

Study Group - Madhyamakavatanama

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

དབུ་མ་ལ་འཇུག་པ་ཞེས་བྱ་བ་བཞུགས་པོ།

4 June 2002

First establish a virtuous motivation thinking, 'I have to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings. In order to achieve that purpose I am going to listen to the profound Mahayana Dharma, and then I will to put what I have listened to into practice.'

Of the four outlines of the text we have completed the meaning of the name, and the homage.

MEANING OF THE TEXT

2. The Actual Body of the Text

The next major outline is the actual body of the text, which has two subdivisions, the causal grounds and the resultant ground.

2.1 The Causal Grounds

Causal grounds has three subdivisions, the way of practising the path on the basis of one's present rebirth, the way of practising the path as an ordinary bodhisattva, and the way of practising the path as an arya bodhisattva.

2.1.1 The Way of Practising the Path on the Basis of One's Present Rebirth

As already mentioned, the text *Entering the Middle Way* explains the *Root Wisdom* both by way of the profound as well as the extensive. The extensive refers to the conventional aspect of progressing along the bodhisattva path, and this explanation was taken from other texts of Nagarjuna.

From *Illumination* :

If it is asked: 'If this commentary conveys both the profound and extensive bodhisattva paths according to Nagarjuna then what does the graduated path leading to the ground of a Buddha according to the school of the protector Nagarjuna look like?'

Understanding the school of the second Buddha Nagarjuna etc. through hearing and contemplation is for the purpose of oneself ascertaining and finding great conviction in the way a perfect path is practiced so that a mistaken path can't mislead one. Therefore, listening and contemplating without having ascertained the way one has to practice the path won't become meaningful, even though one trains in the school of the great pioneers. Therefore, if one doesn't properly take the essence of the Mahayana path even though one practices zealously, then one should make effort to understand the steps of advancing on the path.

Chandrakirti explains the method aspect of the path by relying on other scriptures by Nagarjuna. What is the significance of this? The significance is that Chandrakirti did not just make up the method aspect of the path that

is explained in *Entering the Middle Way*, but he took it from Nagarjuna, who is regarded as the second buddha. By relying on the unmistakable source of Nagarjuna, Chandrakirti explained the method aspect of the path unmistakably.

Clearly ascertaining the unmistakable path will prevent one from entering a mistaken path. As I have explained to you many times before, the importance of studying the correct Buddhist path is that it prevents us from following a mistaken or wrong path. We have to practise the three steps of listening to, contemplating and meditating on the teachings of the great pioneers. The purpose of these three steps is so that we ascertain for ourselves the unmistakable path to enlightenment. Through ascertaining the unmistakable path to enlightenment we won't follow a mistaken path. Here the importance is that we ascertain the unmistakable path.

If we don't generate an understanding of the unmistakable path through our practise of listening and contemplation then we will not have taken the essence of listening and contemplating the teachings of Nagarjuna.

There are many texts by Nagarjuna that deal with individual aspects of the path and three that deal with the whole body of both the profound and the extensive. From those, the Precious Garland of Madhyamaka, 'Its root is bodhicitta' and 'Compassion preceding all practices' have already been quoted.

As we explained before the three dharmas of individual beings are compassion, non-dual awareness, and bodhicitta. The text gave various quotations, which we have already completed, such as 'Its root is bodhicitta' and 'Compassion preceding all practices' and so on.

Further:

*Showing briefly the qualities;
Of a bodhisattva;
Generosity, morality, patience and enthusiasm;
Mental stabilisation, wisdom, compassion and
so forth.*

*Generosity is giving up completely selfish aims;
Morality is to benefit others;
Patience is having abandoned anger;
Enthusiasm increases white dharmas.*

*Mental stabilisation is single pointed and free
from delusions;*

*Wisdom understands the meaning of truth;
Compassion is wisdom regarding;*

All sentient beings of one taste with compassion.

Then the *Precious Garland* condenses the qualities of bodhisattvas into seven. The text goes very briefly through the individual natures of the six perfections and great compassion, which make seven qualities in all.

1. First of all, generosity is having a generous attitude, giving ones own possessions to others. Of course here possession includes much more than material possessions. Being generous is giving up one's own purpose.
2. Morality is abandoning working for one's own purpose alone so that one can work for the benefit of others.
3. Patience means abandoning anger.
4. Enthusiastic effort means being joyful or enthusiastic

in practising virtue.

5. Mental stabilisation is single-pointedness of mind, free from the faults of mental excitement and sinking, and not being obscured by the delusions.
6. Wisdom refers to comprehending the various truths such as ultimate truth and conventional truth, the four noble truths, and so on.
7. Compassion is wishing all sentient beings to be free from all suffering.

Then Nagarjuna then listed some of the results of those seven qualities.

*From generosity wealth, from morality happiness;
Complexion from patience, charisma from
enthusiasm;
Peace from mental stabilisation, liberation from
awareness;
Compassion accomplishes all aims.*

Those are the individual results. Then Nagarjuna explained the result shared by all those seven qualities thus:

*By practising all of those seven simultaneously
At the time of the learner's path
One will attain the incomprehensible
transcendental wisdom
Of the protector of the transitory realms.*

This came from *Precious Garland* where it first identified the six perfections, then mentioned their benefits, and advised that one has to practise the six perfections in conjunction with great compassion. Then, after first generating bodhicitta, and then practising those six perfections in combination with great compassion, the practitioner will advance along the ten bodhisattva grounds.

Here *Illumination* goes onto a quote from Nagarjuna's *Praise to the Dharmadhatu*:

After having gone for refuge then one generates the mind of enlightenment and then by extensively practising the ten perfections one will attain the ten bodhisattva grounds. Nagarjuna's Compendium of Sutra elaborates on this rough explanation of the body of the path more extensively:

It is difficult to find faith in the freedoms and endowments and in the dharma. It is even more difficult to be able to generate the mind of enlightenment. It is also difficult to find great compassion for sentient beings.

Further from the above:

It is also difficult to abandon the karmic obscuration of criticising a bodhisattva, the intention wanting to criticise, demonic activities and abandoning the dharma.

With regard to the first it is difficult to find someone who has faith in the existence of a precious human rebirth. Nagarjuna says it is very rare to find a person who has faith in those eight freedoms and ten endowments. If we think about it, having faith in those eighteen qualities is something very special. However, in general it is very difficult to find, and then, of course, it is also very difficult to find someone who has faith in the teachings. If it is difficult to find someone who has faith in the precious human rebirth, then we don't have to mention

that of course it is also difficult to find someone who has faith in the teachings of the Buddha. It is even rarer to generate Bodhicitta. Even though we might not, of course, have generated bodhicitta, we practise as best as we can in our present situation by applying it to our own situation.

This, together with the other two is indeed clear. However in order to clarify them for those who have difficulty in comprehending the sequence of progressing along the path, the great pandit Shantideva, who was a master in those various schools composed the Compendium of Training as well as his Entering the Bodhisattva's Way of Life. He composed the Compendium of Training in particular to clarify the meaning of the Compendium of Sutra, which has just been quoted.

You have already received many teachings on the *Compendium of Training* and *Entering the Bodhisattva's Way of Life* from His Holiness, who taught them in Bodhgaya.

Then *Illumination* goes on to say:

In Shantideva's Compendium of Training it explains clearly that, having first contemplated the great potential and rarity of finding the eight freedoms and ten endowments one then intends to benefit by taking the essence of this life. Building on that, one trains one's mind in faith in general, and in particular, by reflecting on the qualities of the Mahayana path, one generates stable faith in that path. Then one generates aspirational bodhicitta, which is followed by taking the engaging bodhisattva vows. Then it explains the modes of giving ones body, possessions and roots of virtue, protecting, purifying and increasing.

The way the lam-rim explains how to practice the six perfection in unison and this present explanation are slightly different. Generosity can be the generosity of ones body. According to the lam-rim practising morality combined with generosity means protecting one's mind at the time of practising generosity from the egotistical thought wanting to have benefit for oneself alone. Here however it refers to protecting what one is giving - some people use their body senselessly. Purifying refers to purifying though meditation on the emptiness of the three circles. Increasing means combining one's practices with bodhicitta. In this way one practises the four steps with regard to generosity. One can also apply the four steps to other situations. If you want to know more about practising the six perfections in combination look it up in the lam-rim teachings. One can also practice the combination of the six perfections in conjunction with the seven limbs, which is also very good to know.

From *Illumination*:

Aryadeva also taught the body of the profound and extensive aspects of the path in his text Four Hundred Stanzas on Madhyamaka, where he combined the sequence of the path relying on the three texts called Essence of Madhyamaka by Bhavaoviveka, Ornament of Madhyamaka by Shantirakshita and Sequence of Meditating on Madhyamaka by Kharmalashila. Taking the meaning from those three texts Aryadeva then condensed them into his Four Hundred Stanzas on Madhyamaka. In general, the body of the path he outlined agrees with the general outlay of the path as described by those three scholars, but there are some

slight differences with regard to the view of emptiness. The great Atisha (who was proficient in the schools of the pioneers Asanga and Nagarjuna), composed his graduated path to enlightenment, Lamp to the Path, to assist beginners to easily ascertain the gradual path to enlightenment that is outlined in the texts mentioned above.

As you have just received teachings from His Holiness on the *Lamp to the Path* you have all already ascertained all of that very clearly, haven't you?

2.1.2 The Way of Practising the Path as an Ordinary Bodhisattva

Illumination goes on to ask a question:

This text conveys both the profound and extensive aspects of the bodhisattva path, as well as the end result. So having completed the homage it should explain the very important path of the ordinary bodhisattva, but it doesn't do that. Why?

When we look at the text, following the homage it starts straight away with the first bodhisattva ground, which is an arya path, and doesn't spend any time explaining the grounds of an ordinary bodhisattva. So the text asks, why aren't those very important paths of an ordinary bodhisattva explained after the homage, prior to the explanation of the grounds of an arya bodhisattva? Why isn't it a fault that Chandrakirti didn't do that.

The answer is that the practices of an ordinary bodhisattva have actually been already explained during the homage. As you will remember, the homage explained what we call the three dharmas, or practices, of ordinary beings, which are great compassion, non-dual awareness, and bodhicitta.

First of all, why did it need to explain those practices during the homage? It is because those three practices are the basis or main cause for becoming a bodhisattva. Furthermore, after one has become a bodhisattva those three dharmas form the main practice of the bodhisattva. Even though it outlines the perfection of wisdom, which is the practice of the non-dual awareness, as the main practice of an ordinary bodhisattva, this is only an example. If we look at the deeper meaning, then even though explicitly it only talks about the practice of the perfection of wisdom, of course this implicitly means that the bodhisattva has to practise all six perfections. So in short, since all of this is already contained within the homage, there is no need to repeat it again.

Here again Lama Tsong Khapa gives a quote from the *Compendium of Sutra* where it says that bodhisattvas shouldn't have a partial practice. This means, for example, training only in the profound nature of emptiness but not being proficient in the method aspects of the path, or being proficient in the method aspect of the path, but not knowing about suchness. Rather a bodhisattva should practise the unification of both method and wisdom. If the bodhisattva practises method and wisdom in unification, then their practice will be pure.

Next time we will go onto the bodhisattva grounds. We have now finished the three dharmas of the ordinary beings. Tonight we talked about the practices of ordinary bodhisattvas, and next week we can move on to the

bodhisattva grounds.

End of commentary

On Wednesday I had the opportunity of a private audience with His Holiness, where I mentioned to him that you are all studying very well. When His Holiness asked me what I was presently teaching I said that on one day I was teaching the *Madhaymakavatara* and His Holiness was very happy about that. Then he asked me the commentaries I was relying upon in teaching *Madhaymakavatara* and I told him I was using *Illumination of the Thought* by Lama Tsong Khapa, and *Mirror Clarifying the Meaning of Madhyamaka* by Gyalwa Genden Drup, and again His Holiness rejoiced. He liked that very much and said, 'That's very good, that's very good'. Then he asked me how many people come to the teachings, and I said 70 to 80 people, and he said, 'Do they understand the teachings?' and I said, 'Yes, they understand it very well'. I also mentioned that on Wednesdays I was teaching *The Thirty Seven Bodhisattva Practices*, and again His Holiness was very happy. He said, 'Very nice, you teach texts relating to both practice as well as view. That is a very good combination.'

His Holiness very briefly visited Geshe Loden's centre and in answer to a question, Geshe Loden he told him that he didn't have the Kangyur and Tengyur. In answer to His Holiness' question, I was able to tell him that Tara Institute has the Kangyur and Tengyur, so again His Holiness was very happy and pleased.

His Holiness couldn't come to Tara Institute but through my explanations of what we do in Tara Institute he was very happy. So if His Holiness is happy then that's good enough.

Because there was a queue outside and many people waiting, I had to leave, so His Holiness blessed me, and then I had to go. Before I left, His Holiness took me by the hand and asked me whether I would also be going to Sydney, and I said, 'Yes, I'm also coming to Sydney', and as His Holiness was very happy, I am also satisfied.

Before His Holiness arrived in Australia we recited the Tara Praises on Thursday evenings, so I think it is good if we also start with reciting Tara's mantra.

I'm wondering if it's possible for us to accumulate one million Tara mantras? You can pledge 5,000 or 10,000 or 50,000 or whatever. The minimum pledge is 5000¹. We have one month to accumulate those mantras, because on the 6th July, when it's his birthday, I was planning to send a letter to His Holiness in general to request him to live long, to come again back to Australia, and also to explain to him what practices we have done for his long life.

So maybe someone can write up a list of various pledges? I pledge 100,000 mantras.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson
Edit 1 by Adair Bunnett
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Edited Version*

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¹ Approximately two malas per day over one month.

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11 June 2002

Please establish a virtuous motivation for listening to the teachings thinking that I have to become enlightened for the benefit of all sentient beings, and in order to be able to do so I am now going to listen to this profound Mahayana Dharma.

Whether or not the Dharma we are listening to becomes Mahayana Dharma depends upon the motivation with which we are listening to that Dharma.

2.1.3. *The Way of Practising the Path as an Arya Bodhisattva*

We have finished with the grounds of ordinary bodhisattvas, and now we start with the next outline, which is the grounds of arya bodhisattvas. Here there are three subdivisions, the presentation of the ten bodhisattva grounds in general, explaining each of the grounds individually, and explaining the qualities of the ten bodhisattva grounds.

2.1.3.1. *The Presentation of the Ten Bodhisattva Grounds in General*

Here the qualities and characteristics that are shared by all of the ten bodhisattva grounds are explained.

The explanation of eleven grounds, the ten bodhisattva grounds and the eleventh ground of a buddha is partly based on the Precious Garland. There it says,

'Just as there are eight hearer grounds; explained for the hearer vehicle; there are ten bodhisattva grounds; for the Mahayana.'

It is also based on the Sutra of the Ten Grounds. There it refers to the ten grounds of Extremely Joyful etc. as the ten mind generations from the point of view of them being ultimate mind generations.

There are two different interpretations of those eight grounds of the hearer's path.

According to the *Self Commentary* those eight hearer grounds refer to the eight types of arya¹. The *Commentary on the 'Precious Garland'* says that they refer to the eight grounds of the Hinayana.

Ultimate bodhicitta refers to the mind realising emptiness directly in the continuum of an arya bodhisattva. So we have two types of mind generation, conventional mind generation, and ultimate mind generation.

Conventional mind generation is done in dependence upon the seven-point cause and effect method, and on the method of exchanging self and others.

With respect to ultimate mind generation, sometimes in general we say that a mind that realises emptiness is ultimate bodhicitta. Here it is narrowed down further, saying that ultimate bodhicitta has to be at least the mind realising emptiness directly in the continuum of an arya bodhisattva.

Regarding the identity of the ten grounds posited as ultimate mind generations the commentary says:

'When a Bodhisattva's transcendental uncontaminated wisdom alone, being held by compassion etc., is divided, each part attains the name ground because of becoming the abode of qualities.'

This explains ground by way of the identity of a ground, what it is being held by, way of receiving the name ground and the etymology.

Regarding the identity of: uncontaminated transcendental wisdom, some people assert 'that which doesn't increase contamination' to be meaning of uncontaminated, as explained in the Abhidharma

According to the Abhidharma the meaning of contaminated is that which increases the contamination (delusions) through focus or concomitance. According to this system the table in front of me is contaminated because by focusing on it delusions are generated.

It appears that they haven't realised the uncommon meaning of uncontaminated according to this school. According to our school, being tainted by the ignorance of true grasping or its imprints is the meaning of contaminated and the transcendental wisdom free from those two contaminations is uncontaminated.

From the Clear Words:

'not from the point of view of the nature of the object but the transcendental wisdom free from the obscuration of ignorance is uncontaminated.'

Below the attainment of the ground of a buddha there is no consciousness untainted by the imprints of ignorance apart from the non-conceptual transcendental wisdom equipoise of aryas. This is also indefinite because when the arya arises from the meditative equipoise it becomes tainted by imprints. Until the seventh ground contamination by ignorance exists but from the eighth ground onwards and for arhats that contamination doesn't exist because by then ignorance is eliminated. Contamination through the imprints of ignorance however still exists.

So this is an uncommon tenet of this school.

What is the meaning of uncontaminated transcendental wisdom?

Student: Free from the true-grasping of karmic imprints

Why does it need to be untainted by both of them? What's the significance of making the point that it has to be untainted by both of them?

Student: It is only present in buddhas, or bodhisattvas meditating on emptiness.

Of course. It does exist only in the continuum of a buddha and during the meditative equipoise of an arya. What is the meaning of that uncontaminated transcendental wisdom? For it to be uncontaminated it

¹ Trainee Stream Enterer, Resultant Stream Enterer, trainee Once Returner, resultant Once Returner, trainee Never Returner, resultant Never Returner, trainee Arhat, resultant Arhat.

has to be untainted by both true-grasping and the imprints of true-grasping. For example the first four perfections of generosity, morality, patience and enthusiasm in the continuum of an arhat who has completely abandoned true grasping, are still tainted. Why are they tainted perfections? It is because they are tainted by the imprints of true grasping. Although arhats have abandoned true grasping itself, they haven't freed the mind from the imprints of true grasping, and therefore those various perfections become tainted perfections. In the continuum of an ordinary being who has not even realised emptiness directly, then any type of mind will be a tainted consciousness.

To make it very clear: for a consciousness to be an untainted consciousness it has to be untainted by both true grasping, as well as by the imprints of true grasping. If it is tainted by either of those two then it becomes a contaminated consciousness.

The lower tenets such as the Mind Only tenet and Svatantrika-Madhyamika tenet assert that if it is a path it is a truth of the path. If it is a truth of the path, then according to these tenets, there is a pervasion that it will be an uncontaminated consciousness.

The Prasangika don't assert that if it is the truth of the path then there is necessarily a pervasion that it has to be an uncontaminated mind. Actually all types of conventional consciousnesses in the continuum of sentient beings will always be contaminated. Thus the various perfections such as generosity, morality, patience, enthusiasm, in addition to conventional bodhicitta, compassion, etc., in the continuum of sentient beings, are always contaminated awarenesses.

Why are they contaminated consciousnesses? It is because they are tainted by either the imprints of true-grasping or by true-grasping itself. At the level of a sentient being, the only consciousness that can be posited as being free from either of those two contaminations, (the contamination by ignorance itself or the contamination by the imprints of ignorance), is the uncontaminated transcendental wisdom in the continuum of an arya being in meditative equipoise.

That completes uncontaminated transcendental wisdom.

Further, that the first ground is called non-dual transcendental wisdom in the commentary is because object and object possessor don't appear as distant from one another. It doesn't merely refer to a transcendental wisdom that has abandoned the two extremes.

Both the transcendental wisdom equipoise of an arya bodhisattva, and the transcendental wisdom equipoise of hearer and self-liberator aryas, are the same in being untainted by the imprints of ignorance and realising suchness directly.

Both of those types of transcendental meditative equipoise are the same from both of those points of view. Since the wisdom realising emptiness is basically the same in being untainted, and being the wisdom realising suchness directly then why is one posited as bodhisattva ground and one isn't

Even though, from the point of view of being under the control of great compassion or not, and from the point

of view of having the abilities of the twelve hundred qualities or not, one is classified as an arya bodhisattva ground, and one isn't.

Further, as explained previously, there is a big difference as to whether or not realising suchness directly occurs through expanding ones awareness of the profound via the door of limitless inference into the two selflessnesses during the paths of accumulation and preparation.

Regarding 'is divided', the individual earlier and later parts of merely one uncontaminated transcendental wisdom, being a collection of parts that are sequentially divided, become the individual grounds. They are called grounds because like the ground they act as the place or basis for qualities.

Even though there is a division into the ten bodhisattva grounds they're actually all the same from the point of view of being uncontaminated transcendental wisdom. They are all part of one transcendental wisdom. The difference lies within the qualities that each ground attains.

Even though they are the same in that regard there four criteria why they are being divided into the individual grounds of Extremely Joyful etc.?

Firstly the number of their qualities increases higher and higher. The first ground has twelve hundred qualities and the second has twelve thousand and so forth.

The second criterion is that they attain greater and greater superior power. Thirdly, there is the criteria of superiority in a perfection, the first ground attains superiority in giving, the second in morality etc.

The fourth criterion is the increasing in the ripening result. The first grounder becomes ruler of Dsambuling, the second grounder becomes conqueror ruling the four continents etc.

So, the grounds are classified separately, because there is a big difference between the abilities of the individual non-conceptual transcendental wisdoms of the different grounds regarding their number of qualities and so forth. Since the post-meditational qualities of the individual grounds also need to be contained within the different grounds their classification doesn't pertain only to the meditative equipoise.

That is the way the ultimate bodhisattva grounds are divided. They don't have any division based on a difference in focus and aspect, their nature. From the Sutra of the Ten Grounds: 'Just as scholars can't express or see the trail of birds in the sky; if all the grounds of the conqueror's children can't be expressed likewise, how can one by listening?' Even though birds cross the sky, their trail can't be expressed in words or seen by the mind of scholars proficient in secular topics. Likewise, even though the ultimate grounds, like birds, progress in space like suchness, the manner of their progress, as experienced by aryas, can't be expressed even by the aryas themselves. Hence how can listeners hear it the way it is seen?

There is no difference between the ten grounds from the point of view of their nature and focus - their meditational object, aspect and mode of realisation. Their nature is the same, they are all uncontaminated

transcendental wisdom; they all focus on emptiness as the object of meditation; they all are in the aspect of emptiness and they are all realising emptiness directly.

In the past in India, some scholars investigated how birds flew but they couldn't see their trail across the sky. When we see birds flying in the sky, we can of course see that they are individual birds but we can't see their trail, which is inexpressible and unexplainable.

It is like saying that that molasses is sweet. Just saying the words won't make that person understand what 'sweet' actually is. In the same way one cannot explain the ultimate bodhisattva grounds with words, and even if one could say the words, listeners cannot comprehend how it actually is. One has to gain a direct experience of emptiness for oneself, and this cannot be conveyed in words. Neither can it be understood by listening to the words of those who have realised it. Practitioners have to see emptiness directly for themselves, and that is the only way one can gain an understanding of the direct experience of emptiness. Even after one has direct experience of emptiness it will not be possible for the practitioner to explain what it is like in words. Neither will a listener be able to comprehend it by listening. It is like the example of the molasses; one has to taste the sweetness for oneself to know what it tastes like. Just having someone telling us that something is sweet will not give us any idea of what 'sweet' is actually like.

In the same way as this individual experience of the direct realisation of emptiness is inexpressible, so too the difference between the ten ultimate bodhisattva grounds is also inexpressible. As already said, they are the same in inexpressible aspect and focus.

2.1.3.2. Explaining the Ten Bodhisattva Grounds Individually

Here there are three subdivisions, explaining the first five grounds of Extremely Joyful and so on, explaining the sixth ground, Manifest, and then the last four grounds of Gone Far and so on.

2.1.3.2.1. Explaining the First Five Grounds

This of course has five subdivisions relating to each of the first five bodhisattva grounds. They are the first ground, Extremely Joyful; the second ground, Stainless; the third ground, Illuminating; the fourth ground, Radiant; and the fifth ground Difficult Training.

EXTREMELY JOYFUL

The first ground Extremely Joyful is explained in three outlines, showing briefly the nature of the ground itself (which is the basis for the various characteristics of the ground), explaining extensively the qualities of the ground (which are the characteristics), and concluding by expressing the qualities of the ground.

1. Nature of the Ground

This verse from the root text starts the explanation of the nature of the first ground Extremely Joyful:

*Every mind of the children of the conquerors
Overpowered by compassion to completely
liberate migrators*

*Strongly dedicating with the prayer of
Samantabhadra*

*That intensely abiding within joy is called the
first*

Here Lama Tsong Khapa says in relation to this verse:

*Every mind of the children of the conquerors
abiding on the first ground, who by the method
mentioned above, take the lack of natural existence out
of "seeing migrators lack of natural existence" as the
distinguishing characteristic of the focal object of
compassion, becomes overpowered by great
compassion to completely liberate migrators.*

*The ultimate mind of the Bodhisattvas intensely
abiding within the transcendental wisdom without
dualistic appearance that has the name 'Extremely
Joyful' and is clearly defined by the count etc. of its
resultant qualities is called the first mind beyond
transitory existence. They strongly dedicate virtues
with the prayer of Samantabhadra.*

By the method mentioned above, the generation of bodhicitta preceded by non-dual awareness and the mind of compassion, the mind of the children of the conquerors becomes overpowered by compassion to completely liberate sentient beings from samsara. They take migrators lack of inherent existence as the distinguishing characteristic of the focal object of their compassion.

*The ten great prayers explained in the sutra of the ten
grounds, the ten boundless one hundred thousand fold
prayers done by a first grounder, are contained in the
prayer of Samantabhadra. Therefore, the prayer of
Samantabhadra, the prayer of good conduct, is
mentioned in the root text in order to include all
prayers. It is taught in the Compendium of Deeds
that out of that the two verses of 'Just as the brave
Manjushri...' are dedications second to none.*

End of discourse

Maybe we can leave it here and recite a few OM MANIs.

Di's mother died some days ago, so we will recite some OM MANIs for her. I actually set out a whole program of what prayers to do when a person has died, what prayers to do when a person is sick and so on, but it seems that in this case my advice has not been followed!

The Centre is for the benefit of others. If we have to work or encounter difficulties and become tired, that doesn't matter. The most important thing is that others benefit from the Centre.

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson
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Edited Version

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18 June 2002

THE FIRST GROUND EXTREMELY JOYFUL (CONT)

Last week we started to talk about the first ground, Extremely Joyful. As we said then, the explanation of this ground has three major outlines: showing in brief the nature of the ground that is the basis for the characteristics; showing extensively the qualities of the ground (which are those characteristics); and concluding by briefly expressing the qualities of the ground.

1. Nature of the Ground

Last week we completed the first of those three outlines, showing briefly the nature of the ground.

Next we come quite a few outlines. In general it is very good to go through those outlines point by point, but I'm wondering whether you are up to it.

Students: Yes!

Even though the outlines look very difficult at the beginning, once we are into their rhythm, and therefore more familiar with the text, then they can assist one's understanding of the text.

How a Bodhisattva Progresses Along the Grounds and Paths

As we said when we discussed the homage, Chandrakirti composed the text for developing bodhisattvas of sharp faculty.

Path of Accumulation

Such bodhisattvas first generate the non-dual awareness realising emptiness, then great compassion, and then bodhicitta. Together with the attainment of bodhicitta the practitioner enters the Mahayana path of accumulation.

The Mahayana path of accumulation has three paths: the small path of accumulation, the medium path of accumulation, and the greater path of accumulation. From the medium path of accumulation onwards every bodhisattva will have definitely realised emptiness. That is the latest point at which a bodhisattva realises emptiness.

We said that a bodhisattva enters the path of accumulation simultaneously with the generation of bodhicitta. Thus bodhicitta is the entrance gate through which the practitioner enters the Mahayana path.

Path of Preparation

Bodhisattvas reach the greater path of accumulation and meditate on emptiness while remaining in calm abiding. Then if they are able to induce the bliss of pliancy through analytical investigation into emptiness while remaining in calm abiding, they will have attained what is called the union of calm abiding and special insight. Simultaneously with that attainment they will then progress from the greater path of accumulation to the path of preparation. So the attainment of the path of preparation is simultaneous with the attainment of the union of calm abiding and special

insight focussing on emptiness.

There are four paths of preparation. There is the heat level, the peak level, the level of forbearance, and the level of supreme Dharma.

Path of Seeing

While the bodhisattva meditates on the level of supreme Dharma they have not yet realised emptiness directly. The practitioner has what is called the union of calm abiding and special insight as a result of focussing on emptiness while remaining in calm abiding. However their understanding of emptiness is still a conceptual understanding, and is not yet a direct realisation. Once that conceptual union of calm abiding and special insight is transformed into a non-conceptual understanding, then the bodhisattva has attained the first moment of the path of seeing, the path that sees emptiness directly.

The first level of the path of seeing that is attained is called the uninterrupted path of seeing, and this acts as the direct antidote to the abandonments through seeing.

After the uninterrupted path of seeing has acted as the direct antidote to the abandonments through seeing, then the bodhisattva attains the liberated path of seeing. Together with the liberated path of seeing, the bodhisattva attains the cessation free from the abandonments through seeing.

So first the uninterrupted path acts as the antidote, and then the liberated path is actually free from the abandonments through seeing, and that is also when the first instance of the truth of cessation is attained.

Then the bodhisattva arises from their meditative equipoise and goes into the post-meditational period during which merits are accumulated for the purpose of then being able to oppose and abandon the abandonments through meditation.

I explained this whole sequence of how the bodhisattva progresses along the grounds and paths when we talked about the Prasangika tenet. I said then that what you learn in the tenets can be applied later, when we study further texts. This year is one instance where you can apply what you have learned before. Or you can look it up.

When the bodhisattva reaches the path of seeing then they are called aryas or in English, superior beings. While on the path of accumulation and preparation the bodhisattvas are ordinary bodhisattvas.

One point that might be valuable to mention, is that if we talk about the paths of accumulation and preparation in the context of the Mahayana there's no pervasion that it is necessarily an ordinary ground. So if it is a Mahayana ordinary practitioner, there's no pervasion that it is necessarily an ordinary being. This is because the sequence we were talking about is from the point of view of a practitioner who abides within the Mahayana lineage from the start of their practice.

There are other types of practitioners who only enter the Mahayana path after having completed the Hinayana path. That is, they enter the Mahayana path after having already become arhats or superior beings through following the Hinayana path. After having entered the Mahayana path of accumulation and preparation, these arhats will still be referred to as ordinary Mahayana beings, even though in general they are not ordinary beings anymore; they are arya beings.

If you ask whether arhats who attain the Mahayana path of accumulation, are superior beings, then the answer is yes, they are superior or arya beings. Are they still arhats? Yes they are still arhats. Are they Mahayana aryas? No, they are aryas but they are not Mahayana aryas. Are they Mahayana

arhats? No they are not Mahayana arhats; they are ordinary arhats but not Mahayana arhats. The reason is that in order to become a Mahayana arya one has to have attained the Mahayana path of seeing, which those arhats on the Mahayana path of accumulation haven't yet attained. So therefore they are aryas, but they not Mahayana aryas. Even though they aren't arhats they are not Mahayana arhats, because in order to be a Mahayana arhat one needs to be a buddha. They are not buddhas yet, so they are not Mahayana arhats.

It is good to have an idea of how the practitioner following the Mahayana path arrives at the Mahayana path of seeing, which is where we are now in the text. From now on the text describes how the qualities of the bodhisattvas develop once they have attained the Mahayana path of seeing and onwards.

2. Showing Extensively the Qualities of the Ground

Now we arrive at the second outline, explaining the qualities extensively.

One has to build up the two collections over three countless great eons in order to become enlightened. The accumulations of the first countless great eon are built up during the path of accumulation and preparation. Then, from the path of seeing, from the first ground up until to the seventh ground, one builds up the accumulations of the second countless great eon. On the three pure grounds, the eighth, ninth, and tenth grounds, the accumulations of the third countless great eon are built up.

The first seven grounds are referred to as the seven impure bodhisattva grounds, and the eighth, ninth, and tenth grounds are referred to as the three pure grounds.

Here the characteristics, qualities, or features are this path, the nature of which we described in the previous outline, are explained.

Lama Tsong Khapa gives three major outlines, the qualities that beautify the continuum of the practitioner, the qualities that outshine the continuum of other practitioners, and the qualities of superior practice relating to this ground.

2.1. The Qualities Beautifying the Continuum of the Practitioner

The first outline, the qualities that beautify the continuum of the practitioner is explained in two stages. First it explains those qualities individually, and then it explains them in a condensed manner.

2.1.1. Explaining Those Qualities Individually

These individual qualities are listed in three outlines: the quality of having attained a meaningful name; the four qualities of having being born into the lineage and so forth; and the three qualities of conquering higher grounds and so forth.

2.1.1.1. The Quality of Having Attained a Meaningful Name

We start with the quality of having attained the meaningful name.

*From then onwards those by attaining
Called only by the sound expressing bodhisattva.*

The commentary *Mirror Clarifying the Meaning of the Madhyamakavatara*¹, says:

Consider the subject, 'bodhisattvas from attaining

the first ground onwards' - they are called by the sound that expresses ultimate bodhisattva - because they are bodhisattvas who have attained ultimate bodhicitta.

This refers to bodhisattvas who have attained the first ground and upwards.

The second line of the root text says, 'called only by the sound expressing bodhisattva'. Here one has to think that it is actually saying 'ultimate bodhisattva'. They are called only by the sound expressing ultimate bodhisattva, because they are bodhisattvas who have attained ultimate bodhicitta.

Then *Illumination* reads:

From entering the first ground onwards, by attaining an ultimate mind, those Bodhisattvas will only to be called by the sound expressing 'Ultimate Bodhisattva at the stage beyond the ground of ordinary beings'. Because at that time they are Arya Bodhisattvas they shouldn't be described in any other form.

From the moment of entering the first ground and onwards bodhisattvas are beyond the grounds of ordinary beings because they have attained the ultimate bodhicitta. From that time onwards they're only referred to by the name 'ultimate bodhisattva'. Last Tuesday we talked about the nature of ultimate bodhicitta. Because they have attained ultimate bodhicitta from having attained the first ground onwards, they're only referred to by the name ultimate bodhisattva, because they have become Mahayana aryas. Once one becomes a Mahayana arya then one will be referred to as an ultimate bodhisattva.

Through knowing that from this stage onwards the practitioner deserves the name ultimate bodhisattva, we know that that bodhisattva has attained something which the bodhisattva on the previous path, the supreme path of preparation, hasn't attained. A bodhisattva on the supreme path of preparation hasn't yet attained an ultimate bodhisattva ground. We can understand this when we know why ultimate bodhisattvas are given that name.

Bodhisattvas at that stage, deserve to be called 'ultimate bodhisattva', while bodhisattvas on lower levels, such as on the level of preparation, deserve the name 'bodhisattva' but they don't deserve the name 'ultimate bodhisattva'. One only deserves to be called by the name 'ultimate bodhisattva' once one has reached this stage.

2.1.1.2. The Four Qualities of Being Born into the Lineage and so forth

It's good if you also follow the root text when we go through it. Here the root text reads:

*They are born into the Tathagata lineage
It has abandoned all three strong fetters
Those Bodhisattvas came to hold supreme joy and
Became able to thoroughly shake one hundred
transitory realms*

The first line of the root text reads:

They are born into the Tathagata lineage.

Here 'they' are the subject bodhisattvas abiding on the first ground. They are born into the Tathagata lineage because they have generated in their continuum the path that definitely leads to buddhahood, and thus have gone beyond the grounds of hearers and self-liberators. Because bodhisattvas that abide on the first ground have gone beyond the grounds of hearer and self-liberators, and because they've generated in their continuum the path that definitely leads to buddhahood, they will not fall into any other type of path from that stage onwards. Therefore they

are born into the Tathagata lineage.

So the first line, 'They are born into the Tathagata lineage' refers to the fact that from then on those bodhisattvas just go straight to buddhahood, and do not deviate onto other paths.

The second line of the root text reads:

It has abandoned all three strong fetters.

The first ground abandons all three strong fetters belonging to the abandonments through seeing. One fetter is the intellectually acquired view of the transitory collection, the second fetter is afflictive doubt, and the third fetter is holding moralities and disciplines as supreme. Those three fetters have been abandoned on this ground.

The three delusions referred to here as the three strong fetters belong to the class of abandonments through seeing. This first ground has abandoned them by seeing directly the selflessness of person, or the lack of an inherently established person. The fetters are abandoned because this ground has made their further generation impossible. This shows that the seeds of those three delusions, which belong to the class of intellectually acquired delusions, are abandoned.

The view holding moralities and disciplines as supreme is intellectually acquired, as is afflictive doubt. The spontaneous view of the transitory collection belongs to the class of abandonments that is called abandonments through meditation. Here we are talking about the view of the transitory collection that is intellectually acquired. Delusions that are intellectually acquired belong to the class of abandonments that are called abandonments through seeing.

Here the view of the transitory collection is the intellectually acquired one. What this means is that first of all one grasps at true existence, and in addition one also accepts true existence. It means that one has actually intellectually formed the idea of thinking that there must be inherent or true existence. One would find this type of true grasping in the continuum of a Mind Only for example. We would find the intellectually acquired view of the transitory collection grasping at inherent existence in the continuum of Svatantrika-Madhyamika. In our case, however, even though of course we grasp at inherent existence, we don't accept the existence of inherent existence.

Here we have to think about the different types of delusions - the five delusions belonging to a type of view, and the delusions that are not a view. There are delusions that are an afflictive view, and delusions that are just an affliction, but not a view. Delusions that are an afflictive view are abandonments through seeing. The other type of delusions have a common base with abandonments through meditation.

If you look at the various delusions like attachment, anger, ignorance, pride, or afflictive doubt, for example, then afflictive doubt is definitely an afflictive view. Wrong view, extreme view, and the view of holding disciplines and moralities as supreme and so forth, will be all abandonments through seeing.

Here *Illumination* says:

Since this ground also abandons all the other subtle and extensive types of abandonments through seeing, then why does it only mention those three here?

The reason why it only mentions those three delusions here is because they're the main obstacles preventing the practitioner from attaining liberation. As it is mentioned in the Abhidharma, not wishing to go and mistaking the path, having doubt with regard to the path, whichever of those obscures the advancing of towards liberation, therefore those

three are shown.

Three Factors Obscuring the Advance to Liberation

In the everyday context, there are three main factors that prevent us from going to another country if we wish to do so. First of all, we may not even have the wish to go. Secondly, we are mistaken with regard to the path. Thirdly, we have doubt with regard to the way.

In the same way there are also three factors that primarily obscure us from advancing towards liberation.

The first one is the view of the transitory collections, which causes us to not want liberation, because it makes us afraid of liberation.

Second, is being mistaken with regard to the path. This comes about because of the view holding moralities and disciplines as supreme. Here it of course it is referring to mistaken moralities and disciplines. If we regard mistaken practices and supreme practices as perfect, then we are mistaken with regard to path leading to liberation.

Thirdly, having doubts regarding the path prevents one from progressing along the path.

The third line of the root text says:

Those bodhisattvas come to hold supreme joy.

As it says in *Mirror*:

Take the subject Bodhisattvas abiding on the first ground -they came to hold supreme joy - because they have generated vast uncommon joy through freeing themselves from the abandonments of the first ground.

After having entered the Tathagata lineage they attain the resultant qualities, and by becoming free from the faults of the abandonments relating to that ground then they attain uncommon joy. Because of that they experience a vast amount of extreme joy.

The children of the conquerors come to hold supreme joy, and because on this ground one has superior extreme joy, therefore this ground is referred to as extremely joyful.

Then comes this line in the root text:

Became able to thoroughly shake one hundred transitory realms.

As it says in *Mirror*:

Take the subject a bodhisattvas abiding on the first ground - they're endowed with special abilities and power - because they became able to thoroughly shake one hundred transitory realms.

Those are the four qualities referred to here in this outline, the qualities of being born into the Tathagata lineage, having abandoned the three strong fetters, having come to hold supreme joy, and having become able to thoroughly shake one hundred transitory realms.

Review

First of all what are the ten grounds?

Students: Joyful, Stainless, Luminous, Radiant, Difficult....

Why is the first ground called 'Extremely Joyful'?

Student: After removing obstacles, one finds extreme joy

This ground is called the extremely joyful, because by having freed oneself from the faults relating to that level, and by having attained the qualities relating to that level, then one has attained uncommon supreme joy. Therefore this ground is called Extremely Joyful.

Please give me the three dharmas of ordinary beings.

Students: Compassion, non-dual awareness, bodhicitta.

Then what are the three compassions.

Students: Compassion focussing merely of sentient beings, compassion focussing on dharmas, and compassion focussing on non-focus

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When does the practitioner become a bodhisattva?

Students: When they generate bodhicitta.

What is the entrance gate to the Mahayana path?

Students: Bodhicitta.

What is the name of the first Mahayana path?

Students: Path of Accumulation.

Is there a common basis between a bodhisattva on the Mahayana path of accumulation, and an arya being?

[Student answer unclear]

With regard to the way the practitioner advances from one ground to the next, it should be clear here that is done in meditative equipoise. A bodhisattva advances from one path to the next, or from one ground to the next whilst in meditative equipoise.

[Student answer unclear]

Yes, so that was a correct example. How does one progress from the path of accumulation to the path of preparation?

Student: By attaining the union of calm abiding and special insight focussing on emptiness.

How do we posit calm abiding focussing on emptiness?

Student: Single-pointed concentration

Calm abiding focussing on emptiness is a consciousness that effortlessly focusses single-pointedly on emptiness and is held by the bliss of pliancy. Here the qualities are that the concentration is single-pointed, and that the single-pointedness is effortless. Also the single-pointed meditation is completely and effortlessly unified with the bliss of pliancy.

Even though the practitioner experiences mental and physical pliancy at the ninth stage of calm abiding this effortless combination of single-pointed meditation and bliss hasn't come about. In order to have a fully qualified calm abiding this single-pointed concentration that is unified with the bliss of pliancy has to come about completely naturally, without any effort. If that concentration focuses on emptiness, then it is the calm abiding focussing on emptiness. Here the bliss of pliancy comes about through single-pointed concentration. Then after having focussed on emptiness the practitioner engages in analytical investigation into the subject of emptiness, while remaining in the state of calm abiding. Through the force of this investigation into emptiness further bliss of pliancy is induced, and that meditation is combined with the bliss that is induced through the analysis into emptiness. Then the practitioner has attained the unification of calm abiding and special insight while remaining in calm abiding. If, while remaining in calm abiding this meditation becomes combined with the bliss that arises through the analysis into emptiness, then one has attained the unification of calm abiding and special insight.

What do we call a Mahayana arya?

[Student answer unclear]

You become a Mahayana arya when you attain the Mahayana path of seeing. There are five Mahayana paths. The first four, the paths of accumulation, preparation, seeing, and meditation are referred to as learners' paths. The fifth path is the path of no-more-learning. Within the group of learners' paths the first two, the paths of accumulation, and preparation, are referred to as ordinary paths, or as paths of ordinary beings. The paths of seeing, and meditation are referred to as superior or arya paths. Of course the fifth path is called the path of no-more-learning because one has then perfected all one's Dharma practice.

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Study Group - *Madhyamakavatarama*

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Translated by the Venerable Tenzin Dongak

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25 June 2002

Please generate a virtuous motivation for listening to this teaching, thinking that I have to generate the profound Mahayana bodhicitta, and in order to do so I have to listen to these teachings and then put into practice what I have heard.

2.1.1.3. The Three Qualities of Conquering Higher Grounds and so forth

*Conquering ground from ground and ascending steadily higher,
At the time all their paths to bad migrations completely cease,
At the time all their grounds of individual beings exhaust.*

With regard to the first line, 'Conquering ground from ground and ascending steadily higher', it is the bodhisattva on the first ground that is 'ascending steadily higher' and 'conquering ground from ground'. The bodhisattva on the first ground is conquering the second ground from the first ground, and in this way is steadily ascending up the grounds. As he has already achieved the first ground he can see that he is close to achieving the second ground, and therefore is extremely enthusiastic about conquering the second ground, and thus ascending steadily to higher grounds.

The root text says, 'At the time', which refers to the time of attaining the first ground. Of course 'their paths' refers to the path of the bodhisattva who has attained the first ground.

Concerning this *Mirror* says:

If we consider the subject, bodhisattvas at the time of having attained the first ground - then one can say that all their paths to hell completely cease - because they have abandoned the seed for rebirth there.

At the time of having attained the first ground the bodhisattva has achieved a complete cessation of all the paths that lead to bad migrations. The reason is because bad migrations are regarded as abandonments through seeing, and the bodhisattva on the first ground has completely abandoned these abandonments together with their seeds.

There are no seeds for rebirth in the lower realms in the mind stream of a bodhisattva on the first ground. So the path to bad migrations has ceased. Actually it is said that once they have reached the forbearance level of the path of preparation a bodhisattva cannot take rebirth in the lower realms, and the doors to the lower realms are closed.

The doors are closed at the forbearance level because

the conditions that are needed for rebirth in the lower realms have been eliminated, although the seeds for lower rebirth in the lower realms in the mind stream are still there. If the seeds for rebirth in the lower realms are to ripen they need certain causes and conditions. Once one has reached the forbearance level of the path of preparation those causes and conditions will not be there. Therefore bodhisattvas will not take rebirth in the lower realms. Have they abandoned rebirth in the lower realms? No. That only happens when they reach the path of seeing, because for that a bodhisattva needs to have abandoned the seeds of lower rebirth from the mind stream.

The 'at the time' in the third line of this part of the root text, refers to the time of attaining the first ground, while 'their' refers to bodhisattvas who have attained the first ground. So as it says in *Mirror* one can say:

Take the subject 'bodhisattvas at the time of having attained the first ground' - at that time all their individual being's grounds exhaust - because they are arya bodhisattvas.

Since they are arya bodhisattvas they have gone beyond the grounds of individual beings, and therefore for them all the grounds of individual beings are exhausted.

2.1.2 Showing the Qualities in a Condensed Manner

In this section the qualities of the bodhisattvas are shown in a condensed manner using an example.

The root text reads,

They are clearly shown to be like eighth arya.

Here again, the subject 'they' is bodhisattvas on the first ground. They are clearly shown to be like an eighth arya. Here the eighth arya refers to the trainee stream-enterer. We have four basic divisions of aryas: stream-enterers, once-returners, never-returners, and arhats, and each of those have a trainee level and a resultant level. So there are eight levels in all. If we count them down from the arhats, then the very first one, the trainee stream-enterer, is the eighth arya. So here according to *Mirror*:

Take the subject 'first ground bodhisattvas' - they are clearly shown to be like that eighth arya - because through attaining the first ground they exhaust the faults of the first ground and attain the related qualities.

Summary of the qualities beautifying the continuum of the practitioner

- ∞ The first of the four qualities was attaining a meaningful name and so forth. First of all the bodhisattva attains the name 'ultimate bodhisattva'.
- ∞ Since the Buddhist practitioner has attained the Mahayana path of seeing, they have been born into the **Tathagata lineage**, which means that they are now irreversibly on the path to buddhahood. The abandonments they have eliminated from their mind stream are the **three strong fetters** of the intellectually acquired view of the transitory collections, afflicted doubt, and the view of holding morality and discipline as supreme. Within one

instant they can manifest the **twelve sets of a hundred-fold qualities**.

- ∞ Thirdly we considered the three qualities of conquering ground from ground and ascending steadily higher and so forth.
- ∞ Then there was an explanation of the qualities in a condensed manner by example.

When we reflect, we can see how none of those qualities can in any way show the bodhisattva in a negative light.

2.2. The Qualities of Outshining the Continuum of Others

The qualities outshining the continuum of others has three subdivisions: on this ground outshining hearers and self-liberators through lineage; on the seventh ground outshining hearers and self-liberators through the power of the mind; and the meaning that has been established through the two previous points.

2.2.1. Outshining Hearers and Self-Liberators Through Lineage

The root text reads:

*Even abiding on the first mind of complete enlightenment,
They diminish those born from the speech of buddhas
And self-buddhas through the power of merits increased.*

Mirror:

Consider even those abiding on the first mind of complete enlightenment, Extremely Joyful – they outshine hearers and self-liberators through their lineage – because they diminish hearers born from the speech of the Powerful Able Ones and self-buddhas through the power of the merits of their compassion and bodhicitta; having outshined them their merits increase.

Illumination:

Not only while abiding on the second etc. complete Bodhicitta views, but even while abiding on the first mind of 'Extreme Joy' one's merits will have increased much more than those of self-liberated buddhas and hearers born from the speech of the Powerful Able Ones.

Through the power of one's merits of conventional Bodhicitta and compassion they become diminished and one outshines them. This is another quality different from the qualities mentioned above.

Here a doubt can be generated: if the bodhisattvas on the first ground outshine hearers and self-liberators through the power of their lineage then, first of all, why don't they outshine them also through the power of their mind as well, and from what point onwards do they outshine hearers and self-liberators also through the power of their mind?

So in order to clarify that doubt then here the sutra Maitreya's Liberation is quoted.

Son of good family it is like this, shortly after a prince is born he outshines through the power of his

lineage even all the old and very important ministers, because he has the name of the king.

So even though the prince is just a child, because of his name even very senior ministers and important people in parliament etc will pay great respect to the prince, because of the force of his lineage and his heritage.

In the same way, not long after beginner bodhisattvas have generated the mind of enlightenment they are born into the lineage of the king of Dharma, the Tathagata, and through the force of their compassion and bodhicitta they outshine hearers and self-liberators who have been practising the pure path for a long time.

Here the bodhisattvas being referred to are first level bodhisattvas. Bodhisattvas who have reached the first ground are born into the Tathagata lineage. From that point onwards through the force of their bodhicitta and compassion they outshine hearers and self-liberators. The bodhicitta being referred to here is the bodhicitta arising from signs, or conventional bodhicitta. Specifically, it is the bodhicitta with pure superior intention.

Types of Bodhicitta

If bodhicitta is divided according to the grounds, and the five paths, then we have four types of bodhicitta.

1. The bodhicitta of aspiration and practice is found on first two paths, therefore they are referred to as the grounds of aspiration and practice.
2. Once the bodhisattva has reached the path of seeing then the bodhicitta will be referred to as bodhicitta with pure superior intention. From the first ground up until the seventh ground the bodhicitta will be referred to as pure superior intention. That covers the seven impure grounds.
3. On the three pure grounds the bodhicitta is called ripening bodhicitta,
4. On the path of no-more-learning the bodhicitta is referred to as bodhicitta that has eliminated obscurations.

When it says here that bodhisattvas outshine hearers and self-liberators through the force of their bodhicitta, it refers to the bodhicitta with pure superior intention.

Once bodhisattvas have attained the first ground they outshine hearers and self-liberators through the power of their lineage. That is because they have both bodhicitta and superior compassion.

On this first ground bodhisattvas outshine hearers and self-liberators through the force of the bodhicitta with pure superior intention. Now the question arises: it is mentioned in the scriptures that as one of the benefits of generating bodhicitta, one will outshine hearers and self-liberators. Doesn't that mean that the initial bodhicitta will also outshine hearers and self-liberators? The answer is yes.

The sutras give the example of a diamond that has been broken into splinters. Even a sliver of diamond still outshines gold ornaments and can eliminate

worldly destitution. In the same way even bodhicitta that is separate from the trainings still outshines hearers and self-liberators and places sentient beings in happiness.

The *Compendium of Training* refers to a bodhicitta that is separate from the trainings, meaning the bodhisattva training. Actually that is not really possible. Bodhicitta that is separated from the training of the six perfections is just not possible. What this is referring to is either the aspirational bodhicitta in the continuum of a practitioner who hasn't yet taken engaging bodhicitta vows, or the aspirational bodhicitta in the continuum of a bodhisattva who has broken the bodhisattva vows. In either of those two cases then the bodhicitta is referred to as bodhicitta separate from training.

So as this is completely impossible on the path of accumulation, then it certainly doesn't happen on the first ground. Here it specifically refers to bodhisattvas outshining hearers and self-liberators on the first ground, and this is done from the point of view of having attained bodhicitta with pure superior intention, because it is done here from the point of view of having attained ultimate bodhicitta. Once one has attained ultimate bodhicitta then the conventional bodhicitta becomes bodhicitta with pure superior intention. But it doesn't mean that the bodhicitta on the lower levels doesn't also outshine hearers and self-liberators, because it does.

2.2.2. *Outshining Both Hearers and Self-Liberators on the Seventh Ground Through Awareness*

The relevant line of the root text is,

For those 'Gone Far' also awareness becomes superior.

Mirror has this to say about this line:

If it is asked, 'From which point onwards do they outshine them through the power of their awareness?' Take the subject first ground bodhisattvas – when reaching the seventh ground Gone Far their awareness realising emptiness becomes superior to that of hearers and self-liberators – because from that time they are able to enter into and come out of cessation on a momentary basis.

In *Illumination* Lama Tsong Khapa says:

When those first ground Bodhisattvas reach the ground 'Gone Far', not only will they outshine Hearers and Self-liberators with Conventional Bodhicitta but they will also outshine, they will become superior to, hearers and self-liberators through the power of the awareness of ultimate mind generation.

Here it quotes from the *Sutra of the Ten Grounds*, which says:

'Child of the conquerors it is like that, for example the child of a conqueror endowed with the name of a king by being born into the family of a king will outshine the various group of ministers merely by birth. But it won't outshine them through the force of learning and insight, only through the force of birth and lineage.'

Then once the child of the king has become older and has developed the power of the mind then it will have gone beyond all the activities of all the ministers.

In the same way a child of the conqueror bodhisattva just after having generated bodhicitta outshines all of the hearers and self-liberators through the greatness of the superior thought, but not through the force of their insight and awareness.

The bodhisattva abiding on the seventh bodhisattva ground abides on the greatness of knowing the object, and therefore has gone beyond all the activities of hearers and self-buddhas.

Review

From which point onwards does one become an ultimate bodhisattva?

Student: The first ground.

Bodhisattvas have earned the name ultimate bodhisattvas because they've attained ultimate bodhicitta. Why is a bodhisattva on the first ground born into the lineage of the Tathagatas?

[Student answer unclear]

You have to think that they are definitely abiding within their lineage. This is actually the same for all three types of practitioners: hearers, self-liberators and Mahayana bodhisattvas. Once the individual practitioners of the individual paths have reached the path of seeing belonging to their lineage or their family, then they will not change that lineage and change to another path. They will only follow the path of the lineage into which they have been born as they attained their particular path of seeing.

This means that bodhisattvas are born into the Tathagata lineage, because they don't change to another path. From that point onwards the lineage is definitely abiding.

There is a verse from the *Bodhisattva Charyavatara*, where it says, 'Today I have been born into the lineage of the buddhas etc etc', When we say, 'Today I've been born into the buddha lineage' then as it is referring to the generation of bodhicitta, at that point one has been born into the lineage of buddhas. So that's a bit different from the *Six Session Guru Yoga*, where after taking the bodhisattva vows we say, 'Today I've been born into the Tathagata lineage and from now on I have to act in accordance with those vows etc etc.'

Why do we say a bodhisattva on the first ground has eliminated the three strong fetters, or has eliminated the abandonments through seeing?

[Students give various answers]

The point is, what is the measure that shows that a practitioner has abandoned those particular delusions etc.?

One student answer: Because they haven't got the intellectual view of the transitory collection anymore.

If you say that they don't have intellectual true-grasping because they have realised emptiness, and therefore they have abandoned the intellectual acquired view of the transitory collections, then that

would also apply of course to the bodhisattva on the uninterrupted path of seeing. For a bodhisattva on the uninterrupted path of seeing, the intellectually acquired view of the transitory collections cannot be generated again. However we don't say that they have abandoned the intellectually acquired view of the transitory collections.

Just because a delusion has been rendered ineffective, or has been basically eliminated from the mind stream, and cannot be generated again, doesn't mean that it has been abandoned. At the time of the uninterrupted path of seeing, the intellectually acquired true-grasping cannot be generated. It is not existent and cannot be generated again. Why? Because the uninterrupted path of seeing is the direct antidote that is opposing the intellectually acquired view of the transitory collections. However that doesn't mean that at that time the practitioner has already abandoned the intellectually acquired view of the transitory collection. That happens only when the practitioner attains the liberated path of seeing, and attains the cessation that has abandoned the intellectually acquired true-grasping.

For a bodhisattva, reaching the first ground is simultaneous with attaining an uninterrupted path. From now onwards progressing to a higher ground will always be simultaneous with attaining a liberated path.

Please posit the three fetters that belong to the abandonments through seeing.

Student: Intellectually acquired view of the transitory collection, afflictive doubt, holding moralities and disciplines as supreme.

From the point of view of the five afflicted views and the five afflictive non-views then can you be clearer?

Please tell me the six root delusions.

Students: Anger, attachment, pride, ignorance, afflicted doubt, and wrong view.

What do we have within the wrong views?

[Student answers unclear]

Within the wrong views we have the view of the transitory collection, extreme view, the view holding moralities and disciplines as supreme, and the view holding views as supreme.

The first five delusions are called the non-view affliction. The last five are called the five afflicted views.

Why is the first ground called Extremely Joyful? Why does one say that the first ground holds supreme joy?

Student : Because after abandoning obscurations and attaining the first ground one has great joy.

Which types of powers and abilities does that bodhisattva have?

[Student answer unclear]

It is mentioned here that bodhisattvas in one instant can shake one hundred world systems.

What are the ten perfections?

Students: Generosity, morality, patience, enthusiasm, concentration, wisdom.

What are the last four?

Students: Method, power, prayer, and transcendental wisdom.

For example, on the seventh ground one excels in the perfection of method, and so we have the perfection of method, and on the eighth the perfection of power, on the ninth the perfection of prayer, and on the tenth ground the perfection of transcendental wisdom. It is good to be able to name those ten perfections, which are for the purpose of ripening the continuum of the practitioner.

There are four practices for the ripening of the continuum of others. What are those four practices?

[Students give a variety of answers]

The first one is being generous. Then there is speaking pleasantly. Third is explaining the meaning and fourth is practising the meaning.

First of all one would try to benefit the disciples and try ripen the continuum of others with material generosity.

Then one continues by speaking pleasantly and kindly. For example having invited them in and offered them tea and so forth, and said very pleasantly, 'Hello', and being very kind to them, one then explains the Dharma to them. When we explain the Dharma, especially at the beginning one has to teach very kindly, and according to the mind of the listeners. What one says has to accord with them.

Then of course one has to explain the meaning of the Dharma, such as the ten grounds. the resultant buddha stage, the path etc.

Finally 'practice according to the meaning' means one has to exhort the disciples to practice to what they have heard in accordance with the actual meaning of the teachings. One also has also to practice in accordance with the teachings.

What is a bodhisattva?

[Student answer unclear]

Take the subject buddha. Is a buddha a bodhisattva?

Student: They are bodhisattvas because they have generated bodhicitta.

A bodhisattva is a sentient being who has generated bodhicitta. So it is a practitioner on any of the four learners paths: the paths of accumulation, preparation. seeing, or meditation.

Next week is discussion group, so please discuss well!

*Transcribed from tape by Mark Emerson
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Edited Version

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25 June 2002

DISCUSSION

BLOCK: 3
WEEK: 5
2ND JULY 2002

4th June

What are the 6 perfections, and why are they presented in the context of the Arya Bodhisattva grounds? Is the lam rim presentation of the 6 perfections different from Chandrakirti's?

Discuss types of people who are 'difficult to find' (from Nagarjuna's *Compendium of Sutra*)

Je Tsongkapa said, "Bodhisattvas shouldn't have a partial practice." discuss

11th June

What's the difference between a conventional mind generation and an ultimate mind generation?

Identify the only mind (below a fully enlightened being) that is 'untainted'. Why is an arya (person who has realized emptiness directly) still forced to see things as self-existent after they have abandoned true grasping?

Why is bodhichitta 'contaminated'?

The Bodhisattvas, self-liberators, and hearers direct perception of emptiness is qualitatively the same. How to the Mahayana and Hinayana paths differ.

18th June

What is the state (mental condition) in which a practitioner advances from ground to ground?

How does a practitioner get to the first bodhisattva ground? Discuss the progressive realizations that lead to the Path of Seeing.

25th June

Why is a bodhisattva on the first ground born into the lineage of the Tathagatas?

What are the four methods for ripening others?

What is a bodhisattva precisely?

Tara Institute Study Group 2002 - 'Entering the Middle Way'

EXAM

NAME:

BLOCK: **3**
WEEK: **6**
ASSIGNED: **9TH JULY 2002**

MARK:

1. What advice does Nagarjuna give to those who practise the Mahayana path yet achieve no results? As such, summarize the lamrim contemplations from Master Shantideva's '*Compendium of Training*.' [8 marks]

2. Name and describe the six perfections. Give their individual correlations (results) [18 marks]

Total Marks - 48

Tara Institute Study Group 2002 - 'Entering the Middle Way'

3. What is it to be 'contaminated'? Give both the Abhidharma and Consequence schools interpretation. [2 marks]

4. Why are the ten bodhisattva levels of development called 'grounds'? [2 marks]

5. 1. Give the following:

i) The five Paths:					
ii) The four levels of Path #2:					
iii) The learner paths:					
iv) The ordinary paths:					
v) The Arya paths:					

[18*1/2 marks]

6. What are the only three mental afflictions an *Arya* (at the Path of Seeing) completely gives up? [3 marks]

7. What are the two ways in which practitioners on a Mahayana track outshine other practitioners? Explain the meaning and corresponding stages of these two with the use of Maitreya's 'Prince' analogy. [6 marks]