves at the end are the two Bodies, the Truth and Form Bodies of Buddha.
By depending on the wisdom aspect of the path that directly perceives selflessness, one achieves the final true path and true cessation in the continuum of [oneself being] Buddha superior. This is the ultimate Buddha Jewel.
From here, one can see how, on the <i>basis</i> of reality of the two truths, one engages in the <i>path</i> that combines [the two aspects of] method and wisdom, to achieve the <i>result</i> of the two Bodies of Buddha.
[From the perspective of basis, path and result], this is one way of explaining the ultimate and the conventional.

Another way to explain the ultimate and conventional from the perspective of *perceiving Buddhas*:

The true path and true cessation in the continuum of a Buddha superior is only a direct object of utilization of Buddhas.
Only a Buddha can directly perceive and realize another Buddha's true path and true cessation. In this sense, such a quality is the final, highest and ultimate [Buddha Jewel].
The conventional Buddha Jewel refers to the Form Body: Complete Enjoyment Body and Supreme Emanation Body.
The Supreme Emanation Body can be seen by disciples possessing pure karmas. Complete Enjoyment Body can be seen by the more developed minds of bodhisattva superiors.
Since [superiors and ordinary beings] are not Buddhas but sentient beings, therefore [the Form Bodies] are accessible to sentient beings. In this sense, the Form Bodies are called conventional [Buddha Jewel].
The Dharma Jewel is also divided into the ultimate and conventional. The ultimate Dharma Jewel being the true path and true cessation, which is the actual Dharma Jewel that protects [sentient beings].
The conventional Dharma Jewel refers to scriptures, sutras or the actual teachings of Buddha.
Since the ultimate Dharma Jewel is the actual [jewel] that protects [sentient beings], therefore, the 'conventional' in the sutras or teachings of the conventional Dharma Jewel connotes the sense that these are not the real, actual Dharma that protects.

What is ultimate tathagata essence :

When one studies the Buddha's teachings, it is inevitable that different terminologies, words are used. This presents a challenge to some. Putting aside the meaning, even the word itself is difficult.

Student 2: Is the ultimate Buddha nature 1) the emptiness of sentient beings' mind, or 2) sentient beings' minds' emptiness?

Khenrinpoche: if one does not think, analyze or debate [about this], then you can treat it as the same.

But the usual [explanation] of [ultimate] basic constituent, naturally abiding lineage, [ultimate] tathagata essence, refers to *the suchness of the mind of sentient being*.

The way to analyze the topics:

This is a brief presentation of the Seven Vajra Points. Details of the Three Jewels and the vast majority of the topic on tathagata essence will be explained in later verses. At the end, there will be explanations on the reason for presenting and the order of these Seven Vajra Topics.

What one needs to do is to memorize [the names of] these Seven Vajra Topics, their ultimate and conventional aspects.

It is only when one keeps these words in mind would one be able to make [the meanings] clearer while one progresses as the words act as the foundation for all these.

The whole reason to present these topics into ultimate and conventional is to make the topics clearer. Otherwise, one would only know [the term] 'Buddha' [and not much].

When one understands that from the ultimate point is such and conventional is such, this will then lead to more [qualms], which [when resolved], becomes clearer.

If one analyzes from the [end results] to see the reasons for having Truth Body and Form Body of Buddha, this is due to the [combined] path that [constitutes] method and wisdom. The reason for having such a path is due to the reality of the two levels of truth. Again, one can analyze from the levels of reality what are the reasons for having the two truths.

One can analyze [and compare] the meanings of: 1) ultimate truth: parity between appearance and existence, and 2) conventional truths: disparity between appearance and existence, to see how these two levels of truth constitutes every single phenomenon there is.

* From page 3:

The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras teach the naturelessness, the emptiness, of all phenomena on their explicit level, but they also teach in a hidden way the modes of the paths to supreme enlightenment, called exalted-knowledge-of-all-aspects. The Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras are said to indicate the path structure neither explicitly nor implicitly but in a hidden way because the reasonings proving emptiness only establish an absence, a nonaffirming negative—not something positive and not even an affirming negative—such that a consciousness explicitly realizing emptiness knows a mere elimination of an object of negation. Thus, the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras communicate the message of the path structure not explicitly, nor even implicitly, but in a hidden manner.

- *The Hidden Teaching of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras* - Jeffrey Hopkins

* From page 4:

The great master Longchenpa defined (causal and resultant vehicles) as follows: "The causal vehicles are so called because of accepting a sequence of cause and effect, asserting that buddhahood is attained by increasing the qualities of the nature of the sugata essence, which is merely present as a seed, through the circumstance of the two accumulations. The resultant vehicles are so called because of asserting that the basis for purification is the (sugata) essence endowed with qualities that are spontaneously present as a natural possession in sentient beings, just as the sun is endowed with rays of light; that the objects of purification are the temporary defilements of the eight collections (of consciousnesses), like the sky being (temporarily) obscured by clouds; and that one realizes the result of purification, the primordially present nature, by means of that which purifies, the paths of ripening and liberation. Besides this, there is no difference (between the two) in sequence or quality."

-*Advice from the Lotus-born: A Collection of Padmasambhava's Advice, Volume 1.* By Padma Sambhava

Structure that governs the process of investigation – what and how one should rely on:

Buddha has advised that one should not accept whatever He has said merely out of respect and because it was said by Him.
Rather, He said that one should check and investigate thoroughly whether what He has said accords with reality or not. It is only after knowing that whatever He has said is true, that one should adopt and put into practice.
If there is a need to investigate, then there must be a structure that governs the process of analysis. Hence, there are the: Four [Mental*] Reliances: * <i>Principles for Practice - Jam-yang-shay-pa on the Four Reliances (William Magee, UMA INSTITUTE FOR TIBETAN STUDIES page 24)</i>
1) [Within the external condition of reliance], do not rely on the person, rather, rely on the Dharma [teachings]: This means one should not simply follow a person merely because he is famous or has many followers. Rather, one should examine his teachings. If it is worthy, then one can adopt it.
2) [Within the internal condition of listening to the Dharma teachings,] do not rely on the words but on the meanings: This means one should not trust whatever was said simply because it sounded good, was delivered in a very charismatic and pleasing way. Rather, one should examine its intended meaning. It is only if the meaning behind the words is worthy should one adopt it. Even if the presentation is not very pleasant, the words being used are not poetic, but if it conveys the correct meaning of what one should discard and adopt in the context of the Dharma, one should then put them into practice. But if the subject matter, the meaning, does not accurately convey what one needs to adopt and discard, then no matter how nice sounding and wonderful the presentation may be, it would not bring about any benefit to one.
3) [Within the internal condition of analyzing the meaning,] do not rely on the interpretive meaning, but on the definitive meaning: This means not relying on and following only the literal meanings of words. Rather, one should look for and derive conclusion on its ultimate meaning and intent, the main point.
4) [Within the internal condition of knowing the intended definitive meaning,] do not rely on [one's] ordinary mind, but on [one's] wisdom: Do not rely on ordinary mind means to not rely merely on hearing and reflection. Rather, one should rely on the [effort of wisdom] to bring forth and gain a direct experience of the teachings that comes from meditating and familiarizing one's mind with the topic. This is because, whatever result is achieved through mere hearing and reflecting on the teachings is <i>not stable</i> . Stability comes when one experiences [the teachings] oneself through familiarization. When one has experienced it, this becomes something that will be trustworthy. One can then rely on such a [stable experience]. The main point is that, one needs to: 1) derive a real and valid experience of the teachings for oneself. This is what one should be 2) placing one's hopes and trusts in.

The object of investigation:

If investigation is important, then [one should understand that] the objects that are to be investigated are <i>all phenomena</i> .
This is either a 1) manifest or a 2) hidden phenomenon. The latter is divided into 2a) slightly hidden phenomenon and 2b) extremely hidden phenomenon. These are the three categories of any phenomenon that can be known, realized.
1) There are phenomena that are manifestly obvious. For example, the forms experienced by one's eye consciousness, sounds experienced by ear consciousness, taste experienced by tongue consciousness, touch experienced by body consciousness, etc. [The objects of] forms, sounds, smell, taste and touch are phenomena that are manifest, as one can experience these directly without the need to think or analyze to experience them. Such objects are therefore called manifest phenomena.
2a) There are also many phenomena that cannot be directly experienced, but can only be understood through reasoning. For example, although one only sees that there is smoke rising from a location and does not see any fire directly, one can infer in dependence on the correct proof, sign of the smoke and come to understand the existence of fire at that location. There are many such phenomena that can be understood, realized through employing a correct proof, sign, reasoning.
2b) The category of the extremely hidden phenomena is extremely difficult to understand even with the use of reasoning. The subtle workings of 'karma and its effects' is one such example. One can only come to understand and trust its existence by depending on the speech of a valid person. This means one has to trust another person [that such a phenomenon do exist]. This is reliance on a person. But this is not having mere casual [faith] and trust in a person. Before one can trust such a person, one would have subjected him to much [scrutiny] through investigating on other things that he has said. Upon careful examination, if one sees that whatever other [manifest or hidden phenomena] that he has taught is not false but has proven to be true, then one can come to trust the speech of such a person.

In his praise to Buddha Shakyamuni, Lama Tsongkhapa said: “Whatever You have said is unparalleled. You are the unparalleled expounder because of your precise presentation of subtle dependent-origination.”
If one thinks carefully on this subject, one can develop certainty and see the truth for oneself in Buddha's explanation on dependent-origination. When one comes to see the truth oneself, one can then accept other extremely obscured phenomena the Buddha has expounded as well. This was the case for Lama Tsongkhapa himself.
Based on seeing how Buddha was unmistakable with respect to the critical explanation of dependent-origination, Lama Tsongkhapa could then come to trust all other extremely obscured phenomena such as the qualities of the paths and grounds.
When one considers some of the descriptions of the various qualities achieved on the ten bodhisattva grounds, as well as the qualities that the Buddha Himself are said to possess, one would realize that these are inconceivable. But one can come to trust that such phenomena do exist, through gaining conviction in the presentation of dependent-origination.
As mentioned earlier, an example of a slightly obscured phenomenon is to infer an understanding that there is the [existence of] fire in dependence on the direct perception of smoke, even though one does not [directly realize] that there is fire.
A simple example to understand an extremely obscured phenomena would be one's trust that one was born on such-and-such a day and time. There is no reason not to believe that one was born on such a day and time when being told by one's parents.
The understanding and acceptance of extremely obscured phenomena have to be in dependence upon the speech of another person. But one must have correctly ascertained that such a person is valid, who will not expound falsehoods,
Therefore, it is not a matter of merely believing in whatever another person says is true, as there have to be very many varied reasons one has to analyze, before one can eventually settle that [such a phenomenon] is true.
Hence, to understand something, like the Buddha's teachings, one has to critically examine and analyze. This is one of the reasons one is studying these great treatises: One has to critically analyze and develop one's own certainty and conviction.

How understanding the basis, path and result would make a difference to one's practice:

As mentioned in the previous lesson, in response to the question on the reason for dividing the topics into ultimate and conventional, this is something important that one has to understand and discover for oneself:
<p><i>The basis: [the single entity but different isolates of the] two truths, The path: the [two aspects of the one path of] method and wisdom and The result: [the inseparability of] the two Bodies.</i></p>
Basis: Which is the reality of everything that exists, essentially possesses these two facets of existence, two levels of truth, an ultimate truth and a conventional truth. These two truths, which is <i>one entity but different isolates</i> , apply to every existent.
One must understand what these two truths are. The understanding of one truth must not contradict the other. If it does, then this shows that one has not understood [either]. One must be able to posit how these two truths can coexist harmoniously.
Using the person as an example: the person is none other than a mere appearance to the mind that it appears to, which does not investigate nor analyze. Hence, to a mind that does not investigate nor analyze, there is a mere appearance of a person.
This is an illustration of a conventional phenomenon. If one were to go beyond mere appearance of a person to investigate and analyze the ultimate, final nature of what a person is, this would then be an analysis to distinguish the ultimate.
In such a final analysis, one would not be able to find a person one can point to. A 'findable person' cannot be found. Instead, what one finds is the emptiness of an inherently existent person. This is the ultimate nature of what a person is.
When one analyzes and looks for a real person, what one finds at the end of such an analysis is the emptiness of inherently existing person. One does not find the non-existence of a person, which would be an incorrect finding.
This is the meaning behind the statement, <i>Not Seeing is the Best Seeing</i> : <i>Not seeing</i> is what is found by a mind distinguishing an ultimate at the end of analysis. Such a mind does not find the non-existence of a person, rather, what it finds is the non-existence of an <i>inherently existent</i> person.
One finds that 'an inherently existent person' does not exist whatsoever. This is the ultimate, final nature of what a person is, which has [no other nature] beyond that. Hence, this <i>not seeing</i> is the <i>best seeing</i> , [as one accurately sees its final nature.]
Since the basis of reality consists of these two truths, the path would also involve two aspects: method and wisdom.
The method aspect of the path involves the conventional and the wisdom aspect refers to the mind that sees the ultimate truth.
Since at the time of the basis the two truths are <i>one entity</i> , hence, at the time of the- Path: the two aspects of method and wisdom are also [conjoined], not separate.
To better understand how the two truths are <i>one entity but different isolates</i> , one can examine the <i>Four-fold emptinesses</i> taught in the <i>Heart of the perfection of wisdom sutra</i> : “Form is emptiness, emptiness is form; emptiness is not other than form, and form is also not other than emptiness.”

By depending on a path that unites both method and wisdom, one achieves the: Resultant two Bodies: Truth and Form Bodies, which respectively can be called the ultimate Body and conventional Body.
Buddha's Exalted Body and Exalted Mind are oneness, inseparable, in one indiffereniable union.
If one has a good understanding of what Buddha really is, how His Exalted Body, Speech and Mind are all in one indiffereniable union, then one would come to understand what it means when the teaching says:
Wherever the Buddha's holy Mind perceives, His holy Body is there. Wherever the Buddha's holy Body is, His holy Speech is there.
One can then come to understand how, all the numberless Buddhas can abide on each single atom.
When one has a good understanding of what Buddha is, His qualities and so forth, this makes a big difference to one's mind.
In the root text, there is the presentation of the Three Jewels, where one can understand how Buddha is something so inconceivable, that wherever the Buddha's Mind is, His Body is there, wherever His Body is, His Speech is there as well. This is because, these three are in one indiffereniable union.
When one understands this well, then whatever practices one does, whether it is going for refuge or purifying negativities, [having such an understanding] would make a huge difference to [one's practice.]

Why the Seven Vajra Topics are enumerated as seven [from the perspective of training]:

[From the perspective of training, resultant refuge is taught first:] It is taught that the <i>Seven Vajra Topics</i> are definitely enumerated as seven. This is so from the perspective of cause and effect.
One's highest and final object of achievement, attainment, is the <i>Final Three Jewels</i> . In terms of accomplishing one's own purpose to complete fulfillment, or the accomplishing the highest purpose, the welfare of others, both are encompassed when one achieves the Final Three Jewels.
At the end, after all the efforts one has put in to achieve the [final goal], from the perspective of the <i>result</i> , one [becomes the] 1), 2) 3) Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. This is the result one aims for.
To achieve such a result, one needs to create the causes, which are divided into <i>substantial cause</i> and <i>cooperative conditions</i> . One can also term these as <i>causes and conditions</i> of the results.
To simply illustrate the concept of substantial cause and cooperative conditions: for a sprout to produce, an indispensable substantial cause is the seed. But for the sprout to grow and appear, one also needs the cooperative conditions of water, soil, fertilizer, warmth and so forth.
4) The fourth topic is basic constituent, [the ultimate aspect being] <i>Suchness with defilement</i> , this is [a designated] cause.
The [ultimate aspect of the] tathagata essence, a suchness with defilement, is by nature pure from the very beginning. This is because, if it is not pure by nature, then one would not be able to posit [how] adventitious defilements [can be purified].
[The ultimate] tathagata essence, a suchness with defilement, is an uncompounded, permanent phenomenon. Hence, it cannot produce a phenomenon that undergoes momentary change. Therefore, it is not a fully-qualified substantial cause. But due to its existence as being indispensable for the achievement of the Final Three Jewels, it is [designated as a substantial] cause.
The conventional aspect of the tathagata essence is <i>the potential in the mind that is suitable to become Buddha</i> . This is therefore the actual substantial cause.
The suchness of one's mind is the ultimate truth. One's mind's factor of clarity and awareness is the conventional aspect of the mind. By nature, these two [aspects of one's mind] have always been there as they have always existed naturally.
These two levels of truth exist together as two facets of one's mind. Hence, through the process of the path, at the time of the result, the emptiness of one's mind and one's mind can become the two Bodies of Buddha.
Oneself and all sentient beings possess such a mind bearing these two natures in that, it is naturally pure, as well as having the potential that can be transformed into enlightenment. Hence, one can posit that, all sentient beings can become Buddhas .
Therefore, the cause of enlightenment does not exist outside as it exists within oneself. Every sentient being possesses such a potential. As long as each sentient being has been in existence, it has always been there. Therefore, there is no need to create the cause [of enlightenment] outside one's mind due to it being already present within one's mind.
Hence, the teachings express enlightenment thus: Enlightenment is not far away . When one analyzes the above, one can see how this is true, as the cause of enlightenment is within one's mind. Hence, due to the cause of enlightenment not being far away, but within [the minds] of each sentient being, it is expressed that enlightenment itself is not far away.
However, this import is that, [it is only that] the cause of enlightenment is not outside, but within. What one needs to do is to work with one's mind. This is the significance of this expression.

Therefore, the teachings also say that: <i>Enlightenment is not near.</i>
This is because, to achieve enlightenment, one has to bear with difficulties and undertake hardships to remove the two obscurations, without such effort, enlightenment would not be achieved.
Hence, when one does not bear hardships [for enlightenment,] it is not near.
In essence, all sentient beings possess both the substantial cause and cooperative conditions of enlightenment.
[From the perspective of training, causal refuge is taught later]:
The last three topics, 5) Enlightenment, 6) Qualities and 7) Buddha activities, are posited as cooperative conditions that one needs for achieving enlightenment.
Taking the example of Shakyamuni Buddha: He practiced, achieved enlightenment and turned the wheel of Dharma. Through depending on His turning, one has to actualize what was taught. Through removing one's own adventitious defilements, this is how oneself can achieve enlightenment.
Therefore, these last three vajra topics are the cooperative conditions for one to achieve enlightenment: One needs enlightenment, an external Buddha, [who is fully-qualified with] qualities and who has [enacted Buddha activities] by teaching, turning the wheel of Dharma. One then practices what was taught.
This is how one removes the defilements that are obscuring one's own basic constituent. Through this, one then achieves enlightenment. Therefore, one needs to rely on Buddha's activities.
These Seven Vajra Topics are therefore definitely enumerated as seven due to the points mentioned.
In essence, with respect to the objects of attainment, there are the Final Three Jewels of 1) Buddha, 2) Dharma and 3) Sangha. To achieve this, one needs the cause, the 4) basic constituent, as well as the cooperative conditions of 5) enlightenment of others, their 6) qualities and 7) activities.
Of course, there are many causes of enlightenment, which are much more than what is enumerated. But with respect to the enumeration of the vajra topic as being seven, this is the approximate, basic enumeration. All the other causes of enlightenment can therefore be included within these topics. Hence, approximately, these are the Seven Vajra Topics.
[If one's basic constituent is not pure by nature, then one would not be able to posit the purity of adventitious defilements, how one's adventitious defilements can be purified]:
To achieve the final three objects of refuge, the Final Three Jewels, one has to meditate on, internalize, be familiarized with, and actualize the correct view. To develop this view, one needs to create the causes as well.
Oneself and all sentient beings possess the basic constituent, tathagata essence, the emptiness of the mind, which is by nature pure. Due to its nature of being empty of existing inherently, therefore, it is possible to realize it.
One has the potential to realize this, because the mind's factor of clarity and awareness, especially the factor of awareness, allows one to correctly attend oneself to the method, paying correct mental attention and correctly adopt that which is needed to realize the correct view. Hence, this ability, the factor of awareness, is also innate within oneself.
This shows that it is possible to realize the correct view, because: <i>a)</i> the ultimate nature of the mind is empty of existing inherently, which is by nature pure, and <i>b)</i> one's mind is also by nature able to be aware of [phenomena].
Due to possessing such [attributes] naturally, one can actualize the correct view, through which one can become Buddha.
Although one naturally possesses the cause for actualizing the correct view, but to actualize it, one needs the cooperative conditions. Hence, one needs the [external] factors of enlightenment, qualities and Buddha activities.
Hence, one needs to depend on someone other than oneself, which allows one to actualize the correct view.
This is how Gyalsab Je explains the definite enumeration of the root text as seven.
Such a way of presentation begins with resultant refuge: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha that one will become. Enlightenment, [qualities and Buddha activities are] then posited as the causal refuge, someone other than oneself that one depends on.

Why the Seven Vajra Topics are enumerated as seven [from the perspective of actual sequence]:

There is also another way of commenting on these topics, whereby these two [groups of causal and resultant refuges] are reversed: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are posited as causal refuge, someone other than oneself, whereas enlightenment [and so forth] are posited as resultant refuge:
1) Buddha first came, turned the wheel of Dharma, by depending on this, someone then actualized the 2) Dharma Jewel and become the 3) Sangha Jewel. Through working at His teachings, the Sangha Jewel then separates the 4) defilements from the suchness of his mind. When all defilements are completely separated from his mind, he achieves 5) enlightenment together with its 6) qualities and 7) activities of Buddha.

A brief presentation of the subject matter:

<p><i>1 Buddha, doctrine, community, basic constituent, enlightenment, Qualities, and finally, Buddha activities— The body of the entire treatise is in brief These seven diamond topics.</i></p>

Reason for the title:

<p>The reason for calling these topics as 'Vajra Topics' or 'Vajra Essential Points' is this: these seven phenomena are called vajra [:diamond, to mean indestructible] because, 1) the meaning and what these are, cannot sufficiently be conveyed through the use of conventions, terms or words. It is therefore beyond the scope of ordinary thoughts.</p>

<p>[These phenomena] are something that is directly accessible only to superiors. Hence, these are called vajras.</p>

<p>Taking ultimate truth as an example, in the short homage to the perfection of wisdom, [it is praised as] the <i>inconceivable and inexpressible perfection of wisdom</i>.</p>
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<p>1a) It is called <i>inconceivable</i> because, one cannot sufficiently understand what emptiness, as well as the mind that directly perceives it, are all about with mere ordinary thought.</p>

<p>Likewise, 1b) the meaning of emptiness as an object and the wisdom that directly realizes it cannot be sufficiently conveyed through terms and words, [hence <i>inexpressible</i>.]</p>

<p>Therefore, only the meditative equipoise of a superior directly focusing on emptiness can fully comprehend and experience what emptiness and the mind that realizes it, are all about. For these reason, [the treatise] is called vajra.</p>

<p>Likewise, 2) from the perspective of the ultimate, these topics are also called vajra.</p>
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<p>The topics, essential points here, refer to the treatise itself. Therefore, it is also called Essential Points, Topics because, 3) one has to listen, learn, study, reflect, internalize and then actualize them directly.</p>
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Citation of scriptural source:

<p>To show that the treatise of these Seven Vajra Topics is not a 'self-creation' of Maitreya, the following verse then cites the scriptural source:</p>
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<p><i>2 These [seven] in connection are to be known by way of their own natures In this order in the [Questions of] King Dharanishvara Sutra— The [first] three from the introduction [And the other] four from the divisions of the attributes of the intelligent [Bodhisattvas] and of Conquerors.</i></p>
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Student 1: What are the Final Three Jewels?

Khenrinpoche: Final Buddha Jewel is Buddha. One can say it is the Four Bodies [of Buddha]. Final Dharma Jewel is the true path and true cessation in the continuum of Buddha superior. Illustrations of Final Sangha Jewel can be posited as Buddha superior, Emanation Body or Enjoyment Body.

Student 2: In the Four-fold emptinesses, why is form, which is impermanent, [equated with] emptiness [and vice versa]?

Khenrinpoche: Form is the mere appearance of the mind to which [form] appears to it, in which the mind does not investigate and realize beyond such a superficial appearance. To such a mind, there is the mere appearance of form. Hence, such a mere appearance is posited as form. If one is dissatisfied with such a mere appearance and wishes to [understand and realize its final nature], then one can analyze its ultimate nature. At the end of a correct analysis, what one will find is that the form does not exist inherently. This is the meaning of *Form is emptiness*. This is therefore the ultimate nature of form, it being empty of existing inherently.

While such a form is by nature empty of existing inherently, but it does exist, [albeit a mere existence by way of] manifestation arising from the nature of emptiness. Therefore, it exists as a mere appearance. This is what is meant by *Emptiness is form*.

This is an example of *Not relying on the words, but relying on the meaning*.

How to identify one's object of negation, the crucial factor to realize emptiness:

Nagarjuna's <i>Precious Garland</i> has a useful verse to reflect on, when meditating on selflessness: <i>A person is not earth, not water, not fire, not wind, not space, not consciousness, and not all of them. What person is there other than these?</i>
When one sees one's own 'self, I, person', this appears to be 'self-instituting', right there able to stand on its own. This is how the 'I' appears. It is said that, in reality, the 'self, I, person' exists as that which is merely posited, labeled by the mind.
But in one's experience, the 'I' appears [opposite to that] as something real, right there from its own side.
Not only does the 'I' appear in this way, one also assents, believes in such an appearance, [one mistakenly believes] that this is how the 'I' exists. Therefore, what one has to do is to check and see if this 'I' really exists in the way it appears to one.
One can do so by reflecting on the above verse. Although it is said that, in reality the 'I' exists as merely posited, labeled by the mind, but this is not how it appears. The 'I' appears as existing right there from its own side, able to stand on its own, independent of other factors. Such a <i>self-instituted 'I'</i> , which appears to one, <i>is the object of negation</i> .
One then has to check for oneself whether such a self-instituted 'I', that exists right there from its own side, really exist or not.
The person is that which is merely designated in dependence upon the six elements. While this is the case, but if one were to look for the person among these six elements of earth, water, fire and so forth, one would not be able to point at any of them as being the person. Not only is the person not any of the six elements, the person is also not a composite of them as well.
The 'self, I, person' is not any of the six elements, nor their composites, nor something separated from them. When one looks for the person outside, of a different nature, a separate entity from these six elements, one would also not be able to find it.
Therefore, what is the person then? <i>Just as because of being an aggregation of the six constituents, a person is not real.</i>
What this means is that, the person is that which is merely designated in dependence upon the six elements. Hence, the person does not exist by its own entity, from its own side, there is no real person. Because the person is merely designated in dependence upon the composites of these six elements, hence, it is not real and do not exist from its own side.
Just like the person is not real in that way, likewise, since each of the six elements are also made up of their own respective parts, merely designated in dependence upon their own parts, hence, each of them are also not real.
This verse explains about the selflessness of persons and selflessness of phenomena. Therefore, one first reflects on how the 'self, I, person' is not real, then likewise, just as the person is not real, one also reflects on how the six elements themselves are also not real, as these are also merely designated in dependence upon their own parts.
One has to know that, the conclusion is not that the person does not exist. Although it is true that, if one were to look for the person amongst the six elements, one would not be able to point out any among each of them to be the 'I'.
One would also not be able to point that the composite, the coming together of these six elements, the collection itself, is the person as well. If one looks for the real person outside these six elements, one would also not be able to point it out.
If the person is not findable amongst the aggregates nor outside these aggregates, then one may [wrongly conclude] that the person do not exist [at all]. This is also incorrect.
While it is true that the real 'I' cannot be found amongst the aggregates nor outside them, this does not prove that the person does not exist. This [merely] proves that the <i>real</i> 'self, I, person' does not exist from its own side as real.
Therefore, the verse concludes: <i>'Just as because of being an aggregation of the six constituents, a person is not real'</i> .
What this means is that, since the person is that which is merely designated in dependence upon the six elements, therefore, this shows that the person exists. It is just that, the person does not exist as real.
The first verse says that the person is not earth, not water, not fire, not wind, not space and not consciousness. One then has to check whether the person is indeed not the earth, not water elements and so forth.
However, the question is this, if one uses this verse and think deeply: Does such an analysis harm one's ignorance misconceiving an 'I' or not? This is what one has to analyze. Does this lead one into realizing emptiness or not? If this does lead one to move towards realizing emptiness, then this process of investigation and analysis must harm one's ignorance.
It is relatively easy to discover that the 'I' is not any of the five aggregates. When one searches for the 'I' on the body: head, legs, arms and so forth, obviously the 'I' is not the head, not the hand, not the legs. So it is not difficult to understand that.
This is rather straightforward, as when one thinks whether the person is the head or not, then it is obvious that the person is not the head and so forth. But then, does this mean that, one has known the object of negation?
Does such discovery lead one closer to harming ignorance and closer to realizing emptiness?

One would not say that one's 'I' is one's head, or hand and so forth. One does not find such an 'I'. Even though one does not find one's 'I' in these places, does that mean that one has ascertained emptiness?
Therefore, it is not difficult to discover that, the 'I' is not the head, leg, body, etc., however, at the end of such a discovery, there is still a feeling of 'I' there, an appearance of a real inherently existent 'I' there.
This shows that, one's analysis and discovery has not even 'touched' the object of negation. If one does not even 'touch' nor harm the object of negation, then there is no way to realize emptiness.
As Nagarjuna says in this verse, the person is not the earth, water, fire, wind, space, consciousness element, nor their collections. Since that is the case, then [one may also wonder]: “Does the real 'I' exist outside the aggregates?” When one also searches for it, one will also not be able to find this 'I' as well.
At the end of this process, if one understands that, although the real 'I' appears to exist, but one realizes that it does not exist at all whatsoever, that it exists as an 'I' which is merely designated in dependence upon the six elements, as a mere imputation of one's mind, then one has 'touched' and hit the object of negation. This is crucial before one can realize emptiness.
Such an experience is something which comes with some real understanding of what selflessness is. It is only when one is able to harm, damage one's object of negation, would one be able to move closer to understand emptiness.
It is only when one has the feeling, understanding that the 'I' is nothing other than that which is merely imputed by thought, that it does not exist in the way it appears, would one start to experience that one's ignorance apprehending a self is a really mistaken consciousness.
It is taught that, with such an experience, one can really see how one's ignorance apprehending a self is a complete distortion of reality, whilst the mind which sees that things do not exist inherently, is really that which accords with reality.
With such an understanding and [subsequent] familiarity of it, then one's ignorance apprehending a self would become weaker and weaker over time. One then sees more and more, the possibility of the existence of liberation and enlightenment.
One sees for oneself that, liberation and enlightenment really exist and it is really possible for one to achieve it.
One sees that all the faults, mistakes and obscurations can be removed. With such a knowledge, one's thirst and interest in the Dharma would naturally occur. This is because, one sees that the Dharma, the Buddha's teachings and its founder, the Buddha, are unparalleled in a class of their own.
As what Lama Lama Tsongkhapa has said in his Praise to Buddha, he praised Him as being the unexcelled and unparalleled expounder due to His teachings on dependent-origination.

Root text:

This verse 3 is a summary of the meaning [of verses 1 and 2]:
<p><i>3 From Buddha, the doctrine. From the doctrine, the community of Superiors. From the community, the basic constituent of essential exalted wisdom is attained. Finally from exalted wisdom is attained the supreme enlightenment endowed with the qualities Of the powers and so forth and effecting the welfare of sentient beings.</i></p>
The intended special disciples of this teaching are Mahayanists, who are distinguished by their mind generations. The goal of all mind generations is to achieve full enlightenment to turn the wheel of Dharma. This is so as to liberate numberless sentient beings through producing limitless number of superiors.
This is an explanation of the purpose [of this text, which is intended for the special disciples who are to be endowed with the mind generation in their continua].
The measure of determining that [Mahayana] tathagata essence has awakened:
By 1) seeing the goal of [achieving] the Three Jewels, the intended disciples develop the wish to purify the defilements of their basic constituents. Through their 2) aspirations to purify their basic constituents of any defilements , this is how they achieve their purification. One can say that, [having such aspirations means,] that their tathagata essence has [awakened] .
However, the boundary for the existence of the tathagata essence exists up to prior to achieving enlightenment [ie, up to the end of the continuum of being a sentient being].
<i>'The basic constituent of essential exalted wisdom is attained. Finally, from exalted wisdom...'</i> This shows that, the basic constituent exists all the way up to, but before enlightenment. It does not exist after enlightenment is achieved.
Since the tathagata essence exists before achieving enlightenment, hence, it is suitable for Buddha's enlightened activities to engage sentient beings. Therefore, the term 'tathagata essence' is not applicable to enlightenment.
From the complete purification of stains, defilements, then <i>'finally from exalted wisdom is attained the supreme enlightenment'</i> . Because one achieves enlightenment, then one would be <i>endowed with the qualities of the powers and so forth and effecting the welfare of sentient beings'</i> .

Brief and extensive presentations of the Three Jewels -

A brief presentation of Buddha Jewel:
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>4 Obeisance to the one who has no beginning, middle, or end Who is quiescent, who through buddhification became buddhified in self-arisen aspect And having become buddhified, taught the path of fearlessness and permanence so that those who had not realized it might realize it, And who, carrying the supreme sword and diamond of knowledge and mercy, cuts the sprouts of suffering and destroys the walls of doubt that are surrounded by the darkness of various views.</i></p>
Two essential advice if one wants to learn the teachings:
<p>Khenrinpoche: As mentioned before, if you really want to learn, then you have to <i>1)</i> read the [root] text a few times before coming regardless of whether you understand it or not. If you are reading the text for the first time, then of course [you wouldn't understand]. In class, you then <i>2)</i> pay attention to what is explained [to gain understanding of what you have read].</p>
When I explain the meaning of the root text, you have to look at the root text. If you are merely being contented with listening without [paying attention to the meaning of the words], then you will not be able to understand much as well.
This verse begins with homage to Buddha. Here, the [Buddha that] one pays homage to, possesses the qualities of being either compounded and un-compounded, of which, the un-compounded qualities are explained first:
Obeisance to the one who has no beginning, middle, or end: This describes the nature [truth] body, which is un-compounded. Hence, it is not produced and does not abide nor disintegrate. Therefore, it <i>has no beginning, middle, or end.</i>
The nature body, from the perspective of its natural purity, is by nature free of existing inherently.
When this is applied to the three words ' <i>beginning, middle, or end</i> ', then this means that by nature, the nature body has no inherently existent beginning, middle or end.
Who is quiescent [pacified]: This is the nature body from the perspective of adventitious purity.
Who through buddhification became buddhified in self-arisen aspect: This is the compounded quality of [Buddha's] wisdom directly perceiving phenomena as they are. Perhaps this refers to the wisdom which directly perceives the two truths.
So that those who had not realized it might realize it: This shows the quality of mercy, compassion.
And having become buddhified, taught the path of fearlessness and permanence: Out of mercy, for those who had not realized it might realize it, the Buddha taught the path of fearlessness and permanence.
And who, carrying the supreme sword and diamond of knowledge and mercy, cuts the sprouts of suffering and destroys the walls of doubt that are surrounded by the darkness of various views: This shows the quality of power.
In short, this verse shows the qualities of natural purity, adventitious purity, mercy and power, which is a brief presentation of the qualities of Buddha Jewel.
Extensive presentation of the eight qualities of Buddha Jewel:
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>5 Buddhahood has [the eight qualities of] being un-compounded, Spontaneous, not being realized through the cause of others, Knowledge, mercy, and power, As well as being [the fulfillment of] the two aims [of oneself and others].</i></p>
Buddha can be explained from the perspective of His [truth and form] Body in terms of the purpose of self and others.
Buddhahood has [the qualities of] being un-compounded: This is similar to [verse 4: <i>the one who has no beginning, middle, or end</i>], the natural purity of the nature body, which is an ultimate truth, un-compounded phenomenon.
Spontaneous: This refers to the nature body of adventitious purity, which is the true cessation in Buddha's continuum. Buddha's activities of benefiting sentient beings are effortless and spontaneous, which does not require any <i>motivation</i> .
This is only possible if one removes the different degrees of obstacles to such spontaneity, of which there are coarse and subtle. It is essentially the subtle obstacles of the <i>knowledge obscurations</i> that prevents such spontaneity. Since the Buddha is freed of such knowledge obscurations, therefore, his activities to benefit sentient beings are effortless and spontaneous.
Not being realized through the cause of others: This shows the wisdom directly realizing the ultimate nature of things exactly as they are. Such a wisdom is not primarily produced in dependence on something else.
Knowledge: Perhaps this refers to the quality of wisdom which directly perceives conventionalities.
Mercy and power: Here [these two] refers to the qualities of mercy and power [respectively].

Detailed explanation of verse 5:
<i>6 Because of having a nature without beginning [i.e., without production], Middle [abiding], or end [cessation], it is uncompounded. Because of possessing the quiescent Truth Body, It is said to be spontaneous.</i>
<i>7 Because of being realized by oneself individually, It is not realized through the cause of others. Because of realizing [those] aspects in that way, it is knowledge. Because of teaching the path, merciful.</i>
<i>8 It is power because of removing suffering And afflictive emotions through exalted wisdom and compassion. Through the first three, one's own welfare [is accomplished]; Through the latter three, others' aims.</i>
Summary: Here, there are eight qualities that Buddha possesses. Buddhahood has the quality of:
1) Being uncompounded: the quality of Buddha's nature body of natural purity.
2) Being spontaneous: the quality of Buddha's nature body of adventitious purity, being purified of adventitious defilements, a state of true cessation in Buddha's continuum. This occurs due to the complete pacification of all effort and motivation.
3) Not being realized through the cause of others: Buddha's wisdom directly perceiving phenomena as they are, emptiness.
4) Knowledge: Buddha's wisdom directly perceiving conventionalities.
5) Mercy: great compassion in the continuum of Buddha.
6) Power: the quality of power itself.
7) & 8) The two aims of oneself and others
This is an introduction of Buddha Jewel whom one entrusts, takes refuge and have faith in. Here, the Buddha Jewel is said to possess these eight qualities.

Student 1: What is the difference between an emanation body and a supreme emanation body?

Khenrinpoche: There are many things, words, terms to know and learn. In fact, it is endless. An example of a Supreme Emanation Body is Shakyamuni Buddha. In reality, He was enlightened long time ago. Hence, He merely displayed the twelve deeds such as being born, achieving enlightenment and passing into parinirvana and so forth. The emanation body that displays these twelve deeds is called the Supreme Emanation Body. This is a simple way to look at it.

In general, an emanation body may not display the twelve deeds. In fact, there can be all kinds of emanations: Buddha can manifest as a dog, human, parents, virtuous friends, building, in fact, in any way for the sake of helping different kinds of sentient beings. These are all emanation bodies. Therefore, one does not need pure karma to see or come in contact with emanation bodies.

But supreme emanation body is different. Only those with pure karma, merit, can meet an actual supreme emanation body.

Seeing the Enjoyment Bodies adorned with the major signs and minor exemplifications is even more difficult. These are only accessible to bodhisattva superiors, at the minimum.

The Buddha's body which is: the nature body of natural purity, adventitious purity and the wisdom directly perceiving the two truths, can be directly realized only by Buddhas themselves. Even bodhisattva superiors cannot realize them directly.

Student 2: What are the compounded qualities. What is the *self-arising aspect* stated in verse 4?

Khenrinpoche: The quality of being uncompounded and spontaneous refer to the nature truth body's natural purity and adventitious purity respectively. The qualities of Buddha's wisdom directly seeing the two truths, knowledge, mercy and power are compounded qualities.

'Who through buddhification became buddhified in self-arisen aspect': this refers to the self-arisen wisdom of omniscience. As one progresses from the last moment of being a sentient being to being a Buddha, such an achievement of enlightenment does not depend on a guru but is achieved by oneself. One becomes a Buddha from a being a sentient being within such meditative equipoise. Since this occurs by not depending on a guru but is achieved through [the force of] oneself, hence it is 'self-arisen'.

Student 3: What is the difference between '*do not rely on the words but the meaning*' and '*do not rely on the interpretive but the definitive*' ?

Khenrinpoche: *Do not rely on the words* means not qualifying something as bad or good based on whether the mere words themselves are pleasant sounding or not. One would find such statements made by Buddha as "*phenomena are truly existent*". This is an example of not taking [His words] literally as this is contrary to reality, as phenomena are not truly existent. Hence, the meaning of statements like this are only interpretive in that, one needs to discover the deeper meaning, reasons, purpose and intent behind the statements. Buddha must be trying to say something else. Since there is something more to the literal meaning of the phrase, hence such words are not definitive but interpretive.

Khenrinpoche: Whether you understand it or not, you have to read the root text on your own. Then you hear the explanation. You then try to relate the explanation back to the root text. This is how [your understanding becomes clearer] after a while. You have to be aware that, just by reading [the root text], you cannot expect to understand [straight away]. Of course it is difficult to understand. You cannot expect to understand, for example, what 'uncompounded' or 'spontaneous' means immediately. That is not possible. There are so many things to put in place. Taking 'uncompounded' as an example again, if there is something that is uncompounded, uncomposed, then there must also be something that is its opposite of being compounded, composed. Compounded or composed means something that is produced, abides and disintegrates. Then one needs to know what production, abiding and disintegration all mean. There are so many information you have to gather and [coherently] put together *slowly*. This is not going to happen straight away.

The point here is that, the Buddha that you take refuge in, has the qualities of mercy, knowledge, pure true cessation and so forth. These are the qualities that you entrust yourself to. Therefore, this section is explaining who you are taking refuge in. If you relate [these qualities] to the Lam Rim, the stages of the path refuge section on the qualities of the Three Jewels, there are four reasons given on why Buddha is a suitable object of refuge: **1)** He is free from all mistakes, faults and obscurations. This shows the quality of *true cessation*. **2)** He is skilled in the methods of freeing others from their fears and sufferings. This refers to the quality of *knowledge*, as he knows exactly what to do. **3)** He has great compassion that is free from bias. This shows the quality of *mercy*. **4) *He is pleased, not by material offerings, but by offerings of practice. Hence, he acts for everyone's welfare regardless of whether or not they have benefited him.***

Gaining faith in the evolutionary process of cyclic existence and liberation:

In the ' <i>Fundamental Wisdom</i> ', Nagarjuna said that liberation is the cessation/ exhaustion of all karma and afflictions.
From karma, afflictions and a whole host of discursive thoughts, suffering arises. The root of afflictions and discursive thoughts is said to be the elaboration of true existence, which is exhausted, ceased by [the realization of] emptiness.
Since liberation is the cessation of all karma and afflictions, therefore, it cannot arise without a cause of the antidote.
It is through the force of the antidote that one ceases, exhausts [one's] afflictions. From this, liberation is achieved.
One circles in cyclic existence under the influence, power of karma and afflictions. The primary of these two being the cause of cyclic existence is one's afflictions.
It is said that, through generating the force of applying powerful antidotes, one can reduce the strength of ignorance, as well as other afflictions, to the point where one will no longer newly accumulates propelling karma.
Once one reaches such a state, even though one may have already accumulated many such karmas in the past, but due to one's afflictions that nourishes such seeds of karma being weakened to such a level, these seeds of karma will not be able to issue forth its fruition and bear fruit. The seeds of such karmas are likened to burnt or rotten seeds.
The point here is that, liberation has to be understood on the level of consciousness, which essentially refers to the suchness of one's mind, for liberation is the exhaustion, cessation of karma and afflictions. Then how does one achieve liberation?
The cause for the set of contaminated appropriated physical and mental aggregates that one possesses, on the basis of which one experiences such sufferings as birth, aging, sickness and death, is karma. In turn, its cause are the afflictions.
Karma arises from the afflictions, which are responsible for its accumulation. The afflictions in turn arise mainly from incorrect mental attention. Essentially, this is the mental elaborations of true existence, the root from which afflictions arise.
As mentioned before, whatever appears, be it a person or phenomenon other than it, appears as existing right there from its own side. Not only that, one also assents, believes and fully agrees that this is how things exist.
One is not able to realize that things are mere appearances.
The evolutionary process is this: 1) Whatever object that appears to one, appears as being existing from its own side, one then believes that it is how it really exists in reality.
2) With this as the basis, having assented to the appearance of true existence, believing that, this is how the object really is, the 'truth', then incorrect mental attention would set in.
3) If the object is something [pleasant to one], then incorrect mental attention would exaggerate it beyond what it actually is. Likewise, if it is something [unpleasant to one], even though in general there are [unpleasant] objects, but what incorrect mental attention does is that, it exaggerates the [unpleasantness] of the object beyond what it really is.
In sum, apprehension of true existence sets the basis upon which, incorrect mental attention arises. This exaggerates the object with myriad ways of superimposition. This leads to either strong attachment, desire or anger. Karma is accumulated.
Once [such negative] karma is accumulated, one will have to experience its results, suffering.
As Nagarjuna says: " <i>The elaborations of true existence are stopped by emptiness.</i> " Since apprehension of true existence is the root of all problems and sufferings, that which stops it is none other than emptiness.
Essentially, apprehension of true existence is grasping at things as being real, existing from its own side. Even though one has heard that, things and events do not exist from its own side, but this is something one needs to establish, prove to oneself.
For example, using person as object of inquiry, from <i>Nagarjuna's Precious Garland: A person is not earth, not water, not fire, not wind</i> , and so forth, one can analyze whether the person exists from its own side or not.
He said that the person is not real because it is merely designated in dependence upon the collections of the six elements. Even these six individually are not real because they are also merely designated in dependence upon their own parts.
Space* itself is also not real, does not exist from its own side as well. This is because, space is none other than that which is the mere absence of obstructive [contact with] elements like forms. Even form itself does not exist from its own side.
This applies also to names, terms, labels. These also do not exist from their own sides.
There are many reasons that harm the concept of existence from its own side. One needs to prove this to oneself.

* Uncompounded space is a mere absence of obstructive contact, is all pervasive because there is an absence of obstructive contact everywhere, even where solid objects exist, for without an absence of obstructive contact an obstructive object could not be there in the first place. Because space is a mere absence of obstructive contact, it is a non-affirming negative, there is no positive thing implied in its place, and it is in this sense that an emptiness, which is a non-affirming negative of inherent existence, is said to be similar to a space. Also space, like emptiness, has parts because each physical object has a lack of obstructive contact, just as each object has a lack of inherent existence. The space of an object refers not to the area of the object but to the absence of obstructive contact associated with it. It appears only to an inferential mental consciousness and is permanent. Like emptiness, it is a mere absence of a negated factor – for emptiness, it is inherent existence, and for space, it is obstructive contact. - *Meditation on Emptiness pages 217 & 233.*

One needs to understand that there is no such thing as inherent existence, and then to ascertain [such an understanding] to gain a [faith of] conviction on it.
A definite understanding, ascertainment, conviction will be able to directly counteract the apprehension of true existence.
This is because, in relation to any object, such an ascertainment's mode of apprehending it, is in direct contradiction to ignorance's mode of apprehending its object, hence, directly harming, [damaging] it.
Through cultivating and increasing the strength of such an understanding, ascertainment of the emptiness of inherent existence, the stronger such an ascertainment is, the weaker the apprehension of a self will be. This is how one progresses on and through the paths and grounds:
When one reaches the path of preparation, one realizes emptiness via a generic image. When one reaches the path of seeing, one sees the truth of emptiness directly, due to which, one's apprehension of a self becomes so weakened to the point where this no longer gives rise to afflictions that leads to the accumulation of new projecting karma.
On the path of meditation, through repeatedly familiarizing one's mind that directly perceives emptiness, eventually one will be able to completely eliminate all karma and afflictions. This is when one achieves liberation on the path of no more learning. This is how one progresses on the paths.
Therefore, it is very important to gain an understanding of all these points for oneself, how one is suffering and repeatedly circles in cyclic existence due to one's own karma and afflictions. One has to understand and ascertain for oneself how, one's own ignorance apprehending a self is the root of all of one's problems.
Particularly, one needs to prove to oneself, how the realization of emptiness can liberate oneself from one's own grasping at self, that such an understanding can harm one's own ignorance.
When one experiences all these points for oneself, one will then understand the possibility of liberation, that there is no one except the Buddha who has taught this path, particularly the teaching on dependent-arising.
When one really sees this, one would really develop a faith in His teachings acquired through reasoning.
If one thinks well and thus gain a good understanding of these points, one will also come to understand well what the Three Jewels are, particularly the resultant Three Jewels that one can achieve in one's mind.
If one can see for oneself, how one's own apprehension of true existence is the real harmdoer, and how this can be destroyed, then one can see for oneself the possibility of achieving freedom from all suffering.
All these are made possible simply because one [naturally] possesses the potential to achieve such an understanding and liberation in one's own being, as one's mind is said to be in the nature of clear light, tathagata essence, basic constituent.
This is what gives anyone any hope for liberation.

How mental qualities can be developed to the point that it becomes effortless and spontaneous:

Mental qualities such as the mind that sees selflessness and compassion are said to be able to increase limitlessly unlike physical qualities, which are said to be limited. Even though one can train to increase one's physical qualities, but there is only so much one can do about it. One cannot increase such characteristics indefinitely and limitlessly.
On the other hand, once developed, mental qualities can increase more and more without additional effort. This is the difference between physical and mental qualities.
Mental qualities are such that, once these are developed in the mind, all one needs is a small condition that acts as a catalyst, and the mental qualities can manifest, arise in the mind without much effort.
All the qualities that are achieved on the paths and grounds still require some effort to enable them to arise. Mainly, these still require <i>motivation</i> , even all the way up to the tenth ground.
But once enlightenment is achieved, there is no more [need for] motivation. All the activities of Buddha are said to be spontaneous in that, they arise mainly due to the power of the prayers they had made while they were on the path.
At enlightenment, the power of the prayer, aspiration, is completed. Hence, all the effortless and spontaneous activities of the Buddha arise due to the power of such completed prayers.
It is said that, the Buddha's spontaneous enlightened activities, which are likened to the reflections appearing on the surface of the mirror as it is without any need for effort, engage sentient beings uninterruptedly forever until there are no more sentient beings left in samsara.
While one is still on the path as a non-buddha, one still needs effort, motivation to do something. But a Buddha does not need motivation as His activities are effortless.

The Eight Qualities of Buddha Jewel, someone who has fulfilled the aims of Himself and others:

<p>5 Buddhahood has [the eight qualities of] being un compounded, Spontaneous, not being realized through the cause of others, Knowledge, mercy, and power, As well as being [the fulfillment of] the two aims [of oneself and others].</p>
<p>1) Uncompounded: This refers to the Nature Body which is a natural purity.</p>
<p>2) Spontaneous: Refers to the Nature Body which is an adventitious purity. The obstructions of this are the [knowledge] obscurations. When one is free of such obscurations, one is spontaneous. Even the bodhisattvas on the first to the tenth grounds are not able to work spontaneously and effortlessly for sentient beings.</p>
<p>This is because, it is said that they possess the factors of twelve links included in the knowledge obscurations.</p>
<p>Generally, the <i>Twelve Links of Dependent-Origination</i> is presented from the perspective of the afflictions. But there is also an explanation of the twelve links from the perspective of knowledge obscurations. <i>See page 25</i></p>
<p>There is uncontaminated karma [accumulated by bodhisattva superiors]. That which motivates such uncontaminated karma is the subtle knowledge obscurations, which motivates the accumulation of uncontaminated karma [in the continua of such bodhisattva superiors]. Through this, the bodhisattva superiors undergoes the inconceivable transference of death.</p>
<p>In relation to the superior bodhisattvas' mental bodies and the [way they undergo such 'deaths'], there is a way of explaining the twelve links in relation to [the superior bodhisattvas'] accumulation of [uncontaminated] karma.</p>
<p>To do effortless and spontaneous work for sentient beings, one must abandon the twelve links that are included in the knowledge obscurations. Hence, only Buddhas can do that through achieving the nature truth body of adventitious purity.</p>
<p>3) Not being realized through the cause of others: At the last moment of being a sentient being, [the superior bodhisattva] progresses to the next moment as a Buddha within meditative equipoise directly focusing on emptiness and transfers to the path of no more learning. This is done by oneself alone without relying on anyone else.</p>
<p>These first three qualities is presented from the perspective of having achieved <i>one's own aims</i>.</p>
<p>The following qualities of knowledge, mercy and power are qualities related to the fulfillment of the <i>aims of others</i>:</p>
<p>4) Knowledge: refers to the Buddha's quality of knowing all conventionalities. [Which can be divided into] knowledge of conventionalities and knowledge of the existence of tathagata essence in every sentient being. Hence, Buddha has mercy:</p>
<p>5) & 6) Mercy and Power: Power is the quality which arises from mercy. [All three] are qualities that fulfill the aims of others. The qualities [of mercy and power] arise because of the Buddha's knowledge of conventionalities.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: The Buddha perceives the two truths directly, the ultimate nature of all things and events, as well as all conventionalities. [The quality of] knowledge of the ultimate existence of all phenomena is included within the category of fulfilling one's own aims. But the knowledge of conventionalities is included within the fulfillment of the aims of others.</p>
<p>The first three qualities of being un compounded, spontaneous and not being realized through the cause of others are included under the fulfillment of one's own aims. Whereas the qualities of knowledge, mercy and power are included in the fulfillment of the aims of others.</p>
<p>Qualm: Why is it that, the Buddha's understanding of the ultimate nature of all things and events is included under the fulfillment of his own aims and not the fulfillment of the aims of others? Likewise, why is it that, the quality of knowledge is included under the aims of oneself?</p>

A brief presentation of Dharma Jewel:

<p>9 Obeisance to the sun of excellent doctrine, not non-existent, Not existent, not existent and non-existent, and not analyzable as other than existent and non-existent, devoid of description, Known by oneself individually, quiescent, undefiled, illumined with the light rays of exalted wisdom, And thoroughly destroying desire, hatred, and obscuration with respect to all objects of observation.</p>
<p>From: <i>not non-existent, not existent, not existent and non-existent, and not analyzable as other than existent and non-existent, devoid of description, known by oneself individually</i> and up to <i>quiescent</i>, these are the [qualities] of true cessation.</p>
<p>From: <i>undefiled, illumined with the light rays of exalted wisdom, and thoroughly destroying desire, hatred, and up to obscuration with respect to all objects of observation</i>, these are the [qualities] of true path.</p>
<p>Not non-existent, not existent, not existent and non-existent, and not analyzable as other than existent and non-existent: This is the true cessation that is a natural purity being freed from the four extremes of permanence and annihilation –</p>
<p>[a) <i>Not non-existent</i>: free from annihilation, b) <i>Not existent</i>: free from permanence, c) <i>Not existent and non-existent</i>: free from being something which is both permanent and annihilated, and d) <i>Not analyzable as other then existent and non-existent</i>: free from being neither permanent nor annihilated.]</p>

When one analyzes these four possibilities of extremes between permanence and annihilation, these will be found to not exist inherently:
b) [<i>Not existent</i> : free from permanence]: There is not such a thing as inherently existent non-dependence. This [inherently existent non-dependence] is the extreme of permanence.
a) [<i>Not non-existent</i> : free from annihilation]: Asserting that things do not function conventionally is the extreme of annihilation. [Such an assertion is flawed, as] things do function conventionally.
These two, [a] & b) as well as the other two: c) & d) all] do not exist inherently. This is the true cessation which is a natural purity. No matter how one analyzes these four extremes, one would not be able to find something that exists inherently.
Devoid of description : Such a true cessation which is a natural purity cannot be described using mere words, terms or languages.
Known by oneself individually : [Since that is the case], it can only be known by oneself individually. This means that, such a state can only be experienced by a mind for which all dualistic appearances have subsided.
[The four extremes a), b), c) & d) mentioned above] refers to the entity, nature of the object, a true cessation which is a natural purity. From the perspective of the mind that realizes this, it is said to be devoid of description, for it is known by oneself individually. Such a state can only be known by a mind for which all dualistic appearances have subsided.
Quiescent : This refers to the true cessation which is an adventitious purity. As mentioned earlier, karma and afflictions are the root from which cyclic existence arises. Karma arises from afflictions, which arise from incorrect mental attention.
All causes of cyclic existence, apprehension of true existence, incorrect mental attention, afflictions and so forth, are pacified here. Hence, it is quiescent, a true cessation that is [purified] of adventitious stains.
Undeclared : This refers to the true path, an undeclared and stainless wisdom [of Buddha] directly perceiving emptiness.
Illumined with the light rays of exalted wisdom : Such a wisdom is said to possess the light rays of exalted wisdom.
Thoroughly destroying desire, hatred, and obscuration with respect to all objects of observation : Incorrect mental attention gives rise to all types of afflictions, superimposing qualities beyond its [actual nature], thus giving rise to desire, hatred, etc.
The quality of being undeclared, stainless, refers to the factor of purity in that, such a wisdom is purified of its respective obscurations. Hence it is stainless, undeclared, a quality of purity.
The wisdom being illumined with the light rays of exalted wisdom is the quality of clarity.
Such a wisdom acts as an antidote to the afflictions of desire, hatred and bewilderment, obscurations, which arise from incorrect mental attention.

Extensive presentation of the eight qualities of Dharma Jewel:

<p><i>10 Due to being unthinkable, without the two [i.e., contaminated actions and afflictive emotions], Without conceptions, pure, clear, and antidotal, The doctrine is that which is and that by which there is the [state] Devoid of passions—having the character of the [last] two truths.</i></p>	
<p>Being unthinkable: As mentioned earlier, the true cessation which is a natural purity is devoid of the four extremes. This is something that is beyond the mind, hence, it is unthinkable.</p>	
<p>Without the two: This means without any of the two, karma and afflictions.</p>	
<p>Without conceptions: means without conceptions of true existence.</p>	
<p>Pure, clear, and antidotal: refers to the quality of true path.</p>	
<p>There are six qualities up to the quality of <i>antidotal</i>. Although these are the qualities of true path and true cessation, but if one were to enumerate them separately, then there are [the last two] qualities of true path and true cessation.</p>	
<p>The first three qualities are subsumed within true cessation, whereas the next three are subsumed within true path.</p>	
<p>The <i>Four Noble Truths</i> can be subsumed within the two truths: the truth of the thoroughly afflicted class [true suffering and true origin] and the truth of the thoroughly purified class [true cessation and true path].</p>	
<p>11 This devoid [and making devoid] of passions is included Within true cessations and paths. Respectively those are also to be known By way of three qualities each.</p>	<p>12 It is unthinkable because of being unanalyzable, inexpressible, and known by Superiors. Due to being quiescent it is without the two, And it is without [improper] conceptions. The three, purity and so forth [i.e., clear and antidotal] are like the sun.</p>

How elimination of the twelve links included in the knowledge obscurations enables a Buddha to be spontaneous:

The twelve links are usually explained in the context of how one circles in cyclic existence under the power of karma and afflictions. Motivated by ignorance, one accumulates karma and so forth. Therefore, one circles in cyclic existence primarily under the power of the afflictions.

The explanations of the twelve links in relation to bodhisattva superiors do not refer to such an explanation.

The explanations of the twelve links that are included within knowledge obscurations do not refer to how sentient beings circle in cyclic existence under the power of karma and afflictions.

This refers to the set of links in relation to bodhisattva superiors. This is where the term *Levels of predisposition of ignorance* is used: Motivated by subtle knowledge obscurations, superior bodhisattvas accumulate [uncontaminated] karma.

[Due to that,] they take on a mental body with which, they undergo and experience the *inconceivable transference of death*.

Unlike sentient beings who circle in cyclic existence under the power of karma and afflictions, bodhisattva superiors do not have true suffering. Although they possess mental bodies, they do not have true suffering.

But such mental bodies undergo birth and death. Even though they experience birth and death, these experiences are not the results of karma and afflictions.

Rather, they take on a mental body due to [uncontaminated] karma. With such a body, they experience the inconceivable transference of death. When a bodhisattva superior becomes a Buddha, he no longer has a mental body.

Hence, he no longer undergoes the inconceivable transference of death, for he has pacified the twelve links included within the subtle knowledge obscurations. Therefore, [such a state] is quiescent, pacified.

Prior to becoming a Buddha, although bodhisattva superiors do work for sentient beings, but such work requires effort and motivation. When he becomes a Buddha, his works and activities for sentient beings becomes spontaneous and effortless.

Khenrinpoche: Does Buddha accumulate karma?

Student 1: Does a Mahayana superior only refer to a Buddha or does it also include bodhisattva superiors?

Khenrinpoche: There are different terms like bodhisattva superiors and Mahayana superiors. The latter has a greater pervasion whereas the former has a smaller pervasion. The five Mahayana paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, meditation and no more learning are called Mahayana paths and not the five bodhisattva paths. One achieves the Mahayana path of no more learning and becomes a Buddha when the two obscurations are removed. The term Mahayana superior includes Buddha. Hence, the term Mahayana superior has a greater pervasion whereas the term bodhisattva superior has a smaller pervasion. Therefore, a Mahayana superior is not necessarily a bodhisattva superior, whereas a bodhisattva superior is necessarily a Mahayana superior.

Student 2: [The Prasangikas assert that] true cessation is necessarily an ultimate truth. [Here in this text, it is taught that the Buddha's] true cessation [are] the two purities. Does that mean that an ultimate truth does not merely refer to an emptiness of inherent existence, but also an abandonment of obscurations?

If ultimate truth refers to either emptiness of inherent existence or an abandonment of obscurations, does it then mean that, there are instances of emptinesses being an abandonment of obscurations?

If that is the case, the object of emptiness is inherent existence, which has never existed and will never exist, but the obscurations are existents. [Would that not make the object of negation of emptiness an existent?]

Khenrinpoche: The Prasangikas assert that a true cessation is emptiness and an ultimate truth. The Svatantrikas do not assert that true cessations are ultimate truths. Nagarjuna said that '*liberation is a cessation of karma and afflictions*'.

What liberation exactly is, is not to be found outside one's mind. When karma and afflictions are removed, then what is left is the reality, emptiness of the mind. This is posited as liberation.

The apprehension of true existence is not in the nature of the mind, for when the wisdom realizing selflessness is generated, its opposite, the apprehension of true existence is destroyed. As the strength of the wisdom realizing selflessness, which is an antidote against the apprehension of true existence, gradually increases, the obscurations to which it is an antidote to, is [correspondingly] destroyed, in a similar way how darkness disappears when there is light. When all the obscurations are removed, what is revealed is the [mere] reality of the mind.

Hence, one says that the *nature of the mind is clear light*, for it has never been that the mind has ever existed inherently. From the time mind existed, it has always been empty of existing inherently. When referring to natural purity, this means the [emptiness of true existence of] the mind. Although one's mind has always been that way, empty of existing inherently, but it is covered with adventitious defilements. Hence, one cannot say that there is true cessation there right from the beginning. The [emptiness of true existence of the mind], the ultimate nature of the mind [from the very beginning], is the natural purity. However, this is covered with adventitious defilements. When one generates any wisdom realizing selflessness that is powerful enough to be the antidote to any of the apprehension of true existence, stopping, ceasing it, then a cessation is achieved. This is an example of adventitious purity. Although what is achieved is the emptiness of the mind, but such an unraveling of the nature of the mind, the achievement of [a particular] adventitious purity, is a result of cultivating an antidote.

Although both natural and adventitious purities are emptinesses, but one cannot say that both are equivalent. Although the ultimate nature of the mind is emptiness, but it is still covered by the adventitious defilements. Through the application of a powerful antidote, when such defilements are ceased, what one achieves then will be an adventitious purity. Although this is an emptiness, but [such a purity] comes about through the application of an antidote. Hence, ***liberation is the cessation of karma and afflictions.***

Student 2: So essentially, ultimate truth that has the purity of adventitious stains is true cessation, whereas an ultimate truth that is not an adventitious purity is not true cessation, that a true cessation is necessarily an ultimate truth whereas an ultimate truth is not necessarily a true cessation? **Khenrinpoche:** Yes.

Student 2: What is merit? Is it [synonymous with] roots of virtue and what is a collection of merit? If merit is karma, then for a Buddha who has accumulated three countless great eons of merit, does it mean that he ends up collecting three countless great eons of karma? Would that mean that Buddha has karma?

Khenrinpoche: In one way, merit and virtue are the same. In general, virtue is virtuous karma, for it is a cause of the fruitional effect of happiness. Hence, it is called virtue or virtuous karma. That which results in suffering is nonvirtue or nonvirtuous karma.

As for the *accumulation of merit*, I would think that it refers to the *[virtuous] imprint that is left in the mind*. [As mentioned] in the Lam Rim, how there are three or four permutations between karma that is [done] and accumulated. LRCM page 241

In the case of accumulating merit, one engages [in virtue] and if it becomes an accumulation, then something is left on the mental continuum.

Whether it is an accumulating the collection of merit or an accumulating the collection of wisdom, the mind is of primary importance. This is because, something has to be left on the [mental] continuum. Be it the accumulation of prostrations, refuge and so forth, in order for there to be a real impression of [virtuous] karma that is left on the mind, it is mentioned in the Lam Rim that, [such an accumulation] has to be [engaged] with *strength over a long period* of time. It is then that, a real impression is left on the mind. This applies to whatever merit or virtue that one is accumulating.

The collection of merit results in the Form Body, whereas the collection of wisdom results in the Truth Body. What I would think is that, for there to be an accumulation of the collection of merit, what one needs to do is to ensure that a real impression, imprint, is left on the mental continuum.

Khenrinpoche: Hence, I would think that, the meaning of the word *accumulate* in the phrase *accumulate the collection of merit* would mean that, doing something repeatedly such that, a real impression, mark, imprint is left on the mind. This is the meaning of *to accumulate*. What do you think?

Student 2: Then when you say that the Buddha accumulated three countless great eons of merit, he actually has that amount of imprints? But then Buddha has abandoned karma?

Khenrinpoche: Unless you posit this collection to be form, which I don't think you would, if that is the case, then no matter how you want to debate, there will not be problems. This is because, [the collection] is a non-associated compositional factor.

Student 2: If it is an imprint left behind after an action is [accumulated], since actions are impermanent, then is it a factor of disintegratedness of an action? **Khenrinpoche:** That is another complicated matter.

Student 3: What is the difference between Buddha and Buddha Superior.

Khenrinpoche: Buddha and Buddha superior are not the same. Buddha has a greater pervasion whereas Buddha Superior has a smaller pervasion: *Buddha:* All four Bodies are Buddha, Buddha Jewel: [Nature Truth Body, Wisdom Truth Body], Complete Enjoyment Body and Emanation Body. *Buddha superior:* You have to understand Buddha Superior to be a person. Hence, can the Nature Body of natural purity and the Nature Body of adventitious purity be Buddha Superior? Can the Wisdom Truth Body be Buddha Superior? No. But are they Buddha? Yes. So these three are Buddhas but not Buddha Superiors. These three are not Buddha Superiors because they are not persons. The Nature Body of natural and adventitious purities are permanent, hence they cannot be persons. The Wisdom Truth Body is a consciousness, hence it also cannot be a person. As for our founder Shakyamuni Buddha, He is a Buddha superior as well as an Emanation Body. Of course, He is not His aggregates. [Buddha Shakyamuni as a person] is that which is *merely imputed in dependence upon His aggregates, which are His basis of designation*. Shakyamuni Buddha's Form Body is Buddha, but you cannot say that His Body aggregates are Buddha Superior [as well]. Likewise, you are not your body.

Student 4: Since Buddha are the Four Bodies, would that not make Buddha both permanent and impermanent?

Khenrinpoche: Possessing something does not mean that it is that thing. If you possess something, are you necessarily that thing? Buddha Superior possesses that quality of true cessation. But that does not mean that Buddha Superior *is* true cessation. Even though Buddha Superior possesses the quality of being uncompounded, but this again does not mean that He is uncompounded. Buddha Superior possesses the qualities that are compounded and uncompounded, but Buddha Superior Himself is not uncompounded.

Student 5: As an arya bodhisattva progresses along the path, the quality of the mind increases. In terms of the depth, clarity and profundity, how are these measured?

Module 4a: Heart sutra page 13 - That which enables the Bodhisattva on the Mahayana Great path of accumulation to make the transition into the Mahayana path of preparation is **not bodhicitta** but the **gradual strengthening of the wisdom realizing emptiness in terms of its profundity and clarity**.

Khenrinpoche: Taking a bodhisattva's mind that has emptiness as its object:

On the path of accumulation, the mind in the continuum of such a bodhisattva that understands emptiness, is essentially only a wisdom arisen from hearing and reflection. When the bodhisattva achieves the Mahayana path of preparation, then his mind realizing emptiness is a wisdom arisen from meditation. Within the path of preparation, there are four broad stages through which such a bodhisattva's mind realizing emptiness is able to gradually deal with different layers of conception such as conceptions of the apprehender and apprehended. When this bodhisattva's mind realizes emptiness directly, then he [progresses to] the path of seeing. His mind realizing emptiness here is able to destroy the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence. After realizing emptiness directly, such a bodhisattva's wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, which is [conjoined with] his collection of merit, familiarizes himself repeatedly with such a realization on the path of meditation. Through such a familiarization, as he moves towards the eighth ground, different levels of the apprehension of true existence are removed. Finally on the eighth ground, the apprehension of true existence is [completely] removed. But there are more to be done as he has yet to remove the knowledge obscurations. On the eighth, ninth and tenth grounds, the bodhisattva progresses through these grounds while removing the knowledge obscurations. There is also an extensive description of the qualities achieved by the bodhisattvas on all ten grounds. For example, the bodhisattva on the first ground is able to emanate a hundred bodies, on the second, he is able to emanate a thousand, on the third, a hundred thousand and so forth. These qualities are achieved and are greatly enhanced as he moves from the lower grounds to the higher grounds. Those ten grounds are also associated with an achievement of an exalted practice of a particular perfection: On the first ground, the bodhisattva achieves an exalted practice of the perfection of generosity, [on the second, ethics, then patience, joyous effort, concentration, wisdom, method, prayer, power and finally exalted wisdom.]

Khenrinpoche: It is good to have questions, which [when answered,] makes things clearer. This text is extremely difficult to understand and therefore challenging. What I hope at least to achieve is that, [by explaining them] through these classes [together with] your reading of the root text, you would at least understand something. It is not possible to understand each word as it is very difficult. At least what we can achieve is that, after you have read the text on your own, then when you combine [that reading] with the explanations, and through that, if you can get some [basic] idea, then that will be the aim. Hence, for that to occur, you have to read the root text on your own, then as the explanation is given, you have to refer to the root text and see what the meanings of the words in the verses are.

Brief presentation of the eight qualities of the Sangha Jewel:

<p><i>13 Obeisance to those who, having thoroughly realized the limit or quiescence of selflessness in all transmigrators Through perceiving the non-[inherent] existence of the entities of the afflictive emotions due to the natural clear light of the mind, Perceive perfect Buddhahood as residing in all, to those whose intelligence is unobstructed, And who are endowed with sight of the exalted wisdom that has as its objects the purity and infinity of sentient beings.</i></p>
<p><i>14 Because the perception of [their] internal exalted wisdom Of the mode and of the varieties is pure, The community of irreversible intelligent ones Is endowed with unsurpassed qualities.</i></p>
<p>This is an introduction to the eight qualities of the Sangha Jewel. The first three: 1), 2) & 3) are the qualities of knowledge, the next three: 4), 5) & 6) are the qualities of freedom. When the qualities of knowledge and freedom are enumerated separately, then there are eight:</p>
<p>1) Knowledge of the mode of phenomena, 2) Knowledge of the variety of phenomena, 3) Inner knowledge, 4) Freedom from passion, 5) Freedom from obstacles, 6) Freedom from inferior obstructions, 7) Knowledge and 8) Freedom.</p>
<p>1) Knowledge of the mode of phenomena: Is shown as '<i>Through perceiving the non-[inherent] existence of the entities of the afflictive emotions due to the natural clear light of the mind</i>'.</p>
<p><i>The natural clear light of the mind:</i> This is the [emptiness of the] mind which they perceive. Because the mind is in the nature of being empty of existing inherently, hence they see the empty nature of the mind as it is.</p>
<p><i>'Perceiving the non-[inherent] existence of the entities of the afflictive emotions':</i> they also perceive as it is that the afflictions are not inherently existent by nature.</p>
<p>Essentially, they <i>perceive as it is</i> the nature of the mind being an emptiness, as well as the afflictive emotions being in the nature of emptiness. Due to the emptiness of inherent existence of the mind, hence, the mind is in the nature of clear light. Due to the non-inherent establishment of the afflictive emotions, hence, these are adventitious.</p>
<p>2) Knowledge of the variety of phenomena: Is shown as '<i>having thoroughly realized the limit or quiescence of selflessness in all transmigrators, [the Sangha Jewel] perceives perfect Buddhahood as residing in all.</i>' This means that:</p>
<p><i>'Through perceiving the non-[inherent] existence of the entities of the afflictive emotions due to the natural clear light of the mind'</i>, which is the knowledge of the mode of phenomena, seeing as it is that the mind and the afflictions are in the nature of emptiness, such emptinesses are seen as similar as the emptinesses of the minds in the continua of sentient beings.</p>
<p>Just as they see the a) emptiness of the mind and the b) emptiness of the afflictions, they also see that c) similarly in all sentient beings. This [knowledge a), b) & c)] constitutes the knowledge of the variety of phenomena.</p>
<p>Through seeing that, they know that all sentient beings possess within them from the very beginning, [the tathagata essence] which allows them to become Buddhas.</p>
<p>Of all the qualities possessed by the Sangha Jewels, these two 1) & 2) are the most important.</p>
<p>Through seeing that the nature of the mind and the ultimate nature of the afflictions to be emptinesses, this allows [a Sangha Jewel] to see that this also exist in the continua of all sentient beings. That means, he sees Buddha lineage pervading the continua of all sentient beings. These are the [first two] qualities of knowledge.</p>
<p>The qualities of freedom has a wisdom that possesses the qualities of freedom from 4) attachment, 5) obstacles and 6) [inferior] obscurations. '<i>To those whose intelligence is unobstructed</i>' refers to these three freedoms.</p>

Elaboration of the quality of knowledge of the mode of phenomena:

<p><i>15 Due to realizing the quiescent nature of transmigrating beings, [that is, all persons and phenomena] They [perceive] the very mode [of being of phenomena], This being because of the natural thorough purity And because the afflictive emotions are extinguished from the start.</i></p>
<p>Due to realizing the quiescent nature of transmigrating beings: transmigrating beings here refer to persons – realizing the empty nature of the person – but this also includes phenomena other than persons such as the aggregates, which are the basis of imputation of the person. Due to that, They [perceive] the very mode [of being of phenomena].</p>
<p>This being because of the natural thorough purity. [They are able to perceive] the natural purity, ultimate nature of the mind, the emptiness of the mind. Also, because the afflictive emotions are extinguished from the start. This means that, they also see that the afflictions are by nature empty, hence are adventitious. These two lines are similar to 1) of verse 13.</p>

Elaboration of the quality of knowledge of the variety of phenomena:

*16 Because the awareness realizing objects of knowledge and [their] finality
Sees that the nature of omniscience
Exists in all sentient beings,
They have [knowledge of] the varieties.*

The final object of knowledge is the final mode of abiding, this is essentially emptiness. They have the knowledge/ awareness that realizes the final mode of abiding of Buddha's mind, the emptiness of Buddha's mind.

[Due to this,] they see that something similar pervades in the continuum of all sentient beings.

The wisdom directly realizes the ultimate nature of all phenomena in the continuum of a Buddha realizes the emptiness of his mind. Such a wisdom realizing such an emptiness sees that something similar exists in the continuum of all sentient beings.

Therefore, a Buddha's wisdom directly realizes the mode of phenomena also realizes the varieties of phenomena. It is only a Buddha who can do that. Non-buddhas' wisdom which realizes the mode of phenomena cannot realize its diversity.

A sentient being can only directly perceive the ultimate mode of all phenomena in meditative equipoise. It is only when he arises from meditative equipoise would he be able to realize the varieties/ diversities of phenomena.

A Buddha does not need to do that.

Elaboration of the quality of inner knowledge:

*17a Those realizations in that way
Are just perceptions by their own consciousness individually.*

Essentially, the superior's direct knowledge of the modes and varieties of phenomena are something that [only] they themselves can experience, [hence, an inner knowledge].

Elaboration of the quality of being free from passion and obstacles:

*17b In the basic element of non-defilement there are no passions
And no obstacles, thus those are pure.*

The absence of passion, attachment here refers to the absence/ non-existence of the attachment [grasping] onto truth.

Because they do not possess any obstacles that engage in all phenomena, hence, they are free from obstacles.

Khenrinpoche: I have not seen it being mentioned clearly, but I think that it was mentioned somewhere that, in general, *passion/ attachment* here refers to any of the afflictive obstructions, while *obstacles* refers to knowledge obscurations.

Elaboration of the quality of being free from inferior obstructions:

*18 Because the sight of [these] wisdoms is pure,
It is [close to being] the unsurpassed wisdom of a Buddha.
Therefore, an irreversible Superior
Is a refuge for all embodied beings.*

The Sangha Jewel is said to possess eight qualities, of which the qualities of knowledge of the mode of phenomena, knowledge of varieties of phenomena, inner knowledge, freedom from passion, freedom from obstacles, freedom from inferior obstructions have been explained.

How the extremely subtle mind is the tathagata essence:

Student: What is the difference between the factor of clarity and knowing, and the potential of the mind to transform into [final] qualities?
Khenrinpoche: When referring to the basic constituent, tathagata essence, this can be examined from either a conventional or an ultimate point of view. Hence, one can look at the tathagata essence as being uncompounded or compounded.
The factor of uncompounded is essentially the emptiness of true existence of the mind, that is the ultimate tathagata essence. The potential of the mind to transform into a Buddha is the factor of it being compounded.
There are many ways to examine the factor of clarity and awareness, that which is clear and knowing, the mind.
[Explaining tathagata essence from the perspective of tantra:]
[The potential of the mind to transform into a Buddha,] the Buddha lineage, is essentially that which continues all the way up to enlightenment. If one were to examine from the perspective of tantra, there is an explanation of:
<i>The extremely subtle mind which is mounted on the extremely subtle wind. [Only] such a mind, [such a] factor of clarity and awareness, goes all the way to enlightenment.</i>
<i>[In the final sense,] the substantial cause of the wisdom truth body is this [particular] extremely subtle mind that is mounted on the extremely subtle wind.</i>
If one posits such a [factor of] clarity and knowing [to be the substantial cause of the wisdom truth body,] then it becomes very easy to explain.
From the perspective of tantra, this is posited as <i>the</i> Buddha lineage, for this is <i>the one</i> that goes all the way to enlightenment, as being the substantial cause for the wisdom truth body.
Then one can say that, since sentient beings were in existence, the potential for enlightenment has always been there. Therefore, [this shows that] every sentient being has that potential to achieve enlightenment.
This is because, every sentient being [possesses] such an extremely subtle mind. So if [tathagata essence] is explained from the tantric perspective then it is easier.
[Debating tathagata essence as presented from the perspective of sutra:]
But if one were to examine [tathagata essence] from the perspective of sutra, then that which is clear and knowing essentially refers to that which is able to experience/ cognize/ understand objects.
Khenrinpoche: That being said, does the factor of clear and knowing of ignorance go to enlightenment? The factor of being clear and knowing of ignorance cognizes, knows, is aware of an object. Then this discussion becomes difficult.
There are many afflictions. For example, the apprehension of true existence, is it a consciousness? If it is a consciousness, the very nature of it being clear light, then does it go to enlightenment? Is the nature of ignorance clear light?
Student: The nature of ignorance is emptiness. Khenrinpoche: Hence, it is in the nature of clear light, isn't it?
Student: It is in the nature of clear light conventionally. Clear light is a conventional truth.
Khenrinpoche: Is the nature of ignorance clear light or not? Student: Yes. The nature of any phenomena are in the nature of emptiness. Khenrinpoche: It follows that, ignorance goes to enlightenment!
Student: The emptiness goes to enlightenment, having eliminated ignorance.
Khenrinpoche: The emptiness of ignorance and ignorance are one entity as they always go together. Student: Yes, of course.
Khenrinpoche: [Then in that case], for you, ignorance goes to enlightenment. Student: The adventitious purity goes to enlightenment. Khenrinpoche: Does ignorance [which is] an apprehension of true existence, go to enlightenment?
Student: Of course not. Khenrinpoche: It follows that, ignorance goes to enlightenment, because you have asserted that its nature is clear light. Student: If the defilements are removed, then one will see the nature of clear light, emptiness which is an adventitious purity of ignorance.
Khenrinpoche: Is the apprehension of true existence an adventitious stain? When it is purified, is ignorance ceased? Student: Yes. Khenrinpoche: If it ceases, how does it go to enlightenment? Student: One sees the emptiness of the mind.
Khenrinpoche: The essential point is this, does the emptiness of ignorance which is an apprehension of true existence, go to enlightenment? Student: If the emptiness of ignorance [is synonymous with] an adventitious purity or [even] any phenomena, then it will be the same emptiness. Khenrinpoche: Ignorance is a stain, not yet an adventitious purity.
Khenrinpoche: Since ignorance is emptiness by nature, then does the emptiness of ignorance go to enlightenment or not?

Student: If the emptiness of any phenomena is the same, then the ultimate nature would be one, then this goes to enlightenment. I have always thought that, the ultimate nature of any phenomena would be the same, whereas the variety of conventionalities would be different.
Khenrinpoche: Since you say they are all the same, then are you saying that the emptiness of a [cup] goes to enlightenment?
Student: Yes, those that are perceived by the mind. Khenrinpoche: You would not say that a stone has the potential to become Buddha, would you? Student: Of course not, but then the stone is being perceived by a consciousness, otherwise it would not be a stone. Khenrinpoche: According to what you have said, it follows that a stone has Buddha nature.
Student: The perceiver has the Buddha nature, not the object. Khenrinpoche: It follows that, for you, the stone has Buddha nature, because the emptiness of the stone is tathagata essence.
Student: [I am emphasizing] on the perceiver/ consciousness. Any objects has to be perceived by the mind. It is the consciousness perceiving the object [that goes to enlightenment.]
Ven Gyurme: Then we are back to ignorance. Does emptiness of ignorance go to enlightenment?
Student: If ignorance is like an object like a stone, then of course not. The consciousness would go to enlightenment.
Ven Gyurme: Then ignorance goes to enlightenment! Student: If ignorance goes to enlightenment then everyone would be enlightened. Khenrinpoche: For you, ignorance does go to enlightenment, because the nature of ignorance is clear light.
[Concluding the debate, what is it that goes to enlightenment:]
Khenrinpoche: What is said in the [sutra] teachings about tathagata essence is that, it is the suchness of the mind. It does not say the suchness of a particular mind.
It refers to the emptiness of the mind, together with the mind, these two form the lineage that go to enlightenment.
Most of the proponents of Buddhist tenets from the Autonomy Middle Way School and below assert that the person is the mental consciousness. Hence, among those who assert enlightenment, assert that it is the mental consciousness that goes to enlightenment because it is the person.
There are many kinds of minds, ignorance which is an apprehension of true existence is just one of them. But perhaps one would have to say that, the apprehension of true existence does not continue to enlightenment.
This is because, the apprehension of true existence is not the nature of the mind . This is because, it itself is [merely] an adventitious mind. It is also not the mode of apprehension of mind .
Hence, the statement “ <i>The nature of mind is clear light</i> ”, whether this can be applied to every single instance of mind is the [essential] question. As mentioned, if one were to examine this from the perspective of tantra, relating the [tathagata essence] to the extremely subtle mind, then it is much easier [to explain].
Such a mind has no beginning nor end. It does not die nor does it have a first moment of birth. This is that which goes to enlightenment.
The proponents of Sutra School assert that the mental consciousness is the person, hence, if they were to posit a tathagata essence, then the mental consciousness would be the [Buddha] lineage.
In one of the sub-school of the proponents of Mind Only, they conclude through their own analysis that, there must be a separate consciousness, called mind-basis-of-all, that is asserted to be suitable to be transformed into a Buddha.
The topic <i>Mind being in the nature clear light</i> and <i>Mind being the factor of clear and knowing</i> will be explained soon.
Student: Is it that basic constituent has a bigger pervasion than mind, that it is likened to space, whereas instances of minds are like objects arising and disappearing from this space?
Khenrinpoche: If what you mean by space is emptiness, then that is fine, because everything is in the nature of emptiness, hence, all conventional phenomena has the nature and arise from emptiness.

Continuing discussion on the qualities of the Sangha Jewel:

The eight qualities of the Sangha Jewel are the qualities of:
1) Knowledge of the mode of phenomena, 2) Knowledge of the variety of phenomena, 3) Inner knowledge, 4) Freedom from passion, 5) Freedom from obstacles, 6) Freedom from inferior obstructions, 7) Knowledge and 8) Freedom.
Essentially, the first three can subsumed into knowledge and the next three can be subsumed into freedom.

Verse 15 describes 1) <i>Knowledge of the mode of phenomena:</i>
<i>15 Due to realizing the quiescent nature of transmigrating beings, [that is, all persons and phenomena] They [perceive] the very mode [of being of phenomena], This being because of the natural thorough purity And because the afflictive emotions are extinguished from the start.</i>
' <i>Transmigrating beings</i> ' here refers to both persons and the aggregates in their continua.
The two reasons put forth to explain the quality of knowledge of the mode are: <i>This being because of the natural thorough purity, and because the afflictive emotions are extinguished from the start.</i>
' <i>Natural thorough purity</i> ' means the emptiness of the mind. ' <i>Afflictive emotions are extinguished from the start</i> ' means that the afflictive emotions have always been and by nature, empty of existing inherently right from the very beginning.
Therefore, the afflictions are in the nature of emptiness, hence, they are adventitious.
Verse 16 explains the 2) <i>Knowledge of the variety of phenomena:</i>
<i>16 Because the awareness realizing objects of knowledge and [their] finality Sees that the nature of omniscience Exists in all sentient beings, They have [knowledge of] the varieties.</i>
' <i>The awareness realizing objects of knowledge and [their] finality</i> ' is posited as the <i>exalted-knower-of-all-aspects</i> , which sees the emptiness of inherent existence of the mind.
Such an omniscient final wisdom, which sees the emptiness of the mind of Buddha, sees something similar existing in the continua of all sentient beings.
This omniscient exalted-knower-of-all-aspects is able to directly perceive the varieties of all phenomena while in the state of perceiving the mode of phenomena.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> [Since this is the meaning of this verse,] do you understand the [significance]?
Prior to my explanation, if you have read this verse and did not understand, then now after my explanation, if you read it again and then get something, then we have accomplished what we have set out to do. Do you understand the sentence?
This way of explaining is of course in relation to Buddha. Here, we are [describing] the qualities of the Sangha Jewel, but it is being explained as being the final [Sangha Jewel], Buddha.
Is it alright then, if the object [of this verse] is not a Buddha but a sentient being? Is such a manner of explanation correct?
If one says that a sentient being can see the diversities of phenomena while he is directly perceiving the mode of phenomena, then it is incorrect, as only a Buddha can do that.
But if you say that a Sangha Jewel that is a sentient being, while in meditative equipoise perceives the mode of phenomena, when he arises from that, he perceives the varieties of the Buddha nature in sentient beings, then this is fine.
<i>17 Those realizations in that way Are just perceptions by their own consciousness individually.</i>
This refers to the quality of 3) <i>inner knowledge.</i>
<i>In the basic element of non-defilement there are no passions And no obstacles, thus those are pure.</i>
4) <i>Freedom from passion:</i> ' <i>No passions</i> ' mean there are no stains of the obscurations of attachment.
<i>In the basic element of non-defilement</i> , this wisdom directly sees the mode of phenomena, hence in this mind, there are no passions, attachment. Another way to explain it is this: because the mind directly perceives the mode of phenomena, in this mind, there are no passions, attachment.
5) <i>Freedom from obstacles:</i> ' <i>No obstacles</i> ' mean [no] stains of obstructions. Because the wisdom that directly perceives the diversity of phenomena perceives them as it is directly, hence, such a mind has no obstructions in engaging all such phenomena. Therefore, there are <i>no obstacles</i> .
If this is explained from the perspective of a final Sangha Jewel, which is a Buddha, then it is easy.
This is because, a Buddha's omniscient mind, which directly perceives the mode of phenomena and tathagata essence as it is, has no passion apprehending true existence.
Because the Buddha's wisdom directly perceiving the diversity also perceives the tathagata essence abiding in the continua of all sentient beings, hence, such a wisdom has no obstructions in engaging all phenomena.
Hence, ' <i>in the basic element of non-defilement and no obstacles, thus those are pure.</i> '

Verse 18 shows the quality of the three [types of], 6) Freedom from inferior obstructions:
18 Because the sight of [these] wisdom is pure, It is [close to being] the unsurpassed wisdom of a Buddha. Therefore, an irreversible Superior Is a refuge for all embodied beings.
Taking 'wisdom' in ' Because the sight of [these] wisdom ' to mean Buddha's mind, then it is pure. This is because, it has the qualities of knowing the mode, variety and inner knowledge.
The cause of such a wisdom are the [wisdom of] the bodhisattvas abiding on the eighth, ninth and tenth pure grounds, these being close to enlightenment. Therefore, an irreversible Superior is a refuge for all embodied beings.
If the quality of the Sangha Jewel as a sentient being is explained from the perspective of the Consequence Middle Way School, then a bodhisattva on the eighth ground has already abandoned the afflictive obscurations.
Hence, such a bodhisattva is purified of passion. Hence, if 4) Freedom from passion is taken to mean being freed from the afflictive obscurations , since that is the case, he is pure, free, purified of passion.
If 5) Freedom from obstacles means being freed from knowledge obscurations , since the bodhisattva on the eighth ground starts to remove such obscurations, in that sense, there are no obstacles as he has started [removing them].
The bodhisattva only starts to remove the knowledge obscurations on the eighth ground onwards, this does not mean that he does not have any more knowledge obscurations left. It is just that he has started removing them.
The bodhisattvas on the eighth, ninth and tenth grounds have removed different levels of knowledge obscurations progressively. Hence, they definitely do achieve some levels of ceasing these knowledge obscurations as they proceed along.
For the three [types of] 6) Freedom from inferior obstructions , this is usually listed as a) Wishing to experience the bliss of peace oneself alone . This is how my teacher usually explains it. I have not seen any written commentaries of this in the text.
In the commentary on this text however, the inferior obscurations are posited as the b) lower obscurations that are abandoned before the eighth ground . Hence, these are inferior. Since such obscurations c) obstructs the achievement of the eighth ground , they are therefore obscurations. Hence, inferior obscurations .
Taking the wisdom in the sight of [these] wisdom is pure to mean the wisdom realizing the modes and varieties in the continua of the bodhisattvas on the pure grounds, since the wisdom in their continua is the cause of enlightenment, therefore such bodhisattvas on the pure grounds can be a refuge for all embodied beings .
This completes the explanations on the qualities of the Three Jewels.

General presentation of the Three Jewels as objects of refuge in terms of lineages:

19 In order to [show the qualities of] teacher, teaching, and learners The Three Refuges were posited In terms of those of the three vehicles And those devoted to the three observances [of the individual refuges].
There is a way to posit the Three Jewels, the <i>Three Rare Sublime Ones</i> , in relation to the goals of the persons of the three lineages, the Hearers, Solitary Realizers and Mahayana:
1) Since the aim of those of <i>Mahayana</i> lineage is Buddhahood, hence, the <i>resultant refuge/ Buddha Jewel</i> is shown.
2) Since the aim of those of <i>Solitary Realizer</i> lineage is liberation, [having strong aspiration to reverse the twelve links], hence, the <i>ultimate Dharma Jewel</i> , true paths and true cessations, are shown.
3) Since the aim of those of <i>Hearer</i> lineage is to become a foe destroyer sangha, [having strong aspiration for such activities as listening to the teachings to become that], hence, the <i>Sangha Jewel</i> is shown.
For those who have not entered any paths, offerings are made in relation to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Hence, the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha are shown.
Such a way of presenting the Three Jewels is due to the different aspirations of the persons on the Mahayana, Solitary Realizer and Hearers' lineages.

Positing a Sangha Jewel to be a superior only:

There is a system that strictly posits a Sangha Jewel to be only a superior and not an ordinary being.
This is because, it is only a superior who is a) free from all doubts with regards to refuge, the Three Jewels and, b) he is never separated from the Three Jewels. Hence, a Sangha Jewel has to be a superior and not an ordinary being.
This is because, it is possible that an ordinary being can follow a founder or teacher other than Buddha.

That said, are the bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation and the path of preparation not necessarily Buddhists? Khenrinpoche: What do you think, does a bodhisattva need to be a Buddhist or not? Student: Maybe not, for example, mother Teresa.
The bodhicitta [in the continuum] of such a bodhisattva is focusing on and aspiring to the state of full enlightenment to become a Buddha. Can one aspire to something that one does not know? If you do not have faith in Buddha, you cannot possibly aspire to be a Buddha. If you do not have the wish to be a Buddha, there is no way bodhicitta can be generated.
If you have faith in Buddha, then you are a Buddhist. [<i>Definition of a Buddhist: a person who goes for refuge to the Three Jewels from the depths of their hearts. Cutting Through Appearance, page 150</i>]
It is stated here that, a Sangha Jewel has to be a superior. This is because, a superior does not have any doubts about Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. He can never change. ¹ Whereas it is possible for an ordinary being to follow after a teaching or a founder other than Buddha.
That which one entrusts oneself to, one's object of refuge, has to be stable and unchanging. It would be [unnatural] to entrust oneself and take refuge in someone who [can] change. Hence, the bodhisattvas on the path of accumulation and path of preparation do not fit the criteria [of being an object of refuge here ² .]

Module 4a_Heart Sutra page 8:

1. Once the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness is achieved, it will never degenerate. The Bodhisattva is confident to achieve enlightenment eventually. The first ground is called 'Extremely Joyful' as he finally sees his own enlightenment that is definite to come. Due to that, one can assert that the Superior Bodhisattva will never degenerate into a worldly being again, it is also impossible for him to lose this realization of emptiness. This is stated very clearly by Chandrakirti in his auto commentary called 'Engaging in the Middle Way'.
2. Therefore, when anyone generates this powerful wisdom directly realizing emptiness, this moment is the very birth of an actual refuge in the mind, the birth of true path and the Dharma Jewel. This is the time when the Bodhisattva possesses in his own mind the actual refuge, the Dharma Jewel. Thus, such a person becomes a Superior Sangha, a Sangha Jewel. Therefore, one becomes an actual refuge for oneself, one also becomes an actual refuge for other sentient beings as well. It is only when the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness is realized would one start to actually save oneself, thereby being the savior for others as well, as one would have the abilities and powers to do so. This is because, if one is unable to save oneself, then it would be quite difficult to be an effective object of refuge for others.

Positing refuge from the perspective of causal and resultant refuge:

The resultant Three Jewels are the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha that one has yet to achieve, only something that will occur in the future. The causal refuge refers to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha that are already established in the continua of another.
If one has faith, mentally entrusts to the Buddha that has been established in another's continuum to be the founder, the person who shows refuge, the Dharma that is established in another's continuum as the actual refuge, the sangha that is established in another's continuum as the helper for one's refuge and verbalizes them, then this is going for causal refuge.
If one holds in one's mind, the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha that one will become in the future as an object of refuge, mentally accepts that and verbalizes it, that is going for resultant refuge.
In the commonly recited [prayer for taking refuge]: <i>I go for refuge until I am enlightened, to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha.</i> This shows causal refuge. <i>By the merit I create by practicing generosity and so forth, may I achieve enlightenment for the benefit of all sentient beings.</i> This shows resultant refuge.

Positing refuge from the perspective of conventional refuge and ultimate refuge:

Such superiors like the bodhisattva superiors are not ultimate refuge but conventional objects of refuge. Likewise, the true paths and true cessations in the continua of such superiors are also not the ultimate refuge but conventional refuge.
This is because, [such objects of refuge] are temporal as these exist temporarily, not being the final object of refuge. This is because, [such objects of refuge] have still not reached their fullest potential.
For example, the true paths and true cessations in the continuum of a superior is not at its highest possible level and needs to improve further. Hence in that sense, it is still temporary, not ultimate/ final.
The ultimate refuge is only Buddha.

Reasons showing why non-buddhas are not ultimate but conventional refuge:

<i>20 Because [the verbal doctrine is] abandoned, because [the realizational doctrine in the continuum of a Bodhisattva Superior] has the quality of deception, Because [a cessation is] a [mere] non-existence, and [non-Buddhas] have fright, The two forms of doctrine and the community of Superiors [Respectively] are not the supreme eternal refuge.</i>
There are [three] reasons stated here why non-buddhas are not ultimate/ final objects of refuge, all starting with 'because':
<i>Because [the verbal doctrine is] abandoned:</i> This refers to the collections of words, letters of the text that one reads and the sounds of which one can hear. These are usually considered to be Dharma Jewel. These are not an ultimate object of refuge.
This is because, these are abandoned when one becomes enlightened. One relies on them to reach one's goal before enlightenment. When one achieves enlightenment, one does not need to depend on them anymore.

Just like a person who crosses a vast ocean on a boat, once he reaches [the other] shore, he does not need to depend on it anymore, unless of course, if he decides to return [midway] to the other side of the ocean.
However, after achieving enlightenment, one still needs to teach the disciples using words.
Therefore, <i>[verbal doctrine is] abandoned</i> means that, once one has achieved the final object of enlightenment, one does not need to depend on it again to be a Buddha.
Although the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness in the continuum of a bodhisattva superior is a true path and an object of refuge, but it is not a final/ ultimate refuge, because it <i>has the quality of deception</i> .

Student: Is subtle knowledge obscuration the same as that which motivates the [uncontaminated] karma?

Khenrinpoche: This is something to think about. According to the Consequence Middle Way School, a knowledge obscuration is not a consciousness but a predisposition of the apprehension of true existence. The apprehensions of a self of person and phenomena are not posited to be knowledge obscurations but are consciousnesses which are afflictive obscurations.

The twelve links of dependent-origination from the perspective of afflictive obscurations are usually presented. However, there is [a presentation of the] twelve links of dependent-origination that is included in the knowledge obscurations. Here, there is an explanation on something that motivates the accumulation of uncontaminated karma. This is asserted to be *subtle effort*. Although such an accumulation of uncontaminated karma does not arise as a result of a coarse afflictive obscuration, a subtle effort is still required. Such a subtle effort arises through the force of knowledge obscurations. Hence, whether such a subtle effort, that which gives rise to the accumulation of uncontaminated karma, is equivalent to knowledge obscuration, is to be discussed further.

If effort is consciousness and subtle effort is posited as subtle knowledge obscuration, then that would make a knowledge obscuration a consciousness?

Describing the Two truths through the analogy of a star and a visual aberration:

The verse that is recited before class, which comes from the *Vajra Cutter Sutra*, says:

*A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a lamp;
An illusion, a drop of dew, or a bubble;
A dream, a flash of lightning, a cloud,
See conditioned things as such.*

This verse starts with *a star*. This is an analogy for how, within any specific phenomenon, the two truths, the two levels of reality, are complete.

The *Seven Vajra Topics* showed, how [any phenomenon] could be explained from an ultimate or from a conventional perspective. Likewise, with respect to reality, on any given phenomenon, the *two levels of reality are complete*.

This means that, on any phenomenon, there is a *[merging] of appearance and emptiness*.

On each and every single phenomenon, there are two levels of reality or truths, which are related to the minds to which they appear: There is one level of truth which is an appearance that appears to the non-conceptual wisdom, specifically to the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness.

Other than this, there is a level of appearance to another mind, called *conventional valid cognizer* [that is a worldly consciousness]. This is essentially a valid cognizer in the continuum of a non-superior, someone who has not yet realized emptiness directly [or even inferentially]. To such valid cognizers, there is a level of truth that appears.

Of the two levels of reality on every existent, the level of reality which is an appearance to the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness is an ultimate truth. The other level of reality which has the nature of an appearance to the conventional valid cognizer is the conventional truth, obscurational truth, concealer truth.

Describing the object of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness: *A star* -

Taking the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness of a person as an example. It is said that, from the perspective of such a wisdom directly perceiving the person, the person does not appear. What such a mind realizes and what appears to it, is the *mere emptiness of inherent existence*. This is just the mere negation which is the emptiness of true existence.

Although the person does not appear to the perspective of the wisdom directly perceiving the emptiness of a person, but this does not mean that the person does not exist, for the person does exist. It is just that it does not appear to such a perspective.

To illustrate the fact that it is only the emptiness of true existence that appears to the perspective of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, the example of *star* is given [in the above quote].

The stars are there in the sky. It is just that, during the day, these are generally not seen. This does not mean that these stars are not there. What appears in day time is the *mere absence of obstructiveness*.

This is an analogy for what appears to the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. When one looks into the sky during the day, what one sees is merely the vacuity, space, an ordinary emptiness of nothingness.

This is analogous of how nothing appears except emptiness, [here meaning] the object of negation to the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. In the perspective of such a wisdom, only the mere negation of the object of negation, only the emptiness of true existence, appears.

The [object of the] basis of designation, here [referring to] the *person, does not appear* in the perspective of such a wisdom directly realizing the emptiness of a person. This is what is taught in the teachings with respect to the manner of appearance to a wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. The analogy of a star is used to illustrate this.

Describing the object of conventional valid cognizer: *A visual aberration* -

As for the conventional valid cognizers [that are worldly consciousnesses], these essentially refer to the minds that do not realize emptiness, that do not have emptiness as their objects. The [myriad] diversity of phenomena that appear to these conventional valid cognizers are *conventional phenomena*.

For a mind that does not realize emptiness, it can be a valid cognizer, a correctly assuming consciousness, a doubting consciousness or even a wrong consciousness. Therefore, there are many such possible minds that do not realize emptiness.

Such states of consciousnesses which are wrong [and/] or mistaken, particularly those that are polluted by the apprehension of true existence, do experience a myriad variety of mistaken [and/] or wrong appearances.

For *conventional minds* that do not realize emptiness [called worldly consciousnesses], there are instances where things conventionally exist in the way they appear as some sort of reality*.

*A conventional validly cognizing consciousness which establishes the existence of "I". This consciousness exists, for example, in the continua of those common beings whose mental continua have not been affected by systems of tenets and who thus do not differentiate between nominal imputation and inherent existence. In this case, the "I" is not qualified as being either nominally imputed or inherently existent.

- *Fifth Dalai Lama, quoted in Jeffery Hopkin's Emptiness Yoga, page 469.*

But this is not necessarily the case, as there could be many instances that do not reflect the reality [do not exist in the way it appears]. There are many possibilities for phenomena to appear to <i>conventional minds</i> that do not realize emptiness.
One then needs to posit such a level of reality in relation to a <i>conventional valid cognizer</i> .
For example, the <i>person appears</i> in the perspective of a conventional valid cognizer realizing a person. Just as the person appears to a conventional valid cognizer apprehending a person, one also needs to posit the person does exist and function.
Going back to the analogy of the star, one does not see stars during the day. But come nightfall, suddenly all the stars would appear. This is an analogy of how the myriad diversity of phenomena appear to conventional valid cognizers.
The analogy of a star serves to illustrate how, on any phenomenon, there is the [merging] of appearance and emptiness.
In essence, there is one level of reality that appears to the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. The object [that appears] is an ultimate truth. Then anything other than [such an object, which is emptiness,] that appears to a conventional valid cognizer, is the conventional truth, concealer truth, obscurational truth.
There are of course things that appear to a conventional valid cognizer that do [exist], for example, a [mere] person. For a conventional valid cognizer realizing a [mere] person, the [mere] person does exist and function.
But having said that about conventional truth, that which appears to a conventional valid cognizer, this does not mean that, whatever <i>appears</i> to a conventional valid cognizer is necessarily an accurate depiction of <i>how such a phenomenon exist</i> .
This was clearly asserted by the Consequence Middle Way School, that for a sentient being, with the exception of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, all consciousnesses are necessarily mistaken.
Therefore, whatever <i>appears</i> to a conventional valid cognizer, such an appearance is not necessarily an accurate depiction of the reality of such a phenomenon.
All consciousnesses of sentient beings, with the exception of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, due to these consciousnesses being polluted by the latencies of ignorance, always have whatever that appears to them to appear to exist from its own side, even though this is never the case in reality.
From the perspective of the Consequence Middle Way School, phenomena do appear to conventional valid cognizers.
But whatever appears to a conventional valid cognizer would appear as truly existent, existing from its own side, existing inherently. All such terms are synonymous. But do the phenomena exist in the way it appears, that is, exist truly? No.
It is said that, phenomena do not exist in the way it appears. But to a conventional valid cognizer, everything that appears, appears right there as existing from its own side, under its own power.
If there is a truth that, phenomena that appear to exist from its own side really existed from its own side, whatever appears is necessarily how it exist, that not only do phenomena appear truly but are indeed truly, inherently existent, then this must be the ultimate, final nature, the final, ultimate mode of being, existence of such a phenomenon.
If that is the case, then whatever is the ultimate mode of being of a phenomenon, if it does exist, then it must appear to the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness.
In essence, although the phenomena that appear to the conventional valid cognizers appear as existing from its own side, truly existent, the reality is that, they do not exist in that way, do not exist truly from their own sides.
Hence, there is a disparity between reality and appearance. Although that is not the reality, but that is how it appears.
Therefore, the analogy of a <i>visual aberration</i> is used to illustrate this [meaning]. It is important and good to have some ideas about the two truths. This is because, these are often discussed in many context, even here in this text.

Conventional refuge:

***20 Because [the verbal doctrine is] abandoned,
because [the realizational doctrine in the continuum of a Bodhisattva Superior] has the quality of deception,
Because [a cessation is] a [mere] non-existence, and [non-Buddhas] have fright,
The two forms of doctrine and the community of Superiors
[Respectively] are not the supreme eternal refuge.***

Because it is abandoned: After one achieves the final fruit, that which is to be abandoned here refers to the scriptural Dharma, that which one reads, studies and hears from. Once one achieves the final fruit, one does not need to rely on the scriptural Dharma to maintain one's achievement.

It is likened to someone who relies on a boat to cross the ocean. Once one reaches the other shore and touches ground, one does not need it to continue [one's crossing] as one has arrived. One leaves it behind and moves on. Likewise, when one achieves the final fruit, one does not need to rely on the scriptural Dharma, as one has achieved one's goal.

The Dharma Jewel has the division of conventional Dharma Jewel and ultimate Dharma Jewel. In this context, the scriptural Dharma is a temporary object of refuge that one does not need to hold on to permanently.

<p><i>Because it has the quality of deception:</i> 'It' refers to the true path, the realizational Dharma Jewel, the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness in the continuum of a bodhisattva superior. Such a wisdom is not the final object of refuge because <i>it has the quality of deception</i>.</p>
<p>In general, composed impermanent phenomenon has the quality of deception [due to being changeable].</p>
<p>Since composed phenomena undergo change, hence, they are not reliable, not stable.</p>
<p>There are some expert commentators who explained it this way: since <i>it</i> refers to the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness in the continuum of a superior, which has the quality of deception, hence, the realizational Dharma Jewel, which is a true path in such a continuum, is not a final object of refuge. This is due to it being changeable and unstable.</p>
<p>Hence, they conclude that, the Form Body which are the Emanation and Enjoyment Bodies, as well as even the Wisdom Truth Body, since they are composed phenomena and hence undergo changes, are not reliable objects of refuge.</p>
<p>They conclude that it is only [the Nature Truth Body] that is the [final object of refuge]. This is rejected by Gyaltsab Je.</p>
<p>Therefore, one should understand <i>quality of deception</i> as: In the perspective of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness in the continuum of a bodhisattva superior, there is an appearance of a complete absence of any stains.</p>
<p>Although there is such an appearance, in reality this is not so. This is because, such a wisdom has yet to remove all stains.</p>
<p>There are still defilements yet to be removed, hence such a wisdom still needs to transform from a mind that has defilements into a mind that is completely separated from all defilements. Hence, such a wisdom is not a final object of refuge.</p>
<p>Since there are changes taking place, hence, it is not the final object of refuge.</p>
<p>Therefore [from these two points], the scriptural Dharma and the realizational Dharma of the true path in the continuum of bodhisattva superiors are not final objects of refuge.</p>
<p><i>Because it is a [mere] non-existence:</i> 'It' here refers to a nirvana without remainder, which is a true cessation but essentially only an abandonment of afflictions and suffering. Only or mere here suggests that, there is still the knowledge obscurations that has yet to be abandoned. Hence, 'it' is not a final object of refuge.</p>
<p>Even though such a nirvana without remainder is a true cessation, nonetheless, it is still not a final object of refuge.</p>
<p>[The three points of this verse] here show that, the Dharma Jewel is not the final object of refuge.</p>
<p>While the Dharma Jewel is not the final object of refuge, this does not mean that it is not an actual refuge. One needs to distinguish between an actual refuge and a final object of refuge.</p>
<p>The Dharma Jewel is the actual refuge as it accords the real protection. But it is not the final object of refuge.</p>
<p>A Hearer or a Solitary Realizer foe destroyer is a Sangha Jewel, but they are also not final objects of refuge because they have fright. Even though they are arhats, they still have knowledge obscurations.</p>
<p>In essence, the scriptural Dharma, realizational Dharma, true cessation and all non-buddha superiors are not final objects of refuge. This is where having some knowledge of tenets are useful here:</p>
<p>How the assertions of tenets help with the understanding of final refuge:</p>
<p>Many [schools] assert that there are three final vehicles, whereas there are [others] who assert that there is just one final vehicle. If one does not understand that there are differing views as to the number of final vehicles, one would be confused.</p>
<p>One should know, among the proponents of the Great Exposition, Sutra, Mind Only, Autonomy Middle Way and Consequent Middle Way, which of them assert three final vehicles or one final vehicle, and the respective reasons for their assertions.</p>
<p>The proponents of Hinayana tenets essentially assert that, when a nirvana without remainder is achieved, the person ceases to exist as the continuum is severed. Within the Mahayana tenets of the Mind Only, there are those who propound that [after attaining a nirvana without remainder], the continuum is severed while others do not propound that .</p>
<p>According to the Mahayana tenets of the Middle Way, they assert that there is just one final vehicle.</p>
<p>There are many reasons to substantiate that the continuum is not severed at nirvana without remainder, as the person still remains. This is because, if one asserts the continuum is severed here, then there would be many logical inconsistencies.</p>
<p>The reality is that, the continuum of the person is not, and will never be, severed. Hence, there is only one final vehicle for every sentient being. This is the perspective of this treatise as well. Hence, even Hearer and Solitary Realizer foe destroyers are not considered final objects of refuge.</p>
<p>Since such Hinayana foe destroyers still have knowledge obscurations, hence it is said that, they will have to enter the Mahayana, remove the obscurations there, become Buddhas and would they then become final objects of refuge.</p>
<p>This treatise of the <i>Sublime Continuum</i> adopts the position of one final vehicle for all sentient beings.</p>

How to improve learning:

If one has studied tenets, one should have some idea about the differences between a nirvana without remainder and a nirvana with remainder of the many assertions by the various tenets. If one forgets, then of course merely looking at such phrases would not make much sense.

I have mentioned this before, [such texts] are not easy to understand. Real learning is not easy, but if you really wish to learn them, there would be no way you can do so merely by focusing on one topic or one text in the entire Buddhadharma, and expect to know everything. This is impossible as everything is interconnected.

You have to learn from [all areas] and not forget what you have learnt, as you need to put everything together.

Coming to just this one topic and hoping to learn something, I think [will be ineffective]. Hence, you must not forget the topics you have learnt and if you do, there is no benefit being discouraged as this does not help.

Rather than feeling disheartened, why not think about what you can do to correct the situation?

Buddha is the sole final refuge:

*21 Ultimately the refuge of transmigrators
Is just the sole Buddha,
Because the Subduer has the Body of Doctrine [and thus is the doctrine]
And because [a Buddha] is the finality of the Community.*

Ultimately, the refuge for all sentient beings is only the Buddha. This is because, the Buddha has achieved the Dharmakaya that is separated from all fears.

Because [a Buddha] is the finality of the Community: 'Community' here refers to the Sangha Jewel.

Essentially, all sentient beings from the superior at the end of the continuum of being a sentient being backwards, due to the need to move towards the Dharmakaya, the resultant refuge as they have yet to achieve that, [are not final objects of refuge].

For example, our kind teacher and founder, Shakyamuni Buddha, has a state of achievement that is achieved by someone other than oneself. Hence, this is a causal refuge, as it exists in the continuum existing in someone else.

What the superiors and everyone else are aiming for, are to achieve a state which is similar to what He has achieved. Such a state is the *resultant refuge*. Therefore, the conclusion is that, it is only the Buddha who is the final object of refuge.

This is because, to be a final object of refuge, one has to be free from all fears, be without partiality, help every sentient being regardless whether one has been harmed or helped.

Etymology of Rare and Sublime:

*22 Because of appearing rarely, because of being without defilement,
Because of having power, because of being the ornament of the world,
Because of being just superior, and because of being changeless,
[They are called] Jewels [literally, Superior Rarities].*

Verses up to here show the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha that have yet to occur, the first three of the Seven Vajra Points.

Forth topic – Basic constituent:

*23 Those from which the three virtuous Jewels arise—
Reality with defilement and without defilement,
The qualities of undefiled Buddhahood, and the Conqueror's activities—
Are objects just of those [directly] perceiving the ultimate.*

This states that the basic constituent [and the last three topics of enlightenment, qualities and activities are] inconceivable.

*24 The lineage of these Three Jewels
Is an object [only] of those perceiving all,
For it is inconceivable due to four reasons
In accordance respectively with those four aspects.*

This verse states that, because these [four Vajra Points] are inconceivable, hence, these are only the objects of Buddhas.

*25 Because [the basic realm is] pure but [appears to be] afflicted,
Because [enlightenment is] unafflicted but [appears] to be purified,
Because [the Buddha qualities are] undifferentiated phenomena [even at the time of common being but are not manifest],
And because [the Buddha activities are] spontaneous but without conceptuality
[these four are inconceivable by common beings].*

This verse states the [four reasons] for these [four Vajra Points being inconceivable].

Student: What is the difference between realizing the emptiness of inherent existence and realizing that attachments are the cause of all suffering [as stated in] the Four Noble Truths?

What are the knowledge obscurations that remain in the state of a nirvana without remainder/ in the state of cessation of suffering?

Khenrinpoche: With respect to [the explanation of] knowledge obscurations, it is difficult to explain from the beginning as there are so many things to be explained prior to this explanation. Firstly, one has to know that, the proponents of Hinayana tenets do not assert a presentation of knowledge obscurations. On the other hand, the proponents of Mahayana tenets assert knowledge obscurations. But, [even among them,] they have different presentations of what constitutes knowledge obscurations. The Mind Only, Autonomists and Consequentialists all have different assertions.

Assuming that these are understood, [and by adopting] the highest/ final view that posits ignorance to be the apprehension of true existence, then there are the [explanations of infusions] left on the continuum by the apprehension of true existence which are in the form of a seed as well as a predisposition. In essence, the predisposition of ignorance [is asserted to be the knowledge obscurations].

One needs to understand that there is a difference between a seed and a predisposition. Among these two, the predisposition that is the proclivity/ latency that is [infused] on the mind by the apprehension of true existence, [is asserted as the knowledge obscuration.]

Essentially, the difference between:

- 1) The **seed** of the apprehension of true existence and
- 2) The **predisposition** of the apprehension of true existence, is this:

1) The **seed** of the apprehension of true existence functions as the potential/ ability to produce another **new** moment of an **apprehension** of true existence [in the future].

2) The **predisposition** of the apprehension of true existence cannot produce another new moment of an apprehension of true existence [in the future]. What it produces is an **appearance** of true existence [in the future].

In essence, the potential that gives rise to an appearance of true existence is posited as knowledge obscurations according to the Consequence Middle Way School, the highest view.

Non-dualistic and dualistic appearances:

With respect to the *star* and so forth in the verse mentioned previously, it is an analogy to show how, on any one chosen existing phenomenon, the two features of nature of emptiness and a mere appearance are both **found** on that chosen basis.

The empty nature, the emptiness of that phenomenon, is an ultimate truth. The phenomenon itself, the mere appearance, is a conventional truth, concealer truth, obscurational truth.

Description of non-dualistic appearance to the wisdom of a superior:

During the day, even though there are stars in the sky, one does not see them. What appears is the mere space/ vacuity. Likewise, in the perspective of the meditative equipoise of the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, what appears is the mere vacuity of space-like emptiness of inherent existence, the object of negation. Nothing appears except this emptiness.

In the perspective of this wisdom of meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness, only emptiness appears. Conventional phenomena do not appear, are not seen. Nevertheless, this does not mean that such a wisdom sees the non-existence of conventional phenomena. Such a wisdom is a mind of non-duality, where all *dualistic appearances* have subsided.

Here, *subsidence of dualistic appearances* means: **1)** Conventional phenomena do not appear, **2)** Non-existence [non-appearance] of the object of negation, and **3)** No [appearance] of subject and object being distinct.

This [**3**] is likened to water being mixed with water in that, such a wisdom is experientially merged in oneness with the object it realizes, emptiness. There is no [appearance] of duality of subject and object.

Such a wisdom is said to be an unmistakable mind because, it is not polluted by the apprehension of true existence.

Description of dualistic appearance to the wisdom of a superior:

When one arises from such a meditative equipoise that directly realizes emptiness, one arises into the wisdom of post meditative equipoise of subsequent attainment. To this wisdom of subsequent attainment, it is said:

1) that conventional phenomena appear, **2)** to be polluted by the apprehension of true existence, and **3)** that due to being polluted by the apprehension of true existence, whatever appears to it, appears to exist from its own side, established by its own nature [*having a sense* of subject and object as being distinct.]

For such a wisdom, whatever conventional phenomena appear, appear to exist right there from its own side, exist in itself.

For example, to this conventional valid cognizer which is a wisdom of subsequent attainment, there [can be]:

1) an appearance of a person, and **2)** an appearance of a truly existent person.

Due to the appearance of a person, one must be able to posit the existence of a person. This is something one needs to analyze: Since there are **1) & 2)**, then:

1a) According to the explanation of *predisposition* as presented by the Mind Only School, when one arises from the meditative equipoise into the post meditative equipoise, the person *appears* through the force of past familiarity with the apprehension of person itself. Hence, it is a particular [predisposition] that is responsible for the appearance of the person.

2a) As for the appearance of a truly existent person, this is due to the force of the [predisposition] of the apprehension of a truly existent [person].

Taking person as the *main [prime] object*, this *one and same person* can *appear* to different minds in many different ways, as: *A)* person, *B)* truly existent [person], *C)* self-sufficient [person], or *D)* permanent [person].

The reason that such different appearances in which a person can appear to different minds is due to different predispositions.

The factor of appearance in relation to [the object of a] person appearing as a person means that, the person exists. One then needs to account/ posit for its existence, how that is the case.

If something exists in the way it appears, then the mind [which realizes it] must be a valid cognizer. In the case of the mind to which a person appears as it is, as a person, then such a mind is a valid cognizer.

But it is not the case that, whatever appears is necessarily an accurate depiction of its actual status [in reality].

For example, if a person appears as truly existent, although the mind has the appearance of such a truly existent person, this does not mean that the person [exists as] truly existent. Hence, there is a disparity between reality [existence] and appearance.

Such a mind having the appearance of a truly existent person cannot be [included] as a valid cognizer.

For a wisdom directly realizing emptiness arising into the wisdom of subsequent attainment of post meditative equipoise, the latter wisdom is polluted by the [predisposition of the] apprehension of true existence.

Hence, due to being polluted by the *predisposition* of ignorance, whatever appears will always appear as truly existent. Hence, such a [subsequent attainment] is a mistaken consciousness.

<p>However, this does not mean that, such a [wisdom] believes that [whatever appears] are truly existent. This is due to [it] having realized emptiness directly. [It] does not believe that phenomena exist truly, although they appear to exist truly.</p>
<p>According the Consequence Middle Way School, even though this wisdom of subsequent attainment is a mistaken consciousness, nevertheless, it is a valid cognizer. Hence, a mistaken mind can be a valid cognizer.</p>
<p>[In such a case of subsequent attainment], it is like waking up [from deep sleep].</p>
<p>The person appears as it is as a person to this wisdom of subsequent attainment. Hence, this wisdom <i>realizes</i> person.</p>
<p>But, does the person appear as truly existent to such a mind? Yes. Then, does such a mind grasp/ apprehend the person as truly existent? No. Therefore, this mind perceives the person as illusory-like.</p>
<p>Although person appears as truly existent to this mind [of subsequent attainment], but does the person exist in the way it appears [that is, existing truly in the way it appears,] as truly existent? No. This is because, the person is a mere appearance.</p>
<p>Description of dualistic appearance to a worldly consciousness:</p>
<p>For [worldly consciousnesses] who have not realized emptiness, do these consciousnesses sometimes realize person? Are there minds in the continua of [worldly consciousnesses] that realize person? Yes.</p>
<p>It is quite clear that [worldly consciousnesses] have valid states of minds/ valid cognizers realizing food, car and so forth. There are [worldly consciousnesses] that have valid cognizers realizing earth, fire, wind and water.</p>
<p>When a [worldly consciousness] thinks of a person, it does realize person. But in the perspective of such a mind, the person appears as truly existent. Not only that, it also believes that the person is truly existent.</p>
<p>Proof that the mind realizing conventional phenomena is not the same mind that apprehends non-existences:</p>
<p>Although [a worldly consciousness] does realize person, yet <i>at the same time</i>, such a mind also apprehends that person as truly existent. These two consciousnesses cannot be the same mind.</p>
<p>This shows that, there is B) a mind that grasps/ apprehends the person as truly existent, there is also [another] A) mind that realizes a person as a [mere] person.</p>
<p>This is because, if the person that realizes a [mere] person is also [the same mind] that grasps/ apprehends the person as truly existent, then [such a grasping] will make such a mind [that realizes a mere person] to be ignorance as there is apprehension of true existence. Then [such a mind that realizes a mere person] cannot be a valid cognizer.</p>
<p>Proof that truly existent person or phenomena do not exist at all:</p>
<p>For [worldly consciousnesses], whatever appears, including a person, necessarily appears as truly existent. Not only that, such consciousnesses also assent/ believe in a truly existent person to exist in the way it appears.</p>
<p>Although the person appears as truly existent, but the person does not exist as truly existent as there is no truly existent person [in reality]. Such an appearance of a truly existent person is just a mental construct as an appearance to the mind.</p>
<p>It is not an accurate reflection of reality for, although there is an appearance of a truly existent person, there is no truly existent person in reality. Therefore, an analogy of a <i>visual aberration</i> is used to illustrate this.</p>
<p>Although whatever appears, including a person, appears as truly existent right there from its own side as inherently existent, but such a person does not exist in reality. For if in reality there is such a truly existent person that exists in the way it appears, then it must be found by a mind analyzing the ultimate.</p>
<p>If the appearance of a truly existent person, which is how it must appear [to any worldly consciousness], is an accurate depiction of reality, as [existing] truly, without any disparity between appearance and reality, then this would mean that a person existing as truly, the factor of true existence, must be its final mode of abiding, as the ultimate, deepest nature.</p>
<p>This would mean that it is a truth, which means that there is no disparity in that, it exists in the way it appears. If that is the case, then true existence must be its final mode of existence/ being. If [true existence] is [any phenomenon's] final mode of being, then [such a phenomenon] must be found by the valid cognizer distinguishing the ultimate.</p>
<p>Connecting the analogy of visual aberration to the meaning that phenomena do not exist in the way it appears:</p>
<p>In the analogy of a visual aberration, what is described in the text is seeing falling hairs [physical condition of eye floaters]. The appearance of falling hairs appears to some minds. In such a perspective, falling hairs exist. But in reality, there are no such things as falling hairs. To a person having an impairment in his eyes, he may have visions of falling hairs.</p>
<p>If [the state of falling hairs] is an accurate reflection of reality, then everyone, including those that do not have such conditions, must see falling hairs as it must be realized if it does exist. But most do not see it. It is only those with such conditions that have such visions. This shows how, things do not exist in the way it appears.</p>
<p>Essentially, the analogy of the visual aberration [of falling hairs] illustrates the point that, although things and events appear as truly existent, truly existent phenomena [actually] do not exist at all.</p>

Student: When the wisdom directly realizing emptiness rises from meditative equipoise, does the emptiness also [appear] as illusory-like? **Khenrinpoche:** When the wisdom directly realizing emptiness rises from meditative equipoise, all phenomena appear as illusory-like.

How to posit the Final Three Jewels:

This verse says that it is only the Buddha and no one else, who ultimately is the refuge of migrators, all sentient beings. The Dharma Jewel and Sangha Jewel are temporary objects of refuge:

*21 Ultimately the refuge of transmigrators
Is just the sole Buddha,
Because the Subduer has the Body of Doctrine [and thus is the doctrine]
And because [a Buddha] is the finality of the Community.*

Previous lesson showed how all sentient beings, starting from the one who is at the last moment of being a sentient being, [going backwards] to include all superiors and ordinary beings, are not posited as final objects of refuge.

This is because, they have yet to become a final object of refuge as they have yet to reach the ultimate, final goal.

Khenrinpoche: That said, do you know what could be a qualm here? The last line is the answer to this qualm.

Student 1: How could the Sangha community, even the superior Sangha, be a refuge if they are just temporary and not final refuge? **Student 2:** Why would one take refuge in the Sangha community when they are not the final object of refuge?

Khenrinpoche: There is no need to doubt what you are taking refuge in, because it has been posited from the beginning that, we go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. When referring to objects of refuge, this can be in the form of an ultimate Buddha, Dharma and Sangha Jewel, or a conventional Buddha, Dharma and Sangha Jewel.

Therefore, it is clear that, they are all suitable objects of refuge for one. That said, it is also said that the Dharma Jewel and Sangha Jewel are temporary, and only the Buddha Jewel is the final object of refuge. Hence, the qualm cannot be this.

Student 3: Since the Sangha Jewel is a temporary refuge, but the last line states that the Buddha is the finality of the community, this means that a Buddha is also a Sangha Jewel. Hence, there is a Sangha Jewel that is not a temporary refuge.

Khenrinpoche: The previous lesson showed how the true path and true cessation of the Dharma Jewel are temporary objects of refuge, not final. Also, the arhats who have achieved a nirvana with remainder, thus being Sangha Jewels, are also not final objects of refuge. This explanation is essentially saying that, it is only the Buddha who is the final object of refuge.

The qualm is therefore this: If only the Buddha is the final object of refuge, then would that mean that, there are no Final Dharma Jewel and no Final Sangha Jewel?

The last line of verse 21 answers this in that, starting from the bodhisattva who is existing in his last moment as a sentient being backwards to include everyone else, they still [have more attainments to] transform into and achieve the Dharmakaya.

Hence, the meaning [in this verse] is that, there are the Final Dharma Jewel and Final Sangha Jewel.

Even though it is only the Buddha who is the final object of refuge, but there are the Final Dharma Jewel and Final Sangha Jewel. An example of a Final Sangha Jewel is Buddha superior. Final Dharma Jewel is the true path and/or true cessation in the continuum of Buddha superior.

Hence in this sense, there are the Three Final Objects of Refuge: Final Buddha Jewel, Final Dharma Jewel, Final Sangha Jewel. But when referring to Buddha, Dharma and Sangha *in general*, then only the Buddha is the final object of refuge, not the Dharma and Sangha.

Difference between 'something is' and 'something necessarily is':

If someone were to ask: Are the Dharma Jewel and Sangha Jewel final or temporary objects of refuge? One would have to say that they are temporary and not final [in general without debate].

Therefore, [the reply] would have to depend on how the question is being asked. If someone again asks: Is the Dharma Jewel necessarily a temporary object of refuge? Then one would have to say no.

Khenrinpoche: Is the Dharma Jewel a temporary object of refuge? If you were to reply 'yes', the question [that follows in debate] would then be: "Would that not mean that the Dharma Jewel does not exist on the Buddha ground? This is because, you have said that the Dharma Jewel is a temporary object of refuge."

Khenrinpoche: Do sentient beings exist on Buddha ground? No. Therefore, [how one replies] depends on how the question is being asked: Dharma Jewel encompasses [many areas]. This is because, there is a common locus of Dharma Jewel and temporary objects of refuge, and there is also a common locus of Dharma Jewel and an ultimate object of refuge.

So, if you were being asked: "Is the Dharma Jewel a temporary or ultimate object of refuge?" What would you say? You would have to say that it is a conventional object of refuge.

How there is nothing that is all Final Three Jewels :

<p>Khenrinpoche: According to the view of the Consequence Middle Way School, <i>is there something that is all three final objects of refuge?</i> Student 4: Buddha is all three final objects of refuge.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Buddha is a very convenient answer as it covers a lot of areas! You need to explain why Buddha is the Final Buddha Jewel, Final Dharma Jewel and Final Sangha Jewel. If it exists, there must be an illustration. You need to posit that.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Is Buddha a permanent or an impermanent phenomenon? Student: Permanent. Khenrinpoche: Then how can something that is permanent be a Sangha Jewel? Student 4: This would mean it cannot be the three final objects of refuge.</p>
<p>If I were to say now that Buddha is impermanent, then what would be the [consequence]? [That Buddha superior] is the Final Three Jewels. Khenrinpoche: Is Buddha the wisdom truth body? Student: No.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Since you have asserted that the Buddha [is] the Four Bodies, [then it follows from your assertion that], Buddha is the wisdom truth body.</p>
<p>Student 5: Buddha imparting the Dharma to Buddha, since there is no deception; Buddha is the community of Sangha, because He has no fear. Buddha is Buddha.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Is your point being that, since He teaches the Dharma, hence He is Dharma Jewel? Student: Yes. But if He teaches the Dharma to sentient beings, the Dharma cannot be the ultimate refuge because sentient beings have deception. He cannot misunderstand what He is teaching...</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: The term 'Buddha' covers a big area. If one refers to such a Buddha superior* like our kind founder, Guru Shakyamuni Buddha, even though He teaches the Dharma, He Himself is not the Dharma Jewel but is Sangha Jewel.</p>
<p>Hence, Shakyamuni Buddha is a Sangha Jewel. He is a Sangha Jewel because He is a superior*. He is not a Dharma Jewel because He is neither a true path nor a true cessation. Dharma Jewel is necessarily either a true path and/or true cessation.</p>
<p>A Sangha Jewel is necessarily a superior. The word Buddha encompasses many areas, but if one says Buddha superior like Shakyamuni Buddha, then it is clear that He is 1) Buddha/ Buddha Jewel and 2) Sangha Jewel, but not Dharma Jewel.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: Therefore, is there something that is all Three Jewels? Sometimes, we may mistakenly think that we know [about the topics], but when we meet with a question like this, then what we think we know suddenly [vanishes]! We cannot seem to point to anything that [we thought we knew].</p>

Functions of the Final Three Jewels:

<p>Student 6: When comparing the Final Three Jewels in terms of their functions, what they do, can one respectively say that, these are <i>blessing, attainment and enlightened activities</i>? What is the difference between the Final Buddha Jewel and Final Sangha Jewel in terms of their functions?</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: When referring to Buddha, this is often described as an existent that is attained when the afflictive obscurations and the knowledge obscurations are abandoned. What are actualized/ manifest are the true path and true cessation, the dharmakaya.</p>
<p>[Within the dharmakaya, truth body], there are the [two divisions of] the nature [truth] body into the two purities: natural purity and adventitious purity. This is essentially the final true cessation. [The other division of the truth body] is the wisdom truth body which is the final true path.</p>
<p>In the Seven Vajra Topics, the fifth [topic] is Enlightenment, followed by Qualities and Buddha Activities. Enlightenment here refers to Buddha, Qualities here refers to the qualities of the natural purity, adventitious purity, knowledge of the mode of phenomena and knowledge of the varieties of phenomena.</p>
<p>The two factors of purities are explanations of [final] true cessation, while the knowledge of the mode and varieties of phenomena are related to [final] true path.</p>
<p>If one analyzes what has been explained, the Vajra Topic of Qualities refers to the [Final] Dharma Jewel. Perhaps the last topic, Buddha Activities, is referring to the [Final] Sangha Jewel.</p>
<p>Of all the Buddha's enlightened activities, the principal enlightened activity is that of <i>speech</i> revealing the doctrines to sentient beings. This is done primarily through the two Form Bodies, which are the Final Sangha Jewel.</p>
<p>The two Form Bodies of the Complete Enjoyment Body and the Emanation Body can be posited as [illustrations of] the Final Sangha Jewel. The Final Dharma Jewel does not [perform the function of] revealing the Dharma [by itself].</p>
<p>But as mentioned before, when the Qualities, in relation to true path and true cessation, are actualized, that is, when the dharmakaya is actualized, one then performs the [Buddha] activities of primarily revealing the teachings to sentient beings by emanating bodies, like the Emanation Bodies or the Complete Enjoyment Bodies.</p>
<p>Perhaps the Vajra Topic of Qualities is referring to the Final Dharma Jewel, the last Vajra Topic of Buddha Activities is referring to the Final Sangha Jewel.</p>

How there can be Buddha that is not any of the Four Bodies:

Khenrinpoche: The Final Three Jewels were discussed earlier, so now: <i>Is there Buddha that is not any of the Four Bodies?</i>
We are all learning here, I myself am [still] learning, you are also learning, nobody is perfect. You just give your answer.
But when you do so, there must be some reasons behind it. You cannot merely give one answer and [leave it at that]. You have to go three or four deeper [levels of reasoning to support what you have said]. #
Student: Buddha is [none] of the Four Bodies.
Khenrinpoche: Since Buddha encompasses many areas, [are there more reasons to substantiate your answer?]
Khenrinpoche: What is the Buddha's crown protrusion? Is Buddha's crown protrusion Buddha? Is it dharmakaya? Is Buddha's hand Buddha or not?
Only the proponents of Great Exposition would say no, all other schools would say yes, that Buddha's Form Body is Buddha.
The proponents of Great Exposition assert that, Buddha's form aggregates are not Buddha. Even the Sutra School of the Hinayana tenet do assert that [Buddha's form aggregates are Buddha]. Then of course, the Mahayana tenets would say yes.
There is probably no [proponent] of the Consequence Middle Way School who would assert that the Buddha's Form aggregate is not Buddha. If that is the case, then there should be no doubt as to whether Buddha's hand is Buddha or not.
You must not think that, the word Buddha only refers to a specific person. The word Buddha has a lot of meaning.
The entire concept of what Buddha is, can be explained within the two Truth and Form Bodies. Hence, a Buddha is not necessarily a person nor is a Buddha necessarily a form.
If Buddha's hand is Buddha, then can you find an example of Buddha that is not any of the Four Bodies?
Khenrinpoche: Buddha's hand is which of the Four Bodies?

*A person is not of his bases of designation and shares the qualities of all the mental and physical aggregates. Therefore, persons are included in the fourth aggregate, among non-associated compositional factors. Though a person is thus technically an instance of the fourth aggregate [as a designated category under this aggregate], a person is still not any of the aggregates that serve as that person's bases of imputation.
Cutting through appearances on the chapter of the assertions of the Consequence Middle Way School, page 308.

Buddha as a terminological category by itself is not any of the Four Bodies:

Reason 1: This is because, if Buddha is the Nature Truth Body, then it follows that Buddha is also the Wisdom Truth Body, Buddha would also be a Complete Enjoyment Body and Buddha would also be an Emanation Body. If that is the case, then this would incur three fallacies:

Reason 2: There is a common locus between Nature Truth Body and Wisdom Truth Body, and so forth, and

Reason 3: Buddha is Dharma Jewel.

Reason 4: Buddha is all Four Bodies.

Verse 22 – Showing the etymology of 'Rare Sublime One':

*22 Because of appearing rarely, because of being without defilement,
Because of having power, because of being the ornament of the world,
Because of being just superior, and because of being changeless,
[They are called] Jewels [literally, Superior Rarities].*

Because of appearing rarely: The occurrence of a Buddha in a world system is very rare, just like how it is very difficult to possess a wish fulfilling jewel. Hence, when He has descended in a world, it becomes very important to seek refuge in Him.

Since this is a rare event, hence at such [an auspicious] time when one has some slight idea of what Buddha is, then it becomes very important for one to take refuge in Him.

[The descent of] Buddha in a world system was explained before. In any world system there are four periods, these are the eons of: formation, abiding, destruction and nothingness. Among these, the Buddha only comes during the eon of abiding.

Even during the eon of abiding, He only comes when the lifespans of human beings are on the decline. Hence, [this shows that] the coming of Buddha is very rare. Since one has actually come into contact with the Buddha's teachings, it is therefore very important for one to have pure refuge.

Because of being without defilement: Just as a wish-fulfilling Jewel is free of cracks, faults and stains, likewise, the rare Buddha is also without defilement. Since Buddha does not possess any faults and defilements, hence, he does not possess the faults of not being able to protect or grant refuge.

Hence, it is inappropriate to entrust and take refuge in worldly gods/ deities. This is because, unlike the Buddha, they possess faults and therefore are unable to protect nor guide one.

Therefore, the point behind this phrase *without defilement* is that, one should not entrust nor take refuge in worldly gods. Rather, one should take refuge in and entrust oneself to Buddha.

Because of having power: It is said that if one makes prayer to a wish-fulfilling jewel, it has the power to grant all the necessities of life and enjoyment. Likewise, the Buddha has power to grant many such things as the six superknowledges, [birth, speech, mind, creation of virtue and nonvirtue, realms and emergence.] Hence, Buddha can act as a guardian/ refuge.

Because of being the ornament of the world: If one does possess a wish-fulfilling jewel, one would have the best worldly ornament. Likewise, if one goes for refuge to the Buddha, who is like an ornament of the world, one can achieve both the temporal [high status] and [everlasting definite goodness]. The point is, by depending on the Buddha, one can achieve these.

If one depends on the Buddha and goes for refuge to Him sincerely and wholeheartedly, one can achieve all the provisional goals and [ultimate] purposes.

Because of being just superior: Just as a wish-fulfilling jewel is superior to all other kinds of jewels, likewise, the Buddha is superior to all other objects of refuge. The point here is that, among all the sources of protection/ objects of refuge, the Buddha is unparalleled.

Because of being changeless: A wish-fulfilling jewel is also changeless. It does not matter what one does to it, it remains as a wish-fulfilling jewel. Likewise, the Buddha is not affected by either praise or criticism. It does not matter whether one praises or criticizes Him, He does not have any partiality. Hence, He is able to act as a refuge and grant that to all who seek it.

This is an explanation of the word *Jewel* or *Rare Sublime One*, using the analogy of a wish-fulfilling jewel. Verses 1 up to 22 here [are related to] the first three of the Seven Vajra Topics.

Fourth Vajra Topic: Basic Constituent**Verse 23 – Stating the inconceivability of the causes and conditions for the arising of the Three Jewels:**

*23 Those from which the three virtuous Jewels arise—
Reality with defilement and without defilement,
The qualities of undefiled Buddhahood, and the Conqueror's activities—
Are objects just of those [directly] perceiving the ultimate.*

Those from which the three virtuous Jewels arise—Reality with defilement: This is the suchness with defilement/ tathagata essence, which is posited to be the substantial cause of the Three Jewels/ enlightenment.

However, one must know how to interpret this, as this has already been explained. The suchness with defilement/ tathagata essence [here] is not a fully qualified cause in itself. Nevertheless, there is a way of explaining how this can be so.

Reality without defilement: Refers to the suchness without defilement, here related to the [fifth] Vajra Topic of enlightenment, *Jang Chub*, which is posited as a contributory/ cooperative condition [for the arising of the Three Jewels].

The qualities of undefiled Buddhahood: This refers to the sixth Vajra Topic of Quality, which is also a cooperative condition for the arising of the Three Jewels.

Conqueror's activities: Refer to the seventh Vajra Topic, Enlightened Activity, which is also a cooperative condition.
It is said that, by depending on the suchness with defilement, a substantial cause, as well the other [three] cooperative conditions, one can achieve the Three Jewels.
Are objects just of those [directly] perceiving the ultimate: Who or what perceives that the Three Jewels will arise by depending on these substantial cause and cooperative conditions? It is only the Buddha who can directly see this fact as it is exactly and completely. Hence, these are the objects only of those perceiving the ultimate, [the Buddha].

Verse 24 – The four reasons why only the Buddhas can directly perceive them:

<p>24 The lineage of these Three Jewels Is an object [only] of those perceiving all, For it is inconceivable due to four reasons In accordance respectively with those four aspects.</p>
There are four reasons to show that it is only the Buddhas who are able to directly perceive exactly and completely the fact that the Three Jewels will arise in dependence upon these substantial cause and cooperative conditions. This is essentially because, it is only the object of direct comprehension of the Buddhas, hence, it is inconceivable for non-buddhas.
In verse 23, the four objects of direct perception only of Buddha, the cause and cooperative conditions for the arising of the Three Jewels, are initially identified. Verse 24 then explains that it is only the Buddhas who can directly perceive them.

Verse 25 – Proving the inconceivability:

<p>25 Because [the basic realm is] pure but [appears to be] afflicted, Because [enlightenment is] unafflicted but [appears] to be purified, Because [the Buddha qualities are] undifferentiated phenomena [even at the time of common being but are not manifest], And because [the Buddha activities are] spontaneous but without conceptuality [these four are inconceivable by common beings].</p>
Because [the basic realm is] pure but [appears to be] afflicted: This line refers to the tathagata essence. <i>Pure</i> here refers to the natural purity of the minds of sentient beings in that, from the very beginning, the afflictions have never resided in the nature of the mind. Hence, it is by nature pure.
Yet, such a natural purity is accompanied by defilements. Hence, it is called suchness with defilement/ tathagata essence.
Hence, it is very difficult for ordinary beings to conceive how a suchness with defilement, the tathagata essence, [could have a merging of] these two [aspects] of being pure by nature and yet is accompanied by the defilements of afflictions and stains.
It is therefore difficult to comprehend these two [aspects merging] on one [basis].
Khenrinpoche: The explanation of [the inconceivability will be shown later], but do you understand why it is inconceivable? This is because, it is [abnormal] that something can be pure and yet is afflicted.
Because [enlightenment is] unafflicted but [appears] to be purified: This line shows the undefiled enlightenment, <i>unafflicted</i> , which is essentially suchness without defilement, a suchness that has been separated from the defilements.
Since beginningless time, such a suchness without defilement, unafflicted enlightenment, has by nature never been afflicted, by nature pure, where the afflictions have never abided in the nature of the mind. But yet in time, it is [separated from the defilements,] purified of the adventitious defilements for an enlightenment to occur.
Hence again, [merging these two aspects] of unafflicted [from the beginning] and yet [it is] purified of the adventitious defilements makes comprehending them difficult.
Because [the Buddha qualities are] undifferentiated phenomena [even at the time of common being but are not manifest]: The Buddha's qualities are undefiled. Yet the suchness abiding on these undefiled qualities is not of a different nature from the suchness of sentient beings' minds. Hence, such an undifferentiability is difficult to comprehend.
It is difficult to comprehend how a suchness of Buddha's qualities and the suchness of sentient beings' minds are undifferentiable in nature.
Because [the Buddha activities are] spontaneous but without conceptuality: Refers to the Buddha's enlightened activities, which engages sentient beings spontaneously without the slightest need for intention/ motivation, it is automatically done.
Therefore, these are the four points that are difficult to comprehend, how:
1) The tathagata essence is pure by nature, yet is accompanied with defilements,
2) Enlightenment, the suchness without defilement, is unafflicted, yet will be purified of adventitious defilements,
3) The suchness of Buddha's qualities and the suchness of sentient beings' minds are undifferentiable by nature, and
4) Buddha's enlightened activities are spontaneous without conceptuality.

Elaboration of the first inconceivable point:

1) The tathagata essence is pure by nature, yet is accompanied with defilements:

Suchness with defilement is essentially the emptiness of the minds of sentient beings. It is by nature pure. Yet at the same time, the minds of sentient beings are polluted with afflictions. It is difficult to comprehend how these two can coexist.

If there is pollution of the defilements, then one must be able to posit a 'polluter' and that which is 'polluted'. Essentially, to posit a cause and effect relationship between a 'contaminator' and the 'contaminated'. Yet, how is one going to posit a cause and effect for the suchness of the mind?

On one hand, there is the natural purity of the mind, emptiness, yet at the same time, there is an activity that is valid and functions. Therefore, the point being made here is that, it is difficult to understand the *two truths having a common basis*.

How the Consequentialist refute the Autonomist in their assertions of inherent existence:

With the exception of the Consequence Middle Way School, all lower schools of Buddhist tenets assert that, [if it is an] existent, it [necessarily] exists inherently, by its own nature, from its own side, truly existent. This is how they assert cause and effect, agent, [action] and object.

For these proponents of nature/ inherent existence, if a phenomenon is merely labeled by thought, does not exist from its own side, then they cannot coherently explain cause and effect, agent, action and object. [Such phenomena] cannot function.

This is because, they assert that [a phenomenon existing] merely labeled by thought would mean that, it is no different from asserting that one can make up anything with one's mind in that, as long as one labels something, [that thing exists].

Hence, they do not accept such assertions. They use the example of *a sprout arising from a seed* to show this point:

They assert that there must be some ability and potential, arising right there from the side of the seed, that will give rise to a sprout. If not, then they assert that [a particular seed] could produce anything other than its own sprout.

They assert that the very reason the seed can only produce its own sprout and nothing else shows that, there must be something [findable] right there from its own side, something within the cause [of the seed] itself.

Likewise, all these lower schools assert that, there must be something from the side of virtue to produce happiness. The fact that it is only virtue that can produce happiness and that it is only nonvirtue that produces suffering shows that, these cannot be merely labeled by the mind. Therefore, there must be something [findable] right there from the side of the cause.

Hence, the Autonomy Middle Way School opposed the Consequence Middle Way School in this, by asserting that:

a) If phenomena are merely labeled by thought without any existence from their own sides, then one cannot account for production and disintegration.

b) If one cannot account for production and disintegration, then one cannot account for cause and effect.

c) If one cannot account for cause and effect, one cannot posit the Four Noble Truths, which then become invalid.

d) If the Four Noble Truths become invalid, then the Three Jewels cannot exist.

So, the Autonomist assert that, if all such phenomena [do not] exist from their own sides, then all such phenomena cannot exist. However, the Consequentialist use these very same points and reverse it against them:

If [phenomena had existed] from their own sides, then one cannot assert [production and disintegration], which means that one cannot assert cause and effect, which means one cannot assert the Four Noble Truths, which means one cannot assert the Three Jewels.

Therefore, the point is that, most people have difficulties [reconciling] these two:

A phenomenon is by nature empty and yet, is able to function.

This is therefore related to how:

Suchness with defilement is by nature pure but yet, it is accompanied with the afflictions.

This again goes back to understanding how:

*The two truths can [merge] on any single base in that,
It is by nature empty, and [precisely] because it is empty, therefore it can function.*

It is said that:

*The natural force of the correct understanding of emptiness of inherent existence,
Would automatically enable one to understand without choice that, conventionalities exist, work and function.*

Even if someone is said to be an expert in the knowledge of emptiness of true existence, but if his understanding/ realization of emptiness does not automatically lead him to accept the presentation of conventionalities, that things do function and are valid, then whether others or himself thinks that he has realized emptiness, [such thinking] are mere empty words.

Therefore, all these points are related to the first difficult point, how:

The suchness with defilements are by nature pure but yet, it is polluted by the afflictions, there is the activity of pollution.

Elaboration of the second inconceivable point:

2) Enlightenment, the suchness without defilement, is unafflicted, yet will be purified of adventitious defilements:
The suchness without defilement was never previously afflicted by defilements, hence it is called such. This is because, the defilements themselves, like desire and so forth, can never have this <i>particular suchness</i> as its object of observation*.
This is because, if it does, then this would make desire a virtuous mind.
This is because, desire is essentially a yearning, a mind seeking, aspiring and wanting something.
Hence, this shows that, there was never a time when desire [was able] to focus on suchness as its object of observation.
Hence, a suchness without defilement was never previously afflicted by defilements.
Comparing this particular suchness without defilement with the general suchness with defilement:
One's mind is polluted/afflicted by afflictions. This is because, afflictions like desire and so forth can focus on the mind as its object of observation. Due to this, in the retinue of such a desire, there can arise a whole host of mental factors of afflictions.
Since the afflictions can have the mind as its object of observation, hence, the mind is polluted by the afflictions.
If, as mentioned above*, defilements such as attachment and so forth cannot focus on the suchness of the mind as its object of observation, then what is suchness with defilement? By what is it defiled? What is the defilement?
In the first place, one has to be clear that, the suchness of sentient beings' mind is accompanied with defilement, therefore, it is called suchness with defilement.
Then someone can [debate]: <i>“Suchness with defilement is not defiled, this is because, such a suchness can never be the object of observation of an affliction.”</i>
The point is, the mind that is polluted by the afflictions, is by nature empty. The suchness of such a mind is the suchness with defilement. For if it is not defiled, then it would follow that, anyone would be able to directly perceive such an emptiness.
Why is it that one cannot directly perceive the suchness of one's mind, which is a suchness with defilement? This is because, [such a suchness] is obscured by defilements, hence one cannot directly perceive such a suchness.
As mentioned earlier, the suchness without defilement is said to have never been afflicted by any defilements. This is because, the defilements of the afflictions like attachment and so forth cannot focus on suchness, cannot take suchness as its object of observation. This is the way to think how, the suchness without defilement was never afflicted by defilements.
As for sentient beings' minds, which are polluted by defilements/ afflictions, [such minds] can be the object of observation of the afflictions. The suchness/ emptiness of such a mind is a suchness/ emptiness with defilement.
Since it is a suchness with defilement, hence, it cannot be directly perceived [due to it being obscured by the defilements]. But if the suchness with defilement is <i>not</i> accompanied by defilements, then such a suchness can be directly perceived. However, this is not the case [as such a suchness] <i>is</i> obscured by defilements.
Summarizing the two inconceivable points:
1) A mind and the suchness/ emptiness of this mind are one entity. Since that is the case, then it can be said that, if the mind is polluted by defilements, then the suchness/ emptiness of such a mind is also polluted by defilements.
2) A suchness without defilement ¹ was never afflicted by defilements due to reasons already explained. However, it will eventually be purified ² of the adventitious defilements. [Combining] these two [aspects ^{1&2}] into one [basis] is inconceivable.
As mentioned before, if a mind is polluted by defilements, the suchness of this mind that is one entity with it, is also polluted/ accompanied by defilements. But when such a mind that is polluted by defilements becomes free of the defilements, then the suchness of this mind, which is one entity with it, can also be said to be freed/ separated from the defilements.
Essentially, whether it is a suchness with defilement or it is a suchness without defilement, depends very much on the mind that it is one entity with:
1) If the mind that it is one entity with, is defiled, then the suchness of such a mind would be a suchness with defilement.
2) If the mind that it is one entity with, is undefiled, then the suchness of such an undefiled mind would be a suchness without defilement.

Khenrinpoche: You must not have the expectation that this is something that you can understand immediately. This is something that one needs to think about repeatedly many times. [Understanding] comes with time. If you get disheartened just because you do not understand upon hearing it for the first time, then this is not very helpful because, you are not going to achieve anything [by being disheartened].

Khenrinpoche: Did you get some idea of what I am talking about [tonight]? Good. If you get some idea then it is good. Even if you didn't get any idea but if you [have heard something], then it is also very good! Those who didn't hear anything then [it is] not so good. Just hearing the words [alone] is good [enough]...!

Continuing explanation of the first line of the verse from the *Diamond Cutter Sutra*:

<i>Like a star, a visual aberration, and a flame of a lamp.</i>
<i>A star and a visual aberration: Every single instant/</i> moment of consciousnesses in the continua of [sentient beings not directly perceiving emptiness] is polluted by the predispositions of ignorance.
Hence, all phenomena that appear to such minds, appear as truly existent. Although such phenomena do not exist in such ways, but due to the predispositions of ignorance, everything that appears to such minds will appear as truly existent.
Just like someone with certain medical condition has visions of falling hairs, while in reality these do not exist, but due to certain conditions, he has such [appearances].
Likewise, although phenomena appear to [the minds as described above] as truly existent, these do not actually exist in the way it appears to [such minds].
With the exception of Buddhas and the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness [of sentient beings], all other consciousnesses [of sentient beings], including the conventional valid cognizers, have the appearance of true existence in that, whatever appears to such minds, appears as truly existent. This is without doubt.
How superior sentient beings and ordinary sentient beings have common appearances of true existence:
If sentient beings are divided into ordinary beings and superiors, then even bodhisattva superiors on all grounds [not in meditative equipoise also] have appearances of true existence.
It is only after enlightenment is achieved, does the appearance of true existence cease. This is because, it is only Buddha that has [abandoned] all mistaken consciousnesses. This means that all sentient beings still [possess] mistaken consciousnesses.
How true existence is apprehended and not apprehended by those who do not realize and those who realize emptiness:
Although [those who have not realized emptiness, <i>tshur mthong</i>] and [those who have realized emptiness] both have the appearances of true existence, but there is a difference between them.
Even though ordinary beings [<i>tshur mthong</i>] have the appearances of true existence, above that, they assent to such appearances, believing that things exist in the way they appears, conceiving things to exist truly/ inherently.
Those that have realized the emptiness of true existence [not in meditative equipoise] also have appearances of true existence in that, whatever appears to them, appears as truly existent. Even though true existence appears, but due to their realization of emptiness, they do not believe/ grasp at/ assent to/ follow after the appearance, as they know such appearances are not true.
[Among those who have realized emptiness, there are] those who have realized emptiness directly. When this person is in meditative equipoise directly realizing emptiness, in the perspective of such a consciousness, there is no appearance of true existence. Also, there is no apprehension/ grasping at [phenomena] as truly existent while in such a state.
Such a person does not have: 1) appearance of true existence, 2) apprehension of true existence.
The phrase <i>visual aberration</i> quoted before is used to illustrate the fact that, while phenomena appears as truly existent, these do not exist in that way [as truly existent]. Just as falling hairs do not exist, but <i>appearance</i> of falling hairs <i>can exist</i> .
While it is true that, everything is in the nature of emptiness, that there is not any phenomenon that is truly existent, yet there are phenomena that are mere appearances that exist in the perspective of a conventional valid cognizer. Such a phenomenon exist. One must be able to posit its existence together with emptiness.
To understand that, the next phrase of the verse is quoted: <i>Flame of a butter lamp</i> .
The flame of a butter lamp does not exist, is not established from its own side by its own nature, as a flame. It is something that arises out of the gathering of many causes and conditions: lamp, container for the oil, wick and so forth.
This is to highlight the fact that the flame of a butter lamp can only arise when many cause and conditions gather. Hence, [this shows that], the flame of a butter lamp does not exist by its own nature right there from its own side. The flame of a butter lamp is a dependent-arising in that, it arises in dependence on the gathering of many causes and conditions.
The samsara that one does not like, does not exist under its own power, is not established right there from its own side, is a product of many causes and conditions. Taking a samsaric rebirth is a result of the gathering of many causes and conditions.
Primarily, samsara is the result of karma and afflictions. Likewise, the sorrowless state one desires, does not exist from its own side under its own power. It does not automatically [appear] from its own side, it arises by depending on many factors.
As stated by Arya Nagarjuna in his treatise on <i>Fundamental Wisdom</i> : <p style="text-align: center;"><i>“Whatever that is dependently originated, that is said to be emptiness; that which is dependently designated, that is the path of the middle.”</i></p>

The various subtleties of dependent-origination:

There are many levels of meaning to the word dependent-arising, dependent-origination, some are more subtle than others.

A) The coarsest meaning is in terms of the level of *causality*, a cause and effect relationship in that, effects are dependent on their causes. By depending on their causes, effects are produced. Hence, effects are dependent on their causes. This is fairly obvious, understood and accepted even by the proponents of Great Exposition, Sutra and Mind Only.

This is the dependent-origination for the category of composed/ impermanent phenomena.

B) Dependent-origination at the level of *wholes and parts* is more subtle than the level of causality. The entire concept of the whole is very much dependent on its parts. One cannot assert a whole without its parts. This is because, a whole is none other than a constitution of the parts that form it.

Such a level of dependent-origination applies not only to the category of composed/ impermanent phenomena, but also pervades all phenomena, including permanent phenomena. Understanding such a level of dependent-origination is something that is coherently asserted even by the proponents of the Autonomy Middle Way School.

C) The most subtle meaning of dependent-origination, is dependent-origination in terms of all phenomena being *dependently designated*. Such is an assertion only of the proponents of the Consequence Middle Way School/ *Prasangikas*.

This is the most subtle meaning of dependent-origination, as well as the most challenging to understand and posit.

One can bring to mind any external or internal phenomenon, whether it is a flame of a butter lamp, one's own body or the 'self, I, person'. If one does a deep analysis, examines and looks for the imputed object to see what exactly it is, that which one can point to as the flame of the butter lamp, one is left with nothing as one cannot find the imputed object.

In the course of using the flame of a butter lamp as an object of inquiry, if it is a correct finding, although what one finds is emptiness, but the object of inquiry does make a difference [in terms of ease of finding its nature].

It is said that, if one were to use the 'self, I, person' [as an object of inquiry], then it may be easier. When one looks for it, at the end of such an [inquiry], it would seem that the 'self, I, person' cannot be found.

When one looks for the 'real' 'self, I, person', the 'real' flame of a butter lamp that one believes [in], then it seems that, one would actually not be able to point to anything that is the 'self, I, person', or the flame of the butter lamp.

Even when one finds emptiness of an object, one can still find the existence of such an object:

However, this does not mean that the 'self, I, person' does not exist, that there is no flame of the butter lamp. It is obvious that there is a 'self, I, person', the flame of a butter lamp, as these do function.

Since these do function, one cannot say there's no flame of a butter lamp. This is because:

1) It has its own *defining nature* in that, it is hot and burns, **2)** It *functions* to illuminate darkness.

Hence, even though when one looks for the 'real' flame of a butter lamp, one would not be able to find it, but this does not mean that the flame of the butter lamp is nonexistent, as it does exist.

How objects cannot exist when investigated as its inherent nature cannot bear analysis through reasoning:

If the 'real' 'self, I, person' or a 'real' flame of a butter lamp exists, if there is something that one can really point to as it is, then when one looks for these, one would be able to find it. If something is real [in that], it exists in the way it appears to one, then the more one looks for it, the more one should be able to find, see it or that it becomes more obvious, it must be found.

But the [end result] is that, one does not find it. This means that, the 'self, I, person' or the flame of the butter lamp does not exist from its own side on the basis of designation, under its own power.

Its nature being real, autonomously existing from its own side is nonexistent, as it does not have such a nature. Such a fact can never be discovered because, its nature is such that, it transcends being something that can exist from its own side.

If it [had] existed in the way it appeared, then one would have been able to find it. There are many reasoning and lines of thought one can use in the investigation. If one applies these lines of reason, one would not be able to find the 'real I' or the 'real flame of a lamp'. This means that, its existence/ establishment from its own side cannot bear these analysis.

In the Middle Way texts, there is such a term: "Unable to bear analysis through reasoning." This is because, if something exists in the way it appears, from its own side, then when one looks for it, it should be found.

If one cannot find it, the 'real I' or whatever it is, then this shows that, inherent existence, existence from its own side, is something that cannot withstand/ bear analysis through reasoning, as it cannot be found.

However, when one refers to the 'I' itself, not the 'real I', but the 'I', flame of the butter lamp, or the aggregates and so forth that [do] exist, these do exist because, the application of reasoning cannot harm the existence of [say,] one's body. One's body does exist, the fact that it does exist does not go against reasoning.

When one looks for the imputed object, if the 'real' I, flame of the butter lamp or one's body, exist in the way it appears, from its own side inherently, then it has to be found. But it cannot be found as it cannot withstand analysis.

There is no other option than to conclude things exist as mere appearance posited by a conventional valid cognizer:

Rather, what one finds at the end of one's reasoned analysis, is the nonexistence of a truly existent 'I'. One will not discover the nonexistence of the 'I'. There is a big difference, as one is not discovering that there is no 'I', no flame of the butter lamp.

Everything in samsara and nirvana, one's and others' 'self, I, person', body and mind, anything that exists, do not exist from their own sides. Nevertheless, these exist. How does one know that? One simply *experiences* them through the benefit or harm one receives when one comes into contact with such objects. This obviously [shows] they exist.

But if one were to [delve] deeper into their natures and look for the 'real' I, samsara, nirvana, one cannot find the 'real' imputed object. Yet, these [objects do] exist.

Hence, there are no [other] alternatives to [account] for these existences other than [to conclude that,] everything that exist, [has to] exist as mere appearances, something posited by a conventional valid cognizer. There is no option left other than this.

Essentially, any existent that one can point to, it either [has to] exist right there from its own side under its own power, or it does not. There are no other options. If it really existed from its own side right there from the basis of designation that one can point to, then it must be found when one looks for it.

However, when one does so, the [curious] thing is that, one does not find the 'real' phenomenon. Yet, one knows that, one experiences the 'I', body and so forth. Hence, the only viable [reason for this] is that, things are mere appearances to or posited by a conventional valid cognizer. This is how they exist, [that is all].

This is why the proponents of the Consequence Middle Way School assert [in the final analysis] that, the 'self, I, person' is that which is *merely imputed in dependence upon the five aggregates, its basis of designation*.

This means that, the 'self, I, person' is not the body, mind, any of the five aggregates nor all five. Yet it does exist. Hence, [it can only] exist as that which is merely imputed/ designated by thought in dependence on the aggregates. Its existence is no more and no less than that.

How the basis of designation of the 'I', the aggregates themselves, do not exist from their own side:

That said, if one looks at the manner one's mind conceives of one's own five aggregates, one may say that one's 'self, I, person' is merely imputed in dependence upon them, that these are indeed the basis of designation of one's 'I'.

However, when one [switches focus onto] the aggregates themselves, even though one may think that these are indeed the basis of designation of one's 'I', but [one would conceive them] as a 'real' [and perpetually existent] basis of designation right from its own side [ready] to be designated. This is of course incorrect.

Just as the 'I' is merely imputed, its basis of designation, the five aggregates themselves, are also merely imputed by thought, as these also do not exist from its own side as the basis of designation for the 'I'.

How the terms themselves do not exist from their own sides:

[Even though an object] is established by being merely labeled by mind, existing in mere name, mere convention, but when one [focuses on the phrase] *establishment in mere name* itself, one would again [conceive of] a 'real' name there.

One would then grasp at a 'real' name. Even this is also empty of existing from its own side. This is because, what *establishment of something in mere name/ convention* means is that, it is so only because, conventionally speaking, everyone in the world agrees with the term, that is all to it.

Since all things exist in mere name, then even the 'mere name' itself does not exist from its own side as well. It is just 'mere name' by convention, renown in the world as such. That is all to it.

How even the designating mind itself does not exist from its own side:

Even the *designating mind* itself does not exist from its own side. One may [mistakenly] think that perhaps there must be something from the side of the mind that imputes all such names. The 'real' consciousness also cannot be found.

Whether it is the imputing thought in one's own mind or someone else's mind, when one looks for these, be it a present, past or a future thought, one would also not be able to find it. There is no 'real' thought itself that merely imputes.

How things are empty precisely because things are dependently-designated:

This is according to the assertions of the Consequence Middle Way School in that, everything is in the nature of emptiness. Because, everything is dependently-originated. Particularly, everything that exists is merely imputed by thought. Hence, these are dependently-designated. If something is dependently-designated, it cannot exist from its own side, inherently.

Therefore, the meaning of emptiness is dependent-arising, specifically, being dependently-designated.

In the teachings, there is a line of reasoning given to help one understand emptiness:

The person (subject), is not truly existent (thesis to be proven), because it is a dependent-arising (reason).

The means that, if one wishes to understand emptiness, one firstly has to understand dependent-arising.

How dependent-arising destroys the object of ignorance, which in turns induce understanding of emptiness:

With respect to the subtlety of dependent-arising, there are many levels of meaning. Hence one has to think a lot about dependent-origination. It is said that [due to this, gradually,] the meaning of emptiness will become apparent.
One has to think a lot and discover for oneself the meaning of dependent-origination. This starts with dependent-origination at the coarsest level in terms of <i>causality</i> . Next, there is [the meaning of] dependent-arising in terms of <i>wholes and parts</i> , and [at the subtlest level, there is] dependent-arising in terms of being <i>dependently-designated</i> .
Gradually, one will come to understand the most subtle meaning of dependent-arising. It is said that, when one has the real understanding of dependent-arising in terms of being dependently-designated, then one will be able to destroy the very focus of the apprehension of true existence, that very [nonexistent object] that ignorance is clinging tightly onto.
This in turn can induce the understanding/ experience of what emptiness is [all about].
Through the correct understanding of dependent-arising in terms of phenomena being dependently-designated, one will be able to delineate/ discover in one's own experience, what exactly ignorance is/ what one is clinging/ focusing tightly onto.
This is essentially the object of observation [that refers to] true existence/ inherent existence/ existence from its own side.
When one has a good recognition of what ignorance is clinging onto, and through understanding dependent-arising where one is able to see that, [what ignorance is clinging onto] does not exist, then one is getting at emptiness, hitting the point.
It is only then would one say that such a person has some understanding / ascertainment of emptiness.

How emptiness and dependent-arising compliment and not contradict each other:

The verse from the <i>Three Principal Aspects of the Path [Showing the Right View]</i> says:
<i>One who sees the cause and effect of all phenomena Of both cyclic existence and the state beyond sorrow as forever [infallible], And for whom any object trusted in by the grasping mind has completely disappeared, Has at that time entered the path pleasing the Buddhas.</i>
One who sees the cause and effect of all phenomena as infallible, the person who has a correct understanding of dependent-origination and for whom the object the apprehension of true existence of ignorance he [had held] tightly onto, firmly believed in, has disappeared, that is no longer existing in his experience, has entered the path that pleases the Buddhas.
The person who sees that dependent-arising is infallible, that things do exist and function, yet at the same time, in his experience, no longer trusts that very [object] ignorance is clinging onto, seeing that true existence does not exist whatsoever, is a person who has entered the path pleasing the Buddhas. Why is Buddha pleased with him?
This is because, this person has finally started to shake the whole of [his] samsara. One's whole problem is samsara/ suffering. The root of all of one's problems is the ignorance apprehending true existence.
When one has a correct understanding of dependent-arising, particularly through understanding that phenomena are dependently-designated, one will come to see the meaning of dependent-arising is emptiness, and the meaning of emptiness is dependent-arising, that these two are not contradictory but complimentary, with one [understanding] assisting the other.
It is said that the person who has a good and correct understanding of the <i>Middle Way, subtle dependent-arising</i> , when he places his mind on dependent-arising in terms of causality, how effects are dependent on causes and causes bring about effects, such an understanding itself also induces a powerful understanding of emptiness.
For this person, who has the correct understanding of emptiness, which comes from the correct understanding of subtle dependent-arising, since the meaning of emptiness is discovered in dependence on understanding subtle dependent-arising, hence, such an understanding of emptiness will assist his understanding of dependent-arising. This is because:
Such a realization of emptiness came about in dependence upon the correct understanding of dependent-arising. In this sense, his understanding of emptiness compliments and helps his understanding of dependent-arising, it does not harm it.

Even though the mind realizing emptiness also realizes dependent-arising, these two minds are not the same:

This is not saying that, the mind that realizes that there is no true/ inherent existence, [also] realizes dependent-arising.
One has to understand subtle dependent-arising correctly. Through the force of [such a realization], one then comes to realize emptiness. Through the force of realizing emptiness, this again induces the correct understanding of dependent-arising.
Hence, [this shows that,] the mind that realizes the emptiness of true existence realizes dependent-arising.
This is complicated, as there are many things one needs to resolve before this becomes clear, for example:
Emptiness is a non-affirming negative, a non-implicative negation in that, the phrase <i>emptiness of true existence</i> simply means a negation of true existence. [Such a negation] does not imply that there is something else to be understood, that [it does not imply/ validate] existence [of conventional phenomena].

Because the emptiness of inherent existence is a non-affirming negative, hence the specific mind realizing emptiness realizes that only. Such a mind does not realize dependent-arising.
But through the force of realizing emptiness, this induces a strong [experience] of dependent-arising.
[The verse from the same text showing <i>The Definition of Not Having Completed the Analysis of the Right View</i>] says:
<i>If the appearance of dependent relation, Which is [infallible], is accepted separately from emptiness, And as long as they are seen as separate, Then one has still not realized the Buddha's intent.</i>
A person who has found the correct view of the <i>Middle Way</i> , is one whose understanding of emptiness assists his understanding of dependent-arising, whose understanding of dependent-arising assists his understanding of emptiness.
As long as these two appear as contradictory and not complimentary, as separate and unrelated, then such a person has not realized the Buddha's intent. He does not understand well and correctly the meaning of emptiness.
[The verse showing <i>The Definition of Having Completed the Analysis of Right View</i>] says:
<i>If [these two realizations] are happening simultaneously without alternation, And from merely seeing dependent relation as completely [infallible] The definite ascertainment comes that completely destroys The way all objects are apprehended [as truly existent], At that time the analysis of the ultimate view is complete.</i>
Such texts as this <i>Three Principal Aspects of the Path</i> are recited by many. One sees the [teachings] on emptiness in this.
Even in the text of this module, the <i>tathagata essence</i> , one finds statements like:
<i>Because the nature of the mind is emptiness, therefore it is in the nature of clear light.</i>
This goes to say that, before one can understand tathagata essence, one must have some idea of what emptiness of inherent existence is and yet, how something which is by nature empty can exist.
Hence, gaining some idea of the emptiness of inherent existence becomes very important.
The emptiness of one's mind, the final mode of abiding of one's mind, the ultimate nature of one's mind, is unchanging as it has always been. This is a fact. Yet, one also has to say that [the mind] is a dependent-arising in that, its existence must depend on something [else]. Hence, this is difficult [to understand].

Student 1: From the perspective of the Consequence Middle Way School, what is the difference between the mental image of a person and a mere appearance of a person that does not analyze the ultimate reality. Is there a common locus or are they mutually exclusive?

Khenrinpoche: From the perspective of the Consequence Middle Way School, a person is necessarily [a mere appearance of a person]. There is no common locus. A mental image of a person is not person. The person which is a mere appearance is a fully-qualified person that exists.

Student 2: Why is tathagata essence necessarily an emptiness?

Khenrinpoche: Although Buddha lineage is primarily spoken of in terms of the tathagata essence, but it is not necessarily tathagata essence. This is shown in verse 27: *Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive, because suchness is without differentiation, and because a [Buddha] lineage exists, all embodied are always in possession of a Buddha essence.* There are different ways to explain the tathagata essence. In this verse, there are three reasons to prove that the tathagata essence exists in all sentient beings. This will become clearer later. When referring to the Buddha lineage, that which is suitable to be transformed into the Buddha's body, there is the naturally abiding lineage and the developmental lineage. This is because, Buddha's body has [the two divisions of being] compounded and un-compounded. Hence, there must be something that is suitable to be transformed into a compounded Buddha's body. Likewise, there must be something that is suitable to be transformed into an un-compounded Buddha's body. Hence, there is [the explanation of] a naturally abiding lineage and the developmental lineage.

Student 3: Is the ultimate Buddha Jewel an abandonment of afflictive obscurations? What is the difference between ultimate Buddha Jewel and final Buddha Jewel?

Khenrinpoche: In general, that is not the case as a Buddha is necessarily free from the two obscurations and not just the afflictive obscurations. Buddha definitely has to be someone that is freed from the two obscurations. If you compare ultimate Buddha Jewel and final Buddha Jewel, which would have a bigger pervasion? It is final Buddha Jewel in that, it refers to more areas. The ultimate Buddha Jewel has a smaller limit of pervasion. Hence, these two are not the same. While these two are not the same, the final Buddha Jewel and final/ ultimate object of refuge, final/ ultimate refuge are mutually inclusive.

Student: If subtle motivation is knowledge obscuration, then it is necessarily an obstruction to omniscience. [With respect to big, middling and small obstructions,] what is [subtle motivation] being classified under? When it is pacified, does it mean that the bodhisattva superior will go straight to the path of no more learning to immediately actualize the Four Bodies?

Khenrinpoche: The subtle motivational effort arises in dependence on the force of knowledge obscurations. But to say that the subtle motivational effort is a knowledge obscuration [has to be analyzed as this was explained before]. Knowledge obscurations can be divided into 3 [big, middling and small knowledge obscurations of the pure grounds]. Since the subtle motivational effort arises in dependence on the predispositions of ignorance, and since there are three levels of knowledge obscurations in terms of their subtleties, perhaps one can say that there are three levels of subtle motivational effort. Once one has abandoned even the smallest knowledge obscurations, the Four Bodies are actualized.

Continuing explanation on the Four difficult to comprehend topics:

*25 Because [the basic realm is] pure but [appears to be] afflicted,
Because [enlightenment is] unafflicted but [appears] to be purified,
Because [the Buddha qualities are] undifferentiated phenomena [even at the time of common being but are not manifest],
And because [the Buddha activities are] spontaneous but without conceptuality
[these four are inconceivable by common beings].*

First difficult point – Tathagata essence, suchness with defilements:

Because [the basic realm is] pure but [appears to be] afflicted: The tathagata essence is naturally pure of stains, yet it is accompanied with defilements. This appears as a contradiction.

The basic element, basic constituent is naturally pure. This means that from the very moment it existed, it has always existed as something that was never truly existent, it is by nature not truly existent. Hence, this basic constituent, basic element, tathagata essence is naturally pure. If this is so, then why is it [termed] suchness accompanied with defilement?

The way to understand it is this: **The basis of this suchness is the mind. Due to it being polluted by stains, defilements, hence, the suchness of [this] mind, which is one entity with it, is also accompanied with defilement.**

This is the reason for saying that the tathagata essence is a suchness that is accompanied with defilements. The reasons are:

- 1) Its basis, the mind, which [the suchness] is one entity with, is accompanied/ polluted by defilements.
- 2) Since the mind is accompanied with defilements, hence the suchness of [this mind], which is one entity with it, is also accompanied with defilement.
- 3) If one were to say that since the suchness of the mind is naturally pure and hence, cannot be accompanied by defilements, then why is it that, one does not see the suchness of the mind?
- 4) The reason one cannot see the suchness of the mind is because, there is something obscuring one from seeing it.

Hence, [these 4 reasons] prove that [the suchness of the mind] is accompanied with defilements.

Hence, the way to understand this first difficult point is this:

The suchness with defilement is by nature pure as it has never existed truly. It did not come into existence having a nature of inherent existence. Hence, the suchness is by nature pure, but is a suchness accompanied with adventitious defilements.

Second difficult point – Enlightenment, the suchness without defilements:

Because [enlightenment is] unafflicted but [appears] to be purified: enlightenment is by nature unafflicted. It comes about through the purification of the defilements. On one hand, enlightenment is by nature pure, yet again, it is purified.

Enlightenment here, the suchness without defilement, refers to the truth body, dharmakaya. Within the truth body, this is taken as the nature body. Within the nature body, there is a natural purity and an adventitious purity.

Taking the natural purity, this is by nature pure as it is by nature empty of inherent existence. The afflictions have never resided in the nature of such a suchness. Hence, it is always been unafflicted, but yet, it is purified. This seems contradictory.

The very nature of enlightenment has never been afflicted right from whenever it existed. But later, it is purified of the adventitious defilements.

The example given in the text is gold, which is by nature [pure] gold. In some instances, there are gold which are tarnished. Whatever it is that is tarnishing the gold is not gold. One can polish and refine it. At the end of this process, the tarnish is removed and [pure] gold is left. But it has always been [pure] gold by nature from the beginning.

The nature of the mind is pure by nature, yet it can be eventually purified of the stains.

Third difficult point – suchness of Buddha's qualities being undifferentiable from suchness of sentient beings' minds:

The suchness of Buddha's qualities is of an undifferentiable nature from the suchness of the minds of sentient beings. This is another difficult point to comprehend.

But there is no contradiction here because, during the time as a sentient being, one is not a Buddha. Hence, one does not possess Buddha's qualities. When one becomes a Buddha after the adventitious defilements are purified, that suchness that is purified is a quality which exists naturally.

Fourth difficult point – Buddha's activities being spontaneous and yet arises without conceptuality:

The Buddha's activities engage fully with sentient beings in accordance with their mentality and merit. Such an engagement is spontaneous and effortless, which does not arise with any preceding thoughts thinking “I am going to do this.”

This is hence a difficult point to understand.

Presentation of each of the cause and condition:

26 [The basic constituent that is] the object to be realized, [the enlightenment that] realizes it. [The Buddha qualities that are] branches of this, and [the Buddha activities that are] for the sake of causing realization – Of these, respectively the first topic [the basic constituent] is the cause Of purification; the [other] three are conditions [of purification].

1) The object to be realized is the tathagata essence, basic constituent. 2) That which realizes it is enlightenment. 3) The branches of this are the Buddha's qualities. 4) The Buddha activities are for the sake of causing realizations.

1) The object to be realized is the basic constituent, tathagata essence, suchness with defilement. If it is realized, one achieves the state of enlightenment. If one directly realizes such a suchness with defilement, then there is enlightenment. Otherwise, one would continue on in cyclic existence.

The main cause for actualizing the dharmakaya is the wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a bodhisattva superior. The dharmakaya here specifically refers to the wisdom truth body.

While this is the main cause for actualizing the wisdom truth body, but if such a wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a bodhisattva superior does not have the **correct object of observation**, such a wisdom cannot be developed.

The main focus of this wisdom is the suchness with defilement. Hence, the suchness with defilement is [a designated] cause for enlightenment. Therefore, one has to know why the tathagata essence, the suchness with defilement, is labeled, imputed as a cause of enlightenment. [From page 13: The ultimate tathagata essence, a suchness with defilement, is an uncompounded, permanent phenomenon. Hence, it cannot produce a phenomenon that undergoes momentary change. Therefore, it is not a fully-qualified substantial cause.]

2) The final [aspect] and fullest extent of this wisdom directly realizing emptiness in the continuum of a bodhisattva superior is enlightenment.

3) *The branches of this* refers to the Buddha's qualities. It is primarily in dependence on the Buddha's qualities that, one is able to work for and fulfill the purposes and welfare of sentient beings.

4) Due to the Buddha's qualities, the Buddha's activities engages sentient beings. These activities cause them to comprehend and realize what the Buddhas themselves have realized. This is the same as what has been explained before:

The tathagata essence, basic constituent is the cause of enlightenment. Enlightenment, qualities and activities are the conditions for such an enlightenment.

Reasons to prove all sentient beings possess tathagata essence:

*27 Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive,
Because suchness is without differentiation,
And because a [Buddha] lineage exists, all embodied
Are always in possession of a Buddha essence.*

*28 Because the exalted Buddha-wisdom dwells in the multitudes of sentient beings
And because the undefiled nature is non-dual
And the Buddha lineage is designated [a Buddha, this being the name of] its effect,
It is said that all transmigrators have the Buddha-essence.*

The verses here are proving that all sentient beings possess tathagata essence, this can be proved from the perspective of:

- 1) Result: *Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive.*
- 2) Nature: *Because suchness is without differentiation and,*
- 3) Cause: *Because a [Buddha] lineage exists.*

It is said in the sutra that, all sentient beings possess tathagata essence. In this verse, [these] three reasons are posited to establish this.

<p>1) Result: <i>Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive.</i> All sentient beings are said to possess the tathagata essence because, the enlightened deeds of the Buddhas, [in the aspect of the] dharmakaya, emanate and pervade to all of them.</p>
<p>This means that, sentient beings are suitable receptacles to receive the enlightened activities of the Buddhas in that, they are suitable for Buddhas' enlightened activities to engage them.</p>
<p>Since Buddhas' bodies are pervasive, this means that, the enlightened activities of the Buddhas emanate and pervade to all sentient beings. If it can emanate and pervade all sentient beings, then there must be something that is being pervaded.</p>
<p>Hence, sentient beings are said to be suitable to be affected, touched, engaged by such activities.</p>
<p>If [Buddhas] are sending out enlightened activities, then there must be somewhere that these activities 'land on'.</p>
<p>This is an explanation from the perspective of the result explaining how all sentient beings are said to possess Buddha nature.</p>
<p>The result here refers to the enlightened activities of the dharmakaya, which are said to be emanating and pervading all sentient beings at all times. If it is pervading [something], then there must be something that is pervaded.</p>
<p>Hence, the point is that, that which is being affected by these enlightened activities are sentient beings who possess suchness with defilements. The proof is this: Because [the dharmakaya] emanates, therefore, there must be those that receive it.</p>
<p>Khenrinpoche: I think this is the logic, that is all [to it]. The point is that, there is something within one that makes one a suitable [receptacle] to receive the enlightened activities of the dharmakaya.</p>
<p>2) Nature: <i>Because suchness is without differentiation.</i> The suchness without/ separated from defilement and the suchness with defilement have the same nature. This is to prove that sentient beings have Buddha nature, because the nature of sentient beings' suchness with defilement is no different from the nature of Buddha' suchness, the suchness without defilement.</p>
<p>Because the suchness of Buddha's mind and the suchness of sentient beings' mind are the same in nature, hence, all sentient beings possess the tathagata essence.</p>
<p>As the suchness of sentient beings' minds are accompanied with defilements, during that time, that suchness with defilement is given the name tathagata essence, [designated as] tathagata essence.</p>
<p>Because all sentient beings possess the tathagata essence, because the suchness with defilements, the suchness of sentient beings' minds are of the same nature as the suchness without defilement, hence it is called the tathagata essence.</p>
<p>3) Cause: All sentient beings possess in them the potential that is suitable to transform into the Truth Body, Dharmakaya, called the naturally abiding lineage. All sentient beings also possess within them the potential that is suitable to be transformed into the Buddha's Form Body. Rupakaya, called the developmental lineage.</p>
<p>Essentially, since all sentient beings possess in them the lineage that is suitable to transform into the Dharmakaya and the Rupakaya, hence all sentient beings are said to possess the tathagata essence.</p>
<p>These two verses seek to establish that all sentient beings possess the tathagata essence with three reasons:</p>
<p>1) Result: All sentient beings are suitable recipients of the Buddha's enlightened activities of the dharmakaya. Hence, sentient beings are said to possess the tathagata essence.</p>
<p>2) Nature: Since the nature of the suchness of sentient beings' minds are no different from the suchness of Buddhas' minds. From the perspective of nature [entity], it is said that, sentient beings are in possession of tathagata essence.</p>
<p>3) Cause: Since sentient beings possess the Buddha lineage, hence, sentient beings are in possession of the tathagata essence.</p>

Presentation of the ten aspects that explain the clear light nature of the mind:

In the Tathagata Essence Sutra, nine analogies are given to explain the nine ways the defilements are adventitious. Another sutra presents the ten aspects to establish the clear light nature of the mind.

Identifying the ten aspects:

*29 The entity [of natural purity], the causes [that serve as means of purification], the effect [of separation from all defilements], the function [of causing adoption and discarding upon seeing the disadvantages of pain and advantages of pleasure], the possession [of the qualities of cause and effect], manifestation [of differences in reality by way of the persons on whom it depends], States [of difference], and similarly the meaning of omnipresence [that is, reality pervading all], Immutability at all times [in terms of good qualities], and undifferentiability [of the final] qualities
Are said to be the intended meaning of the ultimate basic element.*

Brief presentation of the first two aspects – Entity and Cause:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>30 [Entity:] Like the [natural] purity of a jewel, space, and water, The nature [of the basic constituent] is always unafflicted. [Causes:] It arises from (1) devotion to the [Great Vehicle] doctrine, (2) the higher wisdom [realizing selflessness], (3) [The immeasurable] meditative stabilization [endowed with bliss], and (4) compassion [for sentient beings].</i></p>
<p>1) Entity: As shown earlier, from the perspective of result, nature and cause, all sentient beings possess the tathagata essence.</p>
<p>1a) The first, result, explains how the enlightened activities of the dharmakaya emanates and pervades all sentient beings. Here, the three [examples of entity of] jewel, space and water are given. Jewel is an analogy for the dharmakaya.</p>
<p>1b) The next reason showing sentient beings possessing tathagata essence is the undifferentiable nature in that, the suchness of sentient beings' minds and the suchness of Buddhas' minds are the same. This is shown through the analogy of space.</p>
<p>1c) Sentient beings having tathagata essence due to possessing the lineage is explained through the analogy of water.</p>
<p>The three analogies of jewel, space and water are meant to help one understand the aspect of entity. The point is to understand that the nature of the mind is clear light.</p>
<p>2) Cause: Four causes are posited – 2a) Devotion to the Mahayana doctrine [Mahayana tenets], 2b) Higher wisdom realizing selflessness, 2c) Meditative stabilizations of Space Treasure of a bodhisattva, 2d) Great compassion.</p>
<p>2a) Devotion to the Mahayana doctrine: One needs a stable devotion to the presentation of causality explained in the Mahayana [tenets]. Based on that, one generates great compassion and the mind of enlightenment. One then needs to develop the calm abiding and special insight [based on the highest doctrine].</p>
<p>This is just a brief presentation of the entity and causes, the elaborate explanations will be shown later.</p>
<p>These four causes [2a, 2b, 2c, 2d] serve as the means for purification of the mind, which would not occur without the application of the antidotes. Hence, these four causes are shown.</p>
<p>Although the suchness of the mind is pure by nature, but it is accompanied with the defilements. Hence, [the suchness of the] tathagata essence is naturally pure, but it is accompanied with the defilements. Hence it is a suchness with defilement.</p>
<p>If one does not remove these defilements, one will not be able to actualize the dharmakaya. Hence, to eliminate such adventitious defilements, [one needs to apply] the four causes.</p>

Elaboration of the first aspect: Entity –

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>31 Because of [having] the power [of fulfilling hopes], of not changing to anything other [in nature], And of being a nature whose entity is moist [with compassion], [The basic constituent] is qualitatively similar to the features Of a precious [wish-granting] jewel, space, and water.</i></p>
<p>1a) The dharmakaya is said to possess the power that fulfills the wishes and welfare of all sentient beings. From the side of sentient beings, they also have the ability, propensity to be touched and receive the enlightened activities of the dharmakaya.</p>
<p>1b) The [undifferentiable] nature of suchness can never change into something of a different nature. Just as un-compounded space is nothing more than the mere absence of obstructiveness, likewise, the nature of suchness is nothing more than the mere negation of true existence, be it a suchness with defilement or a suchness without defilement.</p>
<p>That which are posited as the entities of suchness with defilement and suchness without defilement is that mere negation of true existence. Such an entity has always been that way and will never change into something else. That is its nature.</p>
<p>1c) Just as it is the nature of water to be moist, which defines water, likewise, all sentient beings possess the [innate] potential to become enlightened. There is [a lineage] in everyone that is suitable to be transformed into the dharmakaya and rupakaya.</p>
<p>How all sentient beings are by nature compassionate: It is also said that just as water is moist, all sentient beings are by nature compassionate.</p>
<p>By reasoning, one has to say that there is not a time that one has not felt compassion to each [and every] sentient being. There is not a sentient being in existence that is not an object of one's compassion.</p>
<p>From another perspective, the <i>Seven Fold Cause and Effect Instructions</i> also show that there is not a sentient being that has not been one's mother or loved one.</p>
<p>Two reasons why one does not possess compassion for all sentient beings for the moment:</p>
<p>a) The reason one does not have the compassion that is manifest towards all sentient beings is that, whatever compassion one has had, it has been obstructed or destroyed by one's anger.</p>
<p>b) It is also because, one does not cultivate and bring all the causes and conditions together for the generation of the mind of compassion. If one brings all the causes and conditions together to generate compassion for merely one sentient being, then there is no logical reason to say why one cannot extend such a compassion to all sentient beings.</p>

Reasons to prove that one can generate compassion for all sentient beings:

<i>A)</i> This is because, there is not a sentient being for whom one has never felt compassion towards.
<i>B)</i> If this is the case, this shows that one has definitely felt compassion for each sentient being in the past.
<i>C)</i> If the causes for the decline of this compassion are absent, then there is nothing to stop it from manifesting.
<i>D)</i> Since there is not a sentient being for whom one has never felt compassion, then one would have to say that, one can feel compassion for all sentient beings. This shows that, by nature, one is compassionate.
If one can feel compassion for one sentient being, then by logical extension, one can feel compassion for all sentient beings.
<i>Because of [having] the power [of fulfilling hopes], of not changing to anything other [in nature], And of being a nature whose entity is moist [with compassion], [The basic constituent] is qualitatively similar to the features Of a precious [wish-granting] jewel, space, and water.</i>

Explanation of 'an illusion' from the Vajra Cutter verse:

The first line of the verse from the <i>Vajra Cutter Sutra</i> has been explained:
<i>A star, a visual aberration, a flame of a lamp; An illusion, a drop of dew, or a bubble; A dream, a flash of lightning, a cloud, See conditioned things as such.</i>
The next is An illusion : An illusionist can cause an object to appear in a variety of ways:
He can conjure up an illusion that transforms an object into something that looks very beautiful and attractive. The audience that sees the illusion gets attracted to it and develops an attachment to it.
If the illusionist transforms the object into something frightening and unpleasant, then those who see that illusion may develop dislike or even fear towards that illusion they are seeing
Although in reality it is a mere illusion, as there is nothing right there from the side of the [base of the] object that is made to appear as pleasant or unpleasant to cause happiness or harm to the viewer, but when the illusion is conjured, it is able to induce such reactions of either likes or dislikes from the viewers.
Likewise, even though the sufferings of cyclic existence do not exist in itself from its own side, but from one's own side, there is an apprehension clinging onto such sufferings as if they existed right in itself as being established from its own side.
This induces one to have aversion for these sufferings and attachment for other situations.
Although suffering does not exist from its own side in and of itself right there, but it appears to one as if it existed like that.
This apprehension is the basis on which one develops attachment or aversion to it. This brings about pain and suffering.
An illusionist is used to illustrate this: He conjures an illusion by transforming and causing the object to appear as something which it is not. Through the [power] of magic, the object is made to look like very attractive or unattractive. The viewers see the illusion, although it is merely an illusion, they are induced into reacting with likes or dislikes, attachment or aversion.
Likewise, the suffering of cyclic existence has never existed from its own side in and of itself, but appears as existing in and of itself right there from its own side. One also assents/ believes in that appearance.
Such assenting to the appearance induces one into reacting either with aversion or attachment. This is similar to the verse:
<i>All the phenomena of samsara and nirvana are mere fabrications of the mind. However, one is mistaken in holding onto them as truly existent. Hence, do not cling but look at them as empty.</i>
This verse is saying that, the reality of all phenomena, everything that exists, is that they are mere fabrications of the mind as they are merely imputed by the mind. They do not exist in and of themselves.
Although that is the reality, they do appear as existing in and of themselves right there from its own side.
Such an appearance is due to the mistaken mind apprehending true existence. It is a creation and projection of ignorance.
Hence, do not believe in and follow after such a projection. Because, what one does not want is suffering. Since one does not want this, then one should not follow after such a false projection. Rather, look at everything that exists as empty as they are.
In essence, this is what one can think when one sees this word <i>illusion</i> in the context of this verse from the <i>Vajra Cutter</i> .
One can take the various kinds of suffering experiences in cyclic existence as the basis [for understanding this meaning].
Khenrinpoche : If one really sees everything as in the nature of emptiness, does that mean that thenceforth, one will never have any fears and clinging onto things?

Continuing the explanation of the entity of clear light:

We have started analyzing the clear light nature of the mind, this will be explained by the presentation of the ten aspects.
Of these, the first refers to the <i>entity</i> of the clear light nature of the mind. In verse 28, there were three reasons stated to prove the existence of the tathagata essence in all sentient beings. These three reasons are related to the <i>entity</i> of clear light.
The first two lines of verse 30 explains this: <i>Like the [natural] purity of a jewel, space, and water, The nature [of the basic constituent] is always unafflicted.</i>
In explaining the entity of the lineage, the Buddha, particularly the truth body, dharmakaya, is likened to a wish-fulfilling jewel, suchness is likened to space, and tathagata essence is likened to pure water.

Extensive explanation of the entity of the lineage:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>31 Because of [having] the power [of fulfilling hopes], of not changing to anything other [in nature], And of being a nature whose entity is moist [with compassion], [The basic constituent] is qualitatively similar to the features Of a precious [wish-granting] jewel, space, and water.</i></p>
<p>Because of having the power of fulfilling hopes: First line in verse 27 says, 'Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive'.</p>
<p>This means that, the enlightened activities of the dharmakaya has the quality and power of being able to fulfill the hopes and actualize all the worldly and transcendental qualities of sentient beings. From the side of sentient beings, they have the ability to receive the beneficial effects of the enlightened activities of the dharmakaya.</p>
<p>Of not changing to anything other in nature: This refers to the reality of suchness, which is likened to space. Just as space is none other than the mere absence of obstructiveness, likewise, the nature of suchness is the absence of inherent existence.</p>
<p>The second line of verse 27 says, 'Because suchness is without differentiation'.</p>
<p>This means that, the nature of suchness of the minds of sentient beings and the nature of the suchness of the mind of Buddha is the same. Hence, sentient beings possess the lineage, tathagata essence.</p>
<p>And of being a nature whose entity is moist with compassion: This is related to the third line of verse 27, 'And because a [Buddha] lineage exists'. It is said that all sentient beings possess the Buddha lineage:</p>
<p>There is a phenomenon that sentient beings possess that is suitable to transform into the Truth Body [called the naturally abiding lineage]. There is also another phenomenon that sentient beings possess that is suitable to transform into the Form Body, called the developmental lineage. This line here refers to the developmental lineage.</p>
<p>There is a potential [seed], which is empty of existing from its own side, that exists on the minds of sentient beings, which is suitable to be transformed into a Buddha's body.</p>
<p>There is a seed of compassion in every sentient being that allows them to develop compassion. This is because, there is not a sentient being for whom one has not developed compassion before. This is because, there is not a sentient being that has not been one's mother or loved one in the past. Hence, one must have felt compassion for each sentient being previously.</p>
<p>Therefore, if there is nothing that obstructs the arising of compassion, then one cannot say that one will not be able to develop compassion towards all sentient beings.</p>
<p>If one is free of the obstructing factors like anger and attachment, if all the favorable conditions are gathered, one can develop the compassion that focuses on all sentient beings. This means that, it is possible to develop bodhicitta.</p>
<p>If one can develop bodhicitta, then one can infer that it is possible to achieve enlightenment. If one says one can achieve enlightenment and since all sentient beings can develop such compassion, then by extension, one can then say that all sentient beings possess the Buddha lineage. There is something in sentient beings that allows them to attain enlightenment.</p>

Extensive explanation of the causes of the lineage:

<p>Last two lines of verse 30 show the causes [of clear light]: <i>It arises from (1) devotion to the [Great Vehicle] doctrine, (2) the higher wisdom [realizing selflessness], (3) [The immeasurable] meditative stabilization [endowed with bliss], and (4) compassion [for sentient beings].</i></p>
<p>[An extensive] explanation of these four points [is shown in] verse 32:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>32 (1) Hatred for the [Great Vehicle] doctrine, (2) view of self, (3) Fear of the sufferings of cyclic existence [and thus seeking one's own peace and happiness], And (4) not having concern for the welfare of sentient beings Are the four forms of obstructions [preventing manifestation of the Buddha nature respectively]</i></p>
<p>1) Hatred for the Great Vehicle doctrine: One of the obstruction is hatred for the doctrine, which refers to the Mahayana doctrine. 2) View of self: [grasping at self].</p>
<p>3) Fear of the sufferings of cyclic existence: This means even though one is afraid of the sufferings of cyclic existence, but such a fear is [concerned about] solely seeking one's own welfare alone. This is at the expense of others, forsaking them.</p>
<p>4) Not having concern for the welfare of sentient beings: This does not literally mean that. Rather, it is that one does not have the wish to take up personal responsibility thinking: "I will free sentient beings from suffering by myself [alone]."</p>
<p>As for the persons who possess these obstructions, they are respectively:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>32 Of (1) those of great desire [who do not at all abandon cyclic existence], (2) Forders, (3) Hearers, and (4) the Self-Arisen [Solitary Realizers].</i></p>
<p>These are the four obstructions and the persons who possess them.</p>

The antidotes to these obstructions are [as mentioned in verse 30]:
32 The causes of purifying [those] are the four aspects Of the practices of special devotion [to the Great Vehicle] and so forth.
The antidote for 1) Hatred for the Mahayana doctrine is devotion to the Mahayana doctrine.
The antidote for 2) View of self is the higher wisdom realizing selflessness.
The antidote for 3) Fear of the sufferings of cyclic existence is the immeasurable meditative stabilization endowed with bliss. This is a special uncommon Mahayana meditative stabilization called <i>The meditative stabilization of the Sky Treasure</i> .
The antidote for 4) Not having concern for the welfare of sentient beings is great compassion.
Sentient beings can be broadly classified into three:
a) Those who [have great desire for and] have fallen into the extreme of samsara, b) Those who [have desire for and] have fallen into the extreme of nirvana, c) Those who have not fallen into these two extremes of desiring samsara and nirvana. All sentient beings can be essentially classified into these three categories.
a) Those who [have great desire for and] have fallen into the extreme of samsara:
This type of sentient beings have two divisions: ai) Those who deny [/deprecate] the existence of nirvana, liberation. aii) Those who accept Nirvana, liberation but do not seek virtue, hence, only engage in nonvirtue.
In some texts, this group is labeled as <i>those whose lineage is [severed]</i> . This is not literal, as this is only temporary given that, in that rebirth, there is no development of renunciation, no wish to be freed from suffering and no seeking of liberation.
aii) There are those who have hatred [deprecation] for the Mahayana doctrine, only [accept] the Hinayana doctrine and seek liberation. Yet, they are only suitable vessels for the practice for the Higher Training in Ethics.
They are called the Vatsiputriyas[II], a sub-school of the Hinayana [tenet system of the Vaibhasika], who are not suitable receptacles for the teachings even on coarse selflessness.
ai) There [is another group of the Vatsiputriyas[I]], who also have hatred [deprecation] for the Mahayana doctrine, but who [only] seeks samsara.
b) Those who [have desire for and] have fallen into the extreme of nirvana, liberation:
This group can be divided into two: bi) Those who engage in non[-valid] method, bii) Those who engage in [valid] method.
bi) (a) Those who engage in non[-valid] method: The Vatsiputriyas, even though they desire liberation, but assert a self. Hence, they engage in non[-valid] method.
In ai) , these are Vatsiputriyas[I] who do not desire liberation and also criticize the Mahayana [doctrine]. This means that, there are buddhists who [have great desire for] samsara, who do not [desire] liberation and who criticize the Mahayana.
Here, there are some Vatsiputriyas who do not criticize the Mahayana [doctrine], desire liberation but are engaging in non[-valid] method.
bi) (b) Those who have not realized the final mode, ultimate nature of phenomena, but think they have [think they do not assert a self but actually do]. They belong to those who desire liberation but are engaging in non[-valid] method, by clinging onto emptiness as being truly existent.
Hence the proponents of Mind Only and Middle Way Autonomy fall under this category as well, as they assert true existence.
Therefore, the determinant whether someone engages in a [valid] or non[-valid] method is whether they realize the view of the ultimate nature of reality, persons and phenomena being emptiness of true existence [the wisdom aspect].
Hence, it is not the method aspect of the path [in the division of the path into the aspects of method and wisdom].
The first of the four obstructions is hatred for the doctrine. Those persons who have hatred for the Mahayana doctrine falls under the category of sentient beings who desire samsara and not nirvana.
The persons who possess the second obstruction, the view of the self, fall into the category of those who desire liberation, but are engaging in non[-valid] method.
Hence, the persons of great desire fall under the category of the first type of sentient beings, those who have great desire for samsara and do not want nirvana.
The forders are those who desire liberation but are engaging in non[-valid] methods.
bii) The Hearers and Solitary Realizers are those who desire liberation and are engaging in [valid] method, by directly perceiving selflessness.
Hence, the determinant for someone who engages in [valid] or [non-valid] method is realizing persons and phenomena as truly existent or not. Those who realize this engage in [valid] method, those who do not realize this do not.

Here, the <i>method</i> in those who engages in [valid] and non[-valid] methods, essentially refers to the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness of true existence. Hence, the <i>method</i> here refers to wisdom and not mind generation.
This is because, if <i>method</i> here is taken to mean mind generation, then even the Hearers and Solitary Realizers would also not fall into the category of engaging in [valid] method.
e) The third category of sentient beings are those who do not abide in the extremes of nirvana and samsara. Perhaps this refers to the mind of enlightenment. Such people do not abide in the two extremes.
They train in the path that brings an end to the extremes of samsara and nirvana. Hence, they are the Mahayanist.
Student: Would those with mind of enlightenment but propound Mind Only and Autonomy Middle Way views not fall under the view of self, hence would not fall under the category of those who do not abide in the extremes of nirvana and samsara?
Khenrinpoche: There can be bodhisattvas who can engage in non[-valid] methods. Bodhisattvas are those who do not abide in the two extremes. This is different from saying that, bodhisattvas are necessarily those who do not abide in the two extremes. Hence, only bodhisattvas holding the <i>Prasangika</i> view belong to this third category.
Student: How would those proponents of Mind Only and Autonomy Middle Way be called <i>Forders</i> ?
Khenrinpoche: They are similar to a Forder. In a sutra, Buddha said that, those who hold onto a view of self are similar to Forders: “I am not a teacher to those holding onto a view of self. Those who do will go from darkness to darkness.”
Hence, Forders cover anyone who do not have the correct view of emptiness. Even though there are those who desire liberation from cyclic existence, but nevertheless they are called Forders.
Cultivating the antidotes:
1) Strong believe and devotion to the Mahayana doctrine are needed.
2) Once one possesses that, then there is a chance to develop great compassion.
3) Through this, then there is a chance to develop bodhicitta.
4) Through this, one enters the Mahayana path.
5) Through this, one develops the uncommon meditative stabilization of calm abiding and special insight of the Mahayana.
6) Through this, one develops a concentration that is a union of calm abiding and special insight.
7) With such a special concentration, one is then fully equipped to engage in a path that can destroy these four obstructions.
This section is the explanation on the second aspect of the clear light nature of the mind: cause. By cultivating these antidotes, one can remove the four obstructions. This makes it possible to gradually actualize the dharmakaya.

Analogy for the four causes/ antidotes that result in the temporal Effect of a bodhisattva:

<i>33 Those who have the seed which is devotion to the Supreme Vehicle, The mother which is the wisdom giving birth to the Buddha qualities, The womb which is the bliss of concentration, and the nurse which is compassion Are the [Bodhisattva] children born from [the mind of] the Subduer.</i>
If one wishes to be born as the son of a wheel-turning king, the seed of the wheel-turning king of the father must be present. Likewise, one must have the devotion to the Mahayana, which is the seed for enlightenment. Hence, devotion to the Mahayana is likened to the [father's] seed, which is the uncommon cause for actualizing the dharmakaya.
The mother, that is likened to wisdom that gives birth to the Buddha's qualities, refers to the wisdom that is conjoined with the method aspect of the path. The wisdom realizing emptiness is called the mother, often expressed in the teachings.
This wisdom is a common cause for achieving the Hearers and Solitary Realizers' enlightenment, as well as the full enlightenment of Buddhahood. Hence, this wisdom is like the mother.
To be born as the son of the wheel-turning king, one needs something from the father and mother. To grow, one needs a safe harbor in the womb. This is analogy for the bliss of concentration on the path.
For the young prince to grow into the wheel-turning king himself, someone who has ability to take over his father's reign, he must be well taken care off by a [caregiver] nurse, who is the analogy for compassion [that enables one] to move on the path to enlightenment,. As mentioned [in other texts], compassion is important in the beginning, middle and the end.
By abandoning all the obscurations gradually, the bodhisattvas will eventually actualize the dharmakaya.

Elaborate explanation on how the aspect of causes prove that the mind is the nature of clear light:

The devotion to the Mahayana is essentially faith, which is the forerunner of all virtues. Of the [three] kinds of faith, this is the faith of conviction. Without faith, nothing virtuous can be accomplished.
Aspiration is preceded by faith. Once one possesses faith, then [one can develop] aspiration. Hence, once one has the faith of conviction in the Mahayana, this would enable one to aspire enlightenment.
Hence, with the faith in the Mahayana, one can develop great compassion, whereby one can then develop the mind of enlightenment, bodhicitta, which is essentially an aspiration for full enlightenment.
Once one has aspiration for enlightenment, one will then be seeking enlightenment. One will naturally be investigating the causes, how and what it takes to achieve that. One will then seek out those causes.
When one seeks the causes for enlightenment, [this will cause] one to eventually seek to achieve the union of calm abiding and special insight. Through that seeking, one then trains and eventually actualizes such a union, one would then possess the very antidote that is able to destroy the four obstructions mentioned earlier.
In essence, through the devotion to the Mahayana, one eventually develops great compassion. Through which, one develops bodhicitta. One then enters the [Mahayana] path. Once one develops the union of calm abiding and special insight, concentration and wisdom, one will then possess the antidote that will fully eliminate the four obstructions.
Gradually, one will achieve the dharmakaya. Since one can achieve this, this then shows how the mind is in the nature of clear light [through the explanation of its causes].

How great compassion is the foundation that produces all results:

The persons in the third category, who do not abide in either extremes of samsara or nirvana, are those who purely and sincerely aspire towards full enlightenment, the non-abiding nirvana.
Such great beings do not take rebirth in cyclic existence due to karma and afflictions. Rather, they do so through the power of prayers motivated by their great compassion wishing to free others from their sufferings.
The very foundation that enables all these results is great compassion, from which comes wholehearted resolve, taking on personal responsibility. From that, one is then able to develop the mind of enlightenment, bodhicitta. Hence, great compassion is that which makes everything else possible.

Brief statement on the aspects of Effect and Function:

<p style="text-align: center;">[Effect:] <i>34 The perfection of the qualities of purity, self, bliss, And permanence [of the Truth Body which is the fruit of purifying the obstructions through their antidotes] is the fruit.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;">[Function:] <i>[The lineage] has the function of [bringing about] aversion for the suffering [of cyclic existence] And the aspiration as well as the wish to attain the peace [of nirvana].</i></p>

A drop of dew and a water bubble:

Explanations of the verse from the <i>Vajra Cutter Sutra</i> up to <i>An illusion</i> have been given. Next are <i>Dew</i> and <i>Bubble</i> :
The analogy of <i>A drop of dew</i> helps one to understand the faults/ disadvantages of cyclic existence: [Imagine] a drop of dew resting on the tip of a flower petal or a blade of grass [at dawn]. When the sun rises, this dew can evaporate quickly.
All conditioned/ composed/ compounded/ composite phenomena that come into being through the aggregation of causes and conditions are essentially impermanent. This means that they have the nature of disintegrating moment to moment.
All impermanent phenomenon are created/ established in the nature of disintegrating momentarily. The cause for such a nature is none other than the very cause that brought about the creation/ production of the impermanent phenomenon.
One should apply one's understanding of impermanence to the experiences of one's life, beginning with one's body, loved ones, possessions and so forth to see how these are impermanent in nature, undergoing change, disintegrating from moment to moment and unstable. Eventually, all such things will cease to exist.
If one understands that this is the very nature of composite/ conditioned phenomena, this would help one to have less clinging and attachment to such things.
This is the same meaning with the analogy of the <i>Bubble</i> in that, it ceases to exist quickly and easily. All that it needs is to be poked and it just disappears.
The nature of a water bubble is that, it is established/ it arises from water. When one pokes it and it bursts, it disintegrates back into its nature of water.
[The mental factor of] feeling has three divisions: <i>a)</i> unpleasant, <i>b)</i> pleasant, and <i>c)</i> neutral.
<i>a)</i> When an unpleasant painful feeling arises, it arises in the nature of painful suffering feeling. That is its nature.
<i>b)</i> Pleasant feelings are essentially contaminated feelings of pleasure. When it arises, in reality it actually arises in the nature of suffering [arises as suffering], but this is not apparent [, as suffering of change is subtle if not analyzed].
When such a contaminated feeling of pleasure ceases, disintegrates, it does so also in the nature of suffering [as suffering]. Hence, [such feelings] arise in the nature of suffering [as suffering] and disintegrates in the nature of suffering [as suffering].
<i>c)</i> Neutral feelings are also in the nature of suffering [neutral feelings are also suffering], but one does not know nor recognize it as such. Such feelings are the foundation for other sufferings in that, the state of neutral feeling is the basis for all other sufferings. It also induces/ brings about other sufferings.
The example of a water bubble is essentially an analogy for how [pleasant, unpleasant] and neutral feelings are all in the nature of suffering [are all suffering]. Although they appear differently, but they are in the nature of suffering [are suffering].
Just as a water bubble arises in the nature of water [arises as water] and dissolves back into the nature of water [dissolves as water], likewise, even though all such pleasant, unpleasant and neutral feelings appear and [are considered] as different, but they are actually the same as being in the nature of suffering [same as being suffering].
Such words from this verse like <i>a drop of dew and a water bubble</i> are meant as advice for one to reflect and be reminded of the faults/ disadvantages of one's samsara.
Although [pleasant, unpleasant] and neutral feelings do appear differently, one does not recognize that these are all essentially in the nature of suffering [are all suffering], especially the pleasures one experiences.
One cannot imagine nor see how these are in the nature of suffering [how these are suffering]. The reality is such, that it is in the nature of suffering [it is suffering].
However, the noble superior beings see suffering as suffering, seeing that which is in the nature of suffering to be suffering as it is. Hence, true suffering is a truth for the superiors. Therefore, it is called a Noble Truth, literally a <i>truth for the superiors</i> .

Recap of the first two aspects, first, entity:

The point of the ten [aspects] is to show that the mind is in the nature of clear light.
If one were to examine these [in a basic way], these can be [understood] simply. But if one were to examine them deeply to see what these ten aspects are, then one will realize that it is really challenging.
The first aspect is <i>entity</i> . This refers to the [Buddha] lineage, which is essentially showing how the mind is in the nature of clear light. This is explained through the analogies of the <i>jewel, space and water</i> in verse 30: <i>Like the [natural] purity of a jewel, space, and water, the nature [of the basic constituent] is always unafflicted.</i>
Although one's mind is in the nature of clear light, but it is not called the truth body/ dharmakaya. For one's mind to be transformed into the truth body, there must be a cause for such a transformation.

Secondly, causes:

Hence, the second aspect is <i>cause</i> , which is shown in verse 30: <i>It arises from (1) devotion to the Mahayana doctrine, (2) the higher wisdom realizing selflessness, (3) meditative stabilization, and (4) great compassion.</i>
This is an explanation of the a) causes that are needed to transform one's mind, which is by nature pure, into the truth body, the dharmakaya, and b) how such transformations can be effected if all the causes are present.
There are four causes that must be present to effect the transformation of the mind into the dharmakaya: devotion to the Mahayana, wisdom realizing selflessness, concentration and compassion.
These are the four causes [for manifesting the tathagata essence], as well as antidotes to the obscurations listed in verse 32:
(1) hatred for the Mahayana, (2) view of self, (3) fear of the suffering of cyclic existence, (4) not having concern for sentient beings' welfare, which means not having the wholehearted resolve in taking personal responsibility that thinks: "I will work for their sake by myself alone."
Verse 33 shows an analogy for the [temporal <i>Effects</i>] of a bodhisattva, who gradually becomes enlightened through the analogy of a prince born to a wheel-turning king.
There are causes that must be complete before any transformation of the mind into the dharmakaya can occur. One needs: Great devotion/ belief/ aspiration to the Mahayana. Once one has this, then there is opportunity to develop great compassion.
Once great compassion is developed, then there is opportunity to develop the mind of enlightenment. Once bodhicitta is generated, as a bodhisattva, one would then be able to cultivate the union of calm abiding and special insight.
The bodhisattva would then have the complete causes to actualize the dharmakaya.
Devotion to the Mahayana essentially means having faith of conviction in the presentation of causality as shown in the Mahayana [tenet system]. When one has such a faith of conviction in the Mahayana, this can induce a mind that yearns/ seeks/ wants the Mahayana enlightenment.
The faith of conviction in the Mahayana can induce an aspiration/ yearning for full enlightenment. When one yearns and generates the mental factor of aspiration for full enlightenment, one would then also yearn for the causes of enlightenment.
On this basis, one can cultivate the calm abiding of the Mahayana, as well as the special insight of the Mahayana. One then achieves the union of these two. Once one has this, one has the full complete causes for achieving enlightenment as one can gradually progress towards actualizing omniscience.

Brief explanation of the Effects:

Once one has the causes for actualizing the dharmakaya, then there are such effects:
34 The perfection of the qualities of purity, self, bliss, And permanence [of the Truth Body which is the fruit of purifying the obstructions through their antidotes] is the fruit.
Relating the effects to the entity: There was an explanation in verse 27 to prove the existence of the tathagata essence in all sentient beings, [this having the three perspectives of]: <i>Result - Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive; Nature - Because suchness is without differentiation; Cause: Because a Buddha lineage exist.</i>
1) The perfection of the quality of purity: Perhaps this can be related to the result of the aspect of entity showing that the tathagata essence exists on all sentient beings.
<i>Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive:</i> This is an explanation of the presence of tathagata essence in all sentient beings from the perspective of the result. This means that, the enlightened activities of the dharmakaya is continuously emanating and engaging all sentient beings.
Hence, the dharmakaya acts as the condition through which the Dharma is shown to sentient beings/ disciples. When this is revealed to them, there will be sentient beings who will develop interests, belief in and devotion to it. With such a devotion, interests and belief in the Dharma, they can then proceed on towards achieving the dharmakaya themselves.
2) The perfection of the quality of self: This can be related to the line in verse 27 that says <i>Because suchness is without differentiation</i> [showing the <i>nature</i>]. This is achieved through the mind that has suchness as its object, which realizes the selflessness of persons and phenomena. The ultimate form of such a wisdom is none other than the dharmakaya.
It was shown earlier in this line that, the indispensable object for this wisdom is suchness/ reality. Here, [this is] posited [through] the second result <i>The perfection of the quality of self.</i>
3) The perfection of the quality of bliss and permanence: The line in verse 27 <i>Because a Buddha lineage exist</i> explains how all sentient beings possess the tathagata essence from the perspective of cause.
Here, <i>lineage</i> primarily refers to the <i>developmental lineage</i> . Since the potential of the developmental lineage exists in sentient beings' minds, therefore, the cultivation and generation of concentration and compassion are possible. Hence, these lead to the two results of the perfections of the quality of bliss and permanence.

Relating the effects to the causes:

The four results are shown in verse 34: The perfections of the qualities of purity, self, bliss and permanence.
If these are linked to the aspect of entity of the lineage and the causes for its transformation into the dharmakaya, then:
1) The quality of the perfection of purity is related to <i>Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive.</i>
If this is related to the aspect of cause, there are also four as explained before, firstly: 1) Devotion to the Mahayana doctrine.
It was explained before, that the enlightened activity of the dharmakaya is the condition for revealing the Dharma to sentient beings. This can cause them to develop devotion for the doctrine. They can then proceed on towards manifesting the dharmakaya. At the time of the result, there is [the first result of the] four perfection of qualities of purity.
2) The quality of the perfection of self is related to <i>Because suchness is without differentiation</i> , which explains how the tathagata essence exists on all sentient beings from the perspective of <i>nature</i> . When related to the antidotes, it is <i>wisdom</i> . The result being the [attainment] of the perfection of the quality of self.
3) & 4) The qualities of the perfection of bliss and permanence are related to <i>Because a Buddha lineage exist</i> . This mainly refers to the developmental lineage. Because this exists, therefore, one can develop concentration and compassion.
The results would be the qualities of the perfection of bliss and permanence.

Extensive explanation of the effects:

The above relationships are apparent when one looks at verse 35:
35 In brief the fruits of these [four causes, devotion to the Great Vehicle and so forth, Are attainments of the four qualities] distinguished as Purity and so forth [i.e., self, bliss, and permanence] through being antidotes That are opposite to the four erroneous aspects [impurity and so forth] with respect to the Truth Body.
There are four erroneous aspects that are related to the ultimate mode of being/ abiding of phenomena, as well as the four erroneous aspects related to conventional mode of being/ abiding of phenomena.
Perhaps it is alright to posit the erroneous aspects of the conventional mode of abiding of phenomena as being the [common] four erroneous views, apprehending that which is:
1) impermanent to be permanent, 2) filthy to be clean, 3) suffering to be happiness, & 4) selfless to be a self.
Since the four erroneous aspects here are related with respect to the truth body, hence these refer to and have to be explained in relation to the ultimate mode of abiding of phenomena:
The four aspects of true suffering are: impermanent, suffering, empty and selfless. Hence, the four erroneous views from the perspective of the ultimate mode of abiding means to apprehend :
1) Impermanent as truly existent, 2) suffering as truly existent, 3) empty as truly existent and 4) selfless as truly existent.
The selfless here is posited a <i>coarse selflessness</i> . Hence, 4) apprehending a coarse selflessness as truly existent.
The result of applying the antidotes of having devotion to the Mahayana doctrine is having the perfection of the quality of purity, which is posited as the final sphere of reality that is purified of the afflictive and knowledge obscurations.
Hence, the perfection of the quality of purity is purified of the two obscurations.
The perfection of the quality of self is essentially the realization of the final nature of self. This essentially achieved from cultivating/ meditating on the perfection of wisdom directly perceiving emptiness.
What this wisdom realizes is the ultimate/ final nature of phenomena that lacks a self. This is the space-like emptiness that is devoid, separated and freed of all elaborations. Such a sphere is the ultimate nature of reality, suchness of phenomena and the final/ ultimate mode of abiding of phenomena.
Through meditating on the <i>Sky-treasure meditative stabilization</i> , one achieves the dharmakaya, which pervades all of space/ phenomena. Whatever there is space, essentially the whole of existence, the dharmakaya exists.
This is the perfection of the quality of bliss.
Through cultivating compassion, at the time of the result, Buddhas are able to work for numberless sentient beings without measure for as long as space/ sentient beings exist, continuously and uninterruptedly engaging them.
This is the perfection of the quality of permanence in that, due to having meditated on compassion, Buddhas work for sentient beings eternally without break. This is the meaning of permanence.

More elaborations and summarizing the aspect of Effects:

<p><i>36 Because that [Truth Body] is naturally pure [from the start] And because [the adventitious defilements as well as] the predispositions are abandoned, [this possession of the two types of purity] is [a perfection of] purity. Because the elaborations of [the conception] of self [imputed by the Forders] and of the selflessness [conceived by Hearers and so forth] Have been pacified, it is [a perfection of] holy self.</i></p>
<p><i>37 Because the [subtle] aggregates which have a mental nature And their cause [the level of the predispositions of ignorance] have been removed, it is just [a perfection of] bliss. Because cyclic existence and nirvana are realized as equal [in nature] It is [a perfection of] permanence [that is, unbroken (fulfillment) of the two aims].</i></p>
<p>The perfection of the quality of purity is the dharmakaya. The two reasons [for this quality] are shown [in verse 36]: <i>Because it is naturally pure, and because the predispositions are abandoned.</i></p>
<p>The dharmakaya is also the perfection of the quality of self because, the dharmakaya is the stillness/ pacification of the view of the self that is imputed by the Forders and the pacification of all elaborations of true existence.</p>
<p>Such a pacification is complete and permanent in that, there will not be any such arising any more. Hence, it is a subsidence of all elaborations. Hence, it is a stillness/ pacification of all elaborations of true existence, a subsidence of all duality:</p>
<p><i>Because the elaborations of the conception of self imputed by the Forders and of the selflessness conceived by Hearers and so forth have been pacified, it is a perfection of holy self.</i></p>
<p>The dharmakaya is the perfection of the quality of bliss because, the cause for the subtle aggregates, which are mental bodies, have been removed. The cause being the levels of predisposition of ignorance and uncontaminated karma. Hence, the dharmakaya is just a perfection of the quality of bliss.</p>
<p>The dharmakaya is the perfection of the quality of permanence because, cyclic existence and nirvana have been directly realized as equal. Hence, it is the ultimate/ final freedom from the two extremes.</p>
<p>This is an explanation of the third aspect, effect, showing how the [effect of] the dharmakaya possesses these four qualities.</p>
<p>The perfection of the quality of purity exists only on Buddha ground. The Hearer, Solitary Realizer arhats and even the [pure] ground bodhisattvas who have achieved mastery do not possess this.</p>
<p>This is because, they still possess the obstacles that hinder the achievement of the perfection of quality of purity. These are the levels of predisposition of ignorance, [which produces the] the subtle elaborations of the appearance of true existence.</p>
<p>These superiors do not have the perfection of the quality of bliss because, they still have the body of a mental nature, which arises from uncontaminated karma motivated by the levels of predisposition of ignorance.</p>
<p>Due to the elaborations of true existence, they accumulate uncontaminated karma, which produces a body of a mental nature. Hence, they do not achieve the perfection of the quality of bliss.</p>
<p>Due to the same process, they have to experience the inconceivable transference of death. Hence, they do not possess the perfection of the quality of permanence.</p>
<p>Summary: The perfections of the qualities of purity, self, bliss and permanence exist only on Buddha ground. Hearer, Solitary Realizer arhats, as well as those bodhisattvas abiding on the pure grounds do not possess these qualities. In essence, the reasons that such qualities exist only Buddha ground are that:</p>
<p>1) Non-buddhas do not possess the perfection of quality of purity because, the two obscurations must be removed.</p>
<p>2) The perfection of the quality of self has to be linked to the elaborations of true existence. To possess such a quality, this has to be a realization directly immersed in emptiness whereby, all elaborations of true existence, including all appearances of true existence, have been pacified such that, one will never again need to arise from such an equipoise.</p>
<p>3) This is because, if there is still appearances of duality of any forms of elaborations of true existence, then there would still be the accumulation of uncontaminated karma, which leads to the acquisition of a body of a mental nature. Once one has such a body, one would not have the perfection of the quality of bliss.</p>
<p>This is a quality which is a bliss that arises through the extinguishment of the body of a mental nature. Even though the body of a mental nature undergoes birth and death not due to karma and afflictions, it nevertheless has to undergo the inconceivable transference of death.</p>
<p>4) The perfection of the quality of permanence is a quality that is a freedom from this inconceivable transference of death.</p>

If you analyze the words of the root text, it is very [profound and challenging], as there is so much to think about. But if you were to look at it simply, it is rather straight forward, as you just have to know [the information]. The answers are there. For example, the reasons why it is only the Buddhas who have the perfections of qualities and not the non-buddhas are shown in verse 36: *Because that it is naturally pure and because the predispositions are abandoned, for it is a perfection of purity.* This simply shows the freedom from the two obscurations.

A heart-warming advice and encouragement to continue with the lessons:

Khenrinpoche: Is this topic difficult? Are you enjoying [yourselves], or [do you find it] boring? Do you want [more challenging topics] or you don't want [challenging topics]? [This] is challenging [for me] too. This is even more challenging than when I was studying! Some [topics] are difficult, even for me it is difficult.

Of course [the teaching] is difficult, but [then] at the same time, you can't say "I don't understand." Because, [this depends on] how much effort you put in. So [you] must be realistic when you say "I don't understand." If you hear [it] one time and expect to understand everything, it's impossible. Even [when] I read [it] ten times, I don't get everything. It's not an easy topic.

In the monastery, there are many different teachers, not just one. You [would] go to one teacher and another one [for teachings]. Each teacher teaches differently. We read and memorize, then of course you need to put in a lot of effort. Even [for topics] like the Quality of the Buddha Jewel, Sangha Jewel [and so forth], in the monastery we have to memorize every single word!

Here of course, we are not looking [for that], but we try to understand the meaning as much as possible. Still, you need to read the transcripts over [and over again] maybe ten, twenty times. [You must realize that, it is] not only reading [it] like [you are reciting the] Diamond Cutter Sutra or the Sanghata Sutra. [It's] not like that type of reading, I am not saying that! [So, the way is to] put [in] your time to read, think and then ask questions [and so forth]. I think you need [to put in] lot of effort.

In the first round of the Basic Program, I was talking a lot to people to encourage them to study [hard]. I was talking a lot that time.

It is difficult and tough, I know. But if you really want to study, if you have the wish to study, then I think [you] need [to put in] more effort. So reading and listening [to the teachings], this is something important. Some of the quotations [from the] root text should [be] memorized. It is difficult I know. Sometimes [I think], what you learn here is almost like a **Geshe graduation** [Geshe program level] learning. [It's] almost the same, more or less. The words are difficult, when you [read] this or that word. Even [some] Tibetan words are difficult for me. Even [for] some commentaries, sometimes I don't know what they are talking about. Some are not [that] easy to get [at].

[Then] when you translate [that] to English, the word [itself] is something totally new [to] your life. Firstly, you are not getting the word, then secondly, you are not getting the meaning. So [the] challenge is there, I [do] understand. I [have] mentioned [this] before, [you] should get the word first, [it] should be memorized. Whatever [is] the [terminology], [it] should be memorized. Then secondly, [you should] understand the meaning of the word. We are learning, so firstly we [just have to] learn the word [/terminology], then after that [we have to] learn the meaning. So that's the [reason why we need] to put [in] some effort.

Last time [during the first batch], I used to talk many times. That's why the book, **Daily Reflection**, [was printed and made available]. I used to talk a lot [then], but [for] this [batch of] Basic Program [students] I thought maybe no need to talk much.

What I see is that, the first group and this group [are] different. When I started [teaching to] the first [batch] of Basic Program [students], they [have] already been [around for] a long time with ABC. [So] they are dedicated. But [for] this group, many [of you] are new to ABC. So [you are] beginners. So there will be some challenges and difficulties. But like what [I've said], if you really want to study, then you need to put [in] some [effort, like] reading the root text and the transcripts [and so forth]. If you read [for] maybe five, ten times, I think you will get something there. So, put [in] some effort. So like that...[so that's how it's done].

I've mentioned this before, sometimes [when] we don't understand, we need to do some prayers. I've also mentioned [this before], there [will be] lots of obstacles, [like getting] discouraged sometimes. If you then just stop [coming for] all the classes, you will lose all the opportunities to study. So [you] need to make prayers all the time.

I did mentioned [this] before, the prayers worked for me. When I was studying in *Sera [Je Monastery]*, every morning, we have [to perform] pujas at 5.30. The first thing [we do when we] go to the gompa is to see all the holy objects, then see the *Hayagriva* statue, and make strong prayers every morning to have success in [our] studies. I did that almost all the time, every morning when I go for prayers. For me, that helped me to continue and complete my studies.

Here also, we need to make strong prayers. Each time you make strong prayer, it is just encouraging oneself to study furthermore. Sometimes, when we don't have the [encouragement of] the prayers, when we [encounter] some difficulties, then we [would] just stop. Once you stop [coming for classes], then it [would be] quite difficult to come back and continue. So, not breaking [from] the classes, not breaking [from] studying and not breaking [from sustained] interests are extremely important. So, those who wish to study must do that: **make prayers, work hard and don't get discouraged.**

[Even though] the topic is of course not easy, but [at least] you will achieve something, some understanding there. You will be able to appreciate the teachings of the Buddha. Once you understand a little bit, then you will be able to appreciate a little bit of the Buddha's teachings. So that means that, you are appreciating the Buddha. So this is important. That's why I am mentioning [this] most of the time.

Different assertions of lineage (Tib: rigs) by the Buddhist tenet systems:

Assertion of lineage by the Great Exposition School:
According to the proponents of the Great Exposition (<i>Vaibhashika</i>), the lineage is the virtuous mental factor of non-attachment , which is the cause of a superior's realizations. [For them] this is that which moves to Buddha ground.
The proponents of this school are followers of sutra in that, they depend on citing the sutras. For example, in the Vinaya, it is mentioned that, contentment , the mind of no-need is the superior's lineage. The meaning is essentially non-attachment .
1) The Vinaya is essentially an advice and instruction for the ordained community. To be content by few needs with various articles like the <i>number of robes</i> [of an ordained person] should have and so forth. The point is not to cling onto such articles.
Even though the word is contentment, but the import is to be non-attached.
2) It is also said that, to be contented with receiving alms is the lineage of the superiors. Again, this is contentment of having non-attachment to articles/ objects of enjoyment such as <i>food</i> and so forth.
3) There is also [the advice/ instruction] of being content with the living abode, even with the [type of] mattress: to be content with a simple and <i>humble abode</i> . This is again referring to non-attachment, which is the lineage of the superiors.
4) It is also said that, abandonment and meditation are the lineage of the superiors. Abandonment means <i>abandoning the afflictions</i> ; [meditation means <i>enjoying</i>] <i>meditation</i> . These are also the lineage of the superiors.
Hence, these first three: [having a mind of] contentment with regards to the <i>robes, food and abode</i> essentially means to have a mental factor of non-attachment. Such a mind of non-attachment [to these articles] is an <i>indirect cause</i> for the generation of realizations in the continuum of a superior.
[The fourth, the mind of] abandonment of the afflictions and liking meditation, directly shows the mental factor of non-attachment. Such a mind is a direct cause for the generation of the realizations in the continuum of a superior.
By living a simple and contented life, where there is not much wants and needs, this makes it possible for one to strive in abandoning the afflictions and strive in meditation.
For these proponents, whether one is said to possess the lineage or not, depends very much on whether these [mental factors] exist in a person's [continuum]: whether the person is contented with few needs, likes to work on abandoning the afflictions and [enjoying] meditation or not. If [such mental factors] are present, then the person is said to possess the lineage.
This means to say that, the proponents of Great Exposition do not say that all sentient beings have the lineage.
According to their perspective, if a person has [a lot of] needs, desires and not being contented, then such a person is not going to be anywhere near to becoming a Buddha. Hence for them, most ordinary people do not have the lineage.
[When one examines these particular] assertions of this system, [they do] make sense. The point about living a contented and simple life is important, before one can even [come] anywhere [near] to enlightenment.
The case being made by them is that, the lineage is the mental factor of non-attachment, which is the cause for the production/ generation of all the qualities and realizations in the continuum of the superiors.
If the person is content, in the case of an ordained person, with simple robes, food and abode, such a mind is helpful in turning away and reversing the manifest concept of things belonging to 'me', apprehending them as 'mine'.
It is said that such minds of contentment in relation to these three [articles] can turn away manifest apprehension of 'mine'.
Without working with attachment, lessening and turning away from desire, there is no way to be liberated from cyclic existence, hence, there will be no way to become Buddhas. The whole point is to [stop being involved with] and following attachment. Hence, to do that, one needs to practice contentment.
Here, if one is content with simple clothes, food and a place to stay, then this can help in [fending off] manifest desire.
Craving or attachment is either in relation to one's 'I' or that which belongs to one's 'I', literally to 'mine'. Through living a simple life with respect to these three things, one can work and [fend off] manifest attachment clinging to 'mine'.
If one were [to examine this] honestly, how would it be possible to develop the qualities of a superior if, one does not turn away from attachment? No matter which [aspect] one thinks from, there is no way one can achieve any [realization] without working to give up on [one's] attachment and desires.
If that is the case, then for a person who does not give up attachment/ desire, then if one thinks about it, how can one say that such a person possesses the lineage of the superiors?

The three types of person that possess the different kinds of obstacles were explained previously. The first are those who have great desire for cyclic existence. Among them, there are those who deprecate nirvana and those who accept nirvana.
Even though there are those who accept liberation, but if one has great desire for cyclic existence, then no matter how much one believes in liberation, one is still happily [returning back] into cyclic existence due to the great desire for it.
Hence, there will be no way to generate the realization of the superiors if one does not turn away and give up attachment.
Hence, to be contented with a simple life, specifically having simple clothes, food and abode, these three can counteract the manifest attachment to 'mine' . This is because, for something to be a lineage of a superior, it must be a producer of the realizations in the continuum of a superior.
Taking a liking to abandoning the afflictions and meditation is that which enables someone to [definitely] overcome the attachment to 'self' .
Contentment is something that arises through seeing the pointlessness in having many [belongings] and a [complicated] life.
It is a mind of non-attachment, which does not occur just because one has no possession. This does not necessarily mean one is contented. If it comes about through seeing the pointlessness of having many [belongings], then such a person will naturally be happy not to cling onto his possessions, abandon the attachment to them and have a simple life.
This person would then like to abandon the afflictions and meditate. Through it, one can finally sever the attachment to self.
Such ways of thinking really makes much sense, which is essentially summarized by Lama Tsongkhapa in the last verse in the <i>Three Principal Aspects of the Path</i> , where it says:
<i>In this way you realize exactly The vital points of the three principal aspects of the path. Resort to seeking solitude, generate the power of effort, And quickly accomplish your final goal, my child.</i>
It is only by going into the isolation of a solitary retreat that, one is able to distance oneself from all the busyness of the hustle and bustle of life. It is only then that, there is an opportunity for one's mind to settle down.
By the virtue of such a lifestyle, the afflictions of anger, attachment and ignorance will naturally weaken and subside.
Through the cultivation of practice to change one's mind, one would then really have a chance to achieve one's final goals of definite goodness, liberation from samsara and enlightenment.
Such conditions really make an enormous difference in developing experiences and realizations of the path. This is because, the place one is living in and one's mind of joyous perseverance, taking a great liking in [cultivation], do make a difference.
This is especially so, when this is done within the [mindset] of remembering death and impermanence, realizing how death can come quickly. When all such conditions gather, it is definite that, one will achieve experiences and realizations.
Hence, considering one's own situation now, the kind of lifestyle one is having as a city dweller, it is difficult to say that one possesses the lineage of the superior. Since this is the case, then not working with the attachment means that there is no realization. Hence, it is difficult to find someone [nowadays] with realizations.
Therefore, the reality is that, the teacher do not have realizations and the students do not have realizations.
As what Lama Tsongkhapa has said, it should be like the former. One should have learnt the teachings fairly well and have thought about it with some conviction. With that one enters in solitary retreat to cultivate some experiences and realizations.
When one comes out to impart one's knowledge to others, one will be speaking from experience. But in these day and age in the world, such persons are almost nonexistent, very rare. Hence, those who are teaching are doing so from mere knowledge.
The proponents of the Great Exposition School assert that, the <i>lineage</i> is the virtuous mental factor of <i>non-attachment</i> .

Assertions of lineage by the Sutra, Mind Only and Middle Way Schools:

The proponents of Sutra School assert that, the lineage is the <i>potential/ capacity for the generation of an uncontaminated mind in the continuum of a sentient being</i> . Essentially, they are saying that it is in the form of a potential.
The proponents of Mind Only School assert the same as that of the proponents of Sutra School. It is the seed in the continuum of a sentient being that produces the uncontaminated mind. Above this, they assert three characteristics:
1) Such an uncontaminated mind existed since time without beginning, transiting from one uncontaminated mind to another.
2) The potential [itself] has [also] existed right from the beginning. This means that, by nature, it has always been there.
3) The potential exist on the sixth mental consciousness.
In essence, their assertion of the lineage is the potential/ seed existing in the mind that can produce an uncontaminated mind.
For the proponents of the Middle Way School, the lineage is essentially the <i>emptiness of true existence of the mind</i> .

Proving the existence of lineage in general as asserted by the Middle Way School:

The Mind Only School asserts the lineage to be divided into two: a) Naturally abiding lineage, b) Developmental lineage.
a) The lineage that exists at the time when the seed is not nourished or activated by hearing, reflection and meditation is posited as the naturally abiding lineage.
b) The lineage that exists at the time when the seed is nourished or activated by hearing, reflection and meditation is posited as the developmental lineage.
There is a reason for them to assert that a seed that produces the uncontaminated mind as a lineage, for it is because of a seed that, an uncontaminated wisdom can be generated. Through that, one achieves the wisdom of Buddha. Hence, for them, such a seed is called a lineage.
For the proponents of the Middle Way, the emptiness of true existence of the mind is the lineage. This is in terms of the mind being in the nature of clear light. Such a clear light nature of the mind, the ultimate nature of the emptiness of the mind, has never been polluted by the adventitious defilements. However, the mind itself is obscured by the adventitious defilements.
Since the nature of the emptiness of Buddha's mind is no different from the nature of the emptiness of the minds of sentient beings, hence, the emptiness of true existence in the minds of sentient beings is called the lineage.
The emptiness of true existence of sentient beings' minds is not of a different nature from the emptiness of true existence of Buddha's mind. Both are the same in that, the adventitious defilements have never resided in the nature of all minds.
The <i>emptiness</i> ¹ of true existence of the mind of the naturally abiding lineage and the <i>mind</i> ² of the developmental lineage [1 & 2] are not the same. The mind, which is clear and knowing, has the capacity and nature to cognize and be aware.
Hence, can the mind be called the developmental lineage, and the emptiness of true existence of the mind be called the naturally abiding lineage?
The mind and the emptiness of true existence of the mind are one entity. Hence, they are different but they are not separate.
In the forth topic of the Basic constituent, this can be divided into the conventional and ultimate. What is posited as the conventional Basic element is the mind itself. The ultimate perspective is the emptiness of true existence of the mind.
If it is a Buddha lineage, it necessarily must go to enlightenment. That said, if the naturally abiding lineage is taken as the emptiness of true existence of the mind and developmental lineage as the mind itself, then would that mean that, all minds go to enlightenment? Obviously not, as the afflictions do not go to enlightenment.
When mind [is asserted as] the conventional Buddha lineage, developmental lineage, this does not mean all minds but mind in general. This is what one must understand.
If one takes the mind of a sentient being to be the developmental lineage, since the naturally abiding lineage is the ultimate nature of the mind being empty of true existence, then it follows that, sentient beings naturally possess the Buddha lineage.
The minds of sentient beings are currently obscured by the adventitious defilements. But these can be removed as they are adventitious. Since the naturally abiding lineage of sentient beings are by nature empty of true existence, hence, the adventitious defilements can [above all] be removed, due to the nature of the clear light mind being empty of true existence.
Even though the emptiness of true existence of the mind is currently accompanied with the adventitious defilements, but because it is by nature empty of existing truly, hence, the defilement that accompany this suchness can be removed.

Comparing the assertions of lineage between the proponents of Mind Only and the Middle Way:

The Mind Only School asserts the naturally abiding lineage as the seed which possesses the three characteristics and that produces the uncontaminated mind [in the future], but which is not nourished by hearing, reflection and meditation.
The proponents of the Middle Way assert that, such an assertion does not fulfill the meaning of a naturally abiding lineage.
They do not agree that the seed which has the capacity to produce an uncontaminated mind is a naturally abiding lineage. This is because, this does not naturally exist, as it comes from a seed [which is governed by] causes and conditions.
They assert that, the seed, which has the capacity to generate an uncontaminated wisdom, [must be] a result of causes and conditions. Hence, it is newly produced. Hence, it does not abide naturally [since time without beginning].
Hence, proponents of the Middle Way assert that, the naturally abiding lineage is the emptiness of true existence of the mind.
The emptiness of true existence of the mind, the ultimate nature of the mind, has always been there from whenever time has existed. The emptiness of true existence of the mind has always existed with the mind since time without beginning.
Since emptiness is a permanent phenomenon, then it is must not be newly produced.
According to the Middle Way School, when one correctly searches for a truly existent mind, when one attempts to look for the imputed object, in the final analysis, one does not find the mind but the emptiness of the mind.

Lines of reasoning asserted by the Middle Way School that prove all sentient beings can become Buddhas:

When one looks for the mind, one would not be able to find mind [or] the truly existent mind. What one finds is the emptiness of true existence of the mind. But, this does not mean that the mind is nonexistent, as it obviously exists.
Therefore, the natural conclusion that arises from such an analysis is that, the mind is none other than that which is merely imputed by mind, is established in mere name.
When the mind of a sentient being is completely separated from the adventitious defilements, such a mind acquires a new name, called the wisdom truth body.
When the mind of a sentient being, which is currently obscured by the adventitious defilements, is completely removed [from the obscurations], such a mind would not be accompanied by any adventitious defilements any more.
Such a mind would no longer be called the mind of a sentient being but acquires a new name of the wisdom truth body. The emptiness of true existence of such a wisdom is the nature body.
During the time when he was a non-Buddha, as a sentient being, the emptiness of true existence of his mind is called the suchness with defilement, the tathagata essence.
At the time of enlightenment, when his mind is separated from all the adventitious defilements, the emptiness of true existence of the wisdom truth body, is called the nature truth body.
This means that, in every sentient beings' continua, there exist the very capacity/ potential to achieve the wisdom and nature truth bodies. This is because, if it is a sentient being, it necessarily has a mind.
Hence, such a mind has the potential to transform into the wisdom truth body of a Buddha. Whether one realizes it or not, the mind by nature is empty of true existence. Hence, the emptiness of true existence of the mind is that which will become the nature body, when all the defilements have been eliminated.
Since all sentient beings possess a mind, since the ultimate nature of their minds are empty of existing truly, hence, one has to conclude that, all sentient beings possess Buddha nature/ Buddha lineage/ Tathagata essence. When one analyzes along these lines [of reasoning], one can derive some conclusion that, all sentient beings can become Buddhas.
In the first verse, the forth topic is the Basic constituent, Tathagata essence, Buddha lineage. This can be presented from the conventional or ultimate perspective. The former is a conventional truth while the latter is an ultimate truth.
The proponents of the Middle therefore say that, since all sentient beings possess the Buddha lineage, therefore, there is not a sentient being who will not become a Buddha. Hence, all sentient beings will become Buddhas.

Student: Are the terms basic constituent, tathagata essence, lineage, Buddha nature [synonymous]?

Khenrinpoche: There is no equivalent for Buddha nature in Tibetan, but one can take it to mean the same [as the rest]. As for the three: basic constituent (*khams*), tathagata essence (*de bzhin snying po*), lineage (*rigs*), these are referring to the same thing, depending on what is being explained.

In general, these refer to the same thing. In fact, the two terms basic constituent and tathagata essence in Tibetan can go together as *khams de bzhin snying po*, which can mean Essence of the One Thus Gone.

1) These word-phrases, whether together or treated separately, basic constituent and/ or tathagata essence, primarily refer to the naturally abiding lineage.

2) However, the word lineage can refer to the naturally abiding lineage, but it primarily refers to the developmental lineage.

If all these terms are taken to be the same, there is also no issue there, as it all depends on how they are phrased or explained. If one explains lineage to include the naturally abiding lineage besides the developmental lineage, it means the same [as the other terms]. If someone asks one what is tathagata essence or the lineage, one can say that it is divided into two: the naturally abiding lineage and the developmental lineage.

Student: If the tathagata essence is the developmental lineage, would that not mean that tathagata essence is newly generated?

Khenrinpoche: It was not explained that the tathagata essence *is* [necessarily] the developmental lineage. When it is explained to be divided into two, this does not mean that the tathagata essence is [necessarily either one of them].

Student: Does the [word lineage] from the Heart Sutra that says: *How should any son of the lineage train...* refer to the tathagata essence, any sentient beings who wishes to train?

Khenrinpoche: The sons and daughters of the lineage mentioned in the Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra does not refer to all sentient beings. The lineage there refers to one who possesses the Mahayana lineage, which has been awakened. This [mainly] refers to bodhisattvas.

Student: Is clear light the emptiness of true existence of the mind? Is clear light impermanent or permanent?

Khenrinpoche: The mind's nature is clear light. This refers to the ultimate nature of the mind, being empty of true existence. This is clear light because, the adventitious defilements have never resided in that nature of the mind. The mind's factor of luminosity and knowing/ clear and knowing, is a composite phenomenon.

Explanations of how the defilements are adventitious:

Of the ten aspects explaining the mind to be the nature of clear light, the first three of Entity, Causes and Effects have been explained. The fourth aspect is function. [This and the other aspects] will be explained later.

The explanation of how the defilements are adventitious through the nine examples will be shown, from verse 96 onwards:

In the *Sutra of the Tathagata Essence, Tathagatagarbha Sutra*, nine examples and their meaning are taught to show that defilements are adventitious. This shows the meaning that the tathagata essence, the nature of the mind, is clear light.

Verses from 29 to 96[L2] are essentially an extensive explanation of how the nature of the mind is clear light, how the Buddha lineage exists. Hence, there were many discussions of this prior to [the verses here].

From verse 96 onwards, these will be explanations of how the defilements are adventitious in that, the defilements are enveloping/ covering the tathagata essence:

96 L3: That [such an essential constituent now] dwells inside the covering of afflictive emotions [of sentient beings] Is to be known by way of examples [as its entity is not now known].

There are essentially nine analogies shown, which means that there are nine meanings that the analogies [relate to].

Hence, these nine analogies relate to the *class of the thoroughly afflicted phenomena*. [Having such an enumeration is] because, in meaning, there are nine obscurations.

The nine analogies are: **1), 2), & 3)** Three dormant attachment, anger and ignorance. *Dormant* can be taken as the seed.

4) Strong manifestation of these afflictions from these seeds counted as one [category].

5) Levels of predisposition of ignorance. **6) & 7)** Path of seeing abandonments and path of meditation abandonments.

8) & 9) Obscurations of the seven impure grounds and three pure grounds.

These nine obscurations are the nine meanings of which the nine similes are alluded to.

At the time of stating these nine examples, there are those that are being obscured and those which are obscuring.

The nine obscuring factors concealing the nine obscured factors:

**97 Like a Buddha [dwelling inside] an ugly lotus, honey in [the middle of many] bees,
A kernel inside a husk, gold within filth,
A treasury [of jewels] in the earth [under the house of the destitute, the capacity of growing] stalks and so forth [existing]
in a small seed,**

The image of a Conqueror [made from a precious substance] inside a tattered garment,

**98 A lord of humans [who is a Universal Monarch] inside the womb of a lowly woman,
And a precious [golden] image in an earthen [mold],
This [naturally pure] essential constituent dwells in sentient beings
Obscured with the adventitious defilements of afflictive emotions.**

1) Like a Buddha [dwelling inside] an ugly lotus: Here the Buddha [obscured factor] which possesses the major marks and exemplifications is abiding in a lotus, which is the obscuring factor.

2) Honey in [the middle of many] bees: The swarm of bees [obscuring factor] is obscuring the honey [obscured factor].

3) A kernel inside a husk: [The kernel] is like a barley seed or wheat [obscured factor] that is found inside a husk [obscuring factor], that obscures the seed one is [keen to extract].

4) Gold within filth: This is like a piece of gold [obscured factor] that is sunk in a mess of filth [obscuring factor].

5) A treasury [of jewels] in the earth [under the house of the destitute]: This is like a precious gold mine [obscured factor] that is sitting underneath the ground [obscuring factor] beneath the house of a pauper, who [is totally unaware of this].

6) [Capacity of growing] stalks and so forth [existing] in a small seed: This is the potential of a seed [obscured factor] to produce a huge tree. At the time of the seed, that potential exists within the seed [is covered by its coat, the obscuring factor].

7) The image of a Conqueror [obscured factor] [made from a precious substance] inside a tattered garment [obscuring factor].

8) A lord of humans [who is a Universal Monarch] [obscuring factor] inside the womb of a lowly woman [obscuring factor]

9) Precious [golden] image in an earthen [mold]: Bronze metal statues are usually cast from molds. At the time of casting, if one looks beyond the mold [obscuring factor] to see what is inside, one would find the statue [obscured factor] that is cast.

This is [merely] listing the examples, which is quite straight forward.

How the obscuring and obscured factors show the meaning of the classes of thoroughly afflicted and purified phenomena respectively:

Just as there are nine examples related to the class of the thoroughly afflicted phenomena, likewise there are also nine examples pertaining to the class of the thoroughly purified phenomena. [The enumeration is due to] the meaning [related to the] nine [obscuring factors] and [obscured factors].
This means that, there are nine examples that [relate to] the classes of the thoroughly [afflicted and] purified phenomena [due to having] nine meanings being [related to].
In each of the nine examples, there are two phenomena being mentioned. The first [two] in verse 97 are “Buddha inside a lotus”, 1) Like a Buddha [dwelling inside] an ugly lotus:
[Since the lotus is an obscuring factor], it [relates to] the meaning of the class of the thoroughly afflicted phenomena. [Since the Buddha is the obscured factor], it [relates to] the meaning of the class of the thoroughly purified phenomena.
Since in meaning there are nine obscurations, hence, there are nine examples that [relate to] these nine obscurations, which pertain to the class of the thoroughly afflicted phenomena.
Since there are nine meanings pertaining to the class of the thoroughly purified phenomena, there are [also] nine examples that [relate to] these nine meanings. Verse 27 shows three reasons why sentient beings possess the tathagata essence:
<i>27 Because a perfect Buddha’s body is pervasive, Because suchness is without differentiation, And because a [Buddha] lineage exists, all embodied Are always in possession of a Buddha essence.</i>
When the meaning of this verse is slightly extended, there are these nine meanings pertaining to the class of the thoroughly purified phenomena, which the nine examples [are analogous of].
The nine examples [relating to] the meanings of the class of the thoroughly afflicted phenomena will be shown first, after which, the nine examples [relating to] the meanings of the class of the thoroughly purified phenomena will be shown.

**Meanings of the class of the thoroughly afflicted phenomena related to the examples of the obscured factors –
1 – Buddha dwelling inside an ugly lotus, which exemplifies dormant attachment:**

1) Dormant attachment: [Related to the] first example of a Buddha inside [an ugly] lotus. This lotus [shows that] the dormant attachment is adventitious, verses 100 to 102:
<i>100 For example, a One Gone Thus blazing with the thousands [of magnificences] of the major [and minor] marks, Dwelling inside a lotus of ugly color Is seen by someone having the undefiled divine eye And is taken out from the lotus petals [to be shown to others].</i>
The example here states that, there is a Buddha dwelling inside an ugly lotus, which is not seen by many [people]. But someone who has a divine eye [can] see that Buddha inside. He then tells others that there is a Buddha within, hence, should they pluck away its petals, the Buddha inside will be revealed.
Likewise, Buddha sees that, even the minds of those sentient beings that are born in the relentless hell of Avici are empty of true existence. If they were shown the Dharma, even they can eventually purify their obscurations.
It was shown earlier how, the dharmakaya possesses the quality of permanence in that, it engages and works for sentient beings uninterruptedly out of compassion to free them from their obscurations. Out of compassion, the Buddhas work to free sentient beings from this first defilement [of dormant attachment] shown here.
The Buddhas see that, the minds of sentient beings are empty of existing truly, their defilements obscuring their minds are adventitious. Hence, the dharmakaya emanates and engages sentient beings, shows the paths to them, through that, sentient beings [can] gradually free themselves from their own obscurations.
Essentially, since sentient beings can free themselves of their own obscurations gradually, this means that, obscurations can be removed. This then means that, the defilements are adventitious.
Just like this example of tearing away the petals of the ugly lotus one at a time, the Buddha inside it will gradually be revealed, likewise, by removing the different layers of obscurations, at the end, the dharmakaya can be actualized.
In this example, there is a person who possesses a divine eye who sees that there is a Buddha inside the ugly lotus. This is something that many do not see. This person then tells them that, if they were to [peel away] the petals, they will find a Buddha inside.
Likewise, the Buddhas see that all sentient beings possess the tathagata essence, but they do not realize it. The Buddha then tells them that they have the tathagata essence, reveals the Dharma to them, through that, they then gradually realize the dharmakaya.

2 – Honey inside the comb of bees, which exemplifies dormant anger:

Verses 103 to 105 show the second obscuration: Dormant anger.
A person who is looking for honey would have to get pass the bees [inside its comb] before he can retrieve it. One who is skillful would be able to extract the honey and separate them from the bees.
Likewise, the Great Sage of the Buddha sees the suchness of the minds of all sentient beings, who therefore possess the basic constituent/ tathagata essence, which is temporarily obscured. He then teaches a way to remove those obscurations. He sees the nature of the minds of sentient beings as clear light, and the defilements that are obscuring this suchness are adventitious.
Through turning the wheel of Dharma, this enables them to remove those obscurations, here, being dormant anger.

3 – A kernel inside a husk, which exemplifies dormant bewilderment:

Verses 106 to 108 show this example. If one leaves the grains in its husks, one would not be able to partake the grains inside. Hence, one has to remove the grains from its husks to enjoy it:
<i>108 Just as kernels of rice, buckwheat, and barley not removed from the husks and still with bristles Do not serve as delicious food...</i>
Just as a kernel of grain is obscured and hidden by its husk, likewise, the natural purity of the mind is obscured by the adventitious defilements. The Buddha liberates sentient beings through showing them the Dharma. Through that, sentient beings are able to free themselves from the obscurations.
<i>107 So the Conqueror [i.e., basic constituent] which exists in [all sentient beings] But is mixed with the defilements of the afflictive emotions— As long as it is not freed from the mixture with the [adventitious] defilements of the afflictive emotions— Does not manifest the [inconceivable] deeds of a Conqueror in the three existences [of the Desire, Form, and Formless Realms].</i>
The <i>conqueror</i> here is the basic constituent/ tathagata essence, which is obscured by the adventitious defilements. As long as it is obscured, it is not the dharmakaya. As long as it is not the dharmakaya, it cannot work for sentient beings.
Hence, so long as the dharmakaya is not actualized, as long as the mind is still being obscured by the adventitious defilements, then one cannot [manifest] the deeds of a conqueror.
Since the welfare of sentient beings cannot be fulfilled if the mind is still obscured with the adventitious defilements, hence the Buddhas turn the wheel of Dharma to help sentient beings purify their obscurations.
Here, the fault of the obscurations is highlighted. Due to it, one cannot work for the welfare of sentient beings of the three realms. Hence, there is a need to remove the obscurations of the adventitious defilements.
First three of the nine obscurations have been shown.

4 – Gold among the filth, which exemplifies strong manifest afflictions:

Verses 109 to 112. Here is an example of a person's gold that has fallen into a pile of rotten filth. The nature of the gold is such that, even if it stays inside the pile of filth for hundreds of years, its nature being gold will not change.
A worldly god who has a pure divine eye sees this piece of gold in that pile of filth. He then tells someone that it is there, if one takes it out, one can make something good out of it, like fashioning that gold into a statue of a Buddha.
The pile of filth exemplifies the three manifest mental poisons. The gold exemplifies tathagata essence. The Buddha, by turning the wheel of Dharma, helps sentient beings manifest that potential by them removing their adventitious defilements

5 – Treasure in the ground under the house of a destitute, the ground showing the levels of predisposition of ignorance:

Verses 113 to 115. Here is an example of a poor person, who is unaware that his house is resting on a mine of precious treasure, which would not tell him: "I am here."
The treasure here is an analogy for the treasure existing in sentient beings' mind that is suitable to transform into a Buddha.
This treasure of jewels residing in the minds of sentient beings refers to the tathagata essence, which is the emptiness of true existence of the mind. [Such an emptiness] is [naturally] undefiled [and thus] having a nature [ultimately] without [newly] establishing [qualities] and removing [faults that earlier existed]... This means that:
This tathagata essence is naturally undefiled by nature, a natural purity. Its being undefiled is not newly created through causes and conditions. Hence, it does not exist in and of itself and has always been that way.
The tathagata essence is also not freshly purified of a self because, from time without beginning, it has always been devoid of a self.

Due to not realizing the tathagata essence, one does not experience the bliss of liberation, hence, one is always tormented by suffering.

A poor person obviously experiences poverty. The meaning here explains the poverty of the bliss of nirvana. The Buddha then eliminates this through turning the wheel of various Dharma.

What one needs to know:

One has to remember the nine examples, as well as the obscurations these examples are exemplifying.

One has to know how each example [relates to] its respective obscurations: for example, why does the lotus that obscures the Buddha exemplifies the obscurations of dormant attachment. Why the kernel in the husk exemplifies dormant bewilderment

Continuing with example 5:

In the <i>Tathagata Essence Sutra</i> , nine examples were taught to establish that, the defilement are adventitious. Through that, one comes to understand that, the nature of the mind is clear light.
At the time of showing the examples, in each one, there [are the obscured factor] and the obscuring factor. Likewise, when explaining the meaning of those nine examples, there is also an explanation of the [obscured factor] and the obscuring factor.
The list of the nine meaning of the obscuring factors/ nine obscurations were shown previously. Each has its own example that shows these nine obscurations. Of these, the fifth, <i>Levels of predisposition of ignorance</i> has been shown, V113 – 115:
The example here shows a destitute person, whose house rests on some treasure but he is unaware of it. Hence, he remains poor. Likewise, although all ordinary sentient beings like oneself possess the tathagata essence, but one is unaware of that.
One possesses a Dharma treasure within oneself, which has always been with oneself all along. Such a Dharma treasure is that which makes it suitable for oneself to experience all the happiness and achieve omniscience.
Such a Dharma treasure is none other than one's Buddha nature/ tathagata essence, which is essentially the emptiness of true existence of the mind, the ultimate nature of the mind, which has always been there and has been that way.
Such a quality of the mind has always existed [that way] in that, it is not freshly produced from causes and conditions, but has by nature existed right there [in the sense of existing that way]. One's tathagata essence/ Buddha nature has no beginning.
Although one possesses the tathagata essence, it nevertheless has to be activated/ awakened. Hence, the Buddhas descend into various world systems like ours and turn the wheel of Dharma for oneself to realize and activate one's Buddha nature.
In that sense, the Buddha, in terms of the dharmakaya, acts as the dominant empowering condition for one's tathagata essence to be awakened. But the main cause has to be oneself working hard. Of course, prior to working hard, one needs the dominant empowering condition, hence, all the conditions must gather. But the main cause is for oneself to put in effort.

6 – Seed coat showing the path of seeing abandonments:

Verses 116 to 118. Here is an example of a seed that has the capacity of producing a tree. When this seed is assisted by water, fertilizer and so forth, it will be able to transform into a tree.
The seed must have the capacity to produce a tree. Otherwise, even if all the other cooperative conditions like water, fertilizers and so forth are present, it will still not be able to produce a tree. Hence, if the seed does not have the capacity, then even when meeting with the cooperative conditions, it will not produce a tree. For example, a seed that is scorched by fire.
Hence, even if all necessary conditions for the production of a tree are present, the [burnt] seed will not transform into a tree.
When [this example is] applied to the meaning, one has the tathagata essence, which is termed “That which is by nature pure and [hence,] that which is by nature virtuous.”
However, one's tathagata essence is [shrouded] by one's ignorance. When the cooperative conditions of hearing, reflecting and meditating on the teachings are gathered, this will allow the tathagata essence to manifest [as the dharmakaya].
Through hearing, reflecting and meditating on the teachings, one can be awakened into the Mahayana lineage, through that, one enters the Mahayana path, gradually traverse the paths and grounds and finally actualizing the truth body.
This is like what one gets when the seed has been fully transformed into a tree.

7 – Smelly cloth that shows the path of meditation abandonments:

Verses 119 to 121. Just like the previous explanations, the example here also seeks to show that the path of meditation abandonments are adventitious. The example here is a precious image of Buddha wrapped in a piece of tattered cloth.
If the statue of the Buddha remains wrapped in that piece of tattered cloth, then no one will see it. If there is someone like a worldly god who has the ability to see into the cloth, then he can show others that there is something inside it.
Likewise, when applying [this example] to the meaning, the Omniscient One sees that the Buddha nature/ tathagata essence, which exists in all sentient beings, even in the continua of animals, is temporarily obscured by the afflictions.
When the Buddhas see this, they show the path of Dharma to sentient beings with the wish to liberate them.

8 – Womb of a lowly woman that shows the obscurations of the impure grounds:

Verses 122 to 124. The example shown here is that of an ugly woman, who does not have anyone to protect her and lives alone. However, she is pregnant with an heir to a glorious [kingdom].
When this is applied to the meaning, this shows how, when sentient beings are born in cyclic existence, they are afflicted like such a woman. Nevertheless, all sentient beings possess a tathagata essence but they are unaware of it.

As this protectorless old destitute woman gives birth to her son, who gradually grows up and becomes a wheel-turning king, she will be free of all her poverty.

Likewise, when one's tathagata essence is activated, gradually purified and one finally achieves the dharmakaya, then one would become free of all the problems. When one is freed from all the obscurations, one can then act as a savior to others.

9 – Earth mold showing the obscurations of the pure grounds:

Verses 125 to 127. Even the obscurations of the pure grounds are adventitious.

The example here is of a statue cast from melted gold, which happens to be still inside the mold. Hence, one would not be able to see the cast statue inside it. One has to remove the mold to reveal the statue.

The Buddhas perceive that the defilements of the natural clear light are adventitious. Through seeing that, they teach sentient beings the method to purify those obscurations. Through that, the tathagata essence can be made manifest.

How the clear light mind can also be explained from the conventional perspective of tantra:

With respect to the mind being in the nature of clear light, this generally means that, the nature of the mind is not polluted by the defilements, which do not abide in the nature of the mind.

Besides explaining the mind being in the nature of clear light from an ultimate perspective, perhaps it can also be explained in terms of a conventional perspective:

With respect to mind/ consciousness, its entity is defined as that which is clear/ luminous and knowing/ cognizant. This refers to the factor of experience that is able to cognize/ be aware of any object that appears to it.

Such a factor of luminosity and awareness/ clear and knowing, is not the ultimate nature of the mind. Hence, the potential/ ability/ capacity to be aware of objects is termed consciousness.

But if one explores such a conventional nature of the mind from the perspective of tantra, then it is more profound:

The mind that is usually referred to in Highest Yoga Tantra does not necessarily mean all kinds of mind, but essentially referring to the extremely subtle mind, [also] called the mind of clear light.

Such an extremely subtle mind does not have any beginning nor will it come to an end. From the perspective of [Highest Yoga Tantra, such an extremely subtle mind] is the conventional [clear light] mind which goes to enlightenment.

***That mind that moves from life to life is this extremely subtle mind.
If it is manifest, all the coarser levels of consciousnesses have already dissolved and have become non-manifest.***

At the time of death, all the coarser levels of consciousnesses dissolve. The culmination of all such dissolution processes is this extremely subtle mind. When one dies, one does so by 'entering' into such an extremely subtle mind.

It is within such an extremely subtle mind that one moves onto the next rebirth. This is what goes from life to life.

Hence, the continuum of such an extremely subtle mind never ceases.

If one is going to achieve enlightenment, the continuity of such an extremely subtle mind, being the substantial cause, transforms into the wisdom truth body.

Explaining clear light in terms of basis, path and result of Buddhist tantra:

In Buddhist tantra, there is such teachings as the **1) Basis clear light, 2) Path clear light and 3) Resultant clear light.**

In terms of the clear lights on these three occasions, [each of these has a division into two:] the objective clear light/ [clear light of the] object and the subjective clear light/ [clear light of the] object possessor.

1a) Subjective clear light of the basis: Ordinary beings possess the extremely subtle mind. At the time of death, such an extremely subtle mind manifests. This is the subjective clear light of the basis [/clear light of the object possessor].

1b) Objective clear light of the basis: The emptiness of this mind, which is one entity with [the subjective clear light], is the objective clear light [/clear light of the object].

2a) Subjective clear light of the path: When such an extremely subtle mind of clear light is transformed into the entity of a path, which means such a mind ascertains emptiness, this will be the subjective clear light of the path.

2b) Objective clear light of the path: The object that is apprehended by such a mind, the emptiness [of this mind], is the objective clear light on the occasion of the path.

When the extremely subtle mind is transformed into the entity of the path in that, when it ascertains emptiness as its object, due to it being so refined and subtle, it is very powerful in removing the obscurations.

Through such an extremely subtle mind realizing emptiness, when all the obscurations are finally removed, such an extremely subtle mind of the path becomes the dharmakaya, which is also divided into the subjective and objective aspects.
3a) Objective clear light of the result/ objective clear light of the dharmakaya: At the time of the result, dharmakaya, there is the factor of natural purity, which is the Nature Body/ <i>Svabhavikakaya</i> . This can be posited as the objective clear light.
3b) Subjective clear light of the result/ subjective clear light of the dharmakaya: The Wisdom Truth Body is the subjective clear light of the result.
Hence, the mind being in the nature of clear light can be explained from the conventional or ultimate perspective:
The conventional nature of the mind can be phrased as <i>mind is clear light</i> ; the ultimate nature of the mind, the emptiness of true existence of the mind, can be phrased as <i>mind is in the nature of clear light</i> . This makes even more sense when explained from the perspective of tantra, when mind is explained from the conventional and ultimate natures.

How the lower tenets assert clear light, the 'I' which goes to enlightenment:

When this is explained from the perspective of the lower tenets, starting from the Autonomy Middle Way School and Mind Only School, they assert that the 'I' exist inherently. Hence, there is something one can point to that is the 'I'.
For these schools, the 'I' is imputed in dependence on the consciousness, the 'I' is the consciousness that they point to.
Since all the lower tenets, except the Consequence Middle Way School, assert all existent phenomena to exist inherently, hence, the person must exist inherently. Therefore, there must be something that can be found right there as the person.
The Autonomy Middle Way School asserts that [the person] is the mental consciousness. Some proponents of the Mind Only School assert that it is the Mind-basis-of-all. Hence, for them, that which moves to enlightenment is the mind.
Therefore, anything that moves to enlightenment must be that which is in the nature of clear and knowing.
To use a simple example to illustrate this, children are generally innocent in that, they just say whatever come to their minds, not [considering this or that factor before saying anything], but merely saying things straightforwardly.
This is because, they do not have many discursive thoughts that worry about this and that. Gradually, when they grow up, all kinds of concepts, worries [and considerations will set in]. Hence, the growing child becomes piled on/ covered with all kinds of concepts, thoughts and ideas in that, he becomes 'obscured'. His innocence is lost.
The child is likened to the mind being in the nature of clear light. Gradually, obscurations are heaped onto it, which obscures its nature. As the concepts and thoughts are piled onto the child, he grows up having those 'piled on' nature.
There are children who remember their past live experiences and so forth, especially when they are very young at one or two years old. Their ability to remember has also got to do with their living conditions, like whether the child is physically kept clean or not, including whether the food is clean or contaminated and so forth.
If the [conducive] conditions are present, with the child being kept clean, then there may be some who do remember their past lives as the minds are still 'fresh' or 'pure' [from being piled on with present life's concepts and ideas].
By the time they reach the age of ten or twelve, whatever they were able to remember earlier on become lost. This happens because, the mind has been gradually filled up with all sorts of thoughts, ideas, concepts and becomes obscured.
For the Autonomy Middle Way School and Mind Only School who assert that the 'I' is the consciousness, then that which moves from life to life will be the consciousness. Hence, that which gradually improves is also the consciousness.
For these schools that assert that the 'I' as the mental consciousness or the mind-basis-of-all, which has the ability to perceive objects, this will be that which has the nature of clear light.

How the Consequence Middle Way School differs in their assertions:

The Consequence Middle Way School asserts that nothing exists inherently. When one searches for the imputed 'real' object, it cannot be found. This includes the 'I', which cannot be found amongst its basis of designation.
The <i>'mere I' is nothing more than that which is imputed on</i> , one could even say, <i>the emptiness of the mind</i> .
Since whatever object of inquiry, the imputed object, including the 'I', cannot be found when sought, then the significance is that, the mind being in the nature of clear light is none other than the emptiness of inherent existence.
However, consciousnesses do exist, which exist in the nature of emptiness. Hence consciousness does not exist inherently but conventionally. One can therefore say that, consciousness and all other phenomena arise from the nature of emptiness.
Consciousness is imputed as such/ termed as such, due to its function of being able to cognize and be aware of objects.
From the perspective of sutra, perhaps this is what one can analyze. But the final [ultimate] explanation is from the perspective of tantra, which explains clear light from the perspective of objective and subjective clear light.

Summarizing the nine analogies:

[The examples in] verse 128 show the obscured factors, [the examples in] verse 129 show the obscuring factors. Verse 130 shows the meaning of the mind being in the nature of clear light and the defilements being adventitious:

130 The coverings of the afflictive emotions in the continuums of sentient beings, Because of not being related [with the nature of the mind, are adventitious but have abided] beginninglessly [together with the element of a Superior's qualities. However] the undefiled nature of the mind Is said to [have abided as the great pure nature without being polluted by those faults] beginninglessly.

The nature of the mind, the tathagata essence, is obscured/ covered by the adventitious defilements. The adventitious defilements themselves do not reside in the nature of the mind. This is because, the adventitious defilements themselves are by nature empty. This is something to analyze:

The nature of the basic constituent of sentient beings, the nature of the tathagata essence, is clear light because, it has never been polluted by the adventitious defilements. These do not reside in the nature of the mind because, its nature is clear light.

Since the defilements have never resided in and have never polluted the nature of the mind, hence the mind is in the nature of clear light, it is by nature empty. Due to that, the defilements are said to be adventitious. Since the defilements are adventitious, hence all sentient beings are said to possess the tathagata essence.

Relating the nine analogies to the nine defilements:

Verse 131 essentially lists the nine obscurations:

131 The nine forms of defilements—(1-3) [the latencies or seeds of] desire, hatred, and obscuration [which are overcome by the exalted wisdom of a Superior], (4) the strong arousal [or manifestation] of those [three poisons], (5) The level of] the predispositions [of ignorance which are the means of achieving the uncontaminated actions and the mental body in the continuum of a Foe Destroyer and which are to be overcome by the exalted wisdom of the great enlightenment], (6) the objects to be abandoned by the path of seeing [which obstruct a common being from seeing reality], (7) the objects to be abandoned by the path of meditation [in the continuum of a Learner Superior], (8) The objects to be abandoned by the [seven] impure [grounds which are to be overcome by the pure grounds], And (9) the defilements dependent on the pure grounds [which are to be overcome by the vajra-like meditative stabilization],

These nine defilements are shown by the nine examples of the obscuring factors. It seek to show through [these nine examples] that, these nine defilements are adventitious. All the defilements explained earlier:

132 Are indicated by [the nine] examples Of the covering of a lotus and so forth, But the divisions of coverings of afflictive emotions Are beyond the limits of number.

If the [explanations of the afflictions are elaborated to show], for example, the secondary afflictions and so forth, then it will be [limitless]. The nine defilements are merely listed in this root text, there are no [elaborations] on what they are. In the original commentary composed by Asanga to this root text, extended elaborations on these nine defilements are explained.

Student: Since ignorance is a mind, then the emptiness of this mind is not tathagata essence.

Khenrinpoche: Of course, if ignorance does not go to enlightenment, then the emptiness of this mind, which is one entity with it, would also not go to enlightenment. Hence, it is **not** asserted that, the emptiness of ignorance is tathagata essence.

Student: Is ignorance a mind? **Khenrinpoche:** Yes. It is an affliction, an object of abandonment, which has to be abandoned and is abandoned through applying an antidote. Hence, the continuum of ignorance is severed quite sometime before enlightenment. Since the continuum of ignorance is severed before enlightenment, hence it does not go to enlightenment. Therefore, if ignorance is ceased, its emptiness, which is one entity with it, also ceases. Hence, [such an emptiness] does not go to enlightenment. Therefore, [such an emptiness] is not the tathagata essence. Hence, one can say that, the emptiness of true existence of ignorance is not tathagata essence.

Student: Why is the [tathagata essence] not being termed “nature of emptiness”, instead of “clear light nature”? Is it related to the extremely subtle mind being clear light?

Khenrinpoche: Think in terms of the dharmakaya, which encapsulates both an object as well as the object possessor. In general, the truth body, dharmakaya, the embodiment of truth, refers to the factor of natural purity [the object/ the support] that is separated from the adventitious defilements. If the term dharmakaya is analyzed to see what it can encapsulate, then it also refers to the subject [object possessor]. When referring to the dharmakaya that works for sentient beings, this specifically refers to the wisdom truth body, which is the [supported]. These two existences are separate [, although one entity]. The main producers/ substantial causes of these two must also exist at the time of the path as a sentient being. From the general perspective, the substantial cause of the wisdom truth body is the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, [specifically] the substantial cause of the wisdom truth body is the last moment of a sentient being, [more] specifically the uninterrupted path at the end of the continuum of a sentient being, which directly realizes emptiness. In the next moment, it becomes the truth body. This uninterrupted path at the end of the continuum of a sentient being is the substantial cause/ main producer of the wisdom truth body. Is such a mind in the nature of clear light?

Relating the analogy from the *Vajra Cutter Verse* to its meaning:**Relating *A star* to its intended meaning:**

Continuing with the verse from the *Vajra Cutter Sutra* which starts with *A star, a visual aberration* and so forth, the explanation on *A star* is essentially an explanation of the two levels of truth/ reality. There is a level of reality that appears to an unmistaken mind and another level of reality that appears to a mistaken mind.

Relating *Visual aberration* to its intended meaning:

As for the objects that appear to and is established/ posited by a mistaken mind, one can understand that nonexistence are included as well. Of the different kinds of mistaken consciousnesses, there is a category of wrong consciousness, which engages erroneously in its object of the mode of apprehension. An apprehension of true existence is an example.

That which is the object of the mode of apprehension of true existence is an example of a nonexistent.

Although true existence appears to the [mind of] *apprehension* of true existence, but true existence does not exist whatsoever in reality in the way it appears. But there is still the appearance of true existence to the [mind of] apprehension of true existence. This is related to the *visual aberration*, which comes after *a star*.

Relating *A flame of a lamp* to its intended meaning:

Although there has not been and will never be any truly existent phenomena, but this does not mean that phenomena are nonexistent. While phenomena do not exist truly, phenomena do exist.

Phenomena exist as that which appear to a conventional mind, the mere appearance to a conventional awareness. [Put differently,] the existent phenomenon [is that] which is posited by a conventional mind/ awareness. This is to highlight that, things and events/ existents/ phenomena are dependently-arisen. The example of the *flame of a butter lamp* is thus shown.

Relating *An illusion* to the intended meaning:

Although this is the state of reality, how things have always been and will always remain so, but one still suffers.

Although things have never and will never exist truly, but due to one's mind being polluted and affected by the apprehension of true existence, one conceives of things and events that exist as being truly existent, being established in and of itself, existing inherently. One then conceives of and believes in that. This then induces attachment, anger, which leads to suffering.

Although the state of reality is that nothing exists truly, but one has been apprehending and conceiving anything that exists to be truly existent while in reality it does not exist in the way it appears. The example of *an illusion* seeks to highlight this.

An illusion is none other than a mere appearance to a mistaken mind, a mere illusion as it does not exist in the way it appears, but looks real to that mistaken mind. This is to highlight that while things do not truly exist, but they appear to exist truly.

The apprehension of true existence, conceiving phenomena to have an objective existence in and of itself inherently, is the source and root of all the confusion, problems and everything undesirable. Samsara is essentially the outcome of this.

Relating *A drop of dew and a bubble* to the intended meaning:

If one wishes to reduce one's problems and sufferings, then the method is to reflect on how everything that is associated with samsara is in the nature of suffering [is suffering]. Hence, *a drop of dew and a water bubble* are shown.

A drop of dew is an example to remind oneself to reflect on impermanence, the *water bubble* is [to remind one] to reflect on how anything that is associated in anyway with samsara is in the nature of suffering [is suffering].

To reduce one's suffering, to reduce [one's] samsara, one can reflect on impermanence and how everything associated with samsara is in the nature of suffering [is suffering].

The best and supreme method to overcome samsara:

The next line explains about *A dream, a flash of lightning and a cloud*. These three examples show the best and supreme method to overcome samsara.

The truth of suffering/ true suffering has four characteristics: Impermanence, suffering, empty and selfless.

[In the first,] one reflects on the [suffering nature of impermanence] of cyclic existence. [In the second,] one reflects on how cyclic existence is in the nature of suffering, that [cyclic existence] *is* suffering.

In the third category, from the perspective of the Consequence Middle Way School, *empty* refers to the lack of a self-sufficient person. In the fourth category, [selfless] refers to subtle emptiness from the perspective of this school.

This fourth category of understanding subtle selflessness/ emptiness would be the supreme method. But the point of the first three [categories] is to help lead one into the fourth, the most profound solution of generating the wisdom realizing selflessness.

The wisdom realizing selflessness is indispensable for eliminating the root of cyclic existence. Without it, the root of cyclic existence cannot be severed. If it cannot be severed, then there is no way one can do anything to stop cyclic existence.
Without the wisdom realizing selflessness, there is no way to achieve liberation. It is mentioned in one sutra that, the door to peace is only one, there is only one entrance leading to liberation, which is the wisdom realizing selflessness, specifically the wisdom realizing emptiness of inherent existence. This is the sole antidote to samsara.
This is because, the root of samsara is not simply an erroneous mind, but a conception of a self to be inherently existent.
It is only the wisdom realizing emptiness of true existence/ selflessness that can act as a direct antidote against such an apprehension of true existence. This is the reason why, the wisdom realizing selflessness is the only solution to samsara.
While the 'self, I, person' is conventionally existent, being that which is merely imputed, but one has never ever conceived it that way. One has always believed in a real 'I' existing in and of itself. One hangs on to such a concept/ belief.
Likewise, when one thinks of 'my mind, my consciousness, my thoughts,' one conceives of it as real, being truly existent, existing right there from its own side. Such a conception of true existence is essentially the root of all the problems.
Due to that, this gives rise to every single disruptive emotion. One then accumulates karma, which [then produces] samsara.
Therefore, the main solution is to understand and realize that one's 'self, I, person' and one's minds/ thoughts do not exist inherently. When it is asserted that oneself and one's mind do not exist truly, this is not an exercise in creating something new.
It is not as if the mind has always been truly existent and one is trying to 'make' it non-truly existent. One's 'I', mind and everything that exist, have always been and will always be empty of existing truly.
When it is said that the 'I' and mind are empty of existing truly, one should understand and realize that this is to 'come back to home', to realize what [these natures] have always been.
When one has some concept/ idea/ understanding/ feeling of emptiness of true existence, how oneself and one's mind do not exist in the way one believes, that they are empty of existing truly, it is only then that, would the phrase <i>mind being in the nature of clear light and the defilements are adventitious</i> begin to make sense.
Hence, before one can even [examine what] tathagata essence/ Buddha nature is all about, one firstly has to have some vague idea/ concept of emptiness.

Relating *A dream* to the intended meaning:

Everything that exists has the nature of emptiness, hence, one can [direct one's attention] on any object and think of [the emptiness of such an object]. But one can [also] classify existence/ the object of one's inquiry essentially into the:
1) [Pastness] of the object 2) [Presentness] of the object and 3) [Futureness] of the object. One brings either the empty nature of the object of the past, present or future into mind, how all of these objects do not exist truly.
The analogy of <i>A dream</i> from the Vajra Cutter Sutra verse is used to help one understand how, the idea/ concept/ nature/ entity of [pastness] itself is empty of existing truly. [Such a concept] does not exist in and of itself.
One experiences the appearances of a variety of objects in a dream. There could be something very pleasant or unpleasant. When one wakes up and recalls what one has dreamt of, if it was a pleasant one, one may even feel attached then to the objects in the dream. If it was unpleasant, recalling what had occurred could evoke fears, even when one was already awake.
When one is awake, although the dream was over and nothing is there, one can still cling onto the dream experiences, either a pleasant or an unpleasant one and remain attached or fearful, even though the objects experienced in the dream were not real.
While the objects that existed in the past no longer exist, one can still be attached or have aversion to them. Although such objects do not exist truly, have never existed truly and will never exist truly, but one still conceives of them as truly existent.
Due to such conception of true existence, this leads to clinging/ attachment.
In terms of the three times, past, present and future, most Buddhist tenets assert that the past and future are permanent. But the Consequence Middle Way School asserts that the three times are functioning things, as impermanent.

Accounting for the existence of karmic imprints, that which connects an action to its results:

This leads to the topic of karma: It is clearly stated in the teachings that, one of the characteristics of karma is that, the results of karma never go to waste. If an action is created, its result will not perish on its own. This is said by Buddha. This is a core believe and assertion of all Buddhist tenets in that, all actions never go to waste but will definitely produce results in time.
Once an action is completed, it is certain to give rise to a result in time. It is said that, a very long time can intervene from the time the action has ceased, to the time it brings forth an experience of the result, this could be many intervening eons. The point here is, how does one then account for the action to produce an effect through such a long period?
All Buddhist tenet systems have their own explanations to account for such a non-wastage.

The fallacy of asserting karmic imprints to exist permanently:
Whether it is a virtuous or a nonvirtue karma/ action/ intention, [if one asserts that] once [it is created and becomes permanent], then it will exist continuously, maintaining its [permanent] momentum without ceasing. This will make it somewhat eternal and permanent. [If that is the case], then this will never give rise to a result.
This is because, a [karmic imprint that is a] permanent phenomenon cannot produce [a result that is an] impermanent thing.
The fallacy of asserting karmic imprints to disintegrate/ cease to exist permanently:
When the karma is done and accumulated, it disintegrates and ceases in the next moment. From the second moment, its disintegratedness has set in. From then till the time it issues forth its effects, there can be an enormous intervening time period. If it has ceased in the second moment, [one can assert that] it will remain as static in these intervening moments.
[However,] if that is the case, then how would one be able to experience its effects?
All Buddhist tenet systems accept that, when one accumulates a karmic action, one has to experience its effects. This does not matter how long the intervening period may be. Eventually, one will have to experience its effects.
Then the question is: How does one connect the karma to its effects in the future?
If that connection is due to the karma [permanently] continuing without ceasing [to exist], then no change has occurred as it has remained static. If that is the case, then no matter for how long it takes, one cannot [account for] how it can produce an effect. This is because, a permanent non-momentary phenomenon cannot produce an effect.
If one asserts that, once a karma is created, in the next moment it [permanently] ceases to exist, then again, how does one account for it giving rise to an effect since it has [permanently] ceased to exist?

How the lower tenets assert the basis of infusion of karma:

The four Buddhist tenets have their own assertions on how to connect the accumulation of a karma to its effects:
1) The proponents of Mind Only School who assert the mind-basis-of-all state that, in the moment when karma is produced, as it is approaching its disintegration, when it is disintegrating, this phase is called the karma that is approaching its disintegration. During this time, an impression of this karma is left on the mind-basis-of-all. Hence, [the sequence is]:
a) karma is accumulated, b) karma disintegrates, and c) an imprint is left on the mind-basis-of-all, [its basis of infusion].
At a later time, this particular imprint of this particular karma is activated, one then experiences the fruitional effects.
2) The Great Exposition School asserts that there is a factor of non-wastage [the basis of infusion of the karmic seed], which is a non-associated compositional factor. This is not karma but is that which guarantees that the effects will be experienced.
They use the example of a [debt] slip. When one borrows [money] from another person, the [debtor] issues one a [debt] slip for one to guarantee payment.
3) The proponents of Sutra and Autonomy Middle Way School assert that, an imprint of the karma is left on the mental consciousness. At a later time when the conditions are ripe, it is activated and one experiences its effects.
Hence, they assert that the basis of infusion for the karmic seeds to be such a mental consciousness.

How they account for the intervening period between karma and its effects:

All these four lower tenets are the same in asserting in general that, all phenomena exist by way of its own character, existing inherently. There is something there [to be found].
They assert that, when a karma is accumulated and disintegrates/ ceases, the disintegratedness of that karma is a permanent phenomenon. Hence, it is non-momentary. Due to the permanent disintegratedness of karma, this means that it cannot give rise to an effect.
They resolve this [issue] by generally resorting to the concept of imprint to account for the intervening period between karma and its effects.

How the Consequence Middle Way School refutes such assertions:

The Consequence Middle Way School refutes such complicated assertions like [permanent] imprints, mind-basis-of-all and so forth, [that the lower schools attempt to make it] appear coherent. They assert that, the disintegratedness of karma is merely imputed by thought, and thus, it does not exist by way of its own character. Hence, [karma] can give rise to its effects.
The disintegratedness of karma does not exist inherently. There is no inherently existent disintegration and no inherently existing disintegratedness. Since disintegration itself does not exist inherently, hence, there is also no inherently existing disintegratedness. The point is that, disintegration occurs due to causes and conditions.

There is no inherently existing production. This is because, production is due to causes and conditions.
There is no inherently existing disintegration. This is because, disintegration occurs due to causes and conditions.
The Consequence Middle Way School asserts that, since disintegratedness of karma, the pastness of karma, is a result of causes and conditions, a composite phenomena, hence, it does not exist inherently.
They assert that, a vase's disintegratedness or a karma's disintegratedness, the pastness of a vase or the pastness of a karma, is a composite/ compounded phenomenon due to it being produced from causes and conditions.
It is also an affirming negative: Phenomena [can be divided] into positive and negative phenomena. [Among the negative phenomena], there are [again] two divisions: non-affirming/ non-implicative negative and affirming/ implicative negative. Of these two, the disintegratedness of karma or the disintegratedness of a vase is an affirming negative.
Student: What does the disintegratedness affirm?
Khenrinpoche: Think of how one's mind works to understand vase's disintegratedness. [Such a factor] is a pastness of a vase as it occurs after the vase has disintegrated [/ceased]. Based on the vase going or disintegrating into nonexistence, one understands [conceives of] the pastness/ disintegratedness of a vase.
To conceive of the disintegratedness of a vase, this comes about due to the vase disintegrating. It has to cease to exist [before there can be] the disintegratedness of a vase. Hence, [at the time of nonexistence of the vase, the negative factor of the vase], the disintegratedness of the vase occurred due to certain causes and conditions.
Therefore, the term <i>disintegratedness implies [/affirms] that it [exists] due to causes and conditions.</i>
Student: How does the Consequence Middle Way School account for the long intervening period between karma and its effects? The lower schools account for it using imprint.
Khenrinpoche: The Consequence Middle Way School does not refute imprints as they do assert them. But the context here is about <i>what connects the end of a karma to its results.</i>
All lower tenets create the ideas of “[inherent] karmic imprints being [inherently] stored somewhere”. This is because, all these lower tenets believe that all phenomena that exist must exist by way of their own characters, findable right there.
Hence, they create some [imaginary concepts] for the basis of infusion [of imprints] like 'non-wastage' or 'mind-basis-of-all' or 'mental consciousness', where [imprints are inherently infused] there.
The Consequence Middle Way School asserts that, there is no need to [create such complex intellectually acquired concepts], one just need to examine karma itself. When the karma has disintegrated/ ceased, the pastness/ disintegratedness of the karma does not exist inherently. The significance of this is that it is a produced phenomenon that arises from causes and conditions.
If the disintegratedness of karma is a composite phenomenon, then [it follows that] such a disintegratedness will produce its own effect, which is the next moment of disintegratedness, the disintegratedness of disintegratedness.
The next moment of disintegratedness will produce [its own] next moment of disintegratedness [and so forth] due to it being a composite phenomenon. Since it is impermanent, [it is able to] produce its own effect and so forth.
This is how one connects the disintegration of karma to the time of the result, through the <i>continuum of disintegratedness.</i>
This is a difficult point. Nevertheless, it has been so asserted by the savior Nagarjuna and the glorious Chandrakirti.
Since there are virtuous and nonvirtuous karma, then the disintegratedness of karma would also have the <i>disintegratedness of virtuous and nonvirtuous karma.</i> Such a disintegratedness can also be virtuous or nonvirtuous.
When one examines the different tenets' assertions, [one can see how] it is the Consequence Middle Way School's assertion [that is] opposed to all the other Buddhist tenet systems. These latter tenets do not know how to posit disintegratedness as a composite phenomena [due to their assertions on inherent existence].
Hence, they [have to] posit disintegratedness as a permanent, non-composite phenomena, whereas the Consequence Middle Way School posits that the pastness of a vase, pastness of karma and so forth is a composite phenomena.
Since these are composite and impermanent phenomena, therefore, they can produce its own effect of disintegratedness.
Hence, [how one is able to] account for such differences essentially [can be summarized] as to whether one asserts phenomena to exist by way of its own character or not.
The Consequence Middle Way School asserts that, every phenomenon that exists, does not exist inherently. Hence, there is no inherently existing disintegration. Therefore, there is no inherently existing disintegratedness.
Disintegratedness is not inherently existing because, it is a result of causes and conditions. Hence, disintegratedness is a phenomenon that is dependent on causes and conditions. Therefore, it is a composite impermanent phenomenon.

When they analyze the disintegratedness/ pastness of the vase, [such a disintegratedness/ pastness of a vase] can only come about when the vase ceases to exist. Hence, one can assert the <i>disintegratedness of a vase</i> .
Even though [the disintegration/ cessation of the vase] is a composite phenomenon, but when one looks for such a composite phenomenon in such a factor of disintegratedness, [the disintegrated vase/ object] is <i>neither one with nor separate from</i> [the disintegratedness of the vase/ basis of designation of the object].
Hence, there is no inherently existent composite phenomenon nor any inherently existent disintegratedness of composite phenomenon. Hence, just as everything else, it is merely imputed. Even though it is a composite phenomenon, but it is a merely imputed [composite phenomenon]. They answer this fundamental question by saying that:
<i>When karma disintegrates/ ceases, in the next moment, disintegratedness is produced, which is a composite phenomenon. Hence, it produces its own effect in the next moment of disintegratedness and so forth. Hence, such a continuum of disintegratedness connects the end of a karma to time of the result.</i>
Even though it is [logical] to understand that a disintegratedness produces the next moment of disintegratedness and so forth, for however long it takes to produce its effect, but when one analyzes how this produces its fruition or [completing] effects, be it a [bad] rebirth or miserable experiences, one will again conceive of the arising of a real fruition effect and so forth.
This is because, [on one hand,] when one conceives of imprints and the experiences due to the ripening of such imprints, it is easy for the mind to [understand]. But [on the other,] when one tries to analyze how such a continuum of disintegratedness is able to issue forth its fruition effects, it is quite difficult for one to conceive of how [this comes about].
The problem is due to one not really knowing the concept of inherent existence experientially. One cannot properly identify the object of negation, inherent existence. One is thus unable to differentiate between existence and inherent existence.
There are scriptural proofs for the Consequence Middle Way School's assertion of disintegratedness being produced from a composite phenomenon: In the <i>Sutra of the Ten Grounds</i> , it says:
<i>Aging and death are produced by the condition of birth.</i>
At the time of death, a person has already died/ ceased to exist [as being alive]. Hence, death is said to be the result of birth.
Therefore, if death is produced by birth, then disintegratedness is produced by [death, which shows that disintegratedness is a composite phenomenon].
Another example given by Nagarjuna: In the extinguishment of the flame of a butter lamp, this is produced or caused by the exhaustion of the usage of wick and butter. There are people who die due to the <i>lack</i> of food and medicine. Due to such lack, death occurs. Therefore, this example seeks to show that, disintegratedness is a functioning thing.
The Consequence Middle Way School has no issue asserting that, disintegratedness is a produced/ composite phenomenon. This is because, when karma is created, done or accumulated, it does not last for long as it disintegrates in the next moment.
Such a moment after the disintegration [of karma] <i>is</i> the disintegratedness of karma. Since the latter is being produced from composite phenomenon, hence, it is a composite phenomenon. Hence, it necessarily produces its own [comparable] effects.
Therefore, such a [state of] disintegratedness [is able] to produce its next moment of disintegratedness and so forth. [This is how a] continuum of disintegratedness, all of which are functioning things, [is formed].

How the Consequence Middle Way School asserts the basis of infusion of imprints:

However, this does not mean that the Consequence Middle Way School refutes imprints as they do assert them. Since that is the case, then there must also be the <i>basis of infusion</i> of such imprints, [the base] which is being 'imprinted'.
Most of the lower schools assert the basis of infusion of imprints to be the consciousness, be it a mind-basis-of-all or a mental consciousness. But the Consequence Middle Way School asserts that such a basis is the <i>'mere I'</i> . Hence, the impressions are 'left' on the mere I, which is the repository/ holder/ basis of infusion of imprints. This becomes difficult.
This is because, one is essentially clinging onto true existence, hence, one [finds difficulty in] accepting this.
As cited in Chandrakirti's <i>Auto-commentary to the Supplement to the Treatise on the 'Middle'</i> , there are two basis of infusion: a temporal and actual basis of infusion. The former is the [casual period] consciousness, whereas the actual, which subsists eternally throughout all times, is the mere I.
[The explanation given so far] according to the Consequence Middle Way School about the three times: here regarding the <i>pastness</i> , is a functioning thing and not a permanent phenomenon.

Analyzing deeper whether a wrong consciousness is a valid cognizer or not:

To overcome samsara, to be liberated from the root of cyclic existence, the apprehension of a self must be eliminated. This can only be done with the wisdom realizing selflessness.
With respect to objects of the past, present and the future, one has to see how these do not exist inherently.
Previously, the third line of the verse from the Vajra Cutter Sutra, <i>A dream</i> was explained.
The dream is an analogy of things of the past. When one remembers [the objects in the dream], they too appear to exist inherently. One also assents to such appearances, apprehending them to exist inherently.
This in turn brings about emotional reactions, which could be a dislike/ disgust of what happened, or attachment.
When one wakes up from the dream, whatever dream appearances/ experiences have already ceased to exist [disintegrated], yet when one remembers it [the dream objects appearing], one may still develop and react with different kinds of emotions.
Likewise, although things of the past [like the disintegration of karma and the disintegratedness of karma] have not been in their nature to have ever existed inherently, but when one apprehends them, one believes that they exist inherently.
[It is such belief in the inherent existence] that induces a variety of emotions.
Hence, the dream is an analogy that seeks to help one understand how objects/ phenomena of the past do not exist inherently.
Khenrinpoche: The dream consciousness is a wrong consciousness. Since it is so, then how is it that one is able to remember [the dream appearances] when one awakes?
One cannot remember something one did not realize earlier. This is because, [it is only] when one realizes something that, at a later time, there is a possibility that one is able to remember what one had realized earlier.
The meaning of recollection/ memory is that, one is able to remember something that was <i>ascertained</i> [/realized] earlier.
A remembering consciousness/ memory is a subsequent cognizer. Since that is the case, then the questions are:
1) Is a dream consciousness a mind that realizes its object? 2) Does the apprehension of true existence realize its object? How does the second question relate with the first? What is the point/ benefit of the second question?
Student: The dream consciousness has to realize the object it sees in the dream.
Khenrinpoche: Since that is the case, then does the apprehension of true existence realize its object? Student: Yes.
Khenrinpoche: Is the apprehension of true existence a valid cognizer? What does ignorance realize?
Student: Ignorance realizes the inherently existent object itself.
Khenrinpoche: How can one realizes a nonexistent?
This shows how important it is to query, think and ask questions. This is because, if one is contented with and accepts what others say and just leave it [at that level], then there is no way to learn and improve.
As to whether the dream consciousness realizes its object or not, it is one's obvious experience that one remembers things one has dreamt of. Since that is the case, then how does that happen?

How the factor of disintegratedness is connected to the analogy of *A dream* in the Vajra Cutter Verse:

When an action/ karma ceases, it will produce an effect sometime in the future. It is said that: <i>An effect arises from the [pastness] of karma, that which has ceased in the past.</i>
According to the Consequence Middle Way School, the pastness/ disintegratedness of karma is a composite phenomenon. Hence, it [is able to] produce its effects. They assert that when a karma ceases, the continuum of the disintegratedness of karma will in time when the conditions are ripe, produce an effect.
All other Buddhist tenet systems assert existence by way of its own character, inherent existence, existence from its own side.
They have to account for how a result can occur after karma has been done and accumulated. When karma has been done and accumulated, it ceases [in the next moment]. They assert that the disintegratedness of karma to be a non-composite phenomenon. Hence, they must account for how karma can give rise to its results.
However, if the disintegratedness of karma is permanent and non-composite, it cannot give rise to effects.
Nevertheless, since they assert everything that exist has to exist by way of its own character from its own side, then whether it is karma or its results, there must be something that one can point to.
Since they have to account for the effects of karma, they [formulate] ideas like the factor of non-wastage, or mind-basis-of-all by some proponents of the Mind Only School, or the mental consciousness. All these being the basis of infusion of imprints.

According to the Consequence Middle Way School, they assert that such assertions [by the lower schools are unnecessary]. This is because, they assert that all phenomena necessarily exist non-inherently, do not exist from their own sides.
Hence, karma does not exist from its own side inherently. Therefore, the production, arising, accumulation of a new karma does not exist from its own side. Hence, the disintegration of karma does not exist from its own side inherently by way of its own entity. Therefore, the [pastness/] disintegratedness of karma is not an inherently existing phenomena.
Therefore, there is no inherently existing disintegration and no inherently existing disintegratedness.
Nevertheless, this is not to say that the Consequence Middle Way School do not assert imprints. One may wrongly conclude that there are no imprints. This is not the point here.
The point being emphasized here is that, the <i>pastness/ disintegratedness</i> of karma is a composite phenomenon. Since it is a composite phenomenon, a functioning thing, it will necessarily give rise to its effects. Hence, a disintegratedness of karma [is able to] produce [another] disintegratedness [of karma] in the next moment [and so forth].
Qualm: Even though this is the explanation, but if someone were to ask: “The disintegratedness of karma produces another disintegratedness of karma and so forth in a continuum of disintegratedness [of karma].
This means that the disintegratedness of a nonvirtuous karma produces its next moment of disintegratedness and so forth. Since there are so many moments of disintegratedness, does that mean there is an infinite regression of nonvirtuous karma?”
[In other words,] the disintegratedness of karma produces another disintegratedness, which produces another moment of disintegratedness. Does this mean that, it would be an endless [amount of] disintegratedness [of karma]?
If that is so, then it would follow that, there would be no end to the ripening effects. If that is the case, then [it would follow that], there would be no Buddha lineage. Then there would be no way to achieve enlightenment.
Khenrinpoche: How would you answer this question then, that there would be endless [ripening effects of nonvirtue]?

Explanation on the first three defilements being afflictions that project rebirths in the form and formless realms:

Of the nine defilements, the first three are the dormant afflictions of desire, anger and bewilderment. The forth is the strong arousal of these three. The first three essentially refers to the afflictions that produces rebirth in the form and formless realms.
[To be born in these upper two realms,] one needs to have achieved calm abiding. On the basis of this, through different access/ preparations, one achieves an actual concentration.
There is also the <i>meditation on the coarseness and peacefulness</i> in that, one observes the attributes of the lower realm [one is at] and considers it as coarse, while observing the attributes of the higher realm than [one is at] and considering how that is peaceful and [blissful]. One then desires [to be born in that higher realm].
When one achieves the first concentration, all the manifest afflictions of the desire realms have ceased. However, this does not mean that the seeds of the afflictions have been [eliminated] as these are still there. Hence, these are called <i>dormant</i> .
In the <i>Stages of the Path</i> literature, there is an explanation on the three kinds of karma: non-meritorious karma, meritorious karma and [invariable] karma. This latter karma is that which causes one to be born in the form and formless realms.
The causes which induce someone to accumulate [invariable] karma are these dormant three poisons.
When an actual concentration is achieved, starting with the first concentration, continuing to the second, third and forth, these are lands/ places of the form realms. The beings there do accumulate karma, but only [invariable] karma.
Non-meritorious and meritorious karmas are not accumulated on the basis of a form or formless realm existence.
Non-meritorious karma results in birth in the three lower realms whereas meritorious karma projects rebirth as a human or a desire realm god. The gods in the form and formless realms do not accumulate new karma to be born in the lower realms nor do they accumulate new karma to be born as a human or a desire realm god.
Hence, the karma that the gods in the form and formless realms accumulate is [invariable] karma. It is [invariable] because, the effects of such a karma can only be [invariably] experienced in these realms. Such a karma will not ripen on the basis of a desire realm body. Hence, it is called [invariable, a karmic result that is not subject to change].
Therefore, the effects of a projecting karma accumulated on the basis of a form or formless realm existence can only be experienced on the basis of a form and/ or formless realm basis. This is what [invariable] means.
The karma to be born in the desire realm must be motivated by an affliction belonging to the desire realm.
Since the gods in the form and formless realms do not have manifest desire realm afflictions, therefore, they do not accumulate such projecting karma to be born in the desire realms. Hence, they lack the necessary [karmic] motivation of the affliction of the desire realms [to project a desire realm rebirth].
However, this does not mean that, the gods in the form and formless realms are guaranteed to be moving towards enlightenment and can never be reborn again in the desire realms. Many times, these gods do get rebirth in the hells.

Cyclic existence is often phrased as [being bounded] from the [lowest] avici hell up to the highest [formless] realm, the peak of existence. These are all samsara, which means 'circling' [within].
It is obvious that, cyclic existence includes all the three desire, form and formless realms. Hence, the gods in the form and formless realms can definitely be reborn into the desire realm.
The point is that, the gods in the form or formless realms do not accumulate karma to be born in the desire realms. Since these gods can be reborn in hells, then [such rebirths] are due to karmas accumulated to be reborn in the hells in the past.
The point being made here is that, of the nine defilements listed in verse 131, the first three defilements are in the aspect of a seed called dormant attachment, anger and bewilderment. These dormant three poisons are that which motivates the accumulation of projecting karma for the higher form and formless realm [rebirths].
While the three dormant mental poisons are that which motivates the accumulation of projecting karma to be born in the higher realms, it is still possible to possess manifest afflictions in the higher realms.
Hence, although these three defilements are listed as <i>dormant</i> three mental poisons, but they also include manifest aspects.
This is because, there are manifest forms of desire and bewilderment in the higher realms.

Explanation of the fourth defilement, strong manifestation of the three poisons:

The fourth defilement is the strong arousal/ manifestation of those three poisons. This refers to the afflictions that motivate the accumulation of meritorious and non-meritorious karma.
For example, strong anger leading to the accumulation of non-meritorious karma causing one to be born in the lower realms, or strong attachment that motivates the accumulation of meritorious karma causing good rebirth in the desire realm.
Perhaps the reasons for classifying the defilements in such ways, like having the dormant forms separated from the [manifest] desire realm afflictions, is to relate these [defilements] to the three realms.
Of the two types of afflictions, manifest and dormant, the manifest afflictions have to be stopped before anything can be done about the dormant afflictions.
There are the realms right up to the [formless] level of nothingness, which is the realm before reaching the highest of the formless realm, the peak of cyclic existence. To [suppress] the [manifest] afflictions of the various realms up to this level, one can depend on a worldly path that meditates on the aspects of coarseness and peacefulness.
But one can only go so far as [abandoning] this level of nothingness by depending on such a path. This path cannot abandon the afflictions of the highest realm in samsara, the peak of cyclic existence. To overcome the afflictions of this level, particularly the seeds of the afflictions, one [necessarily] needs to depend on a transcendental path, a non-worldly path.

Explanation of the fifth defilement, the levels of predisposition of ignorance:

By depending on such a non-worldly transcendental path, one abandons the afflictions together with their seeds. One becomes a foe destroyer/ arhat. However, this does not mean that there is nothing left to be abandoned. To understand that there is still something left over [to be abandoned], a fifth defilement, the levels of predisposition of ignorance [is shown].
Would there be any problem if one asserts that, the levels of predisposition of ignorance are the imprints placed by the apprehension of true existence? If one asserts that way, then what would these imprints produce?
These imprints produce an appearance of true existence. Based on the appearance of true existence, then subtle effort arises that [is the subtle motivation that drives] the accumulation of uncontaminated karma. This results in the body having a mental nature, a mental body. The substantial cause and cooperative conditions for such a mental body is difficult to conceive of.
Perhaps, the levels of predisposition of ignorance are the cooperative conditions and the uncontaminated karma is the substantial cause/ main producer of such a mental body. Since karma is intention, a mental factor and hence a consciousness, then it follows that, uncontaminated karma is consciousness.
It is said in the teachings that, when the bodhisattvas abiding in the pure grounds work for sentient beings, [such works] require effort. They are unable to do so effortlessly.
Of course, their efforts are not like that of [ordinary beings], which are extremely coarse and rough. The [pure ground bodhisattvas'] efforts/ exertions are very subtle. Nevertheless, they cannot [work for sentient beings] effortlessly.
It is only the Buddhas that can work for sentient beings effortlessly and spontaneously. Non-buddhas, [like] the pure ground bodhisattvas, cannot do so due to possessing the levels of predisposition of ignorance and uncontaminated karma.
Such beings who possess the mental bodies are said to undergo birth and death which, unlike the gross [birth and death of ordinary beings], are very refine and subtle. This is called the inconceivable transference of death.
Perhaps, ordinary beings do possess something that is of an equivalent of a mental body in the intermediate state. The body of an intermediate state being is not a coarse body made of blood and bones but is like a light energy body.

It is said that, intermediate state beings do not have the characteristics of obstructiveness. Hence, they can pass through walls and arrive at any place just by thinking of going there and they are there immediately.
Hence, perhaps the state of those with mental bodies that undergo the inconceivable transference of death can be compared to what happens [to ordinary beings] in the intermediate state.
The lifespan of an intermediate state being is said to last [up to] forty-nine days. Within that, every seven days, if it is still in the intermediate state, then it will go through death and is reborn again [in the intermediate state until it takes actual rebirth].

Explanation of the sixth and seventh defilement, paths of seeing and meditation abandonments:

[The next defilements] are the paths of seeing and meditation abandonments. In general, if it is an obscuration, it is necessarily either a path of seeing abandonment or a path of meditation abandonment.
Thus, one needs to know about the afflictive and knowledge obscurations. The former refers to the phenomena that mainly interferes with the attainment of liberation. The latter refers mainly to that which interferes with attaining omniscience.
Knowledge obscuration is so called because, it is that which obscures one from seeing the diversity of phenomena. Put differently, until one achieves enlightenment, it causes one to arise from the meditative equipoise directly focusing on emptiness. One is unable to remain in it and yet be able to perceive the diversity of phenomena simultaneously.
It is only the Buddha who can abide in meditative equipoise focusing on emptiness without having to arise ever again from it. This is an unique defining characteristic of a Buddha as no one else can do so. If that is the case, then what would be the problem if the Buddha arises from his meditative equipoise directly focusing on emptiness?
Afflictive obscurations have its roots in the afflictions. It is that which causes one to become unpacified and experience the suffering of cyclic existence. The nature of an affliction is that, it causes the mind to be very disturbed and unpeaceful, whereas nirvana is peace. Therefore, the afflictive obscuration is the phenomenon that obstructs the achievement of peace.
According to the Consequence Middle Way School, that which constitutes an afflictive obscuration is primarily the apprehension of a self together with its seeds and the afflictions like anger, attachment that are induced by such a conception.
That which constitutes the knowledge obscuration includes the imprints deposited by the apprehension of true existence, as well as the mistaken dualistic appearances that are produced due to these imprints.
These obscurations can also be examined from the perspective of path of seeing and path of meditation abandonments:
There are afflictive obscurations that are path of seeing abandonments and there are also afflictive obscurations that are path of meditation abandonments.
The former are the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence together with its seeds and the afflictions like attachment that are induced by such a conception or its seeds. All these are path of seeing abandonments.
This is abandoned when the [first] path of release of the path of [seeing] is attained. An intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence arises through analysis and the adoption of such philosophies. Hence, it is not innate.
The path of meditation afflictions are also afflictive obscurations. These primarily refer to the innate apprehension of true existence, that which has existed since beginningless lifetimes that naturally thinks [of a real] 'I' and so forth.
Such an innate apprehension of true existence, its seeds and the afflictions induced by such conceptions and its seeds are all path of meditation afflictions. Such afflictive obscurations cannot be abandoned by the path of seeing but path of meditation.
As for the knowledge obscurations, these are not divided into the intellectually acquired and innate. There are no knowledge obscurations that are path of seeing abandonments. These are only path of meditation abandonments.

Continuing explanation on the verse from the Vajra Cutter Sutra:

<i>A star:</i> this is an analogy to show how, on every phenomena, there are these two levels of reality of the two truths.
There is an object which is an ultimate truth, the ultimate nature of reality. There is also another object which appears to a conventional awareness. These two levels of truth exist on every phenomenon.
<i>Visual aberration:</i> There is a variety of appearances that appear to a conventional valid cognizer. There is [also] a variety of appearances that appear to a conventional awareness. Some of these appearances are existents while others are not. Hence, whatever appears to a conventional awareness is <i>not necessarily</i> an existent that exists in the way it appears to this mind.
All appearances to the conventional valid cognizer distinguishing a conventionality appears as truly existent. This is necessarily so on sentient beings' ground. But this does not mean that things are existing truly in the way they appear.
A person who does not have any defects in the eye does not experience the vision of falling hairs. If these exist, then it must be seen by others without defective eyes. Likewise, although phenomena appear as truly existent, they do not exist truly.
If phenomena are existing truly, then this must be seen by a superior's wisdom of meditative equipoise. But this is not so.
<i>A flame of a lamp:</i> Although phenomena do not exist truly, yet one cannot posit the non-existence of phenomena. This is because, phenomena do function as one does experience happiness and suffering. Even though things do not exist truly, but they exist as mere appearances. This is the position of the Consequence Middle Way School.
Hence, phenomena exist by being dependently-arisen. The analogy of a butter lamp helps one to understand this. Its flame comes into being through the gathering of many causes and conditions. Hence, it exists as a dependently-arisen phenomenon.
These three analogies seek to explain the actual situation of how phenomena exist: In reality there are the two levels of truth. Although things do not exist from its own side, but they do exist as mere appearances.
<i>An illusion:</i> Whenever one focuses one's attention on the host of phenomena, one experiences both suffering and, depending on how one views the object, some sort of pleasure.
Although things do not exist from their own sides in and of themselves, one apprehends these to be so. This induces anger and aversion for the things [one does not like]. One also develops attachment for things that causes some sort of pleasure.
This is very much how an audience reacts to an illusion created by an illusionist, who conjures an apparition. The audience merely believe in what they see as real and react accordingly with excitement or aversion.
The illusionist does not believe that the illusion that he conjures as real as he understands it is false and not true. Hence, he does not react like the audience with attachment or aversion.
Likewise, when one sees that things do not exist in and of themselves from their own sides, this will reduce one's fear and all the [related] emotions that arise from the belief that things are real.
In short, all the variety of fears one experiences in cyclic existence are the result of the mistaken mind, particularly the apprehension of true existence.
If this is so, then to eradicate this original source of one's fears, the rest of the verse is shown: <i>A drop of dew, a water bubble, a dream, a flash of lightning and a cloud.</i>
<i>A drop of dew:</i> This shows the impermanence of things and events. A drop of dew ceases to exist very quickly as it does not stay [as it is] for a long time. Likewise, all composite phenomena that arise from causes and conditions necessarily undergo momentary change. These do not abide even for a moment but disintegrate from moment to moment and are unstable.
Oneself is also like that, changing from moment to moment. So are others. Through understanding how all composite phenomena are momentary, one can reduce one's attachment and grasping.
<i>A water bubble:</i> All composite phenomena are impermanent. All contaminated phenomena are suffering. A drop of dew and a water bubble show how all contaminated phenomena, the things included in cyclic existence are suffering.
[These can be] the suffering of pain and the suffering of change, the latter refers to the contaminated feelings of pleasure one experiences. One does not consider such feelings as suffering, although they are. One considers them as real and truly pleasurable. However, [such contaminated pleasurable feelings are only] suffering.
The water bubble is essentially water, as it arises in the nature of water. When it bursts, it transforms back into water. Hence, its entity/ nature is water, regardless of its manifestations.
Likewise, all the feelings one experiences in cyclic existence, including the pleasurable and neutral feelings, are <i>different</i> . But essentially, these have the <i>same nature</i> as being suffering.
Reflecting on impermanence [of one's aggregates] and how [one's existence in] cyclic existence is suffering, one can deal with one's suffering by reducing one's afflictions like attachment and so forth.

<p><i>A dream:</i> However, reflections on these points alone will not free oneself from cyclic existence. This is because, to liberate oneself from it, one must eradicate its root, the apprehension of a self.</p>
<p>Hence, there is a need to generate the wisdom realizing selflessness: This is shown as <i>A dream [and so forth]</i>.</p>
<p>It is mentioned that one can conceive of existence in terms of the objects of the past, present and future. Whatever phenomenon of these [time frames] one is focusing on, one should [understand] that they are all empty of existing inherently.</p>
<p>The analogy of a dream is to help one understand how the phenomena of the past are empty of existing inherently.</p>
<p>One may see many different [objects] in a dream. When one wakes up, the objects of one's dream do not exist anymore. But the memory of these objects can cause one to react emotionally with either attachment or aversion.</p>
<p>Likewise, although things of the past do not exist inherently, but these objects can cause an effect in the future. This is seen in the example of karma, having been done and accumulated in the past, can produce an effect in the future.</p>
<p>In terms of the disintegratedness of karma asserted by the Consequence Middle Way School, it is not that they do not assert that, when an action is done and accumulated, an imprint is left on the continuum, which can give rise to effects in the future.</p>
<p>They are not against such an explanation. But when it comes to explaining how karma gives rise to its effects in the future, they do not need to resort to such an explanation. Rather, they explained it through the disintegratedness of karma.</p>
<p>Once an action ceases, a karma is done and accumulated. Due to such a cessation of karma being produced, such a moment of disintegratedness is a composite phenomenon. Hence, such a moment of disintegratedness will give rise to the next moment of disintegratedness and so forth.</p>
<p>This is how they explain the link between the end of a karma and experiencing its effects in the future.</p>
<p>In the works like the <i>Seventy Verses on Emptiness</i> and so forth, Nagarjuna seeks, through many reasons, to explain how the disintegratedness is a product, and hence, a functioning thing.</p>
<p>After a person dies, he is dead. The deadness occurs after he dies. In the twelve links of dependent-origination, the final link is that of aging and death. Therefore, one has to age before one dies. One can die due to many causes and conditions.</p>
<p>Such a death, the deadness of a person, is a product as it was caused by something else. Hence, [deadness] is a functioning thing, a composite phenomenon. Therefore, it can produce its next moment of disintegratedness and so forth.</p>
<p>The assertion that disintegratedness is a functioning thing is an uncommon one of the Consequence Middle Way School. All the lower schools do not posit phenomena as functioning things, particularly, how disintegratedness is a functioning thing.</p>
<p>It is not that the Consequence Middle Way School do not assert imprints/ predispositions. In the works of the glorious Chandrakirti such as the <i>Auto-commentary on the Supplement to the Middle Way</i>, there are many words that explicitly show that, this school asserts imprints.</p>
<p>This word often comes up in his work here, and they do show that, such imprints are placed on the mental continuum. Likewise, when knowledge obscurations are explained, these are also done with respect to the mental continuum.</p>
<p>With respect to the basis of infusion of imprints, there are a lot of [debates], like the meaning of the continuum of mind:</p>
<p>The Mind Only School asserts a consciousness that is a mind-basis-of-all, which is the basis of infusion of imprints.</p>
<p>According to Lama Tsongkhapa's <i>Illumination of Intent</i>, a commentary on <i>Chandrakirti's Auto-commentary</i>, the basis of infusion of imprint as asserted by the Consequence Middle Way School is the <i>mere I</i>. Specifically, it is the mere I that is designated in dependence on the mental continuum. Such an assertion is very difficult to grasp at.</p>
<p>This is because, [it is difficult to understand] how the mere I can act as the basis of infusion of imprint. In the first place, the mere I is that which is merely imputed by thought. The point is, every phenomena that exist, the I, the imprints, basis of infusion and so forth, are in the nature of emptiness, they do not exist inherently.</p>
<p>The Consequence Middle Way School asserts two bases of infusion, a temporary and an enduring basis of infusion. The former is the mental consciousness, whereas the latter is the mere I.</p>
<p>This is because, form cannot act as a basis of infusion of imprints. Within consciousnesses, the sense consciousnesses are not posited as the basis of infusion as well. Hence, it is the mental consciousness that is posited as the temporary basis of infusion</p>
<p>Sense consciousnesses are not stable, hence are not enduring. Therefore, it is difficult to posit sense consciousnesses as the basis of infusion of imprints. Mental consciousnesses are more stable and enduring as compared to sense consciousnesses.</p>
<p>The sense consciousnesses are not stable and enduring because, these are not manifesting constantly. When one sleeps, these consciousnesses become dormant, whereas the mental consciousnesses are always manifesting.</p>
<p>The mental consciousness of an individual progresses as he enters the path. This starts with the path of accumulation, then the path of preparation. When he enters the path of seeing, it is said that his mental consciousness will transform in entity into an uncontaminated wisdom/ path.</p>

Proving the mere I to be the repository of seeds:

Of the nine defilements mentioned before, there are the path of seeing and path of meditation abandonments. When he enters the path of seeing, he achieves the meditative equipoise of the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing first.
[To the perspective] of this uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, the afflictions, together with the seeds of the path of seeing abandonments <i>do not exist</i> . However, these path of seeing abandonments have <i>yet to be abandoned</i> . It is just that, these [afflictions and its seeds,] <i>do not appear</i> due to the force/ antidote of the path.
At the end of this uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, he achieves the path of release of the path of seeing. This is when the path of seeing abandonments are [totally] abandoned. A true cessation is therefore achieved.
On the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, one achieves a true path, on the path of release of the path of seeing, one achieves true cessation. Hence, there is a definite order [of arising] whereby, true cessation comes after true path.
Therefore, true cessation is the [designated] result of true path. Although true cessation is not a fully-qualified cessation [as a result of] the true path acting as a fully-qualified cause and condition, nevertheless, a true cessation can only be achieved in dependence on a true path. The point is, these two paths are not achieved simultaneously.
Qualm: In the continuum of such a wisdom on the path of seeing, do the path of meditation abandonments exist, particularly, do the seeds of path of meditation abandonments exist?
That is, does the person on the path of seeing possesses the path of meditation abandonments, particularly, the seeds of afflictions that are the path of meditation abandonments? One would have to say yes.
If that is the case, then where do these exist? What is the repository of these seeds?
One cannot posit the mental consciousness of such a person on the path of seeing to be the repository of the seeds of the afflictions which are the path of meditation abandonments.
This is because, his consciousness has already been transformed in entity to an uncontaminated path. One cannot posit an uncontaminated path to be the repository of the path of meditation abandonments.
Hence, the Consequence Middle Way School asserts the repository of seeds to be the mere I that is designated in dependence upon the mental continuum.
Khenrinpoche: What is the essence of what I've said? Student: They posit that [the basis of infusion of] the imprints is the mere I. This is because, the [uninterrupted path of] the path of seeing is transformed into an [uncontaminated path]. This cannot be the repository for the afflictions [and its seeds] of the path of meditation [abandonments].
Hence, the afflictions [and its seeds] of the path of meditation [abandonments] have to be [infused] somewhere. This is posited to be the mere I. Khenrinpoche: You've got it!
Student: Is the knowledge obscurations of the arhats also [infused onto] the mere I? Khenrinpoche: Of course, there's no other option. That's the only way...
Khenrinpoche: In essence, the Consequence Middle Way School asserts that, for something to be a basis of infusion, it must be something that is enduring, that exists all the time. Hence, the enduring basis of infusion of imprint is the mere I.
It is also alright to posit a temporary basis of infusion [of imprint], this would be the mental consciousness.

Continuing with *A dream, A flash of lightning and A cloud:*

The dream is therefore an analogy to show how <i>past</i> phenomena do not exist inherently.
After this is <i>A flash of lightning</i> . This is used to explain how <i>present</i> phenomena do not exist inherently.
A flash of lightning comes quickly and also disappears quickly as well. One cannot really [posit when a lightning] is arising, how it is there, and then [when] it is disappearing and ceasing to exist. It merely comes quickly and goes quickly. Hence, one cannot really pin-point when it is the beginning, the middle and the end of the flash of lightning.
Likewise, when one examines phenomena of the present, it is also difficult to pin-point what exactly it is. When one examines the cause, the entity and the effects that it will produce, there is nothing one can really point to that is the object.
When one searches for the real object of focus that ignorance is clinging onto, believing that there is an inherently real object right there, one cannot really point out what exactly it is. Hence, the teachings say that:
<i>Phenomena do not exist inherently but exist as not beyond mere appearances.</i>
This is just like what a flash of lightning is, a sudden appearance of a flash. That is [all there is to it].
A cloud: This is an analogy to show how <i>future</i> phenomena also do not exist inherently.
The clouds appear in the vacuity of the empty sky. The sky itself does not have the capacity to produce rain, hail nor snow. Yet in it, clouds can form. Under certain conditions, these give rise to rain, hail or even snow.

When clouds gather in the empty sky, they give rise to rain, which can nurture crops, which give rise to harvests.
The sky here is likened to the tathagata essence, which is the clear light nature of the mind. Due to the gathering of afflictions, karma and its seeds, the results of suffering or pleasure do arise and are experienced.
These conditions that give rise to both experiences of suffering and pleasure exist on the clear light nature of the mind. When these factors of afflictions, karma and seeds gather, they give rise to the effects.
The effects that come about through these factors themselves do not exist right from their own sides as well.
It is not as if the causes, karma and so forth exist from their own sides in and of themselves being real, then inherently gather and produce an inherently existing effect.
The analogies of <i>a dream, a flash of lightning and a cloud</i> seek to help one understand in general, how phenomena of the past, present and future are all empty of existing inherently.
Through realizing this, one can once and for all eradicate the root cause of all of one's problems.
If one can reflect on the meaning of this verse, then there will be benefit. One should therefore set aside some time to recite it. One should also think of its meaning, starting with <i>A star</i> ; followed by <i>A visual aberration</i> and so forth.
In a way, all the essential practices are encapsulated in this verse. As the <i>Four Seals</i> states:
<i>All compounded phenomena are impermanent</i> <i>All contaminated phenomena are miserable</i> <i>All phenomena are empty and selfless</i> <i>Nirvana is peace</i>
As the third seal states: <i>All phenomena are empty and selfless</i> . Through realizing how phenomena are empty of existing inherently, one achieves the peace and liberation that is the pacification of and freedom from the afflictions.
This is the same with the <i>Four Noble Truths</i> , how true suffering originates from true origin, and how true cessation comes about in dependence upon true path.
Therefore, the fundamental conclusion one reaches when contemplating on these various teachings is essentially the same.

Khenrinpoche: Of the nine defilements, what is the difference between the first three and the forth, that is, the difference between the latencies of the three poisons and the strong manifestation of these?

Student: The first three refer to the non-manifest three poisons in the form and formless realms, whereas the [forth] refers to the afflictions of the desire realm.

Khenrinpoche: That is correct. The first three defilements, the dormant forms of the three poisons which motivates [invariable] karma, result in rebirth in the form and formless realms. The three poisons in the manifest forms which motivate meritorious karmas result with rebirth in the desire realm.

[However,] the first three defilements, the dormant form of the three poisons, are not necessarily posited as seeds only. What is being posited are afflictions that motivate the accumulation of invariable karma.

[Strong] manifest anger does not motivate the accumulation of invariable karma, but manifest attachment and bewilderment can motivate the accumulation of invariable karma.

Invariable karma is the projecting karma that results in a rebirth in the form and formless realms.

[In verse 131,] *The strong arousal of those* refers mainly to the strong manifest anger which motivates the accumulation of karma for rebirth in the desire realm. **Strong manifest anger cannot motivate the accumulation of invariable karma.**

The accumulation of projecting karma for rebirth in the desire realm could be manifest anger, attachment or bewilderment.

What is the purpose of gathering so much information and knowledge:

<p>How gathering information about the Three Jewels induces faith in them:</p>
<p>We have learnt a considerable amount about the Three Jewels so far. We have examined the eight qualities each of the Buddha Jewel, Dharma Jewel and Sangha Jewel.</p>
<p>Since we have studied about these qualities, so in fact, if we are someone who can reflect and utilize these [knowledge], then we should bring what we have learnt into practice.</p>
<p>For example, when we recite the prayers of going for refuge and generating bodhicitta by saying: “I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha,” [we should] bring to mind the eight qualities of the Buddha Jewel.</p>
<p>When the meaning of these qualities arise in one's mind, this would help one to generate faith in the Buddha.</p>
<p>Some of these qualities are “being uncompounded, spontaneous” and so forth. When one goes for refuge to the Buddha Jewel, one can bring these various qualities of the Buddha Jewel to mind.</p>
<p>Essentially, the more qualities of the Buddha Jewel one can remember and bring to mind, then perhaps the more benefits one receives in terms of developing one's faith in the Buddha Jewel.</p>
<p>Sometimes somehow, all of us would have definitely wondered about the purposes and benefits of learning the enumerations and gathering of information.</p>
<p>If you are someone who can utilize the information, reflect and analyze about them, then it is very helpful.</p>
<p>If we could remember the qualities of the Buddha Jewel for example, understanding and remembering these qualities is a condition and is definitely helpful for one to develop faith in the Buddha Jewel. But if you are someone who do not utilize the information, do not reflect and think about it, then of course this is a completely different matter.</p>
<p>Likewise, if we know the eight qualities each of the Dharma Jewel and the Sangha Jewel, this will be very helpful in developing faith in the Three Jewels.</p>
<p>Faith has to arise from seeing the reasons. If one's faith in the Three Jewels is engendered by knowledge and understanding the qualities of the Three Jewels, then such a faith [would be very stable.]</p>
<p>Perhaps this is the main reason why one studies. Through learning, knowing and understanding the [knowledge], using these to [reflect], it becomes helpful, in this case, to induce faith in the Three Jewels. <i>This is the point of [learning the knowledge].</i></p>
<p>When one goes for refuge to the Three Jewels and recite the verses of going for refuge, one can pause after saying Buddha and reflect on the qualities of the Buddha Jewel. Likewise, one can pause after saying Dharma Jewel and Sangha Jewel respectively and reflect on its qualities.</p>
<p>The qualities of the Buddha Jewel are essentially condensed into the qualities of knowledge, power and mercy.</p>
<p>The qualities of the Dharma Jewel are essentially condensed into the qualities of knowledge and freedom/ separation.</p>
<p>When one thinks of the qualities of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, a faith in them will arise in one's mind.</p>
<p>When one reflects on their qualities, a feeling that these three objects of refuge is something very good will arise. When one appreciates what they are, a yearning that wishes to actualize them oneself would arise in one's mind also. This will happen.</p>
<p>How gathering information about one's tathagata essence induces faith that oneself can become the Three Jewels:</p>
<p>When one thinks about the Three Jewels in relation to the tathagata essence, one's Buddha nature, then whether it is the causal or the resultant refuge, all of these are made possible because one has Buddha nature, that tathagata essence exists.</p>
<p>Tathagata essence is also explained in terms of the clear light nature of the mind and how the defilements are adventitious. These are established through various examples and illustrations.</p>
<p>When one posits that the defilements are adventitious, this means that, one can separate the defilements from the mind. This means that, oneself can actualize and become the Final Three Jewels.</p>
<p>The signs of having learnt and meditated on the Dharma:</p>
<p>The vast majority of people everywhere always wonder about the purpose of learning and studying all the great treatises.</p>
<p>One can see it as a condition to cultivate faith, for example, in the Three Jewels. In fact, all the learning and studying must result in the increase in one's faith and devotion towards the Three Jewels.</p>
<p>If one's devotion in the Three Jewels does increase as a result of learning and studying, then one can say that the purpose of learning and studying all [the knowledge of the Buddhadharma] is fulfilled.</p>

As the great Kadampa masters of the past have said, the signs of having learnt the Dharma is that, one becomes peaceful, serene and calm. Through learning and studying all such [great treatises], one's faith, for example in the Three Jewels, will increase. It is through [such an increase in faith] that, one gradually becomes disciplined, serene, calm and subdued.
The sign of having meditated is the lessening of one's afflictions. If one's afflictions such as the three poisons do gradually decrease and weaken over time, this is an indication of having meditated/ familiarized one's mind with the teachings.
The purpose of gathering [Dharma knowledge] through studying and the purpose of reflection are not merely to acquire information. This is not the point. The purpose is to increase one's faith and devotion.
As mentioned by the Kadampa masters, the sign of having learnt and reflected correctly is that, one becomes more calm, pacified, peaceful and subdued.
This is how one checks oneself to see whether, one's learning, studying and reflection are hitting the point, going in the right direction or not. The way to do so is, for example, to see if one's faith and devotion are increasing or not.
If one is meditating, to see whether this is fulfilling its purpose or not, one can check to see if one's own afflictions are weakening over time or not. If it is, this could indicate that one's practice/ meditation is [progressing correctly].
To arouse real faith and devotion in one's heart, one needs to learn and reflect about [what one has learnt]. Through that, faith and devotion will arise.
The Buddha has said in many sutras that, faith is indispensable for generating experiences and realizations of the path. He has said that, without faith, there is no way for any positive experiences and realizations to arise.

Recapping the defilements:

First three: The nine defilements as shown by their examples and meanings have been explained so far. Of the nine, the first three being dormant desire, anger and [bewilderment]. The forth is the strong manifestation of these three [afflictions].
Fifth: Next [defilement] is the levels of predisposition of ignorance. Perhaps it is alright to posit this as the knowledge obscurations. Due to such a defilement, one still needs to exert oneself, albeit subtly.
This defilement is a cause for the accumulation of uncontaminated karma, in dependence on which, a mental body arises. Due to both the levels of predisposition of ignorance and uncontaminated karma, the bodhisattvas acquire the mental bodies.
Even bodhisattvas on the eighth, ninth and tenth grounds still need to depend on subtle exertion to work for sentient beings. By depending on this subtle exertion, [superior] bodhisattvas take on a mental body, through which, they work for others.
When one achieves enlightenment, the levels of predisposition of ignorance would have been abandoned, hence, there would no longer be any subtle exertions. Hence, Buddhas are able to work for sentient beings spontaneously and effortlessly.
These are qualities only of Buddhas in that, they can work for sentient beings such as giving teachings, without ever having to arise from meditative equipoise focusing on suchness. This is the unshared quality of the Buddha.
During the time when one is a sentient being in meditative equipoise focusing on suchness, putting aside working for sentient beings, one cannot even see the diversity of phenomena as one is only seeing emptiness.
It is only a quality of Buddha that is able to work for sentient beings without having ever to arise from meditative equipoise focusing on suchness. Hence, their enlightened activities for sentient beings are spontaneous, effortless and uninterrupted.

Sixth and seventh – detailed explanations of the paths of seeing and meditation abandonments:

The next two defilements are path of seeing and path of meditation abandonments. The latter has two, afflictive and knowledge obscurations. Afflictive obscurations mainly hinder the achievement of liberation while knowledge obscurations mainly hinder the achievement of omniscience.
According to the Consequence Middle Way School, the 1) <i>apprehension of true existence</i> , the 2) <i>seed that is placed by this apprehension</i> , as well as the 3) <i>manifest afflictions arising from these seeds</i> are all afflictive obscurations.
Since the apprehension of true existence, the seeds placed by this mind, and the manifest afflictions like anger, attachment and so forth hinder the achievement of liberation, hence these must be abandoned for liberation to be attained.
<i>The Four Seals state that: All composed phenomena are impermanent, all contaminated phenomena are miserable, all phenomena are empty and selfless, nirvana is peace.</i>
That which is peace is nirvana, which is liberation. When one has abandoned the afflictive obscurations, this results in nirvana, which is liberation. Nirvana is peace because, it is the pacification of all the sufferings of cyclic existence.
The root source of cyclic existence itself are the afflictions. When these are abandoned, one achieves peace.

How the various Buddhist tenets asset the two selflessnesses:

All Buddhist tenets are alike in asserting that, selflessness must be realized to achieve liberation. But most of them assert that one only needs to realize the selflessness of persons to achieve that.
According to the Consequence Middle Way School, to achieve liberation, one necessarily needs to realize both the selflessnesses of persons and phenomena. Their assertions of the two selflessnesses are very different from the other tenets.
The two selflessnesses are not differentiated by the object of negation, inherent existence, be it the selflessness of persons or phenomena, [the negated object of inherent existence] is the same.
The difference between these two selflessnesses is made on the <i>basis</i> of emptiness.
The basis of designation of [phenomena], the aggregates, are empty of existing inherently. Hence, the emptiness of the aggregates is the selflessness of phenomena. The emptiness of inherent existence of person is the selflessness of person.
Hence, these two selflessnesses are not differentiated by its object of [meditation], emptiness. Rather, the two selflessness are differentiated by the basis of emptiness, one being the aggregates, the other being the person.

Why one must realize both selflessnesses in order to achieve liberation:

To achieve liberation, one must abandon the afflictive obscurations, to abandon this, one must realize both the selflessness of persons and phenomena.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> According to the Consequence Middle Way School, why must one [also] realize the selflessness of phenomena to become an arhat? Why is it that, one cannot become an arhat merely by realizing the selflessness of person?
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> It doesn't matter whether you are right or wrong, you just say something. If there is anyone who has the answer then please say it. But if none of you have the answer, then you have to say that you don't know the answer. If you don't say I won't know. So better say something so I know whether you know or not.
<i>Student 1:</i> Arhats have self-cherishing. So if he realizes the selflessness of person, then he would become a Buddha.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> You are not really answering the question.
If you really want to learn, then in reality, you have to give an answer and not be shy about it. The answer could be right or wrong but that is not the point. The point is that, when you give an answer, you must also be willing to accept the challenges.
If I were to question you, then you must be able to [reply] with a to-and-fro discussion. This is to be done without feeling shy or embarrassed. If you are shy or embarrassed, then you learn nothing.
<i>Student 2:</i> When one still sees inherent [phenomena other than persons, there will still be] afflictions. One reacts either with attachment or aversion, one's afflictions, seeds and imprints perpetuates. One is then trapped in cyclic existence just the same.
<i>Khenrinpoche:</i> What you say is correct. In general, that is alright. I have explained what constitutes afflictive obscurations earlier. It is essentially an apprehension of the self of persons and phenomena, as well as the seeds placed by these apprehensions and the afflictions like anger and attachment that arise from these seeds.
To become a foe destroyer, one needs to destroy the enemy, the foe of the afflictions. Liberation means to be freed from the sufferings of cyclic existence. To be liberated from such sufferings, one must be freed from its causes. These are the afflictive obscurations. What constitutes them have been explained.
Since what is included as an afflictive obscurations are the apprehensions of the self of persons and the self of phenomena, then one must realize both the emptinesses of the persons and the aggregates to achieve liberation.

Positing the difference between afflictive obscurations and knowledge obscurations:

As for knowledge obscurations, this is the mistaken fault which is a factor of appearance of true existence. As a sentient being, whatever appears, always appears as truly existent.
There is the mistaken factor of the appearance of true existence which is incorrect as it does not accord with reality. This arises from the predispositions/ imprints placed by the apprehension of true existence.
Between seeds and predispositions, often times these two are the same, but at others, these are different/ separate. In the cases where there is a distinction made between a seed and imprint/ predisposition, then one can understand that seed is coarser whereas imprint/ predisposition is more subtle.
One needs to distinguish between the seed that is deposited by the apprehension of true existence and the predisposition deposited by the same apprehension. The former is an afflictive obscurations, whereas the latter is a knowledge obscuration.
The seed placed by the apprehension of true existence has the capacity to generate another moment of apprehension of true existence. At the time when there is such a capacity to produce a new moment of the apprehension of true existence, then it is called a seed.

The imprint/ predisposition placed by the apprehension of true existence does not have the capacity to produce a new moment of an apprehension of true existence. Rather, it only has the capacity to produce a factor of mere mistaken appearance of true existence.
According to the Consequence Middle Way School, when one becomes a Hearer or Solitary Realizer foe destroyer, that is when the afflictive obscurations are abandoned. In terms of the Mahayana, afflictive obscurations are abandoned when one initially achieves the eighth ground.
Although the Hearer and Solitary Realizer foe destroyers have abandoned the afflictive obscurations, they are still not Buddhas. This is because, they still have the levels of predisposition of ignorance, which have yet to be abandoned.
Hence, they still have to depend on subtle exertion, accumulate uncontaminated karma and take on a mental body.
Therefore, the knowledge obscurations are abandoned [only] when one becomes a Buddha, having abandoned the knowledge obscurations and achieved the path of release of the [Mahayana] path of no more learning.

Differentiating afflictive obscurations that are path of seeing and path of meditation abandonments:

Intellectually acquired afflictive obscurations:
There are afflictive obscurations that are abandoned by the path of seeing and that abandoned by the path of meditation. Hence, there are the path of seeing abandonments and path of meditation abandonments.
The way to differentiate between afflictive obscurations that are path of seeing abandonments and the afflictive obscurations that are path of meditation abandonments is that, there is a thought apprehending 'I' to be truly existent, which is not innate, that arises from intellectually adopting certain mistaken philosophical tenets.
Such an apprehension of a truly existent 'I' is called an intellectually acquired path of seeing afflictive obscuration.
Such an intellectually acquired apprehension is called an affliction that is the path of seeing abandonment, sometimes it is called an intellectually acquired affliction.
How afflictions like anger and so forth, as well as its seeds, induced by such apprehensions are also intellectually acquired afflictions:
One can also posit that there are the seeds deposited by such an apprehension of an 'I'. Then perhaps, one can also posit instances of anger, attachment and so forth that arise through the force of such seeds.
That said, are the afflictions like attachment and anger that arise from such seeds intellectually acquired?
If one says that these afflictions that arise from such seeds are innate, then it becomes an innate affliction arising from an intellectually acquired affliction.
[Hence, one has to say that, intellectually acquired afflictions together with its seeds, that are intellectually acquired attachment, anger, arrogance, and so forth together with its seeds, are afflictions that are induced by intellectually acquired ignorance.] <small>INSTITUTE OF BUDDHIST DIALECTICS [IBD] Advanced Studies in Buddhist Philosophy: 2013Spring-HC/20130410H06</small>
Innate afflictive obscurations:
There are afflictions that are innate that arise naturally. Such innate afflictions are afflictions which are path of meditation abandonments. Hence, such afflictions cannot be abandoned by the path of seeing.
The seeds deposited by such innate afflictions are also path of meditation abandonments.
Afflictions such as anger and attachment that arise due to the force of such seeds deposited by the innate apprehension of true existence are also afflictions that are path of meditation abandonments.
The intellectually acquired afflictions are abandoned by the path of seeing, whereas the innate afflictions cannot be abandoned by the path of seeing, but only through meditating on the path of meditation.
Hence, the path of meditation abandonments are more difficult to abandon than the path of seeing abandonments. This means that, the path of seeing abandonments are easier to abandon than the path of meditation abandonments.
As for knowledge obscurations, these are not classified in the same manner as the afflictive obscurations in that, one would not posit “knowledge obscuration which are path of seeing abandonments and knowledge obscurations which are path of meditation abandonments” [as a group].
This is because, according to the Consequence Middle Way School, knowledge obscurations can only be abandoned through the power of the path of meditation [alone].
The process of abandoning the afflictive obscurations occurs [from the first ground] all the way up to [but before] the achievement of the eight ground. Before that, the process of abandoning the knowledge obscuration does not start.
Hence, such a process only takes place on the three pure grounds starting from the eighth, ninth and then tenth ground.

The long and difficult process of eliminating the afflictions:

From this, one can see that, the process of abandoning the afflictions is not easy. Considering starting from the paths of accumulation and preparation, what the bodhisattva can do is to reduce the afflictions and weaken them only.

When the bodhisattva initially achieves the path of seeing, it is only then that he is able to overcome the intellectually acquired afflictions. The process of abandoning the innate afflictions has not even started.

This only starts when he enters into the path of meditation. Even then, the process of abandoning the innate afflictions goes all the way up to the eighth ground. It is only when the eighth ground is achieved, that ignorance is completely overcome.

It is only after then, does the work of abandoning the knowledge obscurations start.

On the path of accumulation, the bodhisattva engages and strives in the vast accumulation of merit and the purification of negativities and obscurations, with the purpose of abandoning the obscurations.

It is due to the force of his accumulation of merit and purification [of obscurations that], the bodhisattva is able to work quite a lot on their afflictions and achieve something.

On the path of preparation, the bodhisattva does have the realization of emptiness. But such a realization is via a generic image. He does not realize emptiness directly yet.

What constitutes the wisdom of meditative equipoise of the path of seeing:

It is only when he achieves the path of seeing, realizing the suchness existing on the four noble truths that, he is able to realize emptiness directly. This is when he sees emptiness directly for the first time. Hence, it is called the path of seeing the truth of emptiness directly.

When the bodhisattva initially achieves the path of seeing, he realizes the suchness of the four noble truths. At that time, during his meditative equipoise, even the four noble truths do not appear. What he sees is just the suchness of the four noble truths. What appears is just the vacuity, the absence of the object of negation.

The [wisdom of meditative equipoise of the] path of seeing consists of the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing and the path of release of the path of seeing. In the [wisdom of meditative equipoise] of the path of seeing, there is an explanation on the eight forbearances and eight knowledges.

When the bodhisattva achieves the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, he achieves the forbearance of Dharma where, for example, he realizes the suchness of true suffering. Likewise, he realizes the suchness of true origin, true cessation and true path. Such realizations are called the forbearance of Dharma.

From the perspective of the Consequence Middle Way School, there are these four forbearances of Dharma, so called with respect to realizing the suchness of the four noble truths.

The *suchness* of this wisdom that realizes the suchness of these four noble truths is called the subsequent forbearance.

Hence, these are the eight forbearances. These are nominally different but one entity/ essence [one nature], being one entity [with suchness] but [having] different isolates.

The eight forbearances are essentially the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, whereas the eight knowledges are the path of release of the path of seeing.

Student: How are the manifest attachment and bewilderment that motivate the accumulation of invariable karma different from the strong manifest forms of the attachment and bewilderment that motivate the accumulation of karma for rebirth in the desire realm?

Khenrinpoche: Out of the nine defilements, the first three are dormant desire, anger and [bewilderment]. The manifest attachment and [bewilderment] can be included in the category of dormant attachment and [bewilderment]. This is because, [such afflictions] can motivate the accumulation of [invariable] karma, that is all. This is not the same as saying that, dormant attachment is the same as manifest attachment.

The fourth defilement is the strong manifestation of the three poisons. These are not listed separately but as one category. Essentially, these are the strong manifestation of the three poisons that lead to the accumulation of projecting karma for birth in the desire realm.

Student: Can the attachment to pleasure arising from the meditation of ordinary beings lead to the accumulation of [invariable] karma [to be born in the form and formless realms]?

Khenrinpoche: It is difficult to accumulate the karma to be born in the higher realms of the form and formless realms. One must have achieved one of the concentrations or access to one of those concentrations.

To accumulate [invariable] karma, one needs a very good concentration. This means a minimum [attainment] of calm abiding.

The Sixteen Moments of Forbearance and Knowledge of the Path of Seeing:

The afflictive obscurations which are path of seeing abandonments, the eight forbearances and knowledges [that are related to the four noble truths] were shown.
From the perspective of seeing the suchness of the four noble truths, these are the four [Dharma] forbearances [directly realizing the emptiness] of true suffering, true origin, true cessation and true path.
From the perspective of seeing the <i>suchness of the wisdom</i> realizing the suchness of the four noble truths, there are the four subsequent-forbearances.
Hence, altogether there are these eight forbearances that are the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing. These eight are nominally different but in essence one, meaning one entity different isolates.
The uninterrupted path of the path of seeing is the direct antidote to the afflictions as well as its seeds which are path of seeing abandonments.
In the perspective of the wisdom of the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, there are no afflictions which are path of seeing abandonments.
Due to the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing being a very powerful direct antidote to the afflictions which are path of seeing abandonments, even though they are not abandoned yet, there is no opportunity for such afflictions to arise.
With respect to someone who has initially actualized the path of seeing, [at the end of the] the eight forbearances of the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, in that same meditative equipoise, he achieves the path of release of the path of seeing. He simultaneously achieves the eight knowledges, the four [Dharma-]knowledges and four subsequent-knowledges.
This is similar to the eight forbearances. From the perspective of realizing the object of the suchness of the four noble truths, there are the four knowledges. From the perspective of seeing the suchness of the subject realizing the suchness of the four noble truths, then there are the four subsequent-knowledges.
Hence, there are the [eight] forbearances which are the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, as well as the [eight] knowledges which are the path of release of the path of seeing. The latter is achieved after the intellectually acquired afflictions are abandoned.
These eight forbearances and eight knowledges are collectively called the <i>Sixteen Moments of Forbearance and Knowledge</i> .
According to the Consequence Middle Way School, the eight forbearances are achieved simultaneously, [after which,] the eight knowledges are also achieved simultaneously.

Explaining the Eighth and Ninth defilements: Defilements that are abandoned by the impure grounds and defilements that are dependent on the pure grounds:

Verses 132 and 133 essentially summarizes the nine defilements:	
<p><i>132 Are indicated by [the nine] examples Of the covering of a lotus and so forth, But the divisions of coverings of afflictive emotions Are beyond the limits of number.</i></p>	<p><i>133 These nine defilements—desire and so forth— Are briefly indicated respectively By the nine examples Of the covering of a lotus and so forth.</i></p>

Persons who possess such defilements:

*134 [By way of possessing] impurity [mainly] through four, one,
Two, and two of these defilements respectively
Childish [common beings], Foe Destroyers,
Learners [on the four paths], and [impure and pure] intelligent [Bodhisattvas are obstructed from direct perception of the
element of a Superior's qualities in them].*

The first three defilements are dormant anger, attachment and bewilderment. The fourth is the strong manifestation of these three. These first four defilements are possessed by ordinary beings who have not entered any path.

The fifth defilement, levels of predisposition of ignorance, are possessed by the Hearer and Solitary Realizer foe destroyers.

The path of seeing and path of meditation abandonments are found in the continua of learners, here including ordinary beings who have entered a path, as well as Hinayana learner superiors.

The word learner is not used for ordinary beings who have not entered a path. It is used for beings who have entered a path. This would also include ordinary beings who have entered a path.

The defilements in their mental continua are path of seeing and path of meditation abandonments.

The intelligent ones are the bodhisattvas. The defilements found in their mental continua are the defilements of the seven impure grounds and the defilements that are dependent on the three pure grounds.

Verses 135 to 143 – Relating the examples of the defilements to the meaning of the defilements:

Verses 135 to 138 explain the first four defilements, the three dormant poisons and the strong manifestations of these three:

Verse 135 – Desire likened to lotus:

*135 Just as a lotus born from mud
Pleases the mind when it is [newly] present,
But later [when old] does not please,
So [when the latencies of] desire [become manifest attachment through improper mental application, one is] happy [but
when it ceases one is unhappy, due to which it is like the pleasure of seeing a lotus].*

Verse 136 – Anger likened to bees:

*136 Just as bees, having become greatly disturbed,
Sting [and thereby generate pain],
So [manifest anger] is generated [from the latencies of hatred]
Whereby [pangs of] suffering are generated in [one's own and others'] hearts.*

When bees are disturbed, they will attack [the source of disturbance, like people]. When they attack with their stings, they themselves would die after they have stung someone. Hence, they cause others and themselves to lose their lives. Likewise, anger destroys others and oneself.

Verse 137 – Bewilderment likened to husk:

*137 Just as a kernel of rice and so forth is [not seen
When] obstructed on the outside by the husk,
So perception of the factuality of the essence [of a One Gone To Bliss]
Is obstructed by the egg-shell of ignorance.*

The kernel of rice is obstructed from one's view due to the covering of its husk. Likewise, one's apprehension of true existence, one's ignorance, obscures one's tathagata essence. Hence, one is obscured from realizing one's tathagata essence.

Verse 138 – Strong manifestation of the three poisons likened to filth:

*138 Just as filth is disagreeable,
So, because of being a cause of [many faults such as] reliance [on the attributes of the Desire Realm
Through] the desires of those having attachment [to the Desire Realm],
That which is aroused [by the three poisons is a source of renunciation] like a pile of filth.*

As desire is mentioned here, this primarily refers to sexual desire. Such an attachment is dependent on semen and blood, here likened to filth which are undesirable. Likewise, the strong arousal of the three mental poisons are likened to filthy unclean substances, for they obscure the achievement of the path of seeing. How does one relate the example to the meaning?

Filth here refers to semen and blood which one needs to depend on for sexual desire. Likewise, by depending on the strong arousal of the three mental poison, one is blocked from achieving the path of seeing, the arya's path. If one cannot achieve this path, one will continue to accumulate karma to be born in cyclic existence.

Verse 139 – Levels of predisposition of ignorance likened to earth:
<i>139 Just as [a great treasure of] wealth is obstructed [by the earth] And therefore [the poor] do not know of it and do not obtain the treasure [as an object of use], So for beings [bereft of the wealth of good qualities] the self-arisen [exalted wisdom of inexhaustible] good qualities Is obstructed by the level of the latencies of ignorance [and thereby is not seen].</i>
Just as one would not be able to see a treasure buried underground due to it being covered by the earth, likewise, due to the levels of predisposition of ignorance, one is unable to uncover one's self-arisen tathagata essence, one is unable to separate one's defilements from one's tathagata essence.
There is a time and opportunity to see the tathagata essence that is completely freed from all the defilements. However, what obstructs one from seeing that are the levels of predisposition of ignorance.
Verses 140 – Path of seeing abandonments likened to seed coat:
<i>140 Just as through the gradual growing of the sprout [of a tree] and so forth The covering over the seed is gradually rent asunder, So through [gradually generating the exalted wisdom] seeing suchness [The afflictive emotions] which are to be abandoned by the path of seeing are overcome.</i>
Just as there is the seed that has the capacity to gradually transform into a sprout, as that is happening, the covering of the seed is torn apart and disappears. Likewise, through initially seeing emptiness directly, one enters into the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, with that realization, one breaks through and enters into the path of release of the path of seeing.
The intellectually acquired afflictions are hence abandoned.
Verse 141 – Path of meditation abandonments likened to tattered garments:
<i>141 From relation with the path of Superiors [directly seeing the reality of the four truths], The objects of abandonment by the exalted wisdom of the path of meditation Of those who have overcome the essence [or main of the objects of abandonment— the false view of] the transitory collection [as inherently existent I and mine and so forth]— Are indicated as like tattered garments [in that they lack a core of hardness].</i>
When one achieves the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing, this acts as the direct antidote to the intellectually acquired afflictions which are the intellectually acquired view of the transitory collections. These are abandoned by the path of seeing.
For the Hinayana, the defilements/ objects of abandonment that are left behind to be abandoned are likened to tattered garments. Such defilements are to be abandoned by the <i>Vajra-like meditative stabilization</i> of the path of meditation.
Verse 142 – Defilements dependent on the seven impure grounds [likened to a womb covering a future monarch]:
<i>142 The defilements dependent upon the seven [impure] grounds Are similar to the defilement of the covering of a womb [since what one has is not seen or since those defiled states of mind involve exertion]. Like being freed from the covering of the womb, [the arising of] the exalted non-conceptual wisdom [without exertion on the pure grounds] Is like [the birth of] a developed [universal monarch, in that such does not depend upon exertion].</i>
To achieve the non-conceptual wisdom of the eighth ground, one must firstly be freed from the defilements related to the seven [impure] grounds. It is only when one is freed from these defilements would one be able to achieve the exalted non-conceptual wisdom of the eighth ground, just like the birth of a universal monarch [emerging] from a womb.
Verse 143 – Defilements related to the three pure grounds likened to a mold with which to cast a Buddha statue:
<i>143 The defilements related with the three [pure grounds] Are to be known as like an earth [mold] that covers [a golden statue]. They are overcome by the vajra-like meditative stabilization Of those great beings [at the end of the continuum of being a sentient being].</i>
If one is making a [Buddha] statue with gold, after it has formed, to reveal that, one needs to break open the mold to free it. Likewise, one has to overcome the defilements related to the three pure grounds by the uninterrupted path at the end of the continuum of [being] a sentient being.
Verse 144 L2 – Summary of [the examples being related to the meaning of the obscuring factors]:
<i>144 In that way, the [nine] defilements—desire and so forth— Are similar to the examples—lotus and so forth.</i>
Verses up to here have been explaining about the [obscuring factors with examples]. One needs to know what these are and when they exist. Next, the [obscured factors] will be explained.

Relating the four maras to the defilements:

When one has some ideas of these nine defilements/ obscuring factors, then when one is shown the four maras, one will better understand the explanations given.
Buddhahood means being victorious over the four maras. Buddhas are the victorious ones as they have gain victory over them.
The first of the four maras is: 1) The mara of the aggregates. This can be explained in its coarse or subtle aspects.
<i>1a)</i> The coarse mara of the aggregates refer to the contaminated appropriated aggregates which arise from karma and afflictions. <i>1b)</i> The subtle mara of the aggregates refer to the mental body which arises from the levels of predisposition of ignorance and uncontaminated karma.
2) The mara of the afflictions: It was mentioned earlier that, the afflictions are the obscurations that hinder the achievement of liberation. This mara can also be explained in terms of its coarse and subtle aspects.
<i>2a)</i> The coarse mara of the afflictions refer to the manifest afflictions . Examples are the six root and twenty secondary afflictions. <i>2b)</i> The subtle mara of the afflictions refer to the seeds placed by such afflictions .
3) The mara of the Lord of Death. <i>3a) Coarse mara</i> of the Lord of Death refers to the uncontrollable death that occurs due to karma and afflictions. <i>3b) Subtle mara</i> of the Lord of Death refers to the inconceivable transference of death which occurs with a mental body. Hence, even though those who have achieved the mental body are not freed from death [per se].
They still have to undergo such inconceivable transference of death, which is the subtle mara of the Lord of death.
4) The mara of Devaputra [son of god]. <i>4b)</i> [The subtle mara of Devaputra]: [Perhaps] some texts refer this to the hindrances that prevent one from being freed from the first three maras.
<i>4a)</i> The coarse mara of Devaputra refers to the [son of Krishna, called Kama], who shoots the five types of arrows. When one is hit by these, one will develop either anger, attachment, ignorance, pride or jealousy.
Depending on which arrows one gets hit by, one's practice of virtue will be interrupted. Hence, when one gets hit by these arrows, this becomes the condition for the manifest afflictions to arise, which interrupt one's practice of virtue.
Lama Tsongkhapa's <i>Golden Rosary of Good Explanation</i> mentions that, once one achieves the path of seeing, one is liberated/ freed from this mara of Devaputra. Perhaps this means that, when one achieves the path of seeing, one will be freed from the coarse mara of Devaputra.
From the perspective of the Mahayana, in terms of sharp faculties trainee, a bodhisattva on the path of preparation who has achieved the signs of irreversibility cannot be overcome by such a mara. Such a sharp-facultied bodhisattva achieves this freedom from the Devaputra mara on the Mahayana path of preparation.
In the notes taken by <i>Gyalsab Je</i> , called <i>Ornament of Essential Explanation</i> , which comments on the <i>Abhisamayālaṅkāra (The Ornament of Clear Realization)</i> , he states that, so long as one is still possessing the first three maras, one will not be freed from the mara of Devaputra. This means that, one will be freed from that only when one achieves enlightenment.
From this, one understands what the four maras are and what it means to be victorious over them.

Student 1: What is the difference between contaminated and uncontaminated karma?

Khenrinpoche: Can someone answer? If anyone knows the answer, please comment and say something.

Student 2: The karma of an arhat is uncontaminated.

Khenrinpoche: What you said is true, but you didn't answer her question. [One needs] to think about this. If someone asks this question, how are you going to answer?

Student 3: It is uncontaminated in the sense that, arhats and so forth, do not have afflictions in their minds, even though they still have appearances of true existence which result in them accumulating uncontaminated karma.

Khenrinpoche: Something [about] what you say is correct. Then another question for you, how does karma that is accumulated becomes uncontaminated when an individual still has knowledge obscurations? The answer is not difficult.

Student 3: Even though he still has knowledge obscurations, the karma he produces does not cause him to circle in cyclic existence, perhaps there is no grasping. Since the wheel is broken, then whatever karma is produced doesn't cause him to circle in cyclic existence.

Khenrinpoche: It is actually not difficult. To answer that question, essentially you have to know what is contaminated and uncontaminated phenomenon. There are a few enumeration of contaminated phenomena, but it primarily refers to the afflictions. Hence, the karma that is motivated by these afflictions is contaminated.

Uncontaminated karma is not motivated by ignorance. Rather, it is accumulated in dependence upon subtle exertion/ subtle effort, which occurs due to the levels of predisposition of ignorance.

Arhats and the bodhisattvas on the eighth ground onwards do accumulate karma, which is uncontaminated karma. The levels of predisposition of ignorance are the conditions for subtle effort/ subtle exertion. In dependence upon these [subtle effort], these arhats and the pure grounds bodhisattvas accumulate uncontaminated karma.

This is the same [logic when examining] why the contaminated aggregates are contaminated. This is because, one's contaminated aggregates arise out of karma and afflictions, primarily the afflictions. Since [these aggregates] are the product of the afflictions, one's aggregates are contaminated.

The mara of the aggregates was mentioned [in the previous lesson]. The coarse mara of the aggregates refer to the contaminated aggregates that arise as a result of karma and afflictions. The subtle mara of the aggregates refer to the mental body which arises due to the levels of predisposition of ignorance and subtle [effort].

Since the mental body arises from uncontaminated karma, perhaps one can call the mental body uncontaminated aggregate/ uncontaminated body.

If one divides the mara of the aggregates into coarse and subtle, then since the arhats and the pure ground bodhisattvas still have the uncontaminated aggregates/ body, hence, they are not liberated from the mara of the aggregates yet.

With regards to the mara of the Lord of death, the coarse mara of the Lord of death is the death that happens without choice that occurs due to karma and afflictions as it is caused by karma and afflictions. Hence, perhaps such a death can also be called a contaminated death.

Although the arhats and the pure ground bodhisattvas have freed themselves from the coarse mara of death, but since they still have a mental body, they still experience the inconceivable transference of death. Could that perhaps be called an uncontaminated death?

Although I have not seen terms being expressed as contaminated and uncontaminated death, but if one thinks about contaminated and uncontaminated karma, the meaning of contaminated in such a context, then I wonder if it is alright to label the death that occurs due to karma and afflictions as contaminated death and so forth.

As for the mara of the afflictions, the coarse mara of the afflictions refer to the manifest afflictions, whereas the subtle mara of the afflictions refer to the seeds that are placed by the afflictions. As arhat/ foe destroyer is so called because, he has conquered/ destroyed the foe of the afflictions as well as their seeds.

The mara of Devaputra is commonly referred to this being called *Garub Wangchub*, who disrupts the practice of virtue of others.

Lama Tsongkhapa wrote in his *Rosary of Good Explanation*, a commentary on the *Abhisamayālaṅkāra (The Ornament of Clear Realization)* that, when one achieves the path of seeing, one overcomes the mara of Devaputra. This is because, when one achieves the path of seeing, then all the coarse afflictions, like doubts about the Three Jewels, as well as the intellectually acquired afflictions are eliminated.

When one achieves the path of seeing, then the intellectually acquired afflictions cannot arise. This person also becomes a Sangha Jewel. One of the reason is that, when he achieves the path of seeing, he has eliminated the doubts about the object of refuge.

In short, the essence behind contaminated and uncontaminated karma is this:

A karma that is contaminated by the afflictions is contaminated karma, the karma that is not accompanied by the contaminants of the afflictions is uncontaminated karma.

Khenrinpoche: To accumulate karma, exertion is needed, whether it is a coarse exertion or a subtle exertion. Hence, does Buddha have karma? If one looks at it this way, then it would not seem like it.

Khenrinpoche: Does Buddha have karma or not? No? Are you sure? Isn't there virtuous karma in the continuum of Buddha? What do you think? If Buddha offers you a piece of chocolate, does Buddha create [virtuous] karma or not?

Student 3: Buddha does not have conceptual thoughts, so there's no exertion, so there's no karma.

Khenrinpoche: In that way of saying, if Buddha gives you a piece of chocolate, He doesn't create good karma, are you saying that?

Student 3: I don't think he creates virtuous karma. Maybe there's a special category for him!

Khenrinpoche: Whatever you call it, is it virtue or not? **Student:** I would think it is.

Khenrinpoche: Then he accumulates virtue! [Since that is the case], then this virtue must issue forth a result!

When one says to *accumulate merit*, this very expression implies exertion, whether it is a coarse or a subtle exertion. Hence, one cannot say that the Buddha accumulates karma.

As Buddha has already [completed all accumulations], then whatever that needs to be accumulated will have been accumulated. Hence, his enlightened activities are spontaneous, effortless [and continuous]. Therefore, there is no need for him to accumulate [karma]. One probably can say that, he does not accumulate karma. Since to accumulate karma one needs exertion, hence, Buddha does not accumulate karma.

Student 4: **What does exertion really mean?**

Khenrinpoche: Essentially, it is motivation. Whatever one exerts oneself to do something physically, [verbally, or] mentally, there must be a force that [drives] that action.

Student 4: Does exertion/ motivation refer to the mental factor of intention?

Khenrinpoche: Are you saying that, motivation and intention are the same. **Student 4:** Yes.

Khenrinpoche: Is intention not karma? **Student 4:** Yes. **Khenrinpoche:** So is karma and motivation the same?

Student 4: Isn't it the case that, before one accumulates karma, there is intention?

Khenrinpoche: Before action, there must be a thought, called exertion, where one is motivated/ driven to do something. One then does it. The mental factor of intention is that which moves the mind towards an object. One's mind only moves towards an object after one has the motivation, which [drives] one to have the intention to move one's mind towards the object.

Student 1: Does emptiness necessarily have to be realized in meditative equipoise?

Khenrinpoche: It was never taught that emptiness has to be realized in meditative equipoise. In general, there are the three kinds of wisdom, wisdoms arisen from hearing, reflecting and meditating. These three wisdoms can be developed with respect to any phenomena. Hence, with respect to realizing emptiness for the very first time, it is not realized directly in meditative equipoise. Rather, it is realized by an inferential cognizer. This is a wisdom arisen from reflection. The point is, the first realization of emptiness is not necessarily via meditative equipoise.

With regards to the object emptiness, it is first realized by an inferential cognition, which is a wisdom arisen from reflection. Such a wisdom then transforms in entity into a wisdom arisen from meditation. This occurs when one enters the path of preparation. On this path, this is a lot of meditation/ familiarization on emptiness. [Such a path] is a wisdom arisen from meditation. When one sees emptiness directly for the first time, then such a realization is within meditative equipoise. Hence, the very first time one realizes the true path directly is when one enters the uninterrupted path of the path of seeing. From this [uninterrupted path], one achieves the path of release of the path of seeing. During this meditative equipoise on the path of seeing, when one realizes emptiness for the very first time, conventional phenomena do not appear. When one achieves the path of seeing for the first time, one becomes the person, the Sangha Jewel. Such a person [is also] a superior.

Khenrinpoche: If it is a Dharma Jewel, does it necessarily possess the eight qualities of the Dharma Jewel? If one is a Sangha Jewel, does one necessarily possess the eight qualities of the Sangha Jewel?

Khenrinpoche: There are always things to think about. One usually say Dharma Jewel, Sangha Jewel. But one should do more than that then just saying [the words]. The text is challenging. If you are asked these questions, to [be able to] answer them, one firstly have to know what the eight qualities are, it is only then would one be able to answer these questions.

The eight qualities of the Sangha Jewel can essentially be condensed into two: the qualities of freedom and knowledge. There are also inner qualities and so forth. Therefore, there are in fact many things to think about, like when asked about [these two questions].

[One can also think about the] reasons why the Sangha Jewel is a befitting object of refuge. They can act as one's object of refuge because they possess those qualities. If one knows their qualities, then one would also know why they are befitting objects of refuge. This can [definitely] help [increase] one's faith as well.

Student 1: I phrased my question incorrectly. I was referring to the direct realization of emptiness. Does the direct realization of emptiness necessarily have to occur within meditative equipoise? Based on what I hear in this [reply] I gather that [such a realization] can only occur in a state of meditative equipoise.

Khenrinpoche: When you ask this, you must have some reason behind, [what is it]?

Student 1: When Buddha is in meditative equipoise, it does not mean one moment he is Buddha, then the next moment when he wakes up he is no longer Buddha.

Khenrinpoche: Do you mean to say after Buddha 'wakes up' he is no longer Buddha? **Student 1:** Yes.

Khenrinpoche: Why [would he] not [remain as] Buddha? You think that Buddha [should never] 'wake up' from meditation, If he does he becomes non-buddha. That's why you think he [should not] wake up from meditation. So, do you think that, when Buddha 'wakes up', he will become non-buddha?

Student 1: Yes. I think this is related to the realization of the ultimate truth. Seeing conventional truth is no big deal. Even we can see conventional truth. Just seeing phenomena in a conventional sense is not a big deal. The big deal is being able to see the ultimate truth.

Khenrinpoche: Realizing conventional truth *is* a big deal! It is not easy to realize what a conventional truth is. Please explain what is it to realize a conventional truth.

Student 1: Now I recall that Khenrinpoche taught that, first one realizes the ultimate truth, only then does one realize the conventional truth. But I cannot recall the details. Perhaps I [should] use the term seeing conventional phenomena. Seeing conventional phenomena is not so difficult, but realizing the ultimate truth is a big deal.

Ven Gyurme: What is meditative equipoise. Does one need to close the eyes? **Student 1:** No, it is a powerful state of mind. It is obviously a concentration. **Ven Gyurme:** Then post-meditative [equipoise] is not a concentration and is not powerful enough? **Student 1:** In the paths and grounds, when one 'comes out' of [meditative equipoise], then conventional phenomena appears. Of course, the mind does not grasp at true existence, unlike ordinary beings who believe phenomena exist truly.

Khenrinpoche: *To answer your question I need to [check] back what you are really asking. So, I need to clarify your question. If it is a wisdom that directly realizes emptiness, is it necessarily a wisdom of meditative equipoise?*

Student 1: Yes.

Khenrinpoche: Why? This is not a question for you like punishing [you]. It is not [like] that, but [it is meant as a question] equally for everyone. You [all] must think about the reason.

Student 1: Because the direct realization of emptiness cannot be achieved outside of meditative equipoise. That is why when one becomes a Buddha, he never arises from a state of meditative equipoise!

Khenrinpoche: What about the rest? What do you think? Yes or no? Since you all have some ideas of traversing the paths and grounds like the uninterrupted path, path of release, wisdom of subsequent attainment and so forth, then *if it is a wisdom that directly realizes emptiness, is it necessarily a wisdom of meditative equipoise?*

Khenrinpoche: If it is a wisdom of meditative equipoise, it is necessarily either the uninterrupted path or the path of release. Isn't it? **Student 1:** Yes.

Khenrinpoche: Let's say [the bodhisattva] realizes emptiness directly for the first time in an uninterrupted path. Then he moves onto the path of release. Then he 'wakes up' from that meditative equipoise and enters into the post-meditative equipoise. [During this post-meditative equipoise], in his mental continuum, does the wisdom directly perceiving emptiness exist or not?

Student 1: It exists but is not manifest. **Khenrinpoche:** We didn't ask whether it is manifest or not. So [does it exist]?

Student 1: [It does], because obviously he must remember he has the direct realization.

Khenrinpoche: Is that an uninterrupted path or the path of release, in other words, is that a wisdom of meditative equipoise?

Student 1: It is not [a wisdom of meditative equipoise].

Khenrinpoche: [It follows from your earlier assertion that] it is. Because it is a wisdom directly perceiving emptiness. This is based on what you said, that if it is a wisdom directly perceiving emptiness, it is necessarily a meditative equipoise. Don't forget what you've said earlier! Your very basic commitment is that, you said *if it is a wisdom that directly realizes emptiness, it is necessarily a wisdom of meditative equipoise.*

Khenrinpoche: On the path of accumulation, the person seeks to delineate emptiness through hearing and reflecting. When he achieves the wisdom arisen from meditation with regards to emptiness, he enters the path of preparation. On this path, the realization of emptiness occurs via generic image. When he realizes emptiness directly for the very first time, perhaps one can say that this can only happen within a meditative equipoise. If one is realizing emptiness for the very first time, such a realization is necessarily a wisdom of meditative equipoise. Otherwise, it is not necessarily so. For example, in the continuum of a person in post-meditative equipoise, someone who has already realized emptiness directly, this is the wisdom directly realizing emptiness.

Khenrinpoche: With respect to meditative equipoise, does it have to be in a meditation posture, sitting down for some period of time? No? So you can walk around and go shopping? [The meditator] only sees emptiness, he doesn't see any conventional truth! If he doesn't see the road, then how can he walk? Do you think he can see the road?

Khenrinpoche: The material is indeed challenging. But if you want to study these treatises, then you really have got to think about [the subject]. Otherwise, you are not going to understand anything. The [knowledge] does not stay in the mind. You have to connect [the subjects] that were mentioned in the earlier part of the text with those mentioned in the later part, drawing relationships and so forth. It is only then that, the material stays in the mind and you can understand something. Otherwise, if you just [sit] and listen to the first part, then as you move onto the next area then you forgot what you've heard earlier, if that happens, then it will be extremely difficult to learn or understand anything.

Khenrinpoche: I am only asking you questions if I think there are some benefits. I think sometimes if I were to merely speak from my side all the time, I wonder if there is any great benefit. Perhaps if sometimes we can have discussions like this, there could be more benefit. But in the first place, for you to have questions, you must have thought about the [subject] and have some doubts, wondering why this is the case and so forth. We shouldn't be asking questions just because it is question time and we [have to] ask question. That is not the point.

Khenrinpoche: Just look at the *Heart of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra*, which is said to be a teaching by the Buddha. But if you were to look at it, most of the time it is just a question and answer between *Avalokiteshvara* and *Shariputra*! Buddha didn't really contribute much, other than saying "well said well said!" So next time, the teacher should just do that. You people ask question, I just listen. Then if there is a good answer I just say "well said well said!"

Student 5: Does the seed of affliction multiplies the same way as karmic propensity? Hence, is the seed of the affliction which is caused by the affliction itself, a disintegratedness of the affliction itself?

Khenrinpoche: If you remember the discussion on the Consequence Middle Way School's explanation of disintegratedness of karma. It is not that they do not assert seeds and predispositions. Rather, one does not have to explain *a karma issuing its effects in the future* using the explanation of the *ripening of the seed of karma*. This is explained through the disintegratedness of karma [instead]. Perhaps the very concept of seed and predisposition that is accepted by [the other] buddhist tenets is that, they are always asserted from the perspective of [phenomena] having an intrinsic existence, that there is something right there. That karma is [inherently] created, hence, for it to [issue forth] its effects there must be something right there from the cause having the [inherent] ability to give rise to an [inherent] result. The Consequence Middle Way School is saying that [such assertions are unnecessary]. In fact, [phenomena] do not exist inherently. There is nothing that is [findable], if one is looking for a real cause/ karma.

The Consequence Middle Way School explains an action that issues forth an effect in the future, does so through the disintegratedness of karma:

- 1) When one finishes accumulating a karma,
- 2) Such a karma ceases,
- 3) [Such a cessation/ disintegration] produces a disintegratedness.
- 4) Such a disintegratedness produces the next moment of disintegratedness and so forth,
- 5) Until the time when it ripens as an effect.

This is how they connect a cause to its effect.

With regards to whether a seed of the affliction is the disintegratedness of the affliction, perhaps there is nothing wrong to term it that way.

One of the four general presentation of karma is that, karma [magnifies]. How does one explain that? When a karma ceases, it does not last for more than a moment, then the disintegratedness of karma [is produced]. If that is the case, then how does karma increase? The disintegratedness of karma also last for one moment as well, which then produces another moment, which also lasts for a moment and so forth. So then, how does the effects of karma increase?

When a karma is done and/ or accumulated, it ceases and a seed/ potential of it is left on the mind. The capacity of the potential to issue forth its results can increase. This is something to think about. It is said that, karma increases and it does. But it just cannot increase without any reasons.

Perhaps it is this: Ordinary beings' minds are filled with the three mental poisons. Hence, there are so many conditions in the mind to nourish and increase the capacity/ power of the karmic seeds.

With respect to Buddha lineage, there are the naturally abiding lineage and the developmental lineage. The former is naturally present in all sentient beings. If one is a sentient being, one necessarily has that, the emptiness of true existence of the mind. The developmental lineage refers to the time in which, the potential is nourished, increased and developed through hearing, reflecting and meditating. For the lineage to awaken, many conditions like hearing, reflection, devotion, compassion and so forth, must gather. It is insufficient to [merely possess] the naturally abiding lineage. The developmental lineage must also exist. For the latter to awaken and develop, many conditions must therefore gather for its awakening.

As for the seeds of the afflictions, one can say that the power/ strength of the seeds of the afflictions can increase with the afflictions and other factors as conditions. I am not sure whether the capacity of the seed of affliction/ seed of karma will increase or decrease from its own side on its own without any other conditions. I am not sure if that is what is meant [in the teachings]. But:

***If the conditions for the strengthening of the seeds of the afflictions are there,
like the afflictions themselves, then the power of the seed of the afflictions will increase.
But if one were to apply the force of the antidote, then the stronger the antidote,
the weaker will be the capacity of those seeds [to issue forth its effects].***

Hence, from this, one can [explain] about the seeds of the afflictions increasing in strength.

Student 5: What is the difference between an intellectually acquired desire and an innate desire, is there a common locus?

Khenrinpoche: In the classification of the path of seeing abandonments explained earlier, the intellectually acquired afflictions and the seeds established by these intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence were shown. It is quite straight forward that, the path of seeing abandonments are the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence and the seeds established by it. If we say that, the afflictions induced by the seeds that are established by the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence are all path of seeing abandonments, would you agree?

I wonder if there are any innate forms of afflictions that are induced by the seeds established by the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence. The straightforward reason is this:

First, you have the intellectually acquired afflictions which are the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence. The seeds that are established by that affliction must be a seed that is established by an intellectually acquired affliction, isn't it. Hence, since it is a seed that is established by an intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence, then the arising of the afflictions that are induced by these seeds must be intellectually acquired afflictions [as well].

You can turn it around and ask the question this way: There are also the seeds established by the innate afflictions. [Then] is it possible for there to be intellectually acquired afflictions to arise from the seeds that are established by these innate apprehension of true existence?

Student 5: The seed [established by] an intellectually acquired affliction will continue from life to life. [When it does arise,] it will arise based on other conditions, it does not need to be intellectually acquired every lifetime, isn't it?

Khenrinpoche: [Such a seed] will continue for lifetimes, but for that to arise, that person must still meet with some conditions, for that intellectually acquired affliction to arise.

Student 1: Do innate afflictions have a first moment? Can intellectually acquired afflictions transform into an innate affliction? Are innate afflictions learnt or are they intellectually acquired?

Khenrinpoche: When the tathagata essence is taught, it is said that, it is beginningless, there is no beginning [to it]. If the tathagata essence has no beginning. Then one would have to say that, sentient beings have no beginning. One would not be able to point to a moment in time and say that: "This was when a sentient being arose."

When asserting *sentient beings have no beginning*, this is saying that, mind/ consciousness has no beginning. If consciousness has a beginning, then sentient beings would have a beginning. Since consciousness has no beginning, then there is no beginning of sentient beings. If one posits a first moment of consciousness, then there will be logical fallacies.

One has to think of consciousness as a continuum. Hence, a stream of consciousness has no beginning. This is because, if one posits a beginning, then there will be a lot of logical fallacies which are untenable.

As mentioned in the texts [composed] by *Dignaga* and *Dharmakirti*, it is said very clearly that, mind/ consciousness cannot arise from a prior moment of matter. It can only arise either from [a previous moment of] consciousness or [from a] non-associated compositional factor of an imprint that is established by mind.

Due to such reasoning, since a mind can only come from a prior moment of consciousness or from an imprint established by consciousness, hence, one would not be able to posit a first moment of consciousness. Hence, consciousness would have no beginning. If consciousness has no beginning, then there would be no beginning to a sentient being.

Hence, innate afflictions in the continuum of a sentient being would have no beginning as well. For as long as sentient beings existed, the innate afflictions [also exist].

Emotionally, it is difficult to conceive that a sentient being/ a person/ mind or the afflictions have no beginning. But if one thinks about it logically and apply reasoning, if one posits a beginning to a sentient being, innate affliction, a mind and so forth, then one will incur many logical fallacies, which are untenable.

As to whether innate afflictions can arise from the seeds established by an intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence, **I don't think so** but I am not sure...

In the earlier discussion of an intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence and the seeds established by this apprehension, these are classified as path of seeing abandonments. However, what about the afflictions that arise through the force of these seeds established by the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence? Whether such afflictions are path of seeing abandonments or not, is something one needs to think about.

Are such afflictions necessarily path of seeing abandonments or not? Put differently, are there afflictions that arise from the seeds established by the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence that are path of meditation abandonments?

I am not exactly sure if such afflictions that arise through the force of the seeds established by the intellectually acquired apprehension of true existence are necessarily path of seeing abandonments or not.

Student 1: If there is no beginning to the afflictions as it is part of the continuum, but at the same time, the Buddha nature is also part of the continuum, so how can Buddha nature coexist with the afflictions? Do you agree that, when we reach Buddhahood, afflictions don't exist anymore? To have an end, maybe there must have been a beginning.

Khenrinpoche: If we take your position that, in the past we were pure, then somehow became afflicted. [Would that mean that,] we were Buddhas first and then became afflicted?

Student 1: If my position is incorrect and yours is, then it would mean that the two must exist at the same time. How is it consistent that, Buddha nature and affliction coexist, when one means that the other one does not exist?

Student 2: Tathagata essence refers to the emptiness of sentient beings minds. It is possible to have consciousness which apprehends inherent existence, that the appearance of inherent existence appears. The appearance of inherent existence appears, at the same time it is empty. Hence, tathagata essence can exist with the defilements. [For as long as sentient beings existed, which would be beginningless], their minds apprehend inherent existence. Hence, they have a mind with defilements, and [the emptiness of such a mind] is tathagata essence.

Khenrinpoche: That's sounds good. You said that, sentient beings necessarily have appearances of true existence since beginningless lifetimes. There must be a reason for the appearance of true existence. If you assert that there is the appearance of true existence, then you must posit that there is an apprehension of true existence, which must have been there since beginningless lifetimes. As long it is a sentient being, there are definitely appearances of [phenomena] to that sentient being. Whatever appears, necessarily appears as truly existent.

For sentient beings who have not entered the path like oneself, as long as the mind has existed, there are the appearances of true existence, then there is necessarily an apprehension/ grasping of it as truly existent. From this, one can say that, the innate afflictions have always accompanied the mind. Hence, since mind has no beginning, one cannot posit a beginning to the innate afflictions. Hence, innate afflictions have no beginning.

Although the innate afflictions have accompanied the mind, the afflictions have never abided in the nature of the mind.

Khenrinpoche: I think that's the best answer. I cannot think [of a better answer] than that.

V144 L3 to V154 – Nine examples showing the obscured factor:

<p>With regards to the examples [related to the] obscured and its related meaning, in meaning, that which is obscured is the tathagata essence:</p>	
<p>144 Because of having three natures, the basic constituent Is qualitatively similar with [the nine examples of] a Buddha so forth.</p>	
<p><i>Because of having three natures:</i> This is related to V27, where three reasons were given to show that the tathagata essence exists in all sentient beings:</p>	
<p><i>27 Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive, Because suchness is without differentiation, And because a [Buddha] lineage exists, all embodied Are always in possession of a Buddha essence.</i></p>	
<p>This verse establishes that tathagata essence exists in all sentient beings from the perspective of the result, nature and cause.</p>	
<p>The three reasons establishing sentient beings possessing the tathagata essence are these:</p>	
<p>1) <i>Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive:</i> Sentient beings are suitable receptacles to be engaged by the enlightened activities of the Dharmakaya. There is an explanation of what the Dharmakaya is. This will be shown [next].</p>	
<p>2) The suchness is not of a different nature from the Dharmakaya.</p>	
<p>3) Sentient beings possess in them the potential to transform into a Buddha's body.</p>	
<p>145 The [three] natures of this [essence]—the Doctrine Body of self-arisen exalted wisdom, The [unchangeable] suchness, and the lineage [for achieving Buddhahood]— Are to be known [respectively] through the [first] three examples, One [example, gold,] and the [remaining] five [examples].</p>	
<p>There are three examples corresponding to the first nature, Dharmakaya, one to the second, and five to the third.</p>	
<p>The [first] three examples relate to [the first nature,] Dharmakaya, which is the Doctrine Body. This is known to be having two aspects: 1a) Dharmakaya of the realization, and 1b) Dharmakaya of the teaching.</p>	
<p>1b) Dharmakaya of the teaching itself is divided into two: 1b i) Definitive Sutra and 1b ii) Interpretive Sutra.</p>	
<p>1a) Dharmakaya of the realization refers to the wisdom directly realizing emptiness:</p>	
<p>146 The Doctrine Body is to be known as having two aspects— The very undefiled element of [a Superior's] qualities [the actual realizational Doctrine Body that is the object of the exalted wisdom of individual insight], And the teaching, causally concordant with [realizing] that, of the mode Of the profound [emptiness] and the mode of the various [vast conventionalities such as the grounds and paths that are taught in accordance with the interests of trainees—the imputed Doctrine Body, the verbalized doctrine].</p>	
<p>This wisdom directly realizes the element that is undefiled, that which has been separated from the defilements.</p>	
<p>Since Buddha realizes emptiness directly, based on such realizations, He taught according to what He has realized. The subject matter [of what He taught] forms the main body of the definitive sutras.</p>	
<p>Those sutras that teach conventionalities are posited [in context of this text] as interpretive sutras.</p>	
<p>The examples showing the Dharmakaya is shown in V147 to 148:</p>	
<p>147 Since the [realizational Doctrine Body] is beyond the world, An example [capable of illustrating it] is not observed in the world. Therefore [the body of] a One Gone Thus and the basic constituent. Are indicated to be similar.</p>	<p>148 The teaching of the mode of the subtle profundity [of emptiness] Is like the single [sweet and delicious] taste of honeys. The teaching of the mode of the various aspects of [method] Is to be known as like [the various] kernels [of grains dwelling] in the covering of various [husks].</p>
<p>These are the three examples: the Body of the Buddha shows the Dharmakaya of realization, honey [shows the Dharmakaya of definitive sutras] and kernels in a husk [shows the Dharmakaya of interpretive sutras].</p>	
<p>The single taste of honey shows the definitive sutras. Just as honey has that [one] sweet taste, likewise, the subject matter of the definitive sutras, emptiness, its nature is always [being in the] same [taste] as one. It does not change.</p>	
<p>The interpretive sutras has its main subject matter showing the diversity of conventionalities/ phenomena. The examples of kernels of grains dwelling in the husks show the interpretive sutras. What one finds after uncovering the husk is the [kernel].</p>	
<p>Likewise, although there are many kinds of conventionalities taught in the interpretive sutras, but these are all methods that lead one to understand the essence/ heart of the matter of realizing emptiness.</p>	

One first achieves the Dharmakaya of realization, the wisdom truth body. The enlightened activities of such a Dharmakaya then teaches the Dharma to sentient beings, both the definitive and interpretive sutras are revealed and taught.
These are [therefore] the enlightened activities of the wisdom truth body, the condition for the sutras to be taught.
<i>By depending on the meanings of these sutras, sentient beings then put these [meanings] into practice. Hence, this is how the enlightened activities of the Dharmakaya touches and engages sentient beings. The enlightened activities of the Buddha's speech is said to engage any and all sentient beings.</i>
<i>Because a perfect Buddha's body is pervasive:</i> [This states] the enlightened activities of the Dharmakaya engages sentient beings. One then has to think:
1) How does the Dharmakaya engage/ communicate with us?
2) Does it engage all sentient beings?
It is a fact that, from the side of sentient beings, they necessarily have the potential/ capacity to be engaged by the enlightened activities of the Dharmakaya.
V149 Suchness likened to gold – Because suchness is without differentiation:
<i>149 [The suchness which is] the nature [of phenomena] is [always] changeless [such that even though it appears to be related with afflictive emotions, there is no change in its own entity just as gold does not change by falling into filth], And it is [naturally] virtuous [and supreme just as gold is beautiful and valuable, and in another way, it is virtuous in the sense that just as gold is fit to be crafted into adornments, so virtue is generated when suchness is observed], and [the entity of the basic constituent] is pure [just as gold is pure of defilement]. Therefore this suchness is said To be similar to the form of gold.</i>
The way gold is used as the example for suchness is this: the entity of [pure] gold will not change as it does not rust. Hence, gold will always be gold. It can be shaped into different things like ornaments, jewelries and so forth.
Gold illustrates the suchness of the mind, the tathagata essence. In meaning, tathagata essence, suchness of the mind, is by nature pure and will never change into something else. The mind that realizes the suchness of the mind is by nature virtuous.
Next is the [correlation of the examples] with lineage: There are five examples that illustrate the lineage. Of the five, two show the nature/ entity of the lineage, three show the capacity/ potential of the lineage.
V150 – The two illustrations of treasure and fruit tree showing the entity of the lineage:
<i>150 Like a treasure [that naturally remains under the ground] and a fruit tree [that gradually grows with exertion] The lineage is to be known as having two aspects— [The pure element of a Superior's qualities] that naturally abides since beginningless [time] And [the developmental lineage of] supreme virtue [newly] aroused [through the exertion of hearing and so forth that are concerned with the naturally abiding lineage].</i>
With regards to the entity of the Buddha lineage, there are two: the naturally abiding lineage and the developmental lineage.
The naturally abiding lineage has by nature always been there, whereas the developmental lineage is aroused through activities like hearing, reflecting and meditating.
The naturally abiding lineage that has always been there all the while, is likened to a treasure. Here, it refers to naturally occurring metals and minerals that are found underground like gold, diamonds and so forth. Hence, these are not man-made.
Such natural precious substances [are the raw materials] from which one can make other precious jewelries and so forth.
Likewise, the naturally abiding lineage is the basis that makes possible the achievement of the qualities of the Buddha like the ten powers and so forth.
The tathagata essence is the basis that makes it possible for the achievement of all the qualities of Buddhahood.
The developmental lineage is likened to a [young] fruit tree that has the potential to bear fruit. If one carefully nurtures a fruit tree with water, fertilizer and so forth, then it will grow. One day, it will provide one with a bountiful harvest of fruits.
Likewise, if one carefully nurtures the capacity within oneself, one's developmental lineage, through exerting oneself with hearing, reflecting and meditating, then one's qualities will increase more and more. One will eventually become a Buddha.
The treasure and the fruit tree are the two examples showing the entity of the lineage.
V151 - Three examples showing the capacity/ potential of the lineage:
<i>151 It is asserted that the Three Bodies of a Buddha Are attained through these two causal lineages; Through the first, the first body [the Doctrine Body, is attained]; Through the second, the latter two [Bodies of Complete Enjoyment and Emanation are attained].</i>

In this context, the Three Bodies are the Nature Body, the Enjoyment Body and Emanation Body. The Nature Body is achieved in dependence upon the naturally abiding lineage.

The manner in which the Nature Body arises in dependence upon the naturally abiding lineage is this, essentially:

The naturally abiding lineage is the emptiness of true existence of the mind. Taking it as the object of meditation, focusing and meditating on it, one accumulates the collection of wisdom. In dependence upon this, one achieves the Nature Body.

By depending on the developmental lineage, the Complete Enjoyment Body and the Emanation Body are attained:

With one's practices conjoined with love and compassion, one accumulates the collection of merit. In dependence on this, one achieves these two Form Bodies.

V152 – Nature Body likened to the image of Buddha made of precious substances:

*152 [The natural purity and] beauty [of good qualities] of the Nature Body
Is to be known as like an image [made from] a precious substance,
For [that which abides] naturally [from the start] is not made [through new exertion]
And the qualities [of the powers and so forth] are a treasure of precious substances.
[A statue made of precious substance does not depend upon its own compositional activity.]*

The example here is a statue of Buddha made of precious substances. Such substances like gold occur naturally and hence are not newly fabricated. By using such naturally occurring and unfabricated precious substances, one can mold and transform these into a Buddha statue, which will fulfill the hopes of sentient beings.

Likewise, the Nature Body is not something that is fabricated, that does not arise through causes and conditions. Nevertheless, it is beneficial to sentient beings.

V153 – Complete Enjoyment Body likened to a universal monarch and Emanation Body likened to a gold statue:

*153 Because of possessing the great [wealth of] the kingdom of the Great [Vehicle] doctrine [of the profound and the vast,
The Complete Enjoyment Body which] completely enjoys [or makes use of the Great Vehicle doctrine] is like a Universal
Monarch [who controls the glorious wealth of the seven precious substances and the four continents].
Because of having the nature of a reflection [of appearances in accordance with whatever will tame trainees]
An Emanation [Body] is like a gold image.*

Just as a universal monarch, a wheel-turning king, exerts control over his kingdom and enjoys all [the possessions] that he controls, likewise, the Complete Enjoyment Body totally enjoys the Mahayana teachings.

Perhaps it is useful to know that, the Complete Enjoyment Body possesses the *Five Certainties*: The certainty of:

1) Abode – the Complete Enjoyment Body abides only in Akanista.

2) Entourage – the entourage of the Complete Enjoyment Body is necessarily consisting only of Mahayana superiors.

3) Dharma – the Complete Enjoyment Body teaches only Mahayana Dharma.

4) Time – the Complete Enjoyment Body exists as long as cyclic existence remains. This means that, it does not show the aspect of passing away into the sorrowless state.

5) [Body] – the Complete Enjoyment Body possesses the thirty-two [major] signs and eighty [minor] exemplifications.

The Emanation Body here is likened to a gold image of Buddha. Just as gold can be fashioned into different things and can appear as a statue, jewelry and so forth, likewise, the Emanation Body is essentially not of a separately distinct nature from the Dharmakaya. It is just that it appears in different forms according to the different dispositions and capacities of trainees.

These are the nine examples [showing the meaning] of the obscured.

V 154 – The consciousnesses that perceives the tathagata essence, the persons who realize the basic constituent:

*154 The ultimate [essence] of self-arisen [Buddhas, spontaneous and uncompounded]
Is to be realized through just faith [by common beings, Hearers, Solitary Realizers, and Bodhisattvas who have newly
entered their vehicle and is not realized by them just as it is.
For example] the blazing light of the disc of the sun Is not seen by the eyeless.*

Awakening the path of persons of small capacity A):

This was mentioned before. To awaken the lineage, one has to A1) engage in hearing, reflecting and meditating.
To awaken one's lineage, one needs to work hard at A2) accumulating merit and purify negativities/ obscuration. To awaken one's lineage, one has to emphasize these two things.
To be able to do a good practice of accumulating merit and purify one's mind of obscurations and negativities, one needs to have a good practice of going for refuge to the Three Jewels . If one has A3) heartfelt refuge , the practice of accumulating merit and purifying the obscurations/ negativities will be done well.
This means that, one needs to have A4) faith and devotion to the Three Jewels. There are many different kinds of faith that can be cultivated in one's mind.
But here, faith is that which comes from understanding and A5) believing in the qualities of the Three Jewels.
If one has faith and devotion in the Three Jewels that comes from the A6) knowledge of what they are and their qualities, then one will also be able to develop trust/ A7) faith in the workings of karma and its effects.
With a good conviction in the workings of karma and its effects, one would then be able to undertake a proper practice of A8) abandoning that which is to be abandoned and cultivate that which is to be cultivated.
When one is able to do a proper cultivation and abandonment, then naturally, all the worries, fears, frustrations and all kinds of A9) discursive thoughts associated with attachment to the happiness of this life alone will naturally weaken and subside.
This will give one A10) mental space to think about where one will be reborn in the next life.
One will then gradually A11) develop a sincere interest/ wish in having a good rebirth.
It is only then can one say that, one's A12) Dharma practice has started.
When referring to awakening the lineage in oneself, this [A11) develop a sincere interest/ wish in having a good rebirth] is the very least of the entry level of awakening the lineage, where one's Dharma practice [actually] starts.
Therefore, [how one's Dharma practice can start] all comes back to [one's] A3) refuge . If one has a proper refuge, then the thought of practicing Dharma arises in the mind.
If one examines the various practices of the person of small capacity, these are all methods to help one develop a good practice of refuge, with which, one's Dharma practice can start.
With [one's Dharma practice started], one can then begin to awaken the lineage [further].

Awaken the path of persons of middling and great capacities B) & C):

After reflecting and generating an experience of all these points [in A)], there are still more to be done.
On the basis of this A), one B1) thinks of the various problems and sufferings of cyclic existence . One repeatedly brings to mind the problems of being in cyclic existence, the B1a) general problems and suffering [of cyclic existence] , as well as the B1b) specific sufferings of the different realms.
One should then come to the understanding that, B2) any existence within the three realms of cyclic existence is suffering.
One also has to reflect and understand the B3) benefits of being liberated/ freed from cyclic existence.
All of these would help one develop a B4) yearning to achieve liberation.
Through a sustained reflection on the faults of cyclic existence and the benefits of achieving liberation, having thought well about these topics like feeling that samsara is suffering and yearning to be freed from it, then signs may manifest in the form of B5) being emotional [with great joy, showing physical reactions like] crying with body hair standing and so forth.
When this happens to one who has been reflecting on these points in a sustained manner, then this could mean that one has B6) begun to awaken the Hinayana lineage.
When one who engages a sustained reflection and feels for C1) [achieving the wisdom realizing] the emptiness of inherent existence , when one feels for the C2) wish to develop the paths and grounds and so forth , these could be special signs indicating the C3) awakening of the Mahayana lineage.
The awakening of the lineage has to lead one into the path. For a person who is awakening the Hinayana lineage, such an awakening of this lineage must lead one into the Hinayana path and closer to liberation.
Likewise, for one who is awakening the Mahayana lineage, such an awakening of the Mahayana lineage should bring one closer into entering the Mahayana path and hence closer towards enlightenment.

Why it is not suitable to show the Mahayana to one who is of a definite Hinayana lineage:

The Hinayana collection of scriptural teachings are taught for those who have awakened the Hinayana lineage to enable them to move towards and achieve liberation.
Likewise, the Mahayana scriptural collections are taught for those who have awakened the Mahayana lineage to help them enter the path, traversing the paths and grounds with the intention to lead them towards enlightenment.
For a person who is <i>definitely of the Hinayana lineage and has awakened his Hinayana lineage</i> , one has to guide him by showing the Hinayana scriptural collections of teachings and lead him onto the Hinayana path towards liberation.
For such a person, if one shows the Mahayana teachings to him, it is said that this would only become an obstacle for him. This is because, doing so would only make him take a much longer time to achieve enlightenment in the end.
Even if such a person is shown the Mahayana teachings and he does manage to generate bodhicitta, but it is said that he could then degenerate his bodhicitta. [Everything considered,] this would become an obstacle for him to achieve enlightenment.
For someone who is definitely of the Hinayana lineage, the way to help him achieve enlightenment in the overall scheme of things, is for the time being showing him the Hinayana path and help him enter that path.

What constitutes the actual start of Dharma practice and its signs:

From here one can see that, until one develops a real yearning for one's own future good rebirth, it is extremely difficult for anything that one does to become a practice of the Dharma.
As has been shown, the <i>entry level meaning of awakening the lineage</i> can be taken to <i>mean developing the heartfelt yearning to achieve good rebirths</i> in the future.
When one examines the great treatises, one will find terms like awakening the Hinayana and Mahayana lineages. That is all. [These treatises do not explain] about awakening the lineage with respect to developing a yearning for good rebirth.
But perhaps by extrapolating from what are usually taught and apply it [to our situations], perhaps one can explain such minimum entry level of awakening the lineage in the sense of developing an interest in the happiness beyond this life.
If one really awakens the lineage of practicing the Dharma, then one's yearning for good rebirths, the happiness of future lives, will become very stable and unshaken. When this is so, then this will become a basis for one's joyous perseverance in achieving good rebirths. Such a joyous perseverance will increase more and more.
It is said that, with a real stable and heartfelt yearning for one's future lives' happiness, this becomes one's foundation for the effort to increase more and more to achieve that goal.
With such a kind of effort, above everything else, one will just completely prioritize Dharma practice to achieve all the good rebirths to be the main mission in [one's] life.
When one is able to reach such a level, then the phrase "to be free from the lower realms" has meaning and is really achievable.

Signs of someone whose Hinayana or Mahayana lineage has awakened:

Likewise, someone who has awakened the Hinayana lineage would also be able to develop a very stable yearning for liberation from cyclic existence. This then becomes the basis for his effort to increase more and more.
This then becomes possible for him to prioritize the achievement of liberation above everything else. He just focuses on achieving liberation. When he can do this, then of course he will quickly be freed from samsara.
This is also the same for those who have awakened the Mahayana lineage. For such persons, they would then develop a very strong yearning for complete full enlightenment.
With such a stable strong yearning, this would lead to a corresponding increase in their efforts. They would prioritize the achievement of enlightenment above everything else, making this their main mission for their entire existence.
With this, the result [of Buddhahood] will come quickly.

Why it is absolutely necessary to practice the Dharma in stages:

The Buddha lineage [has two divisions]: the naturally abiding lineage and the developmental lineage.
In dependence upon the naturally abiding lineage, at the end of the path, one achieves the result of the Nature Body.
By depending on the developmental lineage, one achieves the Form Body, of which there are two: the Complete Enjoyment Body and the Emanation Body.
In the <i>Stages of the path to enlightenment [literature]</i> , the practices of the three types of persons are shown: the persons of small, middling and great capacities.

In the practices for a person of small capacity, when one examines these, they are all essentially [meant] to help someone develop a sincere interest to engage/ practice the Dharma.
These are all practices for “awakening the lineage to practice the Dharma.” This means that, all these points [are meant] to help someone start to think that: “The Dharma is something that I need to do, I need to practice the Dharma.”
To develop a heartfelt thought thinking that: “The Dharma [really] matters and I must practice it,” one has to meditate on all the various levels of practice that are taught for a person of small capacity. One has to do that gradually in stages.
Without going through those stages and thinking about [these points], this becomes extremely difficult to develop the real thought of practicing the real Dharma.
If one does not eliminate one's preoccupation and attachment to this life, and if one does not develop a real heartfelt yearning for [the happiness of] one's future lives, without these two [mindsets] taking place in one's heart, it is very difficult to have the real wish to practice Dharma.
The practices of [persons of] medium capacity are essentially [meant] to help a person awaken the Hinayana lineage and to lead him into the path towards liberation.
Likewise, the practices of the persons of great capacity are meant to awaken the Mahayana lineage and then to lead him into the Mahayana path towards full enlightenment.

Why all sentient beings can practice the Dharma and attain enlightenment:

All sentient beings can develop the thought to engage/ practice the Dharma. One can term that as <i>awakening the lineage of practicing the Dharma</i> .
If such a lineage/ potential can be awakened, it follows then that, such a lineage must already have existed in sentient beings.
This is because, without the lineage/ potential/ capacity in the first place, one cannot awaken it. This is the [proof].
The fundamental essential point is that, one's mind is empty of existing truly. It has never existed inherently.
Hence, since it does not exist inherently, if one meets with favorable conditions, when positive causes are gathered, then positive change can happen.
For, if the mind has [instead] been inherently existent, then it does not matter what kind of positive conditions one meets with, change can never happen.
It is precisely because positive changes do happen when one puts in correct, positive causes and conditions that shows that, the innermost fundamental nature of the mind is empty of existing inherently.
Hence, the emptiness of true existence of the mind is posited as the Buddha nature/ lineage/ tathagata essence.
Because the mind is dependently-arisen/ dependently-originated, [this shows] that it is empty of existing inherently.
If the mind is not dependently-originated, that would make it exist in and of itself.
If that is the case, then there is nothing that one can do about the mind, for it will never change no matter what one does.
Although the mind is accompanied by the defilements of the afflictions, but these afflictions themselves are dependently-originated/ dependently-arisen [as well]. Hence, if the causes and conditions for the arising of the afflictions are removed, the afflictions will cease to exist. They will not arise.
The point then is that, because the afflictions do not exist inherently, therefore, the mind can be separated from the defilements.
The mind does not exist inherently, the mind is dependently-originated. The defilements do not exist inherently, they are [also] dependently-originated.
Hence if one meets with the correct causes and conditions, then the defilements can be removed. [The defilements] are [hence] suitable/ amenable to removal.
The afflictions are likened to the clouds that move across the sky of the basic constituent/ element.
The sky is likened to the tathagata essence, the emptiness of true existence of the mind. The afflictions are likened to the clouds temporarily moving across the sky.
When the conditions for the clouds to dissipate gathers, they would dissipate. What is revealed then is the sky itself, one sees the clear blue sky. Likewise, with the gathering of the proper causes and conditions, when the defilements/ obscurations are removed, what is revealed then will be the fundamental nature of the mind, the emptiness of true existence of the mind.
When the defilements are removed, such a basic nature is accompanied by the defilements, what one [is left with] is the emptiness of true existence of the mind. <i>This is</i> [the emptiness of true existence of] Buddha's mind. <i>This is</i> Buddha.

The Buddha that one can become is not to be found outside somewhere else. When the mind is accompanied with the defilements, one is not a Buddha. But when the defilements are removed, then what is revealed would be the fundamental purity of the mind, the emptiness of true existence of the mind. This is Buddha. There is no need to point to anything else.
These are ways to think about the lineage/ tathagata essence and how the defilements are adventitious.
When [examining about] the tathagata essence, [what has been explained] is the very essence. If one understands that then [one has achieved the goal of this module]. Khenrinpoche: So it is not so difficult, with two sentences we can understand!

What is the manifestation of the lineage and debates about its terminology:

Student: Is the manifestation of the Buddha lineage the same as awakening the Buddha lineage?
Khenrinpoche: The awakening of the lineage is what has been explained. As for the manifestation of the lineage, when the lineage is fully manifest, it is no longer called the lineage. This is because, when the lineage is fully transformed, it is called the Nature Body and is no longer called the lineage/ tathagata essence.
Perhaps this is what one can say, that the tathagata essence is manifest. When it is fully manifest, that is the Nature Body. One does not call the Nature Body the tathagata essence anymore, as it is not the lineage anymore.
The path of seeing abandonments and path of meditation abandonments were explained before. When one achieves the uninterrupted path [of the path of seeing], that is the antidote to the path of seeing abandonments.
When one achieves the path of release of the path of seeing, perhaps one can say that, one has achieved the: <i>Manifestation of the tathagata essence that is an abandonment of the path of seeing abandonments.</i>
When one achieves the path of release of the path of seeing, what one achieves is a cessation of the path of seeing abandonments.
When one becomes a foe destroyer, one has abandoned all the afflictions and achieves a true cessation which is the abandonment of the afflictions.
Perhaps, such a true cessation which is an abandonment of the afflictions can be called the: <i>Manifestation of the tathagata essence which is the abandonment of afflictions.</i>
This is something that can be debated, something to think about. For example, the true cessation achieved by the arhats, they have achieved the true cessation which is an abandonment of the afflictive obscurations. Can one call such an abandonment a manifestation of the tathagata essence which is the abandonment of the afflictive obscurations?
When one debates, one can do so about the use of [terminology]. For example, one can argue that: <i>The true cessation achieved by a foe destroyer is a manifestation of the tathagata essence which is an abandonment of the afflictive obscurations, but it is not a manifestation of the tathagata essence.</i>
This is because, one can hold onto one's original thesis, the fundamental position to start with. This is something one never gives up, as it was taught that, the manifestation of the tathagata essence only occurs when one achieves the nature body.

V 154 – The consciousnesses that perceives the tathagata essence, the persons who realize the basic constituent:

154 The ultimate [essence] of self-arisen [Buddhas, spontaneous and uncompounded] Is to be realized through just faith [by common beings, Hearers, Solitary Realizers, and Bodhisattvas who have newly entered their vehicle and is not realized by them just as it is. For example] the blazing light of the disc of the sun Is not seen by the eyeless.
It is said that, ordinary beings who have not entered the paths, and even those beings who have, such as the [ordinary] Hearers and Solitary Realizers and the ordinary bodhisattvas, all do not realize the tathagata essence.
Ordinary beings who have not entered the paths [also] do not realize the tathagata essence. This is because, they have a very strong [grasping of] the 'I' and that which is mine. Hence, they do not and cannot realize emptiness.
The [ordinary] Hearers and Solitary Realizers [may] have not realized the emptiness of true existence. [This perhaps can be because,] they have only realized, for example, the coarse selflessness of persons. They also do not realize the tathagata essence.
There are some bodhisattvas who have entered the path but have yet to realize emptiness. Such bodhisattvas also do not realize the tathagata essence.
<i>The blazing light of the disc of the sun is not seen by the eyeless:</i> perhaps this is saying that, the tathagata essence is not realized by these four types of persons.
These are four specific types of ordinary beings who do not realize the tathagata essence. However, this is not the same as saying that, an ordinary being will necessarily not realize emptiness or the tathagata essence. Of course, this is not the case, [as there are ordinary beings who do realize emptiness].

V155 – Delineating the mode of abiding of the basis:

<p><i>155 This [basic constituent of the pure nature] has no [previously existent faults of afflictive emotions] to be removed, And not the least [factor of good qualities] to be [newly] established.</i></p>
<p><i>The basic constituent of the pure nature:</i> These naturally pure basic constituent has never been truly existent in that, it has never been an object that is grasped at by the apprehension of true existence. Hence, the basic constituent has no previously existent faults of such an affliction to be removed. This is because, true existence has never existed in the first place.</p>
<p>Hence, this basic constituent has been naturally pure right 'from the time it existed'. There is no defilements, per se, to be removed from the beginning. This is because, it has always been pure from the beginning.</p>
<p>The selflessness of [the self], the emptiness of true existence of persons and phenomena, is not something that is newly created/ established. Right from the very beginning, this has been its nature. The person and all other phenomena have always been devoid of a self right from beginningless time.</p>
<p>The object that is believed/ grasped at by ignorance/ apprehension of true existence, has never existed and hence has always been empty. Hence, this is why there is the phrase “the emptiness of true existence.” This emptiness is an ultimate truth.</p>
<p><i>V 155 The reality [which is the mode of subsistence devoid of superimposition and deprecation] is to be viewed as reality [by means of the ultimate wisdom].</i> <i>When [upon developing familiarity with meditative equipoise] reality is seen [just as it is], there is release [from the two obstructions].</i></p>
<p><i>When [upon developing familiarity with meditative equipoise] reality is seen [just as it is]:</i> This refers to the view that realizes emptiness. The mind that realizes the emptiness of persons and phenomena just as it is exactly, is a mind that has fully internalized the view. The result of familiarizing such a view is the release from the obscurations.</p>
<p>By familiarizing repeatedly the view of emptiness, conjoining that with the factor of method, primarily compassion and bodhicitta, one would then be able to remove the two obscurations.</p>

V 156 – A proof establishing this:

<p><i>156 The essential constituent is empty of the adventitious [defilements] Which have the character of being separable [from its entity].</i> <i>It is not empty of the unsurpassed [qualities of the powers and so forth] Which have the character of not being separable [from it].</i></p>
<p>Perhaps the first two line is saying that, if one meditates/ cultivates the antidotes, the afflictions/ defilements can be removed.</p>
<p>The ultimate nature of the mind, the emptiness of true existence, has always existed since beginningless lifetimes. Such an ultimate nature of the mind is not newly created, but has always been like that.</p>
<p>Such a potential, the emptiness of true existence, carries the capacity for any person to achieve enlightenment and acquire all the qualities of Buddhahood such as the ten powers and so forth.</p>
<p>As mentioned before, the emptiness of true existence of the mind has always existed. That has been the nature of the mind. Hence, the mind has that capacity to develop the qualities of enlightenment.</p>
<p>When referring to separating the defilements from the mind, it is not a separation that is newly created for, from the very beginning, the nature of the mind is unafflicted. The afflictions have not abided nor resided in the nature of the mind.</p>
<p>Hence, one does not assert 'newly separating the defilements from the nature of the mind.' This is again because, its nature has never been afflicted. Therefore, the defilements are adventitious, are suitable to be and can be removed.</p>

V 157 – Settling a contradiction qualm:

<p><i>157 Throughout [the scriptures of the middle wheel of the doctrine] it is said that all objects of knowledge are empty in all respects</i> <i>Like clouds [which are unstable and lack inherent existence], dreams [which, although experienced, lack inherent existence], and a magician’s illusions [which, although appearing, lack inherent existence],</i> <i>But why has the Conqueror said here [in the scriptures of the final wheel of doctrine]</i> <i>That the essence of a Buddha exists [from the start spontaneously in the continuums of] sentient beings?</i></p>
<p>It is said that, in the second turning of the wheel of Dharma like the <i>Eight Thousand Verses of the Perfection of Wisdom Sutra</i> and so forth, the Buddha said that, all objects of knowledge/ phenomena are empty in all respects in that, they are like clouds, like dreams and like a magician's illusions, which are adventitious.</p>
<p>In the third turning, in the <i>Tathāgatarbha Sūtras</i>, Buddha said that, all sentient beings naturally possessed in them the essence of Buddha, the tathagata essence.</p>
<p>[Would these two statements be contradictory?] On one hand, Buddha said that phenomena are like adventitious dreams, illusion and so forth, but on the other, He said that, by nature, there is something real called the tathagata essence.</p>

V 158 – Settling qualm that it is pointless to teach the tathagata essence to ordinary beings:

There is another qualm stating that, it is pointless teaching the tathagata essence to ordinary beings, as no matter what is being taught, [these beings would not understand and will not] realize it. Since ordinary beings do not realize the tathagata essence, hence what would be the point [teaching it to them?] The answer is shown here:

158 It was set forth so that persons having the five faults might abandon them—

- 1) *[The fault of] a discouraged mind [and non-enthusiasm for the path, which is to think that enlightenment cannot be achieved; this is due to not knowing that the ultimate basic element exists in oneself, and such discouragement is an obstacle to generating the intention to become enlightened;*
- 2) *the fault of nonrespect] despising others as lowly, [thinking that these sentient beings are low; this is due to not knowing of its existence in others and is an obstacle to assuming the care of others;*
- 3) *The fault of] incorrect conception [falsely holding that the adventitious defilements exist in the basic element whereas from the start they do not; this is due to not knowing of its existence in all others and is an obstacle to the wisdom realizing the true mode of subsistence;*
- 4) *the fault of] deprecating the true qualities [thinking that good qualities which are indivisible in entity with the basic element do not exist whereas they do;*
- 5) *And the fault of] excessive attachment to oneself [due to not knowing that the nature of the element of a Superior's qualities is equal in oneself and others, this being an obstacle to realizing oneself and others as equal].*

Khenrinpoche: Today I have asked Kelvin to talk. In the past, we used to have such [sessions] from the students of the Basic Program sharing their experiences [of the program] to the students, so I thought it is good. So, give your time for ten minutes, maybe less, for him to share his experience, maybe that would be helpful for some people.

Kelvin: Thank you Khenrinpoche for giving me this opportunity to share, I am very honored. I am Kelvin, a Malaysian from Penang, currently staying in Singapore. Before studying [about] Buddhist philosophy, I was like the majority of the Buddhists, going to the temples, offering incense to the statues of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and pray that, somehow, they would look after me and my family. I even attended Sunday schools in a church in Penang. But I have not much inclination towards Christianity. I guess I must have a very strong connection with Buddhism in my previous lives.

My first contact with Buddhist philosophy was a Chinese Lam Rim class [conducted] by Mr Toh Ping Tiong. It was he who encouraged me to attend classes in ABC, because it was a very well established *Gulug* center.

Therefore, I started attending classes [conducted] by Ven Gyurme and subsequently the classes on *Special Insight* [taught] by Khenrinpoche in 2010. What a special class to start with...!

At the end of the module, surprisingly, I survived! I thought I've learnt a lot about emptiness. Because to me, emptiness [means that] everything is merely labeled by the mind! [Sigh!] How arrogant I was at that time!

After attending Basic Program, I finally realized that, I've no idea of what I was talking about at that time.

So now, when I was asked to share the benefits, what I've gained by attending the Basic Program, I start to reflect how I was before and how I've become now.

Before that, I thought I have accumulated a lot of virtues, by doing charities [of] giving donations [and so forth]. Now, I've realized that, what I've accumulated [are] only nonvirtues! [This is] because, all my motivations were only for this life's happiness alone!

Before that, I thought, maybe [in] my next life, I'll get a good rebirth. But now I realized that, the lower realms [are] what that awaits me, if I don't strive to purify my negativities and accumulate strong virtues.

Before that, the Three Jewels seem to be very far away from me, like something high up in the sky looking upon us from afar. But now, the Three Jewels seem to be closer. I feel much more closer to the Three Jewels now. It is something that we can achieve, become and realize, if we make effort.

Before that, I thought karma is something [that] we say or we do. But now, I am more mindful of what I think, because, every single moment of my intention is karma. Every moment of feeling is the result I am experiencing now.

In short, whatever I knew previously was very coarse and superficial [that are] mixed with my own bewilderment. Now, after attending the Basic Program, it is opening the door that I never knew existed.

Ahhh...! How fortunate I am to be able to correct my misconceptions while I am still alive! Not just that, I still have a sound mind, a fit body, and all the conducive conditions to attend the classes.

It is said that the Buddha's teachings are extremely rare, but to me, the Basic Program [conducted] by ABC is even more rare!

We have a perfectly qualified Guru, Khenrinpoche, who is more than qualified to teach the Geshe in the Sera, Ganden and Drepun [monastic universities]! I was told that, the Kopan monks are willing to give their hands just to listen to his teachings.

But he is here guiding us! I, such an unworthy student, am truly grateful indeed!

We also have a wonderful translator, who makes extremely clear the difficult points of the root texts, in such an interesting and lively way. Without him, we won't understand anything at all, not to mention the subtle meaning and differences of the teachings.

These teachings/ materials that we are studying now, used to be available only within the high walls of the monasteries in India and Nepal. Yet, now it is easily available to us, due to the kindness of Khenrinpoche and Ven Gyurme.

We also have a group of very diligent seniors, who painstakingly strive to type out all the transcripts so that, we will never miss a single word [uttered] by Khenrinpoche.

We also have very thoughtful students who raise questions that I would never have thought [about] on my own. And the very brave ones who engage Khenrinpoche in debates...those are the moments that I enjoyed and learned the most, although I lacked the courage to do so [myself].

We also have this wonderful building, huge and bright, fully air-con, where we can sit comfortably to listen to the teachings.

Each of these conditions alone is difficult [enough] to fulfill, yet, we have all of them now!

Aren't these something that are worth rejoicing, and worth making use of while I am still able to, before impermanence grasps me?

Well, the immediate benefit I gain by attending the Basic Program is that, I am able to understand the teachings [taught] by other teachers, such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama, [Kyabjhe] Lama Zopa Rinpoche, and even the Chinese Mahayana teachers in Taiwan, although they are mostly from the Mind Only School.

I come to appreciate that the teachings of the Buddhas are coherent and free of contradictions. It is like being given a map to enlightenment, and I can map all the teachings I get using this map to relate them.

Also, my faith in karma and its results has increased as a result of studying the Basic Program. Before that, I thought I'd be lucky to get away from [having accumulated] karma. It is one [minus] one, if I do something bad, then I'd better do something good to negate it. But now I know, that is just a wishful thinking.

Also, I start to think of my future lives' happiness as well. Whatever I do now, I will sometimes consider my actions so that, it will mainly bring [about] the happiness of [my] future lives.

Due to studying the Basic Program, my faith in the Three Jewels has increased as well. Before that, I thought Buddha is someone who has already passed away long time ago, Dharma is just for teachings, whereas practice is just [done during] meditation or what...

But now, I realized that, Dharma is what I can practice daily. It is something that we can do to even to achieve this life's happiness, no to mention all our future lives' happiness, including achieving liberation and enlightenment.

In short, I am happier now, having attended the Basic Program. I look forward to coming to the classes, attending the discussions, and even the exams, although it's a bit scary...in fact, I feel that, the exams are the very important part of the Basic Program. Because, it is through exams that I put in effort to study, and it is through exams that, I can check whether my understanding is correct or not.

In most courses offered by other centers, there are no exams. So whatever I've learnt from them hardly [ever] stays within my mind. But due to the kind constant reminder from Khenrinpoche, and the pressure from exams, somehow, I managed to remember some points from even the first module.

Having no realizations and only a meager amount of study, what I've just said may seem laughable by those intelligent ones. But if somehow these words manage to benefit even just one sentient being, may it be a cause of enlightenment for all sentient beings. Thank you.

Khenrinpoche: Last time, in the last Basic Program, we used to have some students who come and talk [about] their experiences [of studying the Basic Program]. We [haven't done] this for sometime. So, sometime maybe I thought it is good to talk [about this]. So maybe I'll be asking some of you to just come and share...if you think [the Basic Program] is good, you say [its] good, if you [think it is] not good, you just say it is not good. So come and share your experiences when I ask you to come [forward]...

Reasons why tathagata essence is taught:

In verse 157, a qualm states that: In the middle turning of the wheel of Dharma, the Buddha mentioned in the perfection of wisdom sutras that, phenomena are like clouds, dreams and illusions in that, phenomena are empty of existing inherently.

Hence, all phenomena are adventitious. In the last turning of the wheel of Dharma, the Buddha said in the tathagata essence sutra and so forth that, the very essence of Buddha exists and penetrates to the very nature of the mind of sentient beings.

Hence, would this not be a contradiction in that, on one hand, Buddha said things do not exist inherently, but on the other, He said that the Buddha Essence exists and penetrates to the very nature of the minds of sentient beings?

The qualm is this: Since ordinary beings do not realize the tathagata essence, then what is the purpose/ point of teaching ordinary beings about the tathagata essence?

The answer is shown in verse 158. There are five reasons teaching that the tathagata essence exists in all sentient beings:

158 It was set forth so that persons having the five faults might abandon them—

- [1] [The fault of] a **discouraged mind** [and non-enthusiasm for the path, which is to think that enlightenment cannot be achieved; this is due to not knowing that the ultimate basic element exists in oneself, and such discouragement is an **obstacle to generating the intention to become enlightened;**
- [2] the fault of nonrespect] **despising others** as lowly, [thinking that these sentient beings are low; this is due to not knowing of its existence in others and is an **obstacle to assuming the care of others;**
- [3] The fault of] **incorrect conception** [falsely holding that the adventitious defilements exist in the basic element whereas from the start they do not; this is due to not knowing of its existence in all others and is an **obstacle to the wisdom realizing the true mode of subsistence;**
- [4] the fault of] **deprecating the true qualities** [thinking that good qualities which are indivisible in entity with the basic element do not exist whereas they do;
- [5] And the fault of] **excessive attachment to oneself** [due to not knowing that the nature of the element of a Superior's qualities is equal in oneself and others, this being an **obstacle to realizing oneself and others as equal].**

1) Fault of discouragement: One of the obstacle to generating the mind of enlightenment is not knowing that the tathagata essence/ lineage exists in all sentient beings. If one thinks that there is no capacity/ potential/ lineage to achieve enlightenment, one will get discouraged. When that happens, one will not cultivate nor generate the mind of enlightenment.

One of the reasons for teaching the existence of the tathagata essence [existing] in all sentient beings is that this is an antidote to such a discouraged mind. Hence, the first purpose is to stop any sense of discouragement thinking that it is not possible to achieve enlightenment. When it is taught that all sentient beings possess the tathagata essence, this would include oneself.

When one knows that one possesses the tathagata essence, that it has always been there existing naturally, then this would act against any discouragement in generating the mind of enlightenment.

The essential point is to stop discouragement. If there are times when one does feel discouraged, then if one can think well and understand well how oneself possesses the tathagata essence, then this will be helpful in counteracting discouragement.

One will find a similar advice in *Shantideva's Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds*, where he said that, even if insects like mosquitoes can achieve enlightenment, then why not oneself? The line of reasoning is the same.

2) Fault of despising others: The second reason for teaching the existence of tathagata essence in all sentient beings is to abandon the fault of looking down on others.

Even if one has generated bodhicitta, but if one does not realize that the tathagata essence exists in all sentient beings, then it is possible to think that: "I can achieve enlightenment but there are others who [will not and so may] look down and despise them. If this occurs, then this becomes an impediment for one's bodhisattva practice to increase.

By knowing that the tathagata essence exists in all sentient beings, then one abandons this fault of looking down on others. This will help with one's practice of the bodhisattva deeds.

3) Fault of superimposition: The third reason for teaching the tathagata essence is that, it helps to understand the mode of existence/ mode of abiding of phenomena. This helps to remove the impediments that prevent one from understanding the ultimate nature of phenomena.

[As shown in fault 3 in this verse], this is the fault of incorrect conception that erroneously holds that the adventitious defilements exist [truly]. Even though [in reality] the afflictions are incorrect, but there is an apprehension/ view/ thought that holds onto them as correct. Hence, such a view is a superimposition/ exaggeration.

Taking the apprehension of true existence and the afflictions as examples, most tenets assert that, such minds and phenomena are truly existent. By holding onto phenomena as truly existent, which is an exaggeration/ superimposition of reality, this then obstructs one's understanding/ realization of the mode of abiding of phenomena.

<p>4) Fault of deprecating: That denies tathagata essence exists in sentient beings. Teaching tathagata essence existing in all sentient beings eliminates the faults of exaggeration and denial.</p>
<p>This helps one to delineate properly the two truths: On one hand, the mind is empty of existing truly, yet it is feasible that, one can posit action and the [creator of action]. Hence, there is a purpose in teaching the tathagata essence in that, this eliminates the faults of denial/ deprecation and superimposition/ exaggeration.</p>
<p>Through this, one understands correctly how the two truths exist and function as a union.</p>
<p>5) Fault of self-cherishing: To generate the mind of enlightenment, one needs to meditate on <i>Exchanging Self and Others</i>. To remove any obstacles to such a cultivation, the tathagata essence is taught.</p>
<p>If one realizes that the tathagata essence exists in all sentient beings, this means that oneself and all sentient beings are equal in having such a Buddha nature. In this sense, oneself [and others are] equal.</p>
<p>If one is able to see and feel such a parity and sameness, then this provides the basis for one to be able to [cultivate the practice of] exchanging oneself and others. Through [such a cultivation,] then the mind of enlightenment can be generated.</p>
<p>This is the fifth reason for teaching the tathagata essence in that, it removes the impediments to mentally exchanging oneself and others. If one can do that, then one will be able to meditate on exchanging self and others. Through that, one generates the mind of enlightenment.</p>
<p>Through understanding the tathagata essence, one abandons these five faults. Through that, one will be able to meditate on exchanging self and others. Through that, then one will be able to generate the mind of enlightenment. Through this, one then engages in the bodhisattva deeds in general and particularly, one trains in the last two perfections.</p>

Settling the first qualm, where there seems to be a contradiction between the second and third turning:

<p style="text-align: center;"><i>159 The limit of reality [the naturally pure basic element] is devoid Of compounded phenomena in all respects. [The three phenomena of which it is empty—] the afflictive emotions, actions [of non-virtue and so forth], and the fruits [of those, these being the mental and physical aggregates and so forth—] Are said to be like clouds and so forth.</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>160 The afflictive emotions are said to be similar to clouds [in that they pervade and adventitiously obstruct the basic element of sentient beings]. Contaminated actions [which are motivated by those afflictive emotions] are like objects used in a dream [since they are generated by an erroneous awareness and are objects of a mistaken consciousness]. The [mental and physical] aggregates which are the fruits of afflictive emotions and [contaminated] actions Are like a magician's illusions, emanations, [and so forth in that although they appear variously in dependence upon conditions, when analyzed they are not true].</i></p>
<p>These two verses answer the first qualm of contradiction, where in the second/ middle turning of the wheel of Dharma, Buddha said that all phenomena are adventitious in that, they do not exist truly, but in the last turning, He said that the lineage exists in the very nature of the minds all sentient beings.</p>
<p>The limit of reality: This is another way of saying emptiness. Here, this refers to the natural purity of sentient beings' minds, the tathagata essence.</p>
<p>Is devoid of compounded phenomena in all respects: This means that, [the tathagata essence] is devoid of all phenomena that is included within true sufferings and true origins.</p>
<p>The phenomena included in true sufferings and true origins refer to the defilements, which has never entered and resided in the very nature of the mind. Hence, the <i>limit of reality</i>, the tathagata essence, is devoid of these compounded phenomena.</p>
<p>Hence, the defilements are adventitious. One needs to know that, true sufferings and true origins are empty of existing truly.</p>
<p>Within true origins, the principal true origin are the afflictions. The chief of all the afflictions is the apprehension of true existence, ignorance. [Such a mind], like all other phenomena, has never existed truly, it is empty of existing truly.</p>
<p>Ignorance has never resided in the very <i>nature</i> of the mind. It is not the nature of the mind to be ignorant.</p>
<p>Hence, ignorance is adventitious. But one needs to think what this means:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>How is it that the apprehension of true existence has never resided in the very nature of the mind? This is because, how and what ignorance apprehends, the object that ignorance is grasping onto, has never existed.</i></p>
<p>It is said that, even though the <i>mind [itself] is afflicted</i>, but the <i>nature of the mind is unafflicted</i>. The basic nature of the mind is pure. Hence, the defilements are adventitious, as these have never resided in the very nature of the mind.</p>
<p>The chief of all defilements is ignorance, the apprehension of true existence. When it is said that the nature of the mind is unafflicted, essentially what one has to think about is that, the nature of the mind is unafflicted by the apprehension of true existence, which has never resided in the very nature of the mind.</p>

The question [again] is, why has ignorance, the apprehension of true existence, never reside in the very nature of the mind?
This is how one can think: Ignorance is grasping at/ conceiving phenomena to exist in a certain way. Whatever is being conceived of by ignorance, what it is holding onto, that object that ignorance believes in, has never existed on the mind.
Khenrinpoche: Do you understand or not?
It is said that, [the tathagata essence of sentient beings] are pure by nature, hence are not afflicted by nature, but adventitious. Hence, all sentient beings have hope to become Buddhas. But can this be proven?
Since it is said that the defilements are adventitious, but there are many defilements. Hence, obviously one has to examine the most critical defilement, ignorance of apprehending true existence. If defilements are adventitious, then this means that, ignorance must be adventitious.
If it is adventitious, then this means that the apprehension of true existence has never resided in the very nature of the mind.
<i>This can only be the case if, what ignorance conceives of, is not the nature of the mind.</i>
Hence, the main point to be established is that, what ignorance conceives, inherent existence, has never existed and will never exist. This is the [most important point] to be understood.
This is because, if whatever is conceived of by ignorance does not exist, then this proves that, all phenomena, including the mind, has never existed truly, and are not truly existent.
[What is being shown now are] the first two lines of verse 159: <i>The limit of reality the naturally pure basic element is devoid of compounded phenomena in all respects.</i>
<i>The limits of reality</i> refers to emptiness in general, but here it specifically refers to the emptiness of true existence of the mind, which is the tathagata essence.
This tathagata essence is <i>devoid of compounded phenomena in all respects</i> . Compounded phenomena here refers to all phenomena included within true origins and true sufferings.
Between true sufferings and true origins, the principal is true origins. Within true origins, the main ones are the afflictions. Within the afflictions, the chief is the apprehension of true existence.
If one condenses these [lines of reasoning], one can rephrase this line as saying: <i>The limits of reality, the tathagata essence, is devoid of the apprehension of true existence.</i>
Therefore, at the end of the analysis, what one needs to establish is that:
<i>The apprehension of true existence has never resided in the nature of the mind. It is not in the nature of one's mind to be ignorant.</i>
Hence, the point is that, whatever ignorance conceives of, is not the nature of the mind. [In another words,] it is not in the nature of the mind to be that which is conceived by ignorance. The conceived object of ignorance is inherent existence.
At the end of the analysis, this is what one needs to [conclude], that the conceived object of ignorance, inherent existence, has never existed, is not existent, and will never exist.
If one can see how ignorance, the apprehension of true existence, has never resided in the nature of the mind, then one can come to understand that, ignorance, the apprehension of true existence, is adventitious.
If one can establish that ignorance is adventitious, this will also establish that, the other afflictions that are induced by ignorance, the karma motivated by those afflictions, as well as the fruitional effects of such karma, are all adventitious.
This is because, what one usually thinks all the time is that, cyclic existence is permanent, unchanging and real. Suffering is also real, that there is nothing one can do about them, that [it is impossible] to free oneself from them.
<i>This is the heart of the matter: since the lineage exists, therefore the defilements are adventitious.</i>
The key to understanding how one's defilements are adventitious is, to focus first on the chief of all the afflictions, ignorance, and see how that is adventitious.
One can establish that, the apprehension of true existence is adventitious, when one can establish that the conceived object of [such an apprehension], the object which ignorance believes and holds onto, has never existed and will never exist.
<i>One will then be able to posit that, ignorance is adventitious, that it can be removed. This means that, to understand and get some idea, it is imperative to have some understanding of The ultimate nature of reality, the emptiness of inherent existence. It is all condensed into this.</i>
This was stated in the middle turning of the wheel of Dharma in that, the afflictions, karma, its effects, are all empty of existing truly. They are hence like an illusion, a dream and so forth. The mind is also empty of existing truly.
The point is this: In the middle turning of the wheel of Dharma, it is established that, all phenomena are empty of existing truly. This means that, the mind must be included. Hence, the mind is empty of existing truly.

If the mind is empty of existing truly, then it follows that, the defilements are adventitious.
In the third turning of the wheel of Dharma, what is referred to as the tathagata essence, is none other than the emptiness of true existence of the mind.
Therefore, there is no contradiction between the statements from the middle turning of the wheel of Dharma and the last turning of the wheel of Dharma. The intent of the thought of Buddha behind those statements is the same.
The afflictions are said to be like clouds. This is because, the afflictions are adventitious, hence, they are like clouds. The karma that is motivated by the afflictions, since it is motivated by an erroneous awareness, therefore, they are like a dream.
The fruitions of karma motivated by the afflictions, the body and mind aggregates complex, are like the illusions conjured by a magician, the emanations of the magician in that, although they appear to exist truly, but in fact, they do not.
V 161: Having presented earlier in the middle turning of the wheel of Dharma, and again here in this text, <i>The Sublime Continuum</i>, it was taught that the basic constituent just exist so that, the five faults might be abandoned:
<i>161 Having made the presentation earlier [in the middle wheel of doctrine that all phenomena, though appearing, are empty of inherent existence], Again here [on the occasion of teaching] the sublime continuum [the unbroken continuum of the element of a Superior's qualities], It was taught [with many variants in verbalization and with many examples and reasons that] "The basic constituent just exists," In order that the five faults might be abandoned.</i>
If one asks what the purpose of the Buddha's teaching is, in the middle turning of the wheel of Dharma, in which He states that all phenomena are empty of existing truly, and in the last turning of the wheel of Dharma, in which He states that, the lineage exists in all sentient beings, this is so that, the five faults mentioned can be abandoned:

Detailed explanations on the five faults:

<i>162 For, not hearing in this way that [the basic constituent exists], Some—whose minds are discouraged due to the fault Of deriding oneself [thinking, "How could one such as I attain enlightenment!"]— Do not generate the intention to become enlightened [in which one thinks, "I will actualize the nature, the ultimate Buddha."]</i>
Khenrinpoche: Do you understand the words? This is rather straightforward.
What this is saying is the same as what was mentioned earlier. If one understands that the tathagata essence exists in all sentient beings, including oneself, then one understands that one can become enlightened. If one understands one can become enlightened, then one can dispel any discouragement thinking: "There is no way I can become a Buddha."
V 163: Explaining how, by understanding the tathagata essence existing in all, one can remove the impediments to the development and increase one's practice of bodhisattva deeds, after one has generated bodhicitta:
<i>163 Some who have generated the intention to become enlightened Fancy, "I am supreme [a Bodhisattva]," Whereby they discriminate [others] who have not generated The intention to become enlightened as lower [than themselves].</i>
After generating bodhicitta, for the practice of one's bodhisattva deeds to develop more and more, one must understand the mode of abiding of phenomena. Hence, one needs to eliminate the impediments to that.
V 164: Showing the impediments to realizing the final mode of abiding of phenomena:
<i>164 In those who think thus [that the Buddha-essence does not exist], Knowledge of reality [the mode of subsistence free from superimposition and deprecation] is not generated. Thereby, they hold [a view superimposing] the unreal And, not knowing the meaning of reality, [deprecate it].</i>
What this verse is saying is the same as mentioned before: If one has the view of superimposition or denigration of certain facets of non-reality and reality, then that would be an obstacle to realizing the mode of abiding of ultimate nature of reality.
V 165: Showing the methods to dispel these:
<i>165 Because of being fabricated [by conditions] and being adventitious, The faults [i.e., the afflictive emotions and so forth] of sentient beings do not [exist as their own] reality. In reality those faults are selfless [And thus the basic constituent has from the start] a pure nature of good qualities.</i>

<p>If one holds onto, apprehends, conceives, grasps at the afflictions, including the apprehension of true existence, to be real, as existing truly, then this becomes an obstacle to realizing that things are unreal, that all phenomena do not exist truly.</p>
<p>The faults: This refers to the afflictions such as attachment, anger and so forth, do not exist truly. This is because, they are fabricated and arose due to certain causes and conditions. Also, the afflictions themselves are adventitious.</p>
<p>And thus the basic constituent has from the start a pure nature of good qualities: This refers to the natural purity of the mind, which is by nature pure. This is because, the mind does not exist truly.</p>
<p>The natural purity of the mind refers to the emptiness of true existence of the mind. It has never existed truly. This includes the defilements like ignorance themselves. Whatever ignorance conceives, that which is conceived of by ignorance, has never been the quality and nature of the mind. Hence, the mind has never been truly existent. Hence, the mind is by nature pure.</p>
<p>V 166: Showing the impediments to generating love and compassion:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>166 [The Bodhisattva] who possesses an attitude of holding unreal faults [as the reason for viewing that the basic constituent does not exist] And who deprecates the true qualities [of the powers and so forth] Does not attain the [great] love seeing Oneself and sentient beings as equal.</i></p>
<p>V 167: [The results of realizing sentient beings possessing tathagata essence]:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>167 From hearing in this way [that the naturally pure realm exists without difference in all], One generates ¹enthusiasm [for the path upon seeing that Buddhahood can be achieved], ²respect [for other sentient beings that values them even] like the Teacher [Buddha], The wisdom [knowing that the conventional ³defilements do not inherently exist], the exalted wisdom [realizing the entity of the basic constituent in which the ⁴basic element and knowledge are indivisible], and the ⁵great love [which is the equality of oneself and others]. Due to generating those five [beneficial] phenomena [in the mental continuum],</i></p>
<p>1) Through hearing how the tathagata essence exists in all, one generates the <i>enthusiasm</i> to achieve enlightenment.</p>
<p>2) It is said that, if one realizes that the tathagata essence pervades in all sentient beings, that all of them have it, then since all other sentient beings possess the Buddha lineage, then one will be able to <i>respect</i> them like the Buddha.</p>
<p>3) One can also develop the <i>wisdom</i> that realizes the emptiness of true existence.</p>
<p>4) One also comes to realize that, all sentient beings possess in them, the capacity to develop the <i>qualities of Buddhahood</i>.</p>
<p>5) It is said that, if one realizes how all sentient beings possess the tathagata essence, then this can help one in the achievement of <i>great love</i>. Love is the wish for others to have happiness. The highest happiness, highest bliss is the bliss of full enlightenment. Hence, great love is the wish for all sentient beings to possess the bliss of enlightenment.</p>
<p>V 168: The qualities that are developed:</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>168 There is no unseemliness [because of being free from discouragement of mind and so forth; one views] self and other as equal [without low and high; One knows the fact that the adventitious defilements of] faults do not exist [by way of their own entityness] and that good qualities are [naturally] possessed; [And one attains the great] love which is the equality of oneself and sentient beings [as having the essence of a Buddha]. From [those five] Buddhahood is quickly attained.</i></p>
<p>1) If one despises oneself, putting oneself down unproductively, then it is actually a fault. [Overcoming] this is the first quality that is achieved. One is free from the fault of despising oneself.</p>
<p>2) One is able to view oneself and others as being equal.</p>
<p>3) One comes to understand that, the faults of the defilements do not exist inherently. Due to that,</p>
<p>4) One comes to understand that, the good qualities can be achieved.</p>
<p>5) One comes to understand that, one and others are the same in being able to become a Buddha.</p>
<p>It is said that, through understanding these points and acquiring these qualities, one enters the Mahayana path. Through meditating and familiarizing oneself with the lineage, one will come to be a Buddha.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><i>Thus is the first chapter, “The Essence of a One Gone Thus”, in Maitreya’s Great Vehicle Treatise on the Sublime Continuum, Discriminating the Lineage [of the Three Jewels].</i></p>