

# Nagarjuna's Precious Garland

འཇམ་དཔལ་ལྷན་པོའི་བཀའ་བཀའ་ལྟོས་པའི་གསུང་རྒྱུ་ལོ་ལོ་།།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga  
Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

19 June 2012

As we have generated the motivation with the refuge and bodhicitta prayer, we can now engage in the practice of meditation. [meditation]

We can now set the motivation for receiving the teaching along these lines: For the purpose of benefitting all sentient beings I need to achieve enlightenment. So for that reason I will listen to the teaching and put it into practice well.

## 1.1. Extensive explanation of fifty-seven defects to be forsaken

### 1.1.1. The first fifteen, anger, etc.

#### 1.1.1.1. ONE THROUGH FOURTEEN, ANGER ETC.

It is good to keep in mind the secondary delusions that we have already covered.

#### (9) Non-shame and (10) non-embarrassment

The next verse begins:

*405ab Non-shame and non-embarrassment  
Are insensibility concerning oneself and  
others [respectively]*

The two defilements listed here, *non-shame* and *non-embarrassment*, are both secondary or proximate delusions. Their opposites, shame and embarrassment are two of the eleven virtues, which we really need to understand and adopt.

Gyaltsab Je's commentary on these two lines reads:

*Non-shame and non-embarrassment are the insensibility of not refraining from ill-deeds, concerning oneself and others respectively.*

As explained here, **non-shame** relates to engaging in non-virtuous deeds without any sense of shame (in other words, lacking integrity), while **non-embarrassment** relates to engaging in non-virtuous deeds without any consideration as to what others might think and how they might be affected. These two secondary delusions and their opposite two virtues are essential points for our practice. So it is really important that we thoroughly understand them. As mentioned in the teachings, without a sense of shame and embarrassment there would be nothing to encourage us to avoid creating non-virtue and negativity. These are really important points.

It is essential to adopt these virtues of shame and embarrassment, and avoid the delusions of non-shame and non-embarrassment. If we can understand shame and embarrassment, we can then understand their opposites, which are to be avoided. As explained in the commentary, **shame is defined as a mental factor that uses oneself as a reason to avoid misdeeds**, whereas **embarrassment uses others as a reason for avoiding non-virtue**. The opposites of each are to be understood in the same way: not avoiding misdeeds and non-virtue is non-shame at a personal level, and embarrassment in relation to others.

If we encounter an opportunity to engage in a misdeed or non-virtue, then we remind ourselves that it would be

improper to engage in these misdeeds or non-virtues because of the vows we have taken. This is the virtuous mental factor of shame, since we are avoiding misdeeds because of our personal integrity about upholding vows and avoiding misdeeds. Without that sense of shame and personal dignity and integrity we would completely disregard whatever vows and commitments we have taken.

Embarrassment is when we refrain from misdeeds because we know that it would displease the holy gurus, buddhas and bodhisattvas if we were to commit them. Without such regard for our gurus and the buddhas and bodhisattvas there would be nothing to prevent us from engaging in misdeeds.

How could we possibly refrain from engaging in non-virtue if we don't have any concern about either our own integrity or respect for our gurus, and the buddhas and bodhisattvas? Furthermore we need to recall that as our gurus are clairvoyant they will definitely know of our misdeeds! Even though one may feel other people will not find out, our gurus, buddhas and bodhisattvas will definitely know, which would be disrespectful. As soon as we bring that to mind it will prevent us from engaging in the misdeed, thus presenting us with an opportunity to engage in virtue.

As I have mentioned previously, the purpose of having statues and images of holy beings is to remind us and provide a way to engage in both purification practices, and practices that accumulate merit. So the reason why we have holy objects in the gompa or in our own rooms is to remember to engage in those practices, regardless of any doubts we may have about whether they are actually enlightened beings.

Furthermore, self-liberation vows need to be taken in the presence of an abbot and other members of the Sangha, and when we take the bodhisattva vows we do so by envisioning ourselves in the presence of the buddhas and bodhisattvas. For tantric vows we envision the tutelary deities or *vidams*, all the celestial deities with their mandalas, along with the buddhas and bodhisattvas. So if we break those commitments and vows, and engage in misdeeds we will be doing so in the presence of these holy beings as well! We really need to keep this in mind, and see how essential and important shame and embarrassment are as a way to avoid non-virtue and accumulate more virtue.

#### (11) Inflatedness

*405c Inflatedness is not to pay respect.*

Here Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

*Inflatedness is not to pay respect to gurus and so forth.*

This is another essential point to keep in mind. With a sense of inflatedness, there is no way that we will be receptive to the good advice provided by the gurus and so forth. However, even if we initially have a sense of inflatedness, we will naturally develop a genuine sense of respect when listening to the Dharma starts to make sense.

This reminds me of a story I might have shared with you in the past about an old student called (American) Harry. He told me about the very early days when he first encountered the Buddhist teachings. He was in Dharamsala and saw an announcement about a Buddhist talk, which he attended. It happened to be Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey who was giving the teachings then. Harry told me that when he first went in he sat very rigidly and thought 'Well, I wonder what he has to say? What important points has he got to mention?' He told me he sat up very straight with a sense of being equal to

Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey. However, as Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey presented his teaching, it started to really sink into his heart. It affected his mind to the extent that the next day he could not possibly sit up straight with a sense of pride, rather he started to naturally bend down out of respect, just like the others. By the third day, he said, his sense of inflatedness was completely subdued.

This of course is a personal account that was related to me, but we often see people going into a teaching with a care-free attitude, not really thinking of it as being a spiritual occasion. However, as the Dharma begins to sink in and one begins to really relate to it, then a sense true respect can develop.

It is very important that we develop not only respect for our gurus and holy beings, but also for other practitioners. Such respect will be an antidote to jealousy. Otherwise, when we see other practitioners doing well, we might think, 'Oh they think they are so holy and spiritual, but it must be all be very shallow'. Instead of feeling glad about their practice, we feel a sense of contempt, viewing their attempts as meagre and insincere. Such negative attitudes come from a sense of inflatedness and contempt or conceit from our own side. So it is good to develop a sense of respect for other practitioners and, at the very least, rejoice in their good deeds.

As Lama Tsong Khapa and other teachers have mentioned, rejoicing is in fact a very profound practice. When we rejoice in a great being's activities we gain a certain amount of merit ourselves, which is said to be a really incredible way to gain merit without much effort. So it is good to rejoice in the deeds of holy beings as well as other practitioners. This is very profound advice.

As we engage in our practice, we need to remind ourselves that the whole purpose of Dharma practice is to overcome the sense of conceit. Indeed it is said that the Buddha's purpose in giving the teachings was to overcome pride and the sense of inflatedness and conceit. So if we find our pride increasing after studying the Dharma then we have completely missed the point, and it has not served its purpose as a transformative practice. This is essential advice to bear in mind.

In Gyaltab Je's commentary, the mention of *and so forth* refers to other practitioners. We often find it all too easy to hold others in contempt and look down upon them, brushing aside their attempts to practice, at whatever level it may be. This is really harmful, not only to oneself, but to the other who is being looked down upon, as it can really discourage them. Anyone who genuinely engages in practice, who has real knowledge, will not look down upon others and will not hold them in contempt. So we need to be mindful about this in order to ensure that our attempts to practice don't turn into conceit.

We may sometimes encounter people who seem to be simpletons, and who don't seem to know much, but as Lama Tsong Khapa and other masters mention, the real qualities of an individual lie within themselves and are not necessarily outwardly visible. Therefore, we need to protect ourselves by not ridiculing others. That would be a real misdeed.

There is the story about the illustrious great practitioner and scholar Longdro Lama Rinpoche. When he first entered Lhowa Khangtsen in Sera Monastery, it was customary for a new monk to be sent to fetch provisions and so forth from Lhasa, which is about seven or eight miles from the monastery. He would wear old robes that were quite torn, and appeared to be very poor. On one occasion, as he was

returning to the monastery he reached a spot where he put down his load and sat there, happy to perhaps be contemplating on bodhicitta. Nearby there was a well dressed lady of noble status, and when she saw the destitute state of this monk, she prayed, 'May I never be reborn in this kind of state'. Longdro Lama Rinpoche's response was, 'Don't worry, it will be very hard for you to reach this state!'

This is but one story about the destitute appearance of monks in the monastery. There were many great practitioners who put so much time and energy into their study and practice, that they did not pay attention to their clothes and didn't worry very much about food. It was very hard to get provisions, but they just survived on what little they received, so of course they appeared to be quite destitute. However, although they appeared to be destitute simpletons they were great practitioners. There were many monks in the monastery who were so eager to study, that they paid no attention to acquiring more food or clothing. Their only focus and attention was directed toward their studies and practice, and they didn't seek provisions or clothing, and sometimes relied on offerings from others. When their provisions ran out, and their hometowns and families were two or three months away, they had to make do. There were many occasions where monks had to live on just one meal a day and survive with the help of others.

Many of the monks living at the monastery recalled the days when new monks first arrived. Some of those who came were destitute, and directed all of their attention and focus to their studies and so forth. Even though it was hard and difficult at the beginning, as they studied and practiced, things gradually became better for them. By the time they became geshe, they became quite majestic in appearance and, without any effort on their part, people would just come and offer them provisions and food and so forth. Whereas others from well-off families, who didn't pay much attention to study and practice, became weaker and weaker and really destitute in their old age.

On another note, when Geshe Jampel Senge (who was then living in Perth) visited Melbourne, we were provided with a good lunch, and Geshe Jampel Senge said, 'We have been presented with such nice food and so forth, which must be the result of having debated for many years in the monastery!' I then made the comment that it wasn't necessary to feel that we needed to reap the result of our studies and debates solely by receiving good food! Geshe Jampel Senge's response was 'Well, why not? If we get good food now, then that's a good deal!'

The main point in relation to this defilement is that inflatedness is a state of mind that lacks respect for gurus as well as other practitioners and so forth. In order to protect ourselves from this defilement, we need to ensure that whatever knowledge we have gained does not become a cause for feeling inflated and conceited, because that can be a cause for disrespect for gurus and other practitioners. So we really need to protect our mind from that.

## (12) Faulty exertion

According to the text:

*405d. Faulty exertion is to be polluted by belligerence.*

As explained in Gyaltab Je's commentary:

*Faulty exertion is physical and verbal actions polluted by belligerence, such as frowning and so forth.*

*Faulty exertion* is described here as being motivated by a state of mind influenced by *belligerence*, and so it basically stems from anger. That belligerence influences the mind to the

point where one exerts oneself to engage in *physical and verbal actions*, such as frowning and so forth.

### (13) Arrogance and (14) Non-conscientiousness

As explained in the text:

*406a Arrogance is haughtiness [due to wealth, and so forth].*

*Non-conscientiousness is non-application at virtues.*

Some translations use haughtiness instead of arrogance; as explained in Gyaltsab Je's text:

*Arrogance is haughtiness due to wealth and so forth*

Thus **arrogance** is translated here as being haughty about having sufficient *wealth, status and so forth*, which can produce a heightened feeling that 'everything is quite fine' or 'everything is quite good'. This feeling can actually occur very easily when things are seemingly going well in life; it's a heightened state of feeling satisfied with the way things are going – temporarily – in one's life.

That arrogance can then lead to **non-conscientiousness** which, as Gyaltsab Je explains:

*Non-conscientiousness is non-application at virtues due to attachment and so forth and thus not protecting one's mind from contaminations.*

Non-conscientiousness can easily arise from a sense of haughtiness. It is state of mind that does not apply to virtue, *due to attachment to one's own wealth and status and so forth*. In other words through not applying oneself to virtue, one is *not protecting one's mind from contamination*. Non-conscientiousness can also be understood in the context of being the opposite of a conscientious mind, which is a mind that applies itself to virtue, thus protecting itself. These are very central points to reflect upon.

As explained previously, it is easy to fall into a state of arrogance or haughtiness if one is not mindful. If we allow the mind to become carried away with external material gains and status, then our mind can easily fall into a state of feeling elated with haughtiness. As I have shared with you previously, I periodically check myself when I am experiencing a sense of joy. If I find it is related to external circumstances then I become wary about that. As I often share with you, I find that it is much more worthwhile to rejoice and feel happy when I see my meagre attempts at practice and meditating on the points of the Dharma, bearing some positive result.

If a sense of well-being, joy and contentment is merely related to sufficient food, clothing, funds and so forth, then there is the danger that when all of that changes, one's mind will fall to the other extreme of being completely devastated and overwhelmed. So it is really important that we periodically check and be wary about falling victim to that feeling of haughtiness or arrogance.

Non-conscientiousness follows from arrogance. When we lack a sense of conscientiousness we can easily make mistakes and engage in misdeeds and so forth and fall victim to engaging in non-virtue. That is because we are not able to protect our mind. A simple way to understand conscientiousness and its opposite is that conscientiousness is a mind that allows one to engage in virtue, whereas non-conscientiousness is the opposite; it is a mind that prevents one from engaging in virtue.

Here we can take note that the earlier defects of inflatedness and faulty exertion are not specifically included in the twenty secondary or proximate afflictions, whereas

arrogance or haughtiness and non-conscientiousness are included in the twenty secondary afflictions. Also conscientiousness is included as one of the eleven virtues. These are really important points to bear in mind. More specifically, they are a way to protect one's mind from engaging in misdeeds, in particular breaking vows and commitments. In the *Foundation of all Good Qualities* that many of us recite regularly one of the verses states:

Led by this pure thought,  
Mindfulness, alertness and great caution arise.  
The root of the teachings is keeping the Pratimoksha  
vows  
Please bless me to accomplish this essential practice.

All three, mindfulness, introspection (or alertness) and conscientiousness (or great caution) are mentioned together, which goes to show how all three are equally essential in preventing one from breaking the vows and commitments. **Mindfulness**, or being mindful, is a state of mind that does not forget instructions or the advice e.g. being mindful of vows and various points about commitments. **Introspection** is a state of mind that periodically checks and investigates whether one's mind is being distracted or is moving away from observing the vows and commitments. **Conscientiousness** refers to applying one's mind to engage in keeping those vows and commitments and to apply one's mind to virtue. It is good for us to periodically remember this aspiration from the *Foundation of all Good Qualities* and apply it to our everyday life. That is how it will be of most benefit to us.

#### 1.1.1.2. PRIDE (15)

The fifteenth defect, pride, is also one of the six primary delusions (which are included in the fifty-one mental factors). As the root text reads:

*406cd Pride has seven forms  
Each of which I will explain.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

*Pride has seven forms each of which I will explain.*  
However within the category of the fifty seven defects, pride is listed only as one.

A commentary<sup>1</sup> on the fifty-one mental factors gives this definition of pride:

Pride depends on the view of the transitory collection as a real 'I' and has the aspect of a puffing up of the mind upon observing one's own wealth, qualities, youth, and so forth.

As explained in this definition, pride is a mental state or mental factor which, in relation to one's wealth, qualities and one's youthful age and so forth, has a puffed up feeling or a sense of inflatedness. It is also described in some teachings being like the feeling we have when we reach the top of a mountain and look down at everything below us. At that point we have a sense of everything being under us, as well as the elated feeling of being above everything. Pride is similar in that it is a sense of being above everyone else, with a sense of superiority over others.

As the definition indicates, pride depends on the view of the transitory collection, and thus it is related to the sense of a

<sup>1</sup> As explained in the previous teaching, these definitions were prepared for the Masters Program by extracting them from Hopkins, *Meditation on Emptiness*, pp. 261-268. Hopkins noted that he based his text on Yeshe Gyaltsen's *Clear Exposition of the Modes of Minds and Mental Factors*, and Lati Rinpoche's oral teachings, which may have been based on Geshe Jampel Sampel's *Presentation of Awareness and Knowledge*.

truly existing 'I'. Based on that notion of a truly existing self, one develops a secondary sense of feeling superior to others who seem to have fewer qualities than oneself, and being competitive with those who seem to have more qualities, or who are the same. So basically, these feelings relate to that strong sense of 'I', the strong sense of the identity of self.

Although pride is one of the root delusions that we need to try to uproot and overcome, we must not mistake pride for self-confidence, which is something we need to acquire or adopt in order to accomplish what we do need to do. In both a worldly sense and from a Dharma point of view, we need to adopt self-confidence while discarding pride.

In some instances, for example in *The Bodhisattvas Way of Life*, a quality to be adopted is described as pride. But Lama Tsong Khapa clarified this point, saying that because self-confidence is similar to pride, it is more likely that Shantideva is referring to the self-confidence needed to overcome the delusions, in the sense of 'I can do that' or 'I will do it'. So in that sense we can be encouraged by a sense of self-confidence.

Of course from a worldly perspective, we also need to encourage ourselves to see that we are capable of doing something and thus mustering up the courage and will to actually accomplish what we wish to achieve. This does not necessarily have an element of looking down upon others, it's just that one has a heightened determination 'I will accomplish this' or 'I will do that' or 'I do have the capacity'.

Self-confidence is essential to the Dharma because it forms the basis of overcoming the delusions. We need to have the self-confidence to generate the strong determination, 'Having seen the faults and the disadvantages of the delusions infesting my mind, I need to overcome them and I will do it'. That strong determination and will to overcome the delusions within one's mind can be described as self-confidence. So it is really important that we understand the difference between pride and self-confidence.

*The Bodhisattvas Way of Life* describes three categories of pride: deluded pride, a pride of action, and a pride in ability<sup>2</sup>. There, pride of ability is the self-confidence that is to be developed. It is called pride because the way it develops is similar to how deluded pride develops, but it is not a delusion. This classification is discussed in the *Great Exposition of the Path to Enlightenment* or the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* by Lama Tsong Khapa, so you can also refer to that.

We can slowly go through the seven types of pride in our next session. Different texts present these seven in slightly different ways.

It is good to relate the defilements we have covered this evening to the fifty-one mental factors. The first two that we covered, non-shame and non-embarrassment are included in the twenty proximate delusions. The opposite of those, shame and embarrassment, are included the eleven virtues. To review the main point there, non-shame is engaging in non-virtue or misdeeds without considering oneself, one's own vows and so forth. Whereas non-embarrassment is engaging in misdeeds and non-virtue with a lack of consideration for others, in particular the gurus, buddhas and bodhisattvas. The third of the defects we covered this evening, inflatedness is not one of the twenty secondary delusions however, as explained here, it is a state of mind that will cause one to lack respect for gurus and so forth. Likewise faulty exertion is not one of the twenty proximate

delusions; it is a state of mind that is based on belligerence, which leads to the use of facial gestures or verbal misconduct. Lastly, arrogance or haughtiness is another of the twenty secondary afflictions, as is non-conscientiousness. When we include pride we have covered fifteen of the defilements.

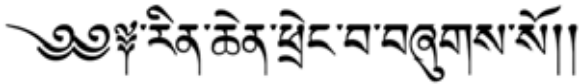
Thus we have covered belligerence, enmity, concealment, malevolence, dissimulation, deceit, jealousy, miserliness, non-shame, non-embarrassment, inflatedness, faulty exertion, arrogance, non-conscientiousness, and pride.

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*Edited Version*  
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<sup>2</sup> See Chapter 7, verses 49 to 55.

# Nagarjuna's Precious Garland



Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

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Based on the motivation we generated with the Refuge and Bodhicitta prayer, we can now engage in the meditation practice, maintaining our focus on the object of our practice. [meditation]

Just as we have done in the *tong len* meditation practice, it is essential to incorporate cultivating love and compassion into our daily life. We should definitely contemplate the essential significance of love and compassion periodically during our daily life, rather than relegating it to a few minutes of meditation practice. In fact, even when we make an attempt to bring a positive, virtuous state of mind to our practice of meditation, we often find it is very difficult to do so. This is not surprising, because most of the time our mind is acquainted with non-virtuous thoughts, and we are engaged in non-virtuous activities. If we don't pay much attention to cultivating a virtuous state of mind regularly, then it is quite natural that it will not come about readily—even when we make an attempt to practise.

It is a fact that for long as we have conscious mind, thoughts will be generated in our mind and if we let our normal state of mind run free, then it is more than likely that we will become preoccupied with worldly, non-virtuous thoughts.

For a practice of meditation to be fruitful, we need to derive the real benefit of developing a virtuous state of mind. Thus, it is essential to periodically bring to mind love and compassion throughout the day, thinking about the plight of sentient beings, wishing them happiness and to be free from suffering. It is by generating such thoughts that our mind becomes more familiar with being in a virtuous state.

Since we regard ourselves as Buddhist practitioners, it is essential that we ensure that our conduct is in tune with our ideals. We do this by ensuring that our pattern of life is in line with a virtuous frame of mind. We may be setting aside some time for meditation and daily practice, so on a regular basis it is good to bring to mind the main purpose for doing that. It is to familiarise our mind with virtue so that whatever we engage in becomes a means to accumulate virtue.

As all the teachers have advised, it is our motivation that determines whether what we do is virtuous. If, in our everyday life, we periodically bring to mind the attitude of love and compassion, and generate the motivation, 'May whatever I engage in now serve as a means to benefit others', then, regardless of whether our activity is a specific Dharma practice, or a worldly activity, it will become a virtuous activity. Even though we may not completely cancel out all the non-virtue that might be involved with some mundane activities, the positive attitude that we develop can definitely assist us in ensuring that whatever activity we engage in does not become a fully negative deed.

In fact, our motivation can turn specific mundane activities into great virtue. For example, we have engaged in the acts of eating and drinking numberless of times in the past and will continue to do so numberless of times. So when we

develop some awareness and mindfulness, we can turn these seemingly mundane activities of drinking and eating into a great occasion for accumulating great virtue.

As a way of contemplating before eating, Nagarjuna presented us with this verse:

Seeing this food as medicine,  
We eat it without attachment or hatred  
Not to become fat, not out of pride,  
Not to look strong, only to sustain the body.  
This offering to the organisms living within my body  
That is now presented as material aid  
In the future may it be the offering of Dharma  
For the benefit of all beings  
And in order to attain Enlightenment  
I now partake of this food and drink.

We really need to think about the meaning of these lines. I am not boasting but I do find these practices really meaningful and practical to engage in regularly. It is something that comes about naturally when we have spent some time incorporating it into our daily life. Thus when we think about it, with the right motivation, we can turn every action of drinking and eating into a practice that is in accordance with Nagarjuna's advice.

It is essential that we think about how much time during the day we spend being completely immersed in frivolous activities, and how much time we set aside for adopting a virtuous frame of mind. If we just let our normal life rule us then, if we don't have much time for formal meditation and practice, we won't have much opportunity to create virtue. But if we periodically remind ourselves and contemplate these essential points of love and compassion, then the opportunity to accumulate virtue is always present. This is something that we need to bear in mind; we can manage to do that. It is just a matter of being aware of it and really trying to cultivate it. Then even normal everyday activities will be an opportunity to become virtuous. So it is in this way that we ensure that our life becomes meaningful.

Regardless of being Buddhists or practitioners, we can still waste so much time and energy if we aren't really mindful. It is not that we are practising meditation because we have nothing better to do and need to fill in time. The reason why we engage in the practice of meditation and study is so that we can use our time virtuously and meaningfully. That is something we need to keep in mind.

If we offer food and drink before we consume it in a mindful way, then it can be an opportunity to accumulate great virtue and merit in just a short span of time. A more complete form is to making an offering first to one's guru and Three Jewels. Then, as mentioned previously, on a second level as one consumes the food or drink, imagine satisfying not just oneself but also all living forms (and apparently there are thousands of them) within our body. They are sustained when we are sustained. We imagine that we are giving them sustenance now, so that they may be sustained by the Dharma in the future. It takes just a minute or two to bring this to mind, and when we consume the food or drink it becomes a really meaningful form of practice.

Opportunities to accumulate great virtue and merit do not have to be on grand occasions. Even stopping for a minute or two, before we consume something, and bringing that offering to mind can definitely accumulate great merit and virtue. This is an example of making our day-to-day activities an opportunity to accumulate virtue. If we really pay attention we will notice that if we take an opportunity to

accumulate virtue, our mind feels happy and joyful and, as a consequence, the rest of the time can be spent quite joyfully and happily.

If, on the other hand, we fail to accumulate virtue and merit, we find that our mind will be more prone to delusions, and it will be all too easy for a negative state of mind to arise, which will inevitably be a source of angst. As a consequence the mind won't be happy and joyful, and thus it will be very difficult to benefit others; indeed we won't even want to be with others. Often, when we are in a depressed, unhappy state of mind, we want to shy away and not engage with others.

In contrast, when our mind is joyful and happy, we don't mind being with others, and when we are with others we are able to contribute to their happiness as well, by saying and doing things that are meaningful. If we don't pay careful attention, this might not be all that obvious, but if we are sincere and look into ourselves, we will notice that there is a difference when we have an opportunity to practise virtue.

Here the doubt may arise that if we have made an offering to the Three Jewels sincerely, would it not actually belong to the Three Jewels? If so, then is it permissible for us to consume it ourselves after we have offered it to the Three Jewels? The point to recognise here is that we are offering the essence to the Three Jewels. With the motivation to sustain ourselves so that we can be of service and benefit to others, we can definitely consume what we have offered to the Three Jewels. They will gladly allow us to do that as a way to benefit others. These are points to keep in mind.

Those who like chocolate can offer chocolate. Then, you can consume it yourself with the thought that this is making me happy so I can help others, which is a way to not only enjoy the chocolate but, in a meaningful way, an opportunity to accumulate virtue as well. So thus the main point here is that whatever we consume, food and drink, if we do it in a proper way we can accumulate virtue.

I remember Angelica once asking a question about what do after we offer chocolate on the altar. In fact this is a reasonable doubt: if we sincerely offer, for example, chocolate to the buddhas and the Three Jewels, then what do we do after that? How long do we keep it on the altar? It might not be appropriate to throw it away, so what do we do with it? We will not face this dilemma when the earlier mentioned motivation is developed.

## 1.1. Extensive explanation of fifty-seven defects to be forsaken

### 1.1.1.2. Pride (15)

We need to recognise the difference between pride and self-confidence. While we definitely need to overcome pride, self-confidence is a positive state of mind that we need to have in order to accomplish the good deeds and practices that we set out for ourselves. In order to not feel discouraged, we need to develop self-confidence and what is sometimes known as the power of mind, which is a majestic, courageous mind.

As mentioned in our last session, in some texts the term 'pride,' may be used in the context of describing the need to develop self-confidence, because both pride and self-confidence share the aspects of an uplifting and cultivating a courageous mind. So we must understand that, depending on its context, pride can mean self-confidence rather than the deluded pride. However, we definitely need to overcome deluded pride which, because it opposes compassion,

hinders the development of a kind, considerate, and compassionate mind.

Both the text and commentary mention that there are seven types of pride.

In the last session I mentioned that in the seventh chapter of *Bodhisattvacharyavatara* Shantideva presented three types of pride: deluded pride, a pride of action, and a pride in ability. The **pride of action** is the type of pride that a bodhisattva develops. A bodhisattva develops a courageous mind that is determined to engage in the actions of the practices of the six perfections, thinking, 'For the sake of sentient beings I will definitely take up these practices.

The **pride of ability** relates to mustering an awareness of one's potential to apply the antidote for overcoming delusions, i.e. it refers to the courage and capacity to overcome the delusions in one's mind.

As mentioned earlier, Nagarjuna's text explains seven types of **deluded pride**. Although the presentation of these seven is slightly different to the way pride is presented in *Abhidharmakosha*, there is no essential difference.

a) The first, **pride of selfhood**, is presented in the following verse:

407 *Fancying that one is lower than the lowly,  
Or equal with the equal,  
Or greater than or equal to the lowly –  
All are called the pride of selfhood.*

After basically reiterating the text, Gyaltsab Je's commentary adds some further points:

*Fancying that one is lower than the lowly, or equal with the equal, or greater than or equal to the lowly are all called the pride of selfhood.*

If one wonders how could assuming one to be lower than the lowly be a form of pride? That is because it is associated with an inflated feeling that it is fine even if one is lower than the lowly.

The pride of selfhood is a pride in relation to equating oneself with others. Those who are really mindful of their state of mind seem to acknowledge that even when one feels lower in status than others there is still this feeling of 'How could I possibly be lower than others? In other words, despite feeling lower in status than others, an inflated sense of self-worth is still present.

People have confided in me, saying that it is actually quite painful to feel that one is lower in status than others. So pride of selfhood is associated with self-worth, in the sense of being uncomfortable with the notion that someone else is better than oneself. For as long as that inflated feeling of self-worth is there, it is a form of pride that makes one feel uncomfortable.

b) **Exceeding pride**

408abc *Boasting that one is equal to those  
Who by some good quality are superior to  
oneself  
Is called exceeding pride.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary basically reiterates these lines of the verse:

*Boasting that one is equal to those who, by some good quality, are superior to oneself is called exceeding pride.*

This is the pride that is developed in relation to those who are conventionally considered to be of equal status. Even though one may feel that one is equal to others, there is still a sense of inflated self-worth, so there is a sense of superiority as well.

### c) Pride beyond pride

408d *Fancying that one is superior to the superior,*  
409 *Thinking that one is higher than the very high,*  
*Is pride beyond pride*  
*Like sores on an abscess*  
*It is very vicious.*

Here Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

*Fancying that one is superior to the superior and thinking that one is higher than the very high is pride beyond pride; like sores on an abscess it is an extremely stubborn defect, and thus very vicious.*

This is a very strong or elated sense of pride, and the example of its severity is *like sores on an abscess*. Although the Tibetan word *dre* also means grain, here the meaning refers to a certain kind of a skin condition translated here as an abscess. When there is an already existing skin condition on which sores develop, it becomes even more painful i.e. there is more pain on top of something that is already painful. So the pride described here is a pride built on top of an existing pride, which why it is called pride beyond pride. *Just like sores on an abscess, it is extremely stubborn defect, and of all the forms of pride it is one of the most vicious.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary then continues with a quote:

As *Bodhisattvacharyaavatara* states:  
Inflated by the disturbing conception of my self-importance,  
I shall be led by it to the lower realms.  
It destroys the joyous festival of being a human.  
I shall become a slave, eating the food of others.  
Stupid, ugly, feeble and everywhere disrespected

According to the *Bodhisattvacharyaavatara* the pride of an inflated sense of self-importance is a cause leading to the lower realms. For humans it completely destroys good conditions, as explained here with an analogy, the joyful festival of being human. When these good conditions are destroyed by pride, one becomes like *a slave, eating the food of others, stupid, ugly and so forth.*

### d) The pride of thinking 'I'

As the root text explains:

410 *Conceiving an I through obscuration*  
*In the five empty [aggregates]*  
*Which are called the appropriation*  
*Is said to be the pride of thinking I.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

The basis of all, which are called the appropriated aggregates, are *conceived as 'I'*. Through obscuration of the *five* naturally *empty* aggregates is said to be the pride of thinking 'I'.

*The basis of all* refers to the five contaminated aggregates, which are the basis of all suffering. The pride of thinking 'I' is focusing on these aggregates and having conception of 'I', thinking, "This is "me" and "I".

### e) Pride of conceit

Here the root text reads:

411ab *Thinking one has won fruits [of the spiritual path]*  
*Not yet attained is the pride of conceit.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains this with an example:

*Thinking one has won fruits, such as a stream enterer, not yet attained is the pride of conceit.*

The pride of conceit is assuming that one has attained fruits, such becoming a stream enterer, when in fact when one has

not done so. This is different to lying to others by saying that one has obtained such a state when one knows that is not true, which is called a lie of completely deceiving others. In this case, it is not a lie of deception because, even though they have not obtained it, the individual assumes that they have obtained that status. So there is a sense of pride in having obtained a state such as a stream enterer, when in fact they have not obtained it. Likewise, if one goes around claiming, 'I have obtained an arya's path', when one hasn't then that would be a complete lie of deceiving others. However if one assumes that one has obtained an arya path, when in fact one has not obtained it, then that is the pride of conceit.

### f) Erroneous pride

This is covered in the second half of verse 411:

411cd *Praising oneself for faulty deeds or negative deeds,*  
*Is known by the wise as erroneous pride.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

*Praising oneself for faulty deeds, such as boasting that 'I did it' is known by the wise as erroneous pride.*

This form of pride is something that we can easily relate to. We find that there are many who engage in negative deeds and who, rather than admitting that it is wrong deed, actually boast about it. Here, an example is the generals and so forth, who engage in battles where lives are lost. Despite these downright negative deeds, they come back and are considered conventionally to be very brave heroes. They, too, assume that they are very brave and have achieved great deeds, when in fact they are just boasting about their negative deed of killing.

### g) Pride of inferiority

As the text reads:

412abc *Deriding oneself, thinking*  
*"I am useless," is called*  
*The pride of inferiority.*

In his commentary Gyaltsab Je explains:

*Deriding oneself, thinking 'Even if I am alive, I am useless', is called the pride of inferiority.*

The pride of inferiority is the sense of worthlessness, a complete lack of self-confidence, thinking, 'I am useless, there is no point in even being alive'. However even with that sense of being worthless, there is still that inflated sense of 'me' or 'I', which is of primary importance.

This is slightly different to the pride of feeling lower than the lowly within the pride of selfhood, which is described as a feeling that even though one feels lower than the lowest, one still maintains an inflated sense of worthiness.

412d *Such is a brief description of the seven prides.*

In conclusion Gyaltsab Je states

*Such is a brief description of the seven prides.* 'Brief' can also indicate that pride has been condensed into only a few categories

### 1.1.2. From hypocrisy to the forty-first, not thinking of death

The Hopkins translation uses 'hypocrisy', but other translations use 'pretentious behaviour'.

### (16) Hypocrisy

Hypocrisy is one of the five types of the mental factor of deceit.

As has been explained in detail previously and, as I have also mentioned previously, the Lam Rim teachings explain clearly that offerings should be obtained without deceit. Offerings of deceit can be either through its cause or through one's motivation. Deceitful by through cause would be obtaining offerings from an unethical source, such as stolen goods etc. Deceit through motivation is to make offerings for personal gain, such as thinking, 'By arranging nice and beautiful offerings, others will praise me', or 'I will be seen as doing very virtuous deeds'. So we need to understand that deceit takes different forms in relation to offerings. As mentioned previously, it is permissible to consume offerings after one has made an offering free from deceit and with the proper virtuous motivation.

With respect to the first kind of deceit, hypocrisy, the text reads:

**413ab** *Hypocrisy is to control the senses  
For the sake of goods and respect.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

*Hypocrisy is to control the senses for the sake of goods and respect. An extensive explanation on this was given in the text previously.*

So hypocrisy is the form of pretentious behaviour that refers to adopting a conduct of seemingly controlling one's senses and so forth, just for the sake of receiving goods and respect from others. If one were to offer goods obtained from such pretentious behaviour then it would be an improper acquisition derived from deceit. If, however, you are offered goods because of your good behaviour, then it is fine to use those goods as an offering, as it would not be an unethical offering.

### (17) Flattery

The root text about the other kind of pretentious behaviour, and the second form of deceit, is quite clear:

**412cd** *Flattery is to speak pleasant phrases  
For the sake of goods and respect.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary makes the same point as the root text:

*Flattery is to speak pleasant phrases for the sake of goods and respect.*

As clearly explained here, uttering pleasant words and so forth to others, with the intention to receive goods and respect is defined as flattery. In offering praise to others we need to be mindful that if there is an intention to receive goods or some kind of favour in return, then that would be flattery. The teachings explain that we need to be really mindful about this.

We also find that some people are very gullible; when offered the tiniest bit of praise they become excited and start giving. That is also something we need to be wary of. We need to be mindful about being easily influenced by the praise of others and their intentions.

### (18) Indirect acquisition

**414ab** *Indirect acquisition is to praise  
Another's wealth in order to acquire it.*

Some translations use 'contrived means', which refers to praising *another's wealth in order to acquire it*. Even though it is explained very briefly, it also has the implication that you might praise someone's generosity as a way of hinting that it would be good if they were to present you with goods and gifts. That would be a form of indirect acquisition.

### (19) Pressured acquisition

**414cd** *Pressured acquisition is manifest derision  
Of others in order to acquire goods.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

*Pressured acquisition is manifest derision of others, such as telling them that they are miserly, in order to acquire goods.*

Here goods or gifts are obtained by using derision, saying, 'Oh, you are very miserly'. This is the fourth form of deceit.

### (20) Desiring profit from profit

**415ab** *Desiring profit from profit  
Is to praise previous acquisitions.*

Here, Gyaltsab Je's commentary states:

*Desiring profit from profit is to praise previous acquisitions.*

An example of this would be when you praise someone, such as by showing great appreciation when they give you something, with the intention that they will give you more again in the future. It is because of this danger that strict vinaya rules state that when something is offered to a monk, he should not offer praise or say, 'thank you', thus showing appreciation for receiving that gift, because of the danger of hinting that you want to be offered more in the future.

Of course we need to understand this in the right context. It is in fact quite appropriate to show appreciation and thank people who do something with real sincerity. The intention here is to acknowledge their generosity and really appreciate their gift, rather than any intention of wanting to receive more in the future. It is only a deceit when one has an ulterior motive. That is what needs to be kept in mind.

We have to be mindful because we need to act in accordance with the effect on others. If you don't show appreciation and thank them then you can actually hurt the feelings of someone who has gone out of their way to give you something. So we need to be mindful about that, and not assume that by not showing appreciation we are practising properly.

Gyaltsab Je's commentary concludes this section on the five deceits thus:

These five are listed individually.

Unlike the seven forms of pride listed under one heading, these five types of deceit, hypocrisy and so forth are listed individually.

The remainder of the text is not too extensive, and we can continue with the remainder of the 57 defects in our next session.

In the *Eight Verses of Mind Training* one of the verses includes practices for overcoming pride. It says

When in the company of others  
I shall view myself as lowest of all  
And from the depth of my heart  
Hold all others as supreme

*Transcribed by Su Lan Foo  
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Edited Version*

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# Nagarjuna's Precious Garland

འཇམ་དཔལ་འཕེད་པའི་བཀའ་འགྲུབ་མཐོན།།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

3 July 2012

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Using the motivation we have generated with the Refuge and Bodhicitta prayer that we have just recited, we can now engage in the meditation practice. [meditation]

Just like the attempt to meditate that we have just made, it is really good to implement the practice into our daily life. Spending some time practising meditation helps to subdue our mind, and thus achieve our objectives. However, because our ignorance is so deep-rooted, practising a focused meditation alone won't suffice to subdue our mind. If we are to really tackle that ignorance we have no choice but to learn and understand more about how to overcome that ignorance, which is where study comes in. So meditation and the study of Dharma work hand in hand to complement each other.

As Lama Tsong Khapa mentioned in the *Lam Rim Chen Mo* (the *Great Exposition of the Stages to Enlightenment*), the way to implement the practice of gaining the realisations of all three scopes of the path is to combine single-pointed meditation with analytical meditation. These two meditation practices of complement each other and help us to engage in the practice of the three scopes. This is really essential advice.

We might have noticed through experience that, when we spend time studying, by analysing and thinking about the material, the essential points remain firmly established in our mind. That is because we have worked hard to gain that understanding, which helps to increase our wisdom and intelligence. These benefits can definitely be seen.

However it is important to understand the difference between general analysis and analytical meditation. Some may feel that any form of analysis of Dharma material is analytical meditation, but that is not the case. Specifically, analytical meditation is when, having initially analysed a topic and reached some understanding of it, one places one's full attention and focus on that topic and nothing else. Furthermore, analytical meditation also requires us to be able to maintain a focus that is free from any laxity and excitement. For these reasons analytical meditation is regarded as a meditation practice. If the mind is not focused on any particular object then it is difficult to posit that it is a meditation practice. So we need to understand the real implication of analytical meditation, which is to maintain a single-pointed focus while analysing a particular topic.

Of course, as beginners we are a long way from experiencing the real danger of subtle laxity and subtle excitement in our meditation. However, if we really make an attempt to maintain our focus on the topic we are analysing then, by training our mind in that way, we will begin to develop an authentic basis for analytical meditation.

If analytical meditation was not considered to be a form of meditation, we would also have to say that special insight is also not a form of meditation. As we understand from the teachings, we need to first develop calm abiding followed by special insight. Then we further develop the meditation practice to achieve the union of both calm abiding and

special insight. It is at that stage that we achieve a really significant level of meditation practice as a basis for higher realisations. This is how we need to understand the significance of analytical meditation.

You will be familiar with the analogy that illustrates the union of calm abiding and special insight. Just as a small fish moving about under the surface of a clear pond does not disturb the pond by causing ripples on the surface; likewise when one develops the state of special insight based on calm abiding and they are in unison, then analysing an object will not disturb or hinder a single-pointed focus on that same object. This is how the union of calm abiding and special insight is to be understood.

Even at a beginner's level, it is good to work towards that goal by making genuine attempts to implement analytical meditation in our daily practice. We initially try to develop a single-pointed focus on the object, and when we have developed some capacity to do so, then we can begin to analyse the object within that single-pointed focus. If we train our mind in such a way then, even at a beginner's level, we are leaving the positive imprints and the potential to further develop that later. The goal is to develop the ability to single-pointedly focus on emptiness while using one's wisdom to analyse it in order to understand more profound levels of emptiness. This is how one eventually develops that actual state of the union of calm abiding and special insight directly focussing on emptiness.

## 1.1. Extensive explanation of fifty-seven defects to be forsaken

### 1.1.2. From hypocrisy to the forty-first, not thinking of death (cont.)

Gyaltsab Je's commentary doesn't go into very much detail about the following defects, so we can cover them quite rapidly.

#### (21) Repeating faults

The root text reads:

415cd *Repeating faults is to recite again and again  
The mistakes made by others.*

Gyaltsab Je's basically reiterates the root text:

*The twenty-first, repeating faults is to recite again and again whatever mistakes made by others.*

This is something that we really need to be mindful about in our personal practice. Although bodhisattvas will never engage in mentioning the faults of others, we can be very prone to engaging in this misdeed. When we talk about the faults of others again and again, we are letting everyone know about fault or mistake. The fault itself might be quite insignificant, but by repeating it again and again, it becomes a major issue and we might even become obsessed about it. Ultimately, it won't harm the other person, but repeating it to others again and again will actually harm us.

Of course going around and talking about the faults of others is the fault of idle gossip, but it may also turn into the fault of divisive speech. When you continue to highlight the faults of a particular person, it can influence others. Although they have little to do with that person, they feel antagonistic towards them, just because of what has been said about their faults. So we need to be really mindful and careful about discussing the faults of others. Otherwise, talking about these faults again and again, whenever the opportunity arises might become like reciting a mantra!

The last person we might approach to speak about these faults is the person themselves. If we can muster up enough

courage to face the person, and address the fault with them, then there may be some benefit for them. Otherwise we end up telling everyone about the fault except the person with the fault, who we don't dare face. We need to be really mindful about this.

It seems that part of our worldly activities consists of gathering together to talk about the faults of others. 'They are doing this, or they are doing that' and going on and on about the kind of mistakes that people make and so forth. Indeed we sometimes call that socialising with others.

The great Kadampa master Atisha advised that we should talk about our own mistakes, while hiding the faults of others, and talk about the qualities of others while hiding our own qualities. This essential instruction is the ideal approach. If one goes on and on about the mistakes of others it just causes more and more disharmony and negativity for both ourselves and those who hear about those mistakes. Eventually when the particular individual hears what has been said, it also causes them unhappiness. So there is really no benefit in talking about the mistakes of others, as it will only cause more confusion and conflict.

On the other hand, talking about the qualities of others really helps us to develop respect for others. How wonderful it would be if we were to do that! We would then be able to encompass others in our scope rather than being judgemental and hostile towards them. When we think about the good qualities of others, we will have good thoughts about them. This is the way we need to practice, in order to protect our own mind as well as the minds of others.

## (22) Non-collectedness

**416ab** *Non-collectedness is inconsiderate irritation  
Arisen from illness.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

The twenty-second, *non-collectedness, is inconsiderate irritation arisen from illness.*

Although there is no specific commentary on it, one of the Tibetan words used here, and in Indian commentaries on Nagarjuna's work, relates specifically to a mind of attachment that causes distress within one's own state of mind. So it has the connotation of a mind based on attachment, which then develops into a state of mind of *inconsiderate irritation*.

## (23) Clinging

**416cd** *Clinging is the attachment  
Of the lazy to their bad possessions.*

Again Gyaltsab Je's commentary reiterates the text:

The twenty-third, *clinging*, arises due to three causes, i.e. the earlier two plus *attachment to bad possessions*. This is a trend of *the lazy*.

As the commentary explains, *clinging arises due to three causes*. The earlier two causes may refer to attachment to goods and respect, and thus for the sake of obtaining them to engage in deceitful means such as hypocrisy and so forth. As explained, these attachments come from a lazy mind, and this is the main point that we need to understand. As explained here, attachment to goods such as offerings or gifts made by others, as well as praise plus attachment to bad possessions come from a lazy state of mind.

Here we need to understand laziness as the opposite to virtuous effort. The definition of virtuous effort is a mind that is inclined to joyously engage in virtue. Thus we need to understand that a mind that is obsessed with clinging or

attachment to these three particular objects, goods, respect and bad possessions, come from a mind of laziness, which is the opposite to a virtuous mind.

At a personal level we need to determine whether we fit into category of having a tendency to be lazy. How much are we inclined to willingly and joyfully take up practising virtue in our daily life? How much of our life is dedicated to attachment to bad possessions and so forth? This is how we need to assess ourselves.

As mentioned earlier, when we assess our life we need to see how much time we spend pursuing these objects of attachment—praise, gifts, promotions, and non-virtuous objects. If we find ourselves spending most of our time and energy in pursuit of these things, then we can safely assume that we fit into the category of being lazy. As the Buddha himself mentioned, 'There is no possibility of cultivating any virtue in the person who is lazy'. We need to understand how to recognise the faults of laziness along those lines.

If we are inclined to a lazy state of mind, there is no possibility of developing a genuinely joyous mind in accumulating virtue, and so one would lack joyous effort. If we lack joyous effort, then there is no possibility of consistently engaging in virtue, because we would be more inclined to pursue those objects of attachment. We really need to assess ourselves in this way. If we are to engage in a practice of pure Dharma, then it is essential that we assess ourselves in this way, so as to ensure that we are practising in a pure form. Otherwise it is very easy for us to lapse from the actual practice of virtue, which can only result in further decline for ourselves.

The Buddha mentioned in a sutra, 'At one time we were equals, but due to exertion and joyous effort in practising, I have freed myself, while out of laziness you are still circling in samsara'. Thus, by developing disenchantment for the pleasures of samsara and an earnest mind seeking liberation, the Buddha was claiming that he was freed from samsara and had obtained the state of liberation and enlightenment. However, we are still in samsara due to laziness and attachment to the pleasures of samsara. We need to apply that statement to ourselves. The Buddha was not talking about some other beings on another planet, but to us personally. We are still in samsara because of our laziness, and with that in mind we need to take the initiative to overcome laziness. In these few lines, the Buddha is giving us very profound advice.

## (24) Discrimination of difference

**417ab** *Discrimination of differences is discrimination  
Impeded by desire, hatred, or obscuration.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

The twenty-fourth, *discrimination of difference between self and others is discrimination impeded by desire, hatred or obscuration of dullness*.

Here *discrimination* is specifically the *discrimination between self and others*. When such discrimination is impeded by any one of the three delusions of *desire, hatred* or, what is translated here as *obscuration*, which is basically a form of dullness or ignorance, there is a discrimination of difference between self and others. We need to understand that the discrimination mentioned here is a faulty discrimination.

We can also relate this to the sequence in which the five aggregates are presented. As explained in past teachings that sequence shows the way delusions develop in our mind: form is followed by feeling, and then discrimination. First we come into contact with forms, which give rise to feelings

–pleasant forms induce a pleasant feeling and unpleasant forms induce unpleasant feelings. On the basis of the nature of those feelings. Thus we generate attachment to the pleasant feelings induced by pleasant objects, and generate aversion to the unpleasant feelings induced by unpleasant objects. This is how attachment and anger (or aversion) arise in our mind. Thus, the sequencing of the five aggregates is in relation to the sequence of how delusions arise in our mind.

### (25) Not looking into the mind

*417cd Not looking into the mind is explained  
As not applying it to anything.'*

Gyaltsab Je states:

The twenty fifth, *not looking into the mind is explained as not applying* the mind to *anything* impeded by desire, hatred or ignorance or nothing virtuous or non-virtuous.

As the Kadampa masters have mentioned, the best instruction is to look into one's mind. Conversely, it is a fault to not pay any attention at all to what is arising in one's mind. Regardless of whether there is negativity or virtue, it is a fault to completely let the mind run free and not periodically check it. In order to be free from this defect or fault we need actually look into our minds and check what is arising. If it is a virtuous state of mind we further develop it, but if it is negative, then we need to recognise it and find ways to apply the antidotes for overcoming those negative attitudes and states of mind. We can only recognise whether something arising in our mind is virtuous or non-virtuous when we actually take the initiative to look into our own mind. Thus we need to engage this form of practice.

There is no extensive explanation on this point, but I suppose we need to understand that although this presentation of the defects doesn't necessarily mean they are delusions in their own right, they do need to be abandoned. So we need to understand how not looking into one's mind is a defect, which needs to be abandoned.

### 26. Degeneration of respect and reverence for deeds concordant with the practices

*418ab Degeneration of respect and reverence for deeds  
Concordant with the practices occurs through  
laziness.*

Gyaltsab Je's commentary is:

The twenty-sixth, *degeneration of respect and reverence for deeds concordant with the practices, occurs through laziness.*

The way to understand this is in relation to oneself. *Degeneration of respect and reverence for deeds concordant with the practices, which occurs through laziness* means that if we don't apply ourselves to engage in the practices of accumulating merit and virtues, then we will not be worthy of respect and reverence for deeds concordant with the practice. Because we are not engaging the practice, we would be guilty of the defect of degeneration, and to avoid that we need to apply the opposite, joyous effort, to our practices. So if one overcomes laziness, then one can overcome this fault of degeneration of respect.

### (27) Being a bad person

*418cd A bad person is regarded as being a spiritual  
guide  
[Pretending] to have the ways of the  
Supramundane Victor*

Again, Gyaltsab Je basically reiterates the verse:

The twenty-seventh, *a bad person is regarded as being a spiritual guide pretending to have the ways of the Supramundane Victor.*

It would not be in accordance with the ways of the Supramundane Victor, or the Buddha, if someone regarded as a spiritual guide or teacher were to engage in the act of teaching and so forth with the mere intention of personal gain, such as receiving offerings and respect. The Buddha engaged in giving teachings and advice solely for the benefit of others, and not for any personal gain.

Here we can recall the daily activities of the Buddha, as stated in *Vajra Cutter sutra*, which you have recited many times:

Then, in the morning, having put on the lower and upper Dharma robes and carried the begging bowl, the Bhagavan entered the great city of Shravasti to request alms. Then, having gone to the great city of Shravasti to request alms, the Bhagavan afterwards enjoyed the alms food, and having performed the activity of food, since he had given up alms of later food, put away the begging bowl and upper robe. He washed his feet, sat upon the prepared cushion, and having assumed the cross-legged posture, straightened the body upright and placed mindfulness in front.

From this account we can see how the Buddha, even while engaging in seemingly normal activities such as going out on an alms round and so forth, was always conscious of what would be presented in his teaching. With 'mindfulness in front', indicates that even the Buddha paid particular attention to ensuring he had a vividly clear mind, focussed on what was to be presented in the teachings.

This is another essential point for us to keep in mind. When we are presenting teachings and so forth, we should not to take it lightly and do it in a seemingly distracted way. Rather we should have it consciously in our mind at all times if we are to present it to others. This is quite a significant point that we can gain from this account. Reading these passages can really move our mind tremendously, as they show how immaculately the Buddha engaged in deeds to benefit sentient beings.

### (28) Yearning

*419ab Yearning is a small entanglement  
Arising from lustful desire.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

The twenty-eighth, *yearning though manifest, is a small entanglement arising from lustful desire.*

This reminds me of the remark I once made to someone, which I have already shared with you. When they asked me whether they had to give up all attachments, I said, 'Perhaps it would be okay to keep some small attachments'; they were very glad to hear that! It gave them a sense of temporary relief because we all have the notion that without attachment, there can't be any pleasure.

### (29) Obsession

*419cd Obsession, a great entanglement  
Arising from desire.*

Here Gyaltsab Je explains:

The twenty-ninth, *obsession is a great entanglement arising from desire* for the five sensual objects of forms, sounds and so forth.

What is translated here as *obsession, is a great entanglement arising from desire for the five sensual objects*, which are visual forms, sounds, smells, tastes, and tactile feelings. It is

because of our obsession with these five objects that we are constantly drawn towards them as a source of pleasure. An obsession is, as explained here, a great entanglement arising when we completely fall for beautiful objects. If we see beautiful objects then a strong desire for the beautiful objects to arises. Similarly we develop very strong desires for beautiful sounds, delicious tastes, and things that feel or smell nice, which then develop into an obsession.

### 30. Avarice

*420ab Avarice is an attitude  
Of clinging to one's own property,*

The commentary basically reiterates the verse:

The thirtieth, *avarice is an attitude of clinging to one's own property.*

### 31. Inopportune avarice

*420cd Inopportune avarice is attachment  
To the property of others.*

Here the commentary reads:

The thirty-first, *inopportune avarice is attachment to the property of others.*

This is quite clear.

Many of these defects are related to attachment. I was intending to give an explanation of attachment here, even though I have done so in the past. The main thing to understand about attachment is that because it is a delusion it is necessarily a faulty or mistaken state of mind. As I have explained previously, one needs to really understand what aspect is mistaken.

When attachment for a beautiful object arises, it is not mistaken in relation to the actual beauty of the object, as there is no denying that the object is beautiful. What it is mistaken about is the exaggeration of the beauty seen in the object. We need to really understand the distinction between the natural beauty of the object, which does exist, and the mistakenly exaggerated beauty, which does not exist but for which one develops attachment.

I mentioned the importance of making offerings of our food and drink last week. As I have mentioned in the past, we first recite the mantra OM AH HUM three times to consecrate the offering.

To understand the significance of the mantra and how it acts to consecrate and purify the offering we can consider the meaning of each syllable.

- ∞ HUM is the seed syllable of Akshobya, the enlightened mind. As there is nothing that an enlightened mind cannot purify, HUM signifies purifying all impurities of the substance to be offered. Thus the five contaminated sensual objects are transformed into the five uncontaminated pure substances.
- ∞ AH is the seed syllable of Buddha Amitabha, and it transforms the actual substance into nectar.
- ∞ OM is the seed syllable of Vairochana, and the significance of consecrating the offering with OM is that it increases the offering. So having consecrated the offering by purifying it and transforming it into nectar, OM has the effect of increasing the offering many times over. We need to understand here that increasing doesn't merely mean increasing in number; it means that it is inexhaustible, no matter how much you partake of it.

When we recite OM AH HUM three times before the offering, then with the first recitation you visualise that the mantra purifies and establishes and consecrates the offering. With the second recitation the mantra transforms the offering into uncontaminated nectar, while the third recitation makes it inexhaustible.

When we recite the blessing OM AH HUM three times, make the offering and recite the offering prayer, it is essential to incorporate visualising making the offering to all the buddhas and bodhisattvas. Regardless of whether we are able to visualise them well or not, just the thought that the buddhas and bodhisattvas are present is sufficient for them to actually receive our offerings—after all, they are present at all times.

So with an awareness of, and at best, a visualisation of the buddhas and bodhisattvas, we bring to mind that we are making this offering to these holy objects, or the merit field. Through the mantra we have purified the five contaminated sensual objects, transforming them into uncontaminated pure substances. So when we offer tea and food the form is the beautiful colours of the substance we are offering, and when we recite the offering prayer we make an offering of sound. Then there is the smell and the taste and then the feel of the object. So we are offering the five sensual objects to be enjoyed by the five senses of the enlightened beings.

The main part of the offering is when one imagines that the enlightened beings accept the offering, and in doing so, there is a newly developed uncontaminated bliss that they experience within their minds. So the actual offering is when one imagines the enlightened beings experiencing uncontaminated bliss. The term 'offering' refers to the Sanskrit term, *puja*, which some say is actually pronounced *purja*. The main meaning of a puja is to please the minds of the deities, the gurus, the buddhas and the bodhisattvas. Our actual offering is when we imagine that they have experienced uncontaminated bliss as a result of our offering, which they are extremely pleased with. That is how we need to understand it.

This is another way to accumulate great merit and virtue on a daily basis. Since we regard ourselves as practitioners, we need to use every opportunity of eating and drinking as a way to accumulate merit. A genuine offering with this awareness in our mind will definitely give us an opportunity to accumulate great virtue and merit. The more we eat and drink the more we accumulate merit, although of course we need to be mindful we don't overeat and get a stomach ache!

This is how we train our mind in accumulating virtue on a regular basis. As mentioned previously, since we eat and drink so many times a day, if we can start to develop our mindfulness and awareness by making that activity an opportunity to accumulate virtue and merit, then we will become more and more familiar with accumulating virtue, and in that way our mind will become more in tune with virtue.

If we can utilise whatever activity we engage in as a way to generate a virtuous mind, to busy ourselves with accumulating virtue, then it will be an appropriate sort of 'busyness', rather than just being completely immersed in worldly concerns and activities. When we utilise whatever activity we do as a means to accumulate virtue, then it serves its purpose and whatever activity we engage in will not waste our time.

*Edited Version*

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# Nagarjuna's Precious Garland

འཇམ་དཔལ་ལྷན་པོའི་བཀའ་སློབ་ཀྱི་རྒྱུ་རྐྱེན་གྱི་ལོ་རྒྱུས་ལྟར་།།

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by the Venerable Michael Lobsang Yeshe

10 July 2012

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Following the motivation that we have just generated with our recitation of the Refuge and Bodhicitta prayer, we can now engage in the practice of meditation.

If we regularly pay attention to what refuge and the bodhicitta attitude entails in our everyday life then, through that familiarity, a mere recollection of refuge and bodhicitta will enable one to generate the appropriate motivation when we engage in the practice of meditation and so forth. We need to understand that being able to generate the appropriate motivation requires attention and acquaintance regularly in our everyday lives.

It is also important to note that both refuge and bodhicitta fall into the category of analytical meditation. In fact, most of the practices presented in the Lam Rim teachings prior to the explanation of calm abiding, are based on analytical meditation. So it is essential that we don't underestimate the need for such analytical meditation. If we think that single-pointed meditation in itself is the goal, and neglect analytical meditation then we won't gain a complete overview and understanding of the path. It is through familiarity with analytical meditation that we are able to travel along the path to enlightenment, beginning with the practices that are common to the small scope. Furthermore, familiarising ourselves with analytical meditation on a regular basis refreshes our understanding of the main points on the path.

As beginners, we may tend to neglect analytical meditation and consider that single-pointed meditation is more important, and become engrossed in that. But if we are not careful, there is the danger that an incorrect single-pointed meditation will actually dull our mind. There are those who have commented and confided in me that although they have spent many years in meditation, their mind have just become darker, rather than clearer. That is an indication that they have been adopting an improper technique, which when applied over a long time can actually make the mind more dull and ignorant.

Recalling the earlier motivation that we had generated, let us now engage in the *tong-len* meditation practice. [meditation]

## 1.1. Extensive explanation of fifty-seven defects to be forsaken

### 1.1.2. From hypocrisy to the forty-first, not thinking of death (cont.)

#### (30) Avarice

The root text reads:

420ab *Avarice is an attitude  
Of clinging to one's own property,*

Here, Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

The thirtieth, *avarice*, is an attitude of clinging to one's own property.

*Avarice* is a form of clinging that arises from attachment to one's own possessions. It is also one of the secondary afflictions of the mental factors.

As has been explained many times previously, it is good to understand what attachment actually is. Attachment is a mind which, focusing on an object, exaggerates the attributes or the qualities of that object, thus inducing a longing for, or clinging to, that object. The mind that exaggerates these qualities arises from an inappropriate attention; while the object itself may indeed have qualities, those exaggerated qualities induced by the inappropriate attention do not actually exist. It is the same with anger, which arises as a result of exaggerating the faults of the object and thus developing an aversion towards that object.

As His Holiness the Dalai Lama has mentioned in his teachings, scientists have found through scientific investigation that when one is angry with an object, some 95% per cent of its perceived faults are in fact a projection from one's own side, while only about 5% are actual faults. His Holiness commented that this is similar to how it is explained in the teachings, so it is good to know that both Buddhists and scientists have come to the same conclusion.

It is also noteworthy to consider the methods that scientists use in their investigations. They don't take things on faith, and they only accept something after thorough investigation and research. It seems that scientists don't immediately assert a conclusion. Rather, they propose an explanation and investigate its worth by using reasoning, logic and experiments. When they have made a concrete finding, they then come to a conclusion based on that finding. The Buddha's teachings also advise us of the need to investigate with an intelligent mind, using logic and reasoning.

The approaches of both Buddhism and scientific empirical investigation are similar. His Holiness the Dalai Lama also states that science and Buddhism can be compatible because their approach to conducting investigations is the same. Indeed some Buddhist explanations have been accepted by science. Now of course the Buddhist teachings were imparted by an omniscient being, the Buddha himself; so we have reason enough to accept whatever he taught. But most of his teachings are presented in a manner that is based on reasoning and investigation, to explain all aspects of reality.

The investigation is not done because we don't accept the Buddha as being a valid being, because we have complete conviction and reliance upon the Buddha's words. But there is a reason why the Buddha himself said, 'You need to investigate and further analyse what I have explained just as you would analyse gold by rubbing, cutting and burning it'. It is because the Buddha taught at various different levels, and thus while some teachings are to be accepted literally many others have to be interpreted.

So while we have no qualms about the validity of the Buddha's words in general, we do need to investigate the Buddha's words that need interpretation. The Buddha's teachings contain implicit meanings along with explicit meanings, and it is those implicit meanings that have to be investigated and understood through logic and reasoning.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama has also referred to the fact that scientists, particularly the neuroscientists, are now beginning to really take a keen interest in trying to understand what the mind is. They initially based their understanding on the mind being part of the brain. But when some scientists observed bodies of meditation masters who passed away, which did not decompose but remained fresh for numbers of days, they began to question and wonder how this was possible. As far as the scientists are concerned, from a medical standpoint the brain is dead. So how and what is keeping the body fresh? They are now

beginning to really question their own assertion that there is merely one mind which is related to the physical brain. His Holiness the Dalai Lama mentions, scientists are taking a keen interest in this question and are using whatever instruments and devices they can to try to detect the nature and activity of the mind.

The main point that is being emphasised here is, of course, the importance of using our intelligence to investigate and reason things out, especially when it comes to defining reality and so forth. In fact, there are teachings that mention that of the two states of mind, a clairvoyant mind and an intelligent mind, the latter is much sharper and firmer. Of course, we may think that a clairvoyant mind is a very advanced mind, but as the teachings explain, an intelligent mind can advance much further when it comes to practice and study. This is an important point to keep in mind.

There is a story in relation to this about the great masters Asanga and his younger brother Vasubandhu. Apparently their mother was a very compassionate woman. At one point in her life she was feeling very distraught about not being able to help the Dharma to flourish. So she made this strong fervent prayer, 'May I bear sons who will propagate the Dharma and help it to flourish extensively'. Later, she bore the brothers who became the renowned masters Asanga and Vasubandhu.

As they were growing up they had a natural tendency to engage in debates which at times become argumentative. Asanga apparently had already obtained certain level of clairvoyance from past lives. However, it was known that Vasubandhu had more intelligence. One day, when they were engaged in a debate trying to outwit each other, their mother wanted to appease the situation and drew their attention to a cow that was about to give birth. 'Rather than arguing to prove who is right', she said, 'I want you to predict the colour of the calf and what kind of markings it will have.' Asanga attempted to use his clairvoyance and predicted that the calf's forehead would be white. Vasubandhu, not being able to perceive the calf with clairvoyance, instead used his intelligence and wisdom. He knew that when the calf is in the mother's womb it would have to be curled up, so he calculated that the tip of the tail would naturally lie on top of the forehead. So he proclaimed, 'It's not the calf's forehead but the tip of the tail that is white!'. Sure enough, when the calf was born the tip of its tail was white and not the forehead! This goes to show how Vasubandhu outwitted Asanga through reasoning and logic.

### (31) Inopportune Avarice

This refers to being attached to the possessions or property of others. So if one develops strong attachment regardless of whether the object belongs to oneself or to others, it is a defect or fault. This is to be understood.

Here the root text mentions:

**420cd Inopportune avarice is attachment  
To the property of others.**

Gyaltsab Je's commentary basically reiterates the verse:

The thirty-first, *inopportune avarice*, is a covetous attachment to the property of others.

As explained here, inopportune avarice is an attachment to the property of others, so it is a mind of covetousness. For example, when you go window shopping, you might see many things that you like and you think, 'Oh, that is very nice, I wish I had that!', and then you notice something else and think, 'I wish I had the money to buy that; it really looks nice'. Or if someone else is wearing something beautiful, you

keep thinking, 'What they have is really beautiful and nice, I wish I had that'. Each time we think in that way we have a covetous longing or desire to possess something that belongs to someone else.

While wishing to possess something that belongs to someone else may seem like a harmless thought, it becomes the basis for further negative deeds. There are those who become so obsessed with possessing something that belongs to someone else, that they may even resort to stealing it. So theft and so forth are motivated by covetousness. That is how we need to understand the ill-effects of being attached to the property of others.

### (32) Irreligious Lust

The first two lines of the next verse of the root text are:

**421ab Irreligious lust is desirous praise  
Of women who ought to be avoided.**

Here, Gyaltsab Je's commentary reads:

The thirty-second, *irreligious lust*, is out of attachment having the intention to utter *desirous praise of women who ought to be avoided*.

As explained here, irreligious lust is, in the case of a man, praising a woman out of lustful desirous intentions. It is a fault to have ulterior or devious motives when one offers such praise as, 'Oh, you are so good', 'you're really beautiful and intelligent', and so forth. Offering such praise makes the other person excited and can be a cause for them to become attached to you. So this defect is offering praise with that sort of intention.

One needs to understand this in its correct context, and be able to distinguish between offering appropriate praise and praise that is based on irreligious lust. One ought to praise women for the qualities they possess, and in fact denigrating women is one of the root transgressions of the tantric vows. If we don't understand this in its proper context, we may easily misinterpret what is being presented and think, 'Oh, I should not be praising women at all', which would be completely missing the point. It is appropriate for a man to offer praise out of respect for a woman who possesses unique qualities. But if it is done out of lust or pure attachment, then it is irreligious lust. In tantric teachings the extensive qualities of women are mentioned.

### (33) Hypocrisy

**421cd Hypocrisy is to pretend that one possesses  
Good qualities that one lacks, while desiring  
ill deeds.**

On this Gyaltsab Je states:

The thirty-third, *hypocrisy*, is to pretend that one possesses good qualities that one lacks, while desiring ill deeds.

This, as stated previously, is a fault about which we need to be really mindful. If we are not careful, we may be prone to pretending that we have good qualities for the sake of securing praise from others, when in fact one does not possess them. That is what is defined as hypocrisy.

### (34) Great Desire

**422ab Great desire is extreme greed  
Gone beyond the fortune of knowing  
satisfaction.**

Here Gyaltsab Je's commentary makes a minor addition to further clarify the point:

The thirty-fourth, *great desire*, is, because of strong longing for possessions, *an extreme greed gone beyond the fortune of knowing satisfaction*.

When there is an excessive longing for possessions, that greed can go beyond the fortune of knowing satisfaction. Being obsessed with greed and never feeling satisfied is said to be the most extreme level of greed. The real purpose of having possessions, good fortune and so forth, is to develop a sense of satisfaction from them. It is explained that material wealth and so forth serves its purpose when one experiences a sense of satisfaction from it. In contrast, when there is a lack of satisfaction, then no matter how much wealth and possessions one may have, even if it is wealth equal to the gods, it will not bring any sense of joy. Thus the real culprit is the greed that goes beyond any measure of satisfaction.

The quality of knowing contentment and having less desire, as you would be aware, is one of the main requirements for someone who wishes to develop calm abiding. It is really important, particularly for ordained monks and nuns, to embody the quality of contentment and less desire. However it is something we all need to be mindful of.

### (35) Desire for Advantage

*422cd Desire for advantage is to want to be known  
By whatever way as having superior good  
qualities.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

The thirty-fifth, *desire for advantage, is to want to be known by whatever way*, specifically by wishing others to proclaim, that one *has superior good qualities*.

Desire for advantage is a particular sort of desire of wanting others to know that one has good qualities. This implies waiting to hear praises like, 'Oh you are so lovely' and 'Everyone mentions how wonderful you are'.

### (36) Non-endurance

The first two lines from the next verse are:

*423ab Non-endurance is an inability  
To bear injury and suffering.*

As the commentary explains:

The thirty-sixth, *non-endurance is an inability to bear injury caused by others and one's own suffering*.

As explained here, non-endurance is a lack of patience. It is a defect that is to be abandoned, while its opposite, patience, is to be adopted. As explained previously, the definition of patience is a mind that does not become disturbed in the event of harm or suffering. As it is explained here, its opposite, non-endurance, is when one has an inability to bear injury whether it is caused by others or by one's own suffering. The state of mind of non-endurance is actually one of agitation and anger. We need to understand that the virtue of patience is practised when we don't allow our mind to become disturbed in the event of injury or harm caused by others, or by our own suffering.

### (37) Impropriety

The second two lines from the verse explain:

*423cd Impropriety is not to respect the activities  
Of a teacher or spiritual guide.*

Here Gyaltsab Je's commentary basically reiterates the verse:

The thirty-seventh, *impropriety, is not to respect the activities of a teacher or spiritual guide*.

This is easy to understand.

### (38) Not heeding advice

The first two lines of verse 424 cover this:

*424ab Not heeding advice is to not respect*

### *Counsel concordant with practice.*

As Gyaltsab Je's commentary explains:

The thirty-eighth, *not heeding advice, is to not respect counsel concordant with practices*, such as thinking, 'It doesn't matter whether I am virtuous or not'.

Basically, this refers to showing a lack of respect for good advice or counsel by responding, 'It doesn't matter whether I am virtuous or not' rather than acknowledging and accepting that advice. This is an inappropriate response.

This is explained in more detail in the Vinaya texts, which explain that it would be inappropriate if, rather than accepting good advice or good counsel, one replies: 'You need not advise me on whether I am virtuous or not. Likewise, I will not concern myself whether you are virtuous or not'.

### (39) Intention to meet with relatives

The next two lines of the verse read:

*424cd Intention to meet with relatives  
Is sentimental attachment to one's kin.*

As explained in the commentary:

The thirty-ninth, *intention to meet with relatives, is sentimental attachment to one's kin*.

That is quite clearly explained. We can relate this defect to the Lam Rim teachings. On an ordinary level, love for one's kin mostly arises out of attachment. In fact, on a worldly level, there is hardly any kind of love that is not mixed with attachment. When we carefully analyse the love we feel for our relatives, we find that it comes from a self-cherishing mind: 'I love them because they are related to *me*, or 'I love them because they are *my* relatives'. This type of love is based mainly on how it relates to one personally, which is not a genuine sort of love. A clear sign that it is based on attachment is when the attachment begins to wane, and the love that one felt for the other vanishes. When the attachment is gone love goes as well, which is a clear sign that the love one feels towards others is based on attachment.

In contrast to the ordinary or worldly expression of love there is the love that bodhisattvas have for other beings. Even though a bodhisattva views all beings as being appealing, they don't develop any attachment because of the wisdom they have cultivated within themselves. Hence there is no fault when a bodhisattva sees all beings as being appealing and expresses genuine love and compassion towards them, because the bodhisattvas' wisdom enables them to overcome attachment. That is how their love is different from ordinary love.

### (40) Attachment to objects

*425ab Attachment to objects is to relate  
Their good qualities in order to acquire them.*

Here Gyaltsab Je's commentary basically reiterates the verse:

The fortieth, *attachment to objects, is to relate their good qualities, even if it may have defects, in order to acquire them*.

Out of strong, obsessive attachment, one may be blind to the faults in the object, and only see good qualities. There are cases where one may initially see a lot of good qualities in someone, but when the attachment starts to wane, one begins to notice their defects. His Holiness the Dalai Lama mentions that when there is intense anger, any good qualities in the object are obscured, and the object is seen as having only faults and being totally at fault. That is another

example of exaggeration, and when one's anger subsides, one will begin to see that this is not the case and that the object actually does have some good qualities. So in cases of both anger and attachment, there is the excessive mind that exaggerates the qualities or the faults, which obscures the actual reality of the object or the situation. We need to really understand this important point.

We might hear someone comment, 'Who would be attracted to such an unattractive or ugly person?' Yet when attachment for an object that is commonly seen as being unattractive develops, then even that unattractive object will appear to be beautiful and attractive. That is because attachment has that element of exaggerating the qualities of the object due to inappropriate attention. That is how attachment obscures the actual attributes of the object.

It is the same with anger. Even though there are good qualities in an object, at a moment of extreme anger the anger obscures those qualities. Again, this is due to the inappropriate attention that exaggerates the faults or defects of the object, thus obscuring any good qualities. This results in seeing the object in a totally negative way.

When we understand how the mind works in that way, then we can see the appropriateness of practising meditation. The meditation practice for overcoming attachment is said to be meditating on the faults of the object. Because attachment is a state of mind that exaggerates qualities and obscures any faults, the more the object seems attractive and appears beautiful, the stronger the attachment to that object will be. Thus in order to overcome such strong desire and attachment to the object, we try to contemplate its faults or natural defects. This will help to reduce the exaggerations in the mind that focuses on those qualities. Then attachment is reduced, and can thus be overcome. So, one can see the appropriateness of that practice.

Likewise, as explained in the teachings, one of the best remedies for overcoming anger is to meditate on love for the object of one's anger. This is done by focussing on the attractive or appealing attributes of the object, which can help to reduce the level of anger in the mind. Seeing the object as appealing and attractive can help to subdue a very negative hostile mind. Focussing on that appealing aspect of the object can help to develop a fondness or some closeness to the object, and from that one can develop a genuine sense of love as well. So that is how it is to be understood.

It is really important that we ponder these points on how attachment develops in our mind and how it obscures our perception, and how anger arises in our mind and obscures the actual reality of the object and the situation. As explained in the teachings, if we further analyse how attachment or aversion arises in our mind, and where it stems from, we will find that it comes from that strong sense of an opinionated mind, which actually comes from the root cause of grasping at the self or the 'I'. [*Geshe-la interjects in English*]

We say 'I'm here', 'I like that', 'I don't like that', 'I like to be happy', 'I don't like it if you come here' ... 'I, I, I' .... If you say 'I don't like it' then you can make bad karma. That's very, very important. If you decide that you like something that's very, very good, but if you decide you don't like it, that's very, very dangerous. [That] makes this life dangerous, and the next life dangerous.

As Geshe-la has just explained, thinking about what we like and don't like comes from a strong sense of 'I', an opinionated mind thinking 'I like' or 'I don't like'; everything stems from that. Attachment in relation to your

friends or relatives is none other than because, 'I like them and that is why I am fond of them'. We say of people that we disagree with, 'I don't like them', and we develop an aversion towards them. It is all based on how things relate to the 'I'.

Instinctively we have that sense of 'liking' or 'not liking' in relation to the 'I'. This is a fact that we cannot deny. It's not so much a fault as a matter of what that sense of liking or dislike is focussed on. The main thing for our progress and transformation is to incorporate this into our Dharma practice and really investigate and analyse, 'What it is that I want and like?' and 'What is it that I don't want and don't like?' If one has a liking and a longing for something that is virtuous, then that is good, and in accordance with our practice, and will help us develop our practice even further. If we don't like and don't want negative deeds and non-virtue then that is also in accordance with our development and practice. You can certainly rejoice about that! One can feel happy and joyful about liking and wishing to engage in virtue and not wanting to engage in non-virtue. In this way we can encourage ourselves to further engage in the practice.

In contrast, if one shuns and abandons opportunities to accumulate virtue, and thus engages in non-virtuous activities, then one needs to acknowledge that. Throughout the day, we need to check, 'OK, where is my mind going?' At the end of the day we assess, 'Have I spent my time seeking opportunities to acquire virtue or has it been in mostly non-virtuous activities?' If it has been non-virtuous, then one needs to develop a strong sense of regret, and a keen determination to purify the negative or non-virtuous deeds one has engaged in. Make a strong commitment to not engage in non-virtuous deeds again, even at the cost of one's life. Remind yourself, I must definitely avoid causing harm to myself in this life and in all future lives'.

If we conduct ourselves in this way on a daily basis, it is a sure and certain way to progress and transform our lives. If you have accumulated virtue and engaged in good deeds during the day, don't just rejoice in that, but dedicate it towards benefitting all sentient beings and the ultimate state of enlightenment. It is in this way that one secures one's virtue so it does not go to waste.

I cannot claim that I do any high levels of practice in my daily routine, however, these are the points that I regularly try to consider, and investigate within myself. I check into my mind to see whether it is heading in a virtuous direction or a non-virtuous direction. That simple investigation ensures that one is adopting a virtuous activity, and brings a great sense of joy and happiness. That is something I can attest to, so I am sharing it with you.

To summarise the main points: If we can maintain a joyful mind in our daily life, then that is much more conducive for us to engage in virtue, and with a joyful, happy mind we are inclined to accumulate more virtue. It is really important to ensure that we have a joyful and happy mind.

With that, we can conclude for the evening.

Just to remind you, the next session, as everyone will be aware, is the discussion, followed by the exam. As mentioned regularly, it is good to be really mindful about engaging in the discussion in a most appropriate way, in the spirit of sharing and learning from each other. Also do the exam with a clear and good motivation. That is something we need to keep in mind.



## Discussion 2

Tara Institute 'Nagarjuna's Precious Garland' Block 4 Study Group 2012

## Discussion Week 6 (18.07.2012)

### Week: 1 (19 June 2012)

1. Give the definitions of:

- a) Shame [2]
- b) Embarrassment [2]

2. What is something we can do to prevent us from engaging in a misdeed? [2]

3. a) What is inflatedness? [2]

b) How will we naturally develop a sense of respect? [2]

c) What do we need to do to protect ourselves from this defilement? [2]

4. What is:

- a) Faulty exertion? [2]
- b) Arrogance? [2]
- c) Non-conscientiousness? [2]

5. What three things are essential in, preventing one from breaking ones vows and commitments, and engaging in virtue? [3]

### Week: 2 (26 June 2012)

(15) Pride. There are three types of pride. Deluded pride, pride of action and pride of ability

6. Explain:

- a) Pride of action. [2]
- b) Pride of ability [2]

7.. List and give a brief explanation of the following types of deluded pride

- a) Pride of selfhood [2]
- d) Pride of thinking 'I' [2]

8. Give a brief explanation of the following type of deceit.

(16) Hypocrisy [2]

### Week: 3 (3 July 2012)

9. Give a brief explanation of:

- (21) Repeating faults [2]
- (22) Non-collectedness [2]
- (23) Clinging [2]

2. Give a brief explanation of:

- a) (24) Discrimination of difference [2]
- b) How can we relate this to the sequence in which the five aggregates are presented? [4]

10. (25) Not looking into the mind [2]

(26). Degeneration of respect and reverence for deeds concordant with the practices. [2]

(28) Yearning [2]

(30). Avarice [2]

11. Many of these defects are related to attachment. What is the main thing to understand about attachment and what aspect of attachment is mistaken? [4]

*Week 4 (10 July 2012)*

12. Why is it really important that we ponder these points on how attachment and anger arise in our minds?

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**Exam Week 6 (24.07.2012)**

**Name:**

**Mark:**

1. Give the definitions of:

a) Shame [2]

b) Embarrassment [2]

2. What is something we can do to prevent us from engaging in a misdeed? [2]

3. a) What is inflatedness? [2]

b) How will we naturally develop a sense of respect? [2]

c) What do we need to do to protect ourselves from this defilement? [2]

4. What is:

a) Faulty exertion? [2]

b) Arrogance? [2]

c) Non-conscientiousness? [2]

5. What three things are essential in, preventing one from breaking ones vows and commitments, and engaging in virtue? [3]

6. (15 )Pride. There are three types of pride. Deluded pride, pride of action and pride of ability

Explain:

a) Pride of action. [2]

b) Pride of ability [2]

7. List and give a brief explanation of the following types of deluded pride

a) Pride of selfhood [2]

d) Pride of thinking 'I' [2]

8. Give a brief explanation of the following type of deceit.

(16) Hypocrisy [2]

9. Give a brief explanation of:

(21) Repeating faults [2]

(22) Non-collectedness [2]

(23) Clinging [2]

10. Give a brief explanation of:

a) (24) Discrimination of difference [2]

b) How can we relate this to the sequence in which the five aggregates are presented? [4]

11. (25)Not looking into the mind [2]

(26). Degeneration of respect and reverence for deeds concordant with the practices.[2]

(28) Yearning [2]

(30). Avarice [2]

12. Many of these defects are related to attachment. What is the main thing to understand about attachment and what aspect of attachment is mistaken? [4]

13. Why is it really important that we ponder these points on how attachment and anger arise in our minds?