



**Commentary on
Je Tsong-kha-pa's
Lam Rim Chen Mo
By Venerable Jih-Chang**
**English Commentary Book 7, ver 2.0
(Lamrim Vol 1, Chapter 11 & 12)**

Printed by BW Monastery, Singapore
For use by students of the monastery only

Purpose:

This book (version 2.0) contains the translation of Master Jih-Chang's commentary of the *Lamrim chapter 11 "Going for Refuge to the Three Jewels" and chapter 12 "The Precepts of Refuge"*. This book is for use by BW Monastery students only. It serves to facilitate students' understanding of the Lamrim as explained by Master Jih-Chang.

Student Feedback:

The translation of Master's commentary in this book is still a draft and will be improved. All students are welcome to provide your feedback to improve the translation. Kindly submit your feedback via the feedback form that is available in the BW Monastery web page, where this book can be downloaded from.

**CHAPTER 11:
GOING FOR REFUGE TO
THE THREE JEWELS**

Chapter 11 Outline

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[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 42B, 25.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P62, L13]

Well then as we have gone through the path described earlier, we understood that, “Ah! It’s really not easy to obtain this human life of leisure and opportunity. It’s not easy!” There are so many benefits and all of them begin from the moment we obtain a human life of leisure and opportunity. Once you have this human life of leisure and opportunity, that’s when you are able to cultivate. However, it rapidly moves toward death, impermanence. Ah! After death, where will one go? Where we go after death is not something which we have control of. It is entirely dependent upon karma. When we look at our karma, sorry, all the karma that we create are bad karma. After creating bad karma, we will go to the three miserable realms, an unspeakable suffering. Therefore if you do end up there in the future, there will be nothing that you can do then! Thus we must take advantage of the time while we haven’t gone there to strive quickly, practice in such a way that we can avoid the sufferings of falling [into miserable realms] and obtain happiness! Therefore, it tells us to go another step further to take a look here. Ah, this is true! There is no mistake in this, we must prepare for our future lives. Well then how can we obtain happiness in our future lives? The order of the stages is just so plain and clear. Therefore it tells us here, “Ah, now if you do this, you will obtain happiness in the future.” So number two.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 42B, 26.57; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P63, L9]

ii) Relying on the means for achieving happiness in the next life

Now it will tell you! Once you follow through this order of the stages, what are the benefits to that? With your undivided attention, ah! You will trek up the path in this fashion and with whatever you learn, you will concord immediately. As you concord immediately and practice, you gain the benefits. Therefore having a complete set of the stages is that important and that beneficial. In general, we would be training for a long time and would usually feel that it's great when we listen [to the teaching] and how it seems to make much sense. However, when you are asked to practice after you listen, you always feel, what should I do with this? The practice seems very slippery and is hard to get a firm grip of it. Can you say that it (the teaching) is not good? It's very good. But if it's good, how do you practice it? You can't seem to find a way. Now here it is explained to us, every section is made very clear, much like a chain of rings, one linking the other so that you can advance on the path step by step without any error in the order. Then it immediately follows up to tell you, "Yes! There, this is to tell you, if you truly wish to obtain the benefits that you desire, if you truly wish to alleviate your suffering, here are the means!" Now let us take a look, what is the method.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 42B, 28.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P64, L4]

The means for achieving happiness in the next life are explained in two parts:

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 42B, 28.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P64, L6]

1. Training in going for refuge, the excellent door for entering the teaching (Chapters 11-12)

The first one is going for refuge and what is the second?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 42B, 28.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P64, L8]

2. Developing the faith of conviction that is the root of all temporary happiness and certain goodness (Chapters 13-15)

Since you are afraid of suffering and want to alleviate suffering, then you will want to find someone to help you, right? Ah, now it tells you that this person can help you and so you will wholeheartedly rely on him. It's just like when we are sick, we need to find a doctor. The only person who can truly remedy our illness is the doctor, so ah, we have to find this doctor immediately! After seeing the doctor, what should we do? This is what the second one tells us, after we've found the doctor, what medication we should take. In other words, this is what these two sections are telling us, which is also on how to take [the medication].

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 42B, 28.58; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P65, L1]

a' Training in going for refuge, the excellent door for entering the teaching

Going for refuge is explained in four parts:

The first one is the excellent door to enter the teaching. For this most auspicious path, the door for entering it is going for refuge. We have to wait until now before we come upon the section of refuge, why should we go for refuge and we are still not told the way to go for refuge yet. Look at that! The stages are set in a way that's very tight and tidy. Training in going for refuge can be divided into four parts and the first is

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 42B, 29.27; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P65, L5]

1. The causes of going for refuge

Say you want to go for refuge, but why do you want to go for refuge? In other words, what is the cause of going for refuge? If you are doing fine, why should you go for refuge? You have to figure out a cause. Yes! It's just like with whatever you wish do, why do you want to do it? This is the first. Then the second thing is.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 00.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P69, L1]

2. Based on that, the objects to which you go for refuge

Because of this reason, you go for refuge. Based on this reason, when you go for refuge, whom should you go for refuge? Isn't this very clear? In every aspect, he so clearly presented every aspect.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43A, 00.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P69, L4]

3. The way you go for refuge

The third one, what is the way you go for refuge? That is the way of going for refuge, the method of going for refuge, and the content of going for refuge.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P191; 43A, 00.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P70, L1]

4. Once you have gone for refuge, the stages of the precepts (Chapter 12)

After you have gone for refuge, what should you do?
Now let's read on.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 00.37; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P70, L3]

1' The causes of going for refuge

In general there are many causes.

This is the first one, **“the causes of going for refuge.”** In other words, for what cause do you go for refuge. Though there are many causes for us to go for refuge, but now it tells us this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 00.51; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P70, L6]

However, for our purposes, the following apply. As previously explained, you cannot remain in this life—you soon die—and, after death; you have no control over where you will be reborn, for you are under the control of your karma.

Since every one of us pursue happiness and with what we have now, needless to say if we are unhappy, even if we are happy, sorry, this happiness won't last. Impermanence happens very quickly and the happiness is soon gone. Then this happiness [that you so think of] will become like a dream to you at death and it is meaningless. Afterwards, after you die, where will you go? Ah! The place that you will end up going, sorry, you don't have any control over that. It is controlled by karma. This thing to us is truly, you might as well say that someone else has complete control of it and you are like a slave with absolutely no say. No one wants this. Ah! Our future is bleak and I don't know what everybody is

preoccupied with. Soon enough, one may be killed, slaughtered, roasted, or beaten up. No one knows what's coming to him, and everyone will be restless with anxiety. What happens then, you will try to look for a place that's safe. This is it. This is very clear. It is because of this that you wish to find a place that's safe. Right?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 02.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P71, L3]

If you cannot develop the concept described earlier, you will not be looking for a safe place for refuge. That's why we need to understand the previous points. Only when you understand the previous points, the cause, will you then say, "Ah, its true! How can we find a refuge?" It's the same as how you'll be hungry at noon, what will you do beforehand? You will quickly figure out some way to make money and prepare some food in advance. This is because you know that in the future you will be hungry and will have to suffer, so you'll need to go make money first. The same principle applies here now that you are clear of this, oh, since the future is bleak and you don't know what will happen, by that time, this cause will propel you to look for a refuge. So what propels you now? Karma.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 02.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P71, L9]

With regard to karma,

What are the subjective aspects of karma?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 02.58; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P71, L11]

***Engaging in the Bodhisattva Deeds* says:³⁰⁷**

**Just as a flash of lightning in a dark cloud
Momentarily illuminates the darkness of a black
night, [132]**

**So too does there infrequently appear in the
world, by a buddha's power,
A few moments of intelligence to cultivate
virtue.**

**Thus virtue is always weak,
And sin is fiercely powerful.**

In terms of karma, non-virtuous karma is a black karma and virtuous karma is a white karma. What is non-virtuous karma like? **“In a dark cloud”**, not only is it a black night, but there are also dark clouds. Ah, my goodness! A black night will already make it too dark to see anything. To add a sky full of dark clouds to this black night, that would be the state of our black karma. Then, what is white karma like? The white karma is like a sudden flash of lightning which momentarily illuminates. That is the white karma. What is a white karma? A Buddha’s power. In the tens of thousands of ways in the world, only a Buddha instructs us what white karma is, everything else is black karma. It explains that, ah, the white karma or virtues is very scarce, nearing nothing but its

illumination is very strong. Besides its scarcity, the period of time that it appears is extremely short. How about black karma? Ah! It's not only abundant but extremely long lasting in time. For the white karma to generate wisdom and merits, it is comparable to having a flash of lightning in this world. Thus, with what Buddha has taught us, there is only so little. Not only it is little, but that the virtues we cultivate from it are weak and little. We usually create very weighty non-virtuous karma and they are powerful and fierce.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 04.39; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P72, L9]

Since virtuous karma is weak and nonvirtuous karma is exceedingly powerful,

Therefore, we will have to fall into the miserable realms.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 04.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P72, L11]

if you contemplate how readily you fall into the miserable realms, you will be filled with fear and dread, and will resolve to seek a refuge.

When we think of this, we will be filled with great fear! Since our bodies will quickly be gone and after they are gone, where we go will be determined by our karma. However, most of the karmas we create are powerful non-virtuous karmas. Such powerful non-virtuous karma will lead us to the miserable realms. That's when we are filled with great fear.

To do something about this fear, what will you do? You will then wholeheartedly resolve to seek a refuge. We just said that as we sit here, we don't know exactly what will happen next. Ah! That is terrifying. But actually, this is not the case of not knowing, we do know. What do we know? We know that we will have to bear immeasurable great sufferings. Thus, at this time, you will desperately try to escape, you will certainly run away. I think no one is an exception to this, no one is an exception. It's as if we say there are some bandits out, and these carnivorous bandits are about to come here. As soon as they catch us, they will seize, kill, and eat. Therefore, we would desperately try to escape and no one would be an exception. Actually, our current true situation is just like this, making it the reason we truly go for refuge.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 06.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P73, L6]

As Mahatma Dignaga says:³⁰⁸

Mahatma Dignaga tells us that

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 43A, 06.05; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P73, L8]

**Adrift in the bottomless ocean of cyclic existence,
Devoured by fierce sea monsters-
Attachment and the like-
To whom should I go for refuge today?**

What is our current situation like? We are in this “**ocean of cyclic existence**.” In this ocean of cyclic existence, its vastness is boundless and its depth is bottomless. Ah, it’s incredible! What is the cause for having this ocean of cyclic existence? It is created by the three poisons. Through the delusions from the three poisons, we create boundless karma. No one can escape from this. These “**fierce sea monsters**” are the Magadha fish of the ancient times. When this fish opens its mouth, the ocean water just keeps pouring in. “Pa!” Nothing can stop it, you will certainly be devoured. According to the legend, when this fish stares at you, the two eyes are fierce like two suns. As soon as the mouth opens, the ocean water becomes like what? Like a waterfall gushing down, “pa!” This means when bad karma ripens, the way in which you will fall [into miserable realms], there isn’t any force to stop it. Therefore, quickly take advantage of the time before it happens. Quickly strive to go for refuge as soon as possible. Bodhisattva says so too. This is what we should know. Ah, this is the reason we go for refuge. Because of this, we must bear suffering and therefore we go for refuge in order to be released from suffering. Well then now he summarizes these principles.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 07.34; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P74, L5]

In brief, the causes of your going for refuge are twofold:

Which two things? One.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 07.37; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P74, L7]

your fear of the miserable realms and the like,

This is a reason. Regarding “**miserable realms and the like,**” miserable realms here will include many aspects such as all sorts of things of the body and mind, suffering, afflictions, feeling ill at ease, all these generate tremendous fear. Since you’ve developed fear and you wholeheartedly wish to evade this fright, this produces the first reason. Furthermore, you will be looking for someone who can protect and save you from this fright. All the religions in the world are born from this. Well then for us who believe in Buddha, we know that the only ones who can help, guide, and give us salvation will be the Three Jewels. Second.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 08.24; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P74, L13]

and your conviction that the three jewels can protect you from them.

This is when we know it correctly! We have faith and are keenly aware that only the Three Jewels can protect and save us from cyclic existence. This is the real refuge. Since we’ve now all taken refuge, everyone can think about this. Did we understand why we had gone for refuge? If we say one does not understand at all, that’s not true! If we say one understands completely why [he goes for refuge], there are probably very few that really do. Everyone says, “Ah, it’s good to go for refuge.” Yes, you are doing this to gain benefits. In a reverse angle, this does what? To alleviate suffering.

However, what is the characteristic of this suffering? This is something we may not necessarily understand. When you say it's good, how good is it and why is it good (the meaning behind this)? We may not necessarily understand that but here the analysis is very clear and the boundaries are drawn very clearly. Nothing is left out, nothing is left out. If you cannot find this path, the only thing left is suffering, no other choice. Now the only way to be released from suffering is this! This is an inevitable conclusion. This is what we need to understand. If you can understand this and then go for refuge, there will be strength to your refuge. Otherwise you will just go there, "Go for refuge and not fall to hell," you'll recite it three times, "Ok, I've gone for refuge." There is no substance to this. You are merely accumulating a small virtuous root.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 10.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P75, L12]

Thus, you must strive to realize these two causes because if they remain mere words, so will your refuge. However, if they are strong and stable, your refuge will transform your mind.

Thereforewith these two things, in other words, these two things are the two causes for going for refuge...if they remain mere words, means that you haven't realized these causes, would you then be able to produce an effect? Thus your refuge will also be mere words. If these two things are true, the causes are realized, they will certainly produce an effect. Well then since the causes are solid and stable, your refuge will be strong and powerful. What will a strong and powerful

refuge do? “It **“will transform your mind.”** What do these words, **“transform your mind,”** mean? Let me explain first and then you can weigh yourself against it. The text told us previously that it is because we feel the suffering within the three realms (desire, form, and formless realms), therefore understand that only the Three Jewels can protect and save us. At that point, in your mind, ah, you are truly frightened by this samsara world! You will have this kind of fear. This is the first one. Because of your fear, you will seek for something to evade this suffering, you will seek to take refuge. Therefore, suppose that these two causes are truly internalised [in your mind], what will happen in your mind at that time? Ah! You will wholeheartedly take refuge and rely on the Three Jewels. At that time, it is called transforming the mind. So as for transforming the mind, you now have a general idea of it but don't have a clear understanding. We don't need to talk about how clearly we understand it or at least not here. Instead, we can use something else to explain it now and I think you'll soon have a good understanding of it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 12.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P76, L10]

Now most of us are practicing the recitation of the Buddha's name. In the sect of reciting the Buddha's name, what does it primarily tell us? Faith, aspiration and conduct, these are called the three types of merits. Whether you will be reborn in Pure Land will have to depend on whether you have faith and aspiration. What do you have faith in? What do you aspire? You believe that the Samsara world is filled with suffering and you believe that the Pure Land is a place of

perfect joy. Now if we think about this and compare it with what we've been saying, if you just give it some thought, you will discover that they are saying the same thing. There is absolutely no mistake! Ah! This Samsara world, the three realms are filled with suffering and we really don't know what to do! Therefore, you develop this fear, right? You believe in this. What is the second one? Then, this is the only place that can give you salvation; therefore the Pure Land is perfect joy. You have faith in this right? If you believe in these two things, then what happens? You will have an extreme dislike and disenchantment for this Samsara world and will be extremely happy and joyous to go to Pure Land. Right? This becomes your aspiration.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 13.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P77, L2]

Then with your whole heart, [you say] “Namo” – what is Namo? Refuge! At that time, you will recite “Namo Amitabha Buddha.” With your whole heart, you will go to Amitabha for refuge. Once you have this correct understanding, whether you are reciting with your lips or not, you are mindful of refuge in your every thought. There are both the feelings of disenchantment and joy within this one recitation of Buddha's epithet. Right? However, nowadays everyone wants to recite Buddha's name but if you don't even understand the principle, how can you recite it? If you go through the aforementioned principles accordingly in a step by step manner, even if your mouth is covered, it won't matter. Your mind will still desperately recite this. “Ah! The suffering of this world is beyond words.” Then with your whole heart you go for refuge

and reliance. How is it possible that you won't go to Pure Land if you have recited Buddha's name in this way? How is it possible that you would recite Buddha's name without the feelings of disenchantment and joy? Therefore, "with this one recitation of the Buddha's name, you possess both disenchantment and joy." When you recite at that moment, you will know very plainly and clearly in your mind that, "Ah! This world is good for nothing and the only thing to do is to go for refuge and rely on Amitabha Buddha."

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 14.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P77, L10]

What phenomenon is then developed in your mind? Hey! Things you used to be attached to and are hard to let go; now you can't refuse it fast enough. Previously we asked you to bring up the urge to practice and you couldn't, now even if we tell you to stop reciting, you can't. Hasn't your mind been transformed? Would you still feel afflicted and say, "Ah, this is not good, ah, that's not good?" Feeling restless when you do this, restless when you do that. Would you still be like that? [No.] You would feel that even if you strive with all your might to recite the Buddha's name, there is still not enough time. Yes, you do speak of practice but in reality, you would eat and then become restless. Why is that? The main reasons are all here. How the principles [that we've been learning] explain this so clearly! Therefore if you truly understand these two things, these are the causes for you to seek refuge. After you know these are the causes for refuge, naturally you will follow through to practice. If you can generate a continuous stream of thoughts on this in the causal period, how will you not end

up going to Pure Land if you have accrued enough pure karma? How could this effect not manifest?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 15.24; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P78, L2]

Therefore the phrase, **“you must strive to realize these two causes!”** So we now talk about practice, practice. This is what we should really practice. This is what’s worthy of our efforts, our efforts! Do you understand? Do we believe this? Now that we understand this principle, we should reflect upon this thoroughly. If we do not reflect on this, then our long efforts for understanding this will have gone to waste. As soon as we close the book we will forget it. We will end up following the afflictions that are always around. Soon we will be gossiping about this person and that person. Like that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 16.05; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P78, L6]

Therefore, after a session you can rest for a few minutes. Ah! You will feel really happy. You don’t have to keep contemplating but in between sessions, you should rejoice, “Ah, I’m so happy!” You can do nothing, be relaxed but just keep rejoicing. You will then be continuously increasing merits. Once your mind knows it clearly and after listening, you may begin to relax [and lose the idea]. Then you should resume with your analysis. Then at that time, though you’ve exited the session and you are not reciting the epithet, but your merits continue to increase. So there it includes a very

accurate instruction which tells us the method of practice. Then by that time when you prostrate to the Buddha, you will feel an unparalleled lovingness and warmth, “Ah, Amitabha Buddha, Shakyamuni Bhagavan! You have been so kind to me. You’ve told me such complete teachings!” When you prostrate, you’ll feel this unparalleled lovingness and warmth. Even if we ask you to be disrespectful, you can’t and normally, you can’t help but praise the Tathagata. Then what happens? With your own mistakes before, you naturally will feel, “Ah, these are so irrelevant now.” Even if we ask you to stop confessing, you can’t. Then with these, normally for the chores of the temple we ask you not to do it...but you would know how much merits you can accumulate from this. Thus, you will naturally and easily begin to uphold all of the Ten Great Vows. Right?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 17.24; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P79, L1]

Therefore here, this is the reason why this is really good. Up until now, the text has only pointed out the beginning of it! For these causes, what are the objects to which you go for refuge, and the way in which you go for refuge have not been explained yet! However, a strong and powerful force has already been developed. Think about it, isn’t it right? This is a place where we should offer our praises! This is a complete teaching. Then, we should be thankful for the numerous virtuous karmas we’ve created in the past lives to have issued this virtuous fruit (effect) today, giving us the opportunity to listen to a complete teaching. So let us break and we can all

rejoice ourselves for 10 minutes, relax a little and we'll resume the fight in the next session.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 18.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P79, L6]

We now understand how terrifying it is to be in the cyclic existence, that's when we seek for refuge and this is the only place that can help protect and save us. Therefore, these two things are the causes of us going for refuge. Then, the levels of going for refuge can be shallower or deeper. The different levels will depend on how you realize these two causes. With these two causes, if you recognize them at a shallower level and just say, ah! If you can only see the sufferings of the miserable realms and for which then you will only seek to be reborn as a deity. If you can see one step further, you'll see that even though you may be reborn as a deity, you will still fall [into the miserable realms] later, will still have to suffer. If you have this deeper perspective, you will seek for liberation [from cyclic existence], rendering you on the path that's shared with a person of the medium capacity. You then discover that with this liberation, though you've alleviated the sufferings of immediate afflictions, however, you haven't alleviated sufferings completely. That's when you need to go deeper. As a result of your consideration of others in your own situation, you expand your attitude of evading suffering and help alleviate others' suffering. Whether you go through the route of wisdom as in the first case, or through the route of compassion as in the latter case, you will then enter the most perfect path for evasion of sufferings. This is the path for a person of great capacity. Therefore, it doesn't matter if you

are a person of small capacity, medium capacity, or great capacity, the method to evade suffering is to go for refuge. The only difference among them is the varying level of understanding of the causes but the causes remain these. This is something we should understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 19.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P79, L15]

Therefore, when we speak the rites of going for the three refuges, when we truly obtain the benefits from the three refuges....even when we take up the five vows, the Shramanera vows, the Bhikshu vows, the Bodhisattva vows, and the Mantra vows, the moment we truly obtain their substance is when we go for refuge. This is the reason for that. That is in terms of refuge, how would you go for refuge from the causal stage and how would you go for refuge at the effect stage. This vast and profound principle will be explained gradually later. In all, we can say that what Buddhism teaches is entirely nothing more than refuge. Therefore next it says that through knowing these two causes, you seek for refuge. Well then under this circumstance, what are the objects to which you go for refuge? Therefore, we're now at number two.

2' Based on that, the objects to which you go for refuge

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 20.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P80, L6]

At that time, it says “**based on that**” and that means after understanding these two causes, we want to go for refuge. The objects to which we go for refuge can be divided into two parts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 20.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P80, L8]

a" Identifying the objects to which you go for refuge

It formally explains, there! Who or what are the objects you go for refuge? What are they? Why do you go for refuge? Now it’s going to explain. It first quotes [the verses] from the *Praise in One Hundred and Fifty Verses*:

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 21.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P80, L11]

The Praise in One Hundred and Fifty Verses (Sata-pancasatka-stotra) says:³⁰⁹

**The one in whom no fault
Can ever exist,
The one in whom all good qualities
Always exist—
If you are sensible,
It is correct to go for refuge to just such a person,
To praise and honor him,
And to abide in his teaching.**

It says... I’ll finish reading the following explanation first and explain them altogether.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 21.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P81, L2]

Thus, if you can distinguish a refuge from what is not a refuge, it is right to go for refuge to the Bhagavan Buddha, the true refuge. This citation applies to the teaching jewel and the community jewel as well. As Candrakirti's *Seventy Verses on Refuge (Trisarana-gamanasaptati)* says:³¹⁰

**The Buddha, teaching, and community
Are the refuge for those who desire liberation.**

First, let us think about this, “Why do we want to go for refuge?” It said, “Ah! This is suffering.” It is because of suffering and therefore you seek to evade this suffering. Since you wish to evade this suffering, you must seek for protection from someone. Therefore if this person who is going to save you has not evaded suffering himself, may I ask then, can he be your refuge? Of course not. This is pretty obvious. He must be one who has evaded suffering already and then it would work! Therefore, for those of us who have the ability and wisdom to discern whom we should go for refuge, if we choose with this kind of [distinguishing] power, the objects to which we go for refuge will certainly have to be one who has resolved all problems. That’s right, isn’t it? This is pretty clear and obvious. Therefore, at this time, this should be someone who has completely eliminated all his faults and therefore completely removed all his sufferings. Then, **“The one in whom all good qualities always exist.”** He has

obtained all the good qualities there are. He is then our real refuge.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 23.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P81, L12]

Therefore, for those with true wisdom and can discern right from wrong, **“If you are sensible,”** you will certainly go for refuge to the objects described above. This is what’s truly worthy of our refuge, our praises and veneration. Then, once you go to him for refuge, you rely upon him and abide by what the correct method which he has taught us. That’s something with absolutely no flaws, and therefore undeceiving (true refuge). This must be Buddha, Bhagavan. Bhagavan is in Sanskrit, which is translated into a few particular epithets in Chinese. We would normally use one of them, the honoured one, which is World-Honoured One. Buddha, the World-Honoured One. We wholeheartedly go to him for refuge, then one that concords with him would be the jewel of the Sangha community. This is also our refuge. Therefore, due to this reason, we wholeheartedly go for refuge to Buddha. Then there are another few verses from another commentary which tells us, therefore “Buddha, teaching and the community” are the objects that we can rely on in order to be truly liberated from suffering. This tells us what’s correct.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 24.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P82, L6]

b" The reasons why they are worthy to be a refuge [133]

There are four reasons why the Buddha is worthy to be a refuge

Why should we go to him for refuge? This is divided into four reasons to explain that, divided into four reasons to explain that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 24.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P82, L8]

First, he has mastered himself and attained the sublime state of fearlessness. If he had not attained this, he would not be able to protect others from all fears, just as a person who has already fallen down cannot help up someone else who has fallen down.

First, the object to which we go for refuge, he will certainly have “**mastered himself.**” He has tamed and disciplined all his faults and abides in the most quintessential of all virtues. He has attained [the sublime state of fearlessness] so there is nothing that he fears. Therefore, only Buddha has the ten powers and the four kinds of fearlessness. If he had not attained this level, he would be just like a person who has already fallen down, too weak to stand even a gust of wind. He would not be able to stand on his feet, so can he help you? Of course it’s impossible! This is the first one. He must have completely resolved all his problems. Though he has resolved his problems, if he is not skilled enough to help you, when you ask for help from him, he would have no means [to help you]. He would say this,

“It’s true that I am not sick, but I don’t know how to treat your sickness!” He can’t help! Therefore, he...

[Translator Note: from Soothill-hodous: “The ten powers of Buddha”, giving complete knowledge of (1) what is right or wrong in every condition; (2) what is the karma of every being, past, present, and future; (3) all stages of dhyāna liberation, and samādhi; (4) the powers and faculties of all beings; (5) the desires, or moral direction of every being; (6) the actual condition of every individual; (7) the direction and consequence of all laws; (8) all causes of mortality and of good and evil in their reality; (9) the end of all beings and nirvāṇa; (10) the destruction of all illusion of every kind. “The four kinds of fearlessness”, or courage, of which there are two groups: Buddha-fearlessness arises from his omniscience; perfection of character; overcoming opposition; and ending of suffering. Bodhisattva-fearlessness arises from powers of memory; of moral diagnosis and application of the remedy; of ratiocination; and of solving doubts.)

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 26.03; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P83, L3]

***Second*, he is in all ways skilled in the means of training disciples. If he were not so, he would not be able to fulfill your needs, even if you went to him for refuge.**

Given any situation, he knows how to train disciples who are those who ask him for help. No matter who is to be helped, he is in all ways skilled in the means of helping them.

Without this qualification, though you ask him for help, he will not know how to help you. Therefore [you will run into the situation where] he won't be able to help you with this, he won't be able to help you with that! This is where we may want to talk a bit about the difference between Buddha versus the śrāvaka and pratyekabuddha of the Hinayana vehicle. One who has gone through the śrāvaka path [until reaching arhatship] will have definitely resolved his problems and so we should never look down on him. We haven't even resolved our own problems. How can we look down on śrāvakas? Numerous places in the sutras tell us that if we respect and venerate śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas, we will accrue immeasurable and boundless merits. However, the reason we hold Buddha in great esteem is because though śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas have resolved their problems, they may not be able to perfectly and completely help all beings and "all beings" include us. Therefore, this is the reason that when we do go for refuge, we go to the Buddha for refuge. This is where we need to make a clear distinction. This is the second reason. Given any situation, for anyone, he knows how to help him. As long as you seek help from him, he will help you. If you don't seek help from him, he can't do anything to help you. This is something we should understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 27.43; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P84, L1]

***Third*, he has great compassion. If he did not have it, he would not protect you even if you went to him for refuge.**

The third one, there is another qualification required. Though he knows how to help but when you go to him, he may say, “Sorry! I do know how to help but today I don’t want to help you because I’ve got my own enjoyment to seek.” That wouldn’t work! Therefore, he needs one more quality which is great compassion, great compassion. Though he may have [the ability]...for example, when we go see a doctor who is really skilled but he is too busy or he has his own things...ah, sorry! He doesn’t want to see any patients. He is going on vacation, going to travel. You can’t do anything about that. Therefore, there needs to be one more quality—great compassion. What is the subjective aspect of great compassion? All that he does and thinks about revolves on one single thing – help and save all sentient beings as if they are his beloved children. Is this enough? Ah! One more qualification is needed.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43A, 28.38; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P84, L9]

***Fourth*, he is pleased, not by material offerings, but by offerings of practice. If he were not, he would not act as a refuge for everyone, but would help only those who had previously helped him.**

See how there needs to be a fourth one. He may have great compassion, however, there also needs to be absolute impartiality in his mind. He can say, “Anyone of you can come to ask me for help.” However, if he is partial then it is such that, “though I have great compassion,” but to someone who is nicer to him, [he will proceed to say] “I will help you first.”

To those who are not as nice to him, he will be slower at getting to them. This still won't work, still won't work! There needs to be what qualification? The fourth one which says whether you give material offerings or however nice you are to him, he will not attach importance to what you've given him. What does he want instead? **"Offerings of practice."** So he still attaches importance to one thing, that he values the offerings of practice. So then we say, "Well, he still attaches importance to something!" Ah! This is because whether he can actually save you or not matters not on material offerings you give him, but on if you can listen to him and practice accordingly. If you do not listen to him and practice accordingly, even if you try hugging on to his leg, he won't be able to save you! Like that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43B, 00.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P87, L1]

Therefore the fourth point is a very important factor which explains to us that even though Buddha has these characteristics, if you do not go to refuge in accordance with the teachings and the principles, it would be futile. If Buddha does not possess this qualification, there will be a problem. [One could ask this], "you say that Buddha has great love and compassion and he will save all sentient beings. In the end, has he done so?" If he has done so, may I ask then, why do we still suffer? Isn't there a contradiction? Ah, this is said very clearly. It's not that Buddha doesn't want to save you, the reason Buddha can't save you is because of your own obstacles!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43B, 00.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P87, L6]

This is why I keep telling everyone, you have come with great intention to be ordained, so you should learn from Buddha and not learn from this “ego self!” There is a great deal to know about this here! Don’t overlook this word. You continue to think over this word until one day you will truly recognize it, that’s when there is hope for you. Now what are we all doing here? We are learning to grow more of the “ego self!” “Ah, I’ve become ordained, I need to hurry up and go practice! Ah, this is how I should practice.” [Often] when we tell someone to study the texts diligently, and listen [to the teachings] diligently, he doesn’t want to listen [to what you say]. He feels that he needs to go and prostrate to Buddha and then seclude himself in a hut, seclude himself in a mountain. Yes, there are people who have succeeded in doing so. That’s because he had capital invested in the past, he had ascertained the method of practice and then he went about to practice it. Now, have you understood it yet? You don’t even know the subjective aspects of afflictions and therefore this “ego self” is ever present here. You don’t even know the subjective aspects of afflictions. You don’t know the meaning for doing the prostrations. You just go about to observe how others do something and you follow to do it, you do it too. Then you observe how others sit [in a meditation], and you sit like them too. That’s useless. Therefore, this number four point, there is a special condition in here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P179; 43B, 01.52; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P88, L6]

Once you have these qualifications, is it enough? Yes. Then it's ok! Think about it, isn't it right? He first must have already resolved his own problems. Second, he needs to know how to help others. Third, he has the attitude of wanting to help everyone. Then the last point is that, hey! This tells you that he does wish to help you, however, whether you truly can achieve or not will depend on if you listen to him accordingly. It is not dependent on, ah, you give him so much money. If it depends on that, then he would be completely like business people in this world. You give him more money and he will sell you the things. That would completely become a business transaction of the mundane world! Buddha is not like that. This is what we should understand. Therefore, once he possesses these four points, his great compassion can truly be counted as great compassion. This is what we should understand. If you can understand this point, then you won't be as muddled with many of the Buddhism concepts. Also with Buddha and the many sayings of the world, such as when they say Buddha is omnipotent, you will know that Buddha is not omnipotent. Buddha is omniscient, but not omnipotent, he can't do everything. There is a distinction here.

In brief, only one who is free of all fears,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 03.12; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P89, L2]

In brief that is to sum up everything. **“Only one who is free of all fears,”** this is the first one. Second.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 03.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P89, L3]

who is skilled in the means of freeing others from fear,

With what's truly terrifying, he has a complete and ultimate understanding. He knows how to help others and have the means of saving others.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 03.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P89, L6]

who has great, impartial compassion for everyone,

This is number three. No matter those who are close or not close to him, he will help them with great compassion. Number four.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 03.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P89, L8]

and who acts for everyone's welfare regardless of whether or not they have benefited him,

These are the conditions.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 03.47; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P89, L10]

is worthy of being a refuge.

So now we know. Ah! Why should we go for refuge to this object? The reasons are here. Why should we go for refuge? This is because we know the sufferings of the world and we seek happiness. Then due to this, the person we go for refuge, the person we go for refuge must certainly be like this. A person who possesses all of these qualifications is one whom we can truly go for refuge. So in every section, the text gives clear distinctions. If you can grasp this idea and go for refuge, what benefit would it bring you? You would be able to distinguish between a Buddhist and a non-Buddhist.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 04.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P90, L4]

Nowadays, we would often say, “Ah! Religions are all good since they all exhort people to be virtuous.” There is a great problem in this, great problem! If you understand the situation, then you’ll be able to make clear distinctions. Yes, from the perspective of the mundane world, religions do tell people to be virtuous. However, what’s the reason that Buddhism, Buddha’s teaching is absolutely different from other religions? It is here. You will know this very clearly and plainly. You will then absolutely not....there will be a distinction. By then, you won’t say this is the Earth God Bodhisattva, the Town God Bodhisattva, anyone is a Bodhisattva. It’s possible that the Earth God could be a Bodhisattva, the Town God could be a Bodhisattva, but the real meaning or content of Bodhisattvas is not like that. You would go and prostrate to different gods

(十八王公, 無常, 媽祖). Yes! They are virtuous gods of the mundane world who are worthy of our respects. So I'm not saying that we should not respect them! But once you understand the objects to which you go for refuge and the meaning, you will be able to discern clearly, without any ambiguity and you will not waver even a bit! This is something we should understand very clearly. Needless to say that Yīguàndào or Sheng-Yen Lu will absolutely be unable to change your mind. What is the reason for this? It is here. It's quite clear and obvious. Now we continue. So what would it mean with all these qualifications?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 05.53; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P90, L14]

Since only the Buddha has these qualities,

Only the Buddha has all these qualifications! Thus many places in sutras and commentaries tell us that Buddha alone is the refuge! What does this refer to? It is precisely this point. We must discern clearly with what reasons do you go for refuge? With these reasons, whom should you go for refuge? Then you would get a grasp of this and after detailed observation and analysis, you will conclude that there can only be Buddha! No one else can serve as your refuge. Therefore,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 06.27; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P91, L5]

and the divine creator and so on do not,

Divine creator, divine creator is one who has been venerated in India. Now we often go for refuge to all kinds of things, so to say “**so on**” would include them all. All others in this mundane world, they are all good but they do not serve as refuge for us. This is distinguished very clearly. At that time, you are certain that there is only Buddha [as our refuge]!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 06.58; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P91, L9]

he alone is the refuge. Therefore, his teaching and the community of his disciples are also worthy of being a refuge.

Due to this, thus Buddha’s teaching and his disciples are also worthy. Up until this point what are we certain of? Buddha is the only refuge. Since Buddha is the only refuge, he is perfect and complete in all respects. Therefore what he tells us is perfect and complete. So what he tells us becomes the teaching. Then the disciples who follow Buddha are whom we should go for refuge as well, they are the community.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 07.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P92, L1]

Thus, after you have ascertained these things, which are taught in the Compendium of Determinations,³¹¹ entrust yourself to the three jewels with a single-pointed focus. Develop this certainty from the depths of your heart, for

once you are able to do this, they cannot fail to protect you.

So the above principle was taken from the *Compendium of Determination*. With this principle, you follow it accordingly to study, reflect and ultimately develop a certainty of this view within the depth of your heart. Then, once you've developed a certainty of this view, of course you would go for refuge whole-heartedly. Certainly! It is because you understand that the world has so much suffering and the only place of protection is [this]...so how could you not focus single-pointedly on refuge? If you could go for refuge with single-pointed focus...it will produce this effect, it will transform your mind. Remember this? Just like that. At this time, your refuge will certainly be imbued with both faith and aspiration. Also at this time, when you meditate, you will certainly have both complete joy and disenchantment. This absolutely will happen. So now we often try to practice for a long time. Ah! We often would feel that while we listen to the teachings we seem to understand it, but we just can't get a hang of it when we meditate (practice)! But do you really understand the principles? No! If you truly understand the principles, this effect will certainly manifest! Under this circumstance, they cannot fail to protect you because they definitely will help you. Thus, ten thousand people who practice this method, ten thousand of them will go [to Pure Land]. It is absolutely said so in the sutras and commentaries! It will certainly happen, a 100% guarantee. Therefore, **“Develop this certainty from the depths of your heart.”** This is what we have to work on!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 09.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P92, L13]

Up to here, this is where you can apply the principles for the method of reciting Buddha's name. See! With the true auspiciousness of reciting Buddha's name, we need not speak of real profound principles. Just with the principles of taking refuge, as long as you have a good grasp of this concept and recite Buddha's name [with this mindset], then ten thousand people will make it to Pure Land when ten thousand people practice this way. Now we work so hard [on reciting Buddha's name]. Ah! No need to mention when ten thousand people are practicing this, even if one hundred thousand people practice this now, how many people actually do go to Pure Land after practicing this method? Oh, Amitahba Buddha! Why this happen? It is because we don't understand the principles! If you don't understand the principles of course you can't do it. Let's continue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 09.47; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P93, L4]

This is so because there are two causes of your being protected: an external and an internal. The Teacher has already fully realized the external factor or cause,

There are two causes of us being protected, which are these two? The internal and the external – as causes and conditions! The internal is your desire to go for refuge and the external is someone who can save you. Between these two causes, the external cause that can save you, the external

factor or the external cause is “**fully realized.**” We do not lack any of this. Why? Buddha has already attained Buddhahood and there isn’t just one Buddha. There are immeasurable Buddhas in the ten directions! Shakyamuni Buddha is not the only one [helping us]. So Shakyamuni Buddha desperately tries to push us forward and Amitayus Buddha desperately tries to pull us up. Ah! We just don’t budge. He tries to pull, but we can’t be pulled. What’s the reason for that?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 10.41; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P93, L10]

but you suffer because you have not yet developed the internal factor, entrusting yourself to the refuge.

See! It’s because of our internal factor. We have not yet truly entrusted ourselves and abide by the principles to seek refuge. As a result, we suffer! Therefore, everyone suffers. Ah, we want to cultivate! What is the result? It’s really rare! That is why when I see everyone here, I truly praise you. You have virtuous roots from previous lives. In a world where five impurities are rapidly spreading, where errors and wrong views are pervasive, you actually have given up everything to come here. Now that you’ve come to this place, you still suffer [with afflictions]. Yet you say you want to cultivate. If you lay aside the best method of cultivation and you are not willing to learn it, how will you cultivate! Therefore in this segment, it tells us, it is [the issue of] the internal factor, the internal factor.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 11.29; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P94, L2]

So let us think about this a little more. Do you believe in Buddha? You do believe in him. If you do believe, what are the characteristics of the Buddha? He has resolved all his problems and he knows how to help others with any issues they have. He also has a great compassion to want to help everyone. Do we believe this? Yes we believe this! If we believe in it, then would I be an exception? Would he not help me? Does he not have great compassion? Haven't we believed in him? So let me go further to ask you this, doesn't he know how to help us? Haven't we believed in him? Then how come we have not been saved yet? Where is the problem? There, There, There, it's this – the internal factor. You are turned around by your afflictions! So do look at this carefully, we need to have an accurate understanding of these few sentences.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 12.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P94, L8]

So then because of this we “**suffer.**” Ah! We are constantly suffering [with afflictions] day in and day out. Just like that. Ah! Therefore we should be happy that we have gotten to this place! We should have “a medley of sorrow and joy.” We should feel sorrowful for not knowing this before and joyful because we know it now. So be happy and strive diligently.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 12.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P94, L11]

Therefore, know that the Buddha, moved by his great compassion, assists you even if you do not request his help;

So we should know that even though we have not requested for Buddha's help, but moved by his great compassion, he is still constantly assisting us. Buddha is always looking at us with his eyes wide open. He is everywhere. Not only does he look at us, but he tries to pull us in the front, push us from the back, and push us up from below. He is doing all this!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 13.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P95, L1]

that he is not lazy at this;

He will not be lazy. Buddha has 18 different characteristics [as compared with bodhisattvas.] One of them is called joyful perseverance without laziness. Thus Buddha joyfully perseveres infinitely. He forges ahead with infinite speed in his perseverance.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 13.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P95, L4]

and that he, the unrivaled and auspicious refuge, abides as your personal protector. [134]

This is truly “**auspicious**” – auspicious and profound, a true place of refuge. Buddhas of all ten directions are all here with us. Therefore “Vairocana (the spiritual or essential body of Buddha-truth, and like light) pervades everywhere, realm of eternal rest and light (i. e. wisdom) and of eternal spirit (dharmakāya) is the abode of the Buddha.” Ah! Buddha is everywhere so isn’t he where I am as well? Of course he is here. Yet, he doesn’t seem to be where I am or where you are, he is not present with us here. Why? It’s because of our internal factor! So remember this! We should not say that there are no excellent teachers. [We should say] there are no students who want to learn! Who may the students be? It is “me!” If you come to learn to increase more of the “ego self” then what would be the year of your real attainment? That’s why the past masters of used to say you would achieve in the year of the donkey. What is the year of the donkey? Is there a year of the donkey in the Chinese Zodiac Animal sign? There are rat, ox, tiger, rabbit, dragon, snake, horse, goat, monkey, rooster, dog and pig, but there is no sign of the donkey. So throughout the rotation of the signs every 12 years, when you say you will achieve in the year of the donkey it implies you will not achieve anything in any year. That is because you focus on learning to enhance the ways of the “ego self”! Make a note of this – it is the internal factor! So in this part of the text and in many places as well, the text has pointed this out. Earlier, it has already pointed out our subjective aspects, then later it will tell us to really strive, to strive, to strive really hard at it! He, the Buddha is here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 14.59; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P96, L1]

Recognizing this, go to him for refuge.

Yes!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 15.03; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P96, L3]

*The Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honor (Varnarhavarṇa-stotra) says:*³¹²

He proclaims, “I am the friend
Of you who have no protector.”
Out of his great compassion,
He abides as if embracing the entire world.

So Buddha he says so himself, “**I am the friend of you who have no protector.**” It means that there is no one who can help with your sufferings and that I am truly here to help. Why does he do this? It is because it is “**out of his great compassion.**” With his great compassion, he embraces all living beings.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 15.27; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P96, L6]

O Teacher, you are so compassionate
And caring, and
strive to act

**Lovingly without
laziness- Who else
is like you?**

This “**Teacher**” is our Buddha, to be truly called a “**Teacher**”, it is the Buddha. Only Buddha is worthy of being called the great “**Teacher**”. He has great compassion and he loves and cares for us at all times. Not only does he love us, but he has methods of helping us. Not only does he have the methods, he diligently and earnestly strives at the method without stopping. For this characteristic, no one within the three realms, whether it is the mundane world or supramundane world, is comparable. Though Bodhisattva does have [portions] of it, it is not complete. Those in the Hinayana may have resolved their own problems but he can only help others within their capacities. Their compassion, the compassion of the Hinayana practitioners lacks greatness but there is compassion! We should clearly distinguish the difference between compassion and great compassion! This is explained in detail in the later sections. Once you understand this, then with many principles of the Southern tradition, you will not engage in disputes. Like that. So on this point, with the Southern tradition, we should very much give our respects, but there is no need to argue. So I want to explain that first here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 16.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P97, L2]

**You are the protector of
all living beings, The
benefactor of everyone.
Beings sink down
because
They do not seek your protection.**

This says that you, Buddha, are the protector of all living beings. He is what's most auspicious, one whom we should be close to and worthy of our complete reliance and refuge. It is because we do not seek such perfect Buddha to be our refuge and that's why we sink in this cyclic existence!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 17.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P97, L5]

**You are even able to assist the lowly
If they have correctly adopted your teaching.
Other than you
No one knows these beneficial teachings.
You have truly realized
All the external factors, or powers.
Because they have not acquired the
inner powers, Ordinary persons
remain subject to suffering.**

If you can really practice according to the teachings, if you can honestly and correctly learn any teaching, no matter how inferior you may be, if you can follow and do so, you will derive benefits. Now Buddha knows not only all the elementary things, he knows ultimately and completely all the

methods to help all living beings. Like that! It's much like in the mundane world, if we were to tell you how to do run a business, if the information is very accurate, then you once you learn it, you can certainly become successful. Or if we teach you how to drive a car, once you learn it, you will know how to drive. That's the kind of benefit!

Now for all that's most perfect, Buddha is perfect in everything, perfect in everything. Then how come we are unable to obtain them? It is because we have not "**acquired the inner powers**" and thus we are not able to obtain them. Why is it that we can't obtain them? Why have we not acquired our inner powers? [There is only] one word [to describe this] – "foolishness", this is why we are foolish. Because of foolishness, we suffer. We are foolish and yet we are unaware that we are foolish, we think we are right, that's the greatest foolishness of all! Therefore a true practitioner will only look at themselves, "Ah! I am foolish." If you can constantly see this and constantly purify it, then there is hope for us.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P180; 43B, 19.03; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P98, L2]

If you truly understand this, then we wouldn't be arguing over the things we do now. Ah! The reason we argue now is because we see the faults in others. A true practitioner's eyes have only the time to look at their own faults. This is absolutely the truth. It is absolutely the truth. Okay. To take this a step further, we now know about going for refuge, the objects of refuge should be like this. Well then we are absolutely joyous! Then, how should we go for refuge?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 19.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P98, L6]

3' The way you go for refuge³¹³

There are four aspects to going for refuge:

So there are 4 aspects for this. What are the 4 aspects? These were taught in the *Compendium of Determinations*. It is a brief discussion but it is also the essential outline, mainly divided into these 4 aspects.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 19.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P98, L9]

- 1. By knowing the good qualities**
- 2. By knowing the distinctions**
- 3. Through commitment**
- 4. By refusing to acknowledge other refuges**

Why should we go to him for refuge? What is refuge, so now we know, there! There are so many benefits for going for refuge! Hmmm...Yes. So why do you go for refuge? You are seeking these benefits! Ah, so now we know the benefits of going for refuge. What about “**knowing the distinctions?**” Since for refuge, there are the Three Jewels, so then for what are the differences among them, what are the detail contents/meanings of each one? Then how do you go for refuge? It is “**through commitment.**” That is because once you understood this, then of course it is something you wish to do! It is not like someone telling you, “So and so, ah! Going

for refuge is good! Come with me, come, come, come! Let's go for refuge." This is of no use. Once you understand these things, even if we tell you to stop going for refuge, you couldn't stop. So you will certainly become this way if you have truly gone for refuge. As for us who practice now, we actually exhort you and ask, "Ah! so and so! Now that you've come here, come, come, come! It will be good if you listen to that teaching!" In your mind, "you kind of want to listen and kind of don't." Then it is of no use. If you truly understand this, we can't even stop you from coming! Like that. Even if there are no more seats for you, you would still feel fine to stand outside the door and try to listen. You would still do that. If you have this kind of mindset then you will obtain the benefits.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 21.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P99, L8]

If we look at all the great masters of the past, they were all like that. Remember we talked about a story of the Zen's sect in ancient China? This Fen-Yang (汾陽) went to visit...who? He went to see Ci-Ming. Yes, so then he travelled long distances to find his teacher. He got there at night, the teacher saw him, "pong" shut the door on him, and said, "What a ghost!" Ah, but Feng-Yang did not back down. The next morning when the teacher opened his window and saw the student still sitting there, with his bucket of water, he poured it [on him]. The student still didn't leave. Why? He knew that this was the only place where he wanted to be. The Lineage Masters are like that. When we look at Buddha, Buddha is the same! To seek for one verse [of teaching], no matter how much suffering he had to endure, whether it would

cost him his life, his head, eyes, marrows...etc, ah, he would absolutely do it! For us now, if we feel that we are slightly wronged or suffer from injustice, we can't take it. People try so hard to get us here and yet we don't want to come. So it is a matter of internal factor! So it says **"through commitment."** Once you understand it, of course! Then when you go for refuge, you **"refuse to acknowledge other refuges."** [Because] this is it! This is it! It is not like after you go for refuge and later this person tells you "this thing is good" and you follow him and that person tells you "that thing is good" and you follow that person. Then it's a waste! [So] you distinguish clearly, the true meaning of refuge is exactly this [and nothing else]. That is how to go for refuge. Now we can continue to read.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 22.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P100, L4]

a" Going for refuge by knowing the good qualities
Since going for refuge by knowing the good qualities
requires recalling the good qualities of the refuge, there
are three subdivisions of this topic:

- 1. The good qualities of the Buddha**
- 2. The good qualities of the teaching**
- 3. The good qualities of the community**

When you are going for refuge, you want to be able to recall and continuously think about it. You would then feel, "Ah! It has these benefits." Then at that time, even if we tell you to stop going for refuge, you can't stop. So it is divided into 3 parts, Buddha, teaching (Dharma) and community

(Sangha) because these are the Three Jewels we go for refuge!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 22.53; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P100, L8]

1" The good qualities of the Buddha These are explained in four parts:

- 1. The good qualities of the Buddha's body**
- 2. The good qualities of the Buddha's speech**
- 3. The good qualities of the Buddha's mind**
- 4. The good qualities of enlightened activities**

With [the good qualities of] the Buddha, it is divided into 4 parts. Which four? Body, speech and mind. Within the mind it is further divided into good quality of compassion and wisdom. So it is of body, speech, compassion and wisdom. Next, let's recite it; this part is easy to understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 23.13; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P100, L11]

**(a) The good qualities of the Buddha's body
This entails recollection of the Buddha's auspicious signs and exemplary features.**

In the song of praise for the Buddha, Ah! The first part praises the good signs of Buddha. This is so that in our mind, we can begin to have this concept – we have such ugly body now and we suffer infinitely from it. Because of suffering, we

want to go for refuge. The object of refuge has resolved all of his problems and therefore is perfect and has unsurpassed beauty. When you think of this, when you think of his perfect beauty, unconsciously you have already started to wholeheartedly go for refuge. This is refuge of the cause. If you go for refuge in the causal period and practice the teachings accordingly, in the end you will become him. Then you will achieve the signs of the effect stage. That's how it is. That's how it works! So with the below section, it's easier, we can just read it through.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 24.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P101, L6]

Recall them as they are taught in the *Praise by Example (Upama-stava)* [section of the *Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honor*]:³¹⁴

So in our mind, we should recall this all the time. What is in our mind now? We all think of things in the mundane world. Ah, what is that? Because your mind thinks of that, your brain follows it all the time, you are turned by your afflictions, turned by your afflictions. You may be thinking of foods, things to play, money, or whatever. Your mind keeps pursuing those things. Now if you think of the Buddha, your mind will pursue that too. When you think of the things in the mundane world you give rise to afflictions and wander in the cyclic existence. When you think of the perfect qualities of the Buddha, you increase uncontaminated karma, and you'll go without afflictions. At present you will feel at ease and content. Then because of your contemplation, the uncontaminated karma

you accrue will allow you to escape [cyclic existence] in the future. Ah! What a difference between the two! They are heaven and earth apart.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 25.12; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P101, L13]

**Your body, adorned with the signs,
Is beautiful, an elixir
for the eye; It's like a
cloudless autumn sky
Decorated with
clusters of stars.
O golden Sage,
Beautifully draped with religious robes—
You are like a golden mountain peak
Wrapped in the clouds of sunrise or sunset. [135]
O protector, even the full moon
Free of clouds cannot
compare With the
radiant orb of your
face Free of the
embellishment of
jewelry.
Should a bee see
The lotus of your face
And a lotus opened by the sun,
It would wonder which was the real lotus.
Your white teeth beautify
Your golden face**

**Like pure moonbeams in autumn
pouring through The gaps
between golden mountains.
O one so worthy of worship, your right hand,
Adorned with the sign of the wheel,
Makes the gesture of relief
To people terrified by cyclic existence.
O Sage, when you walk,
Your feet leave marks on this earth
Like splendid lotuses-
How can it be beautified by lotus gardens?**

Ah! The Buddha's body has unsurpassed beauty! From the crown of his head to the bottom of his feet, these are but some simple and brief explanations. If we were to discuss this more in depth, we would talk about the 32 signs, and then in more detail, we would talk about the 80 notable physical characteristics. If we want to be even more detailed, then are infinite beauties that there's no end to telling it. We are now in a total mess [in comparison], in such a mess! We may have full faculties with our bodies, but there isn't anything worth viewing. Why are we like that? It's because we are attached to things [i.e. worldly things]. Our mind still cannot let these things go! Then of course, you are destined to become what you look like! Therefore, this is why we should think of Buddha's body. Thus in the causal period, you definitely shouldn't be thinking anymore that, "Ah! Are the dishes nutritious?" "Ah! Need to think of some ways to make more money." "Ah, this person gave me a funny look, what was that for?! Let me go ask him." Definitely do not think of these things anymore. It is meaningless, it is meaningless. [You

should] with your whole heart think that, “Ah! Buddha’s body has unsurpassed good qualities.” If you cannot recall it, then read it. It’s very simple. Just read it, just read 4 words, or even reading 1 word will bring infinite merit. The principle is such.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 27.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P102, L13]

So with the content of this, read [and recall] as according to your abilities. If you can study/read it continuously, when you pass by the main shrine, ah, you will have unsurpassed joy! Don’t belittle this! One thought of unsurpassed joy is one purified thought. However long that you can sustain this, it will be however long you’ve had pure mindfulness. If you seek to go to Pure Land, then this thought will be able to send you there. It’s that great! To practice is that easy! You might want to give it a try. Once you understand this, even if I tell you not to try you couldn’t resist. This is absolutely true.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 28.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P103, L4]

But some people would say, “Yes! After I listen to this, I really understand the principle. Once the session ends, my mind still becomes much irritated. What should be done?” It has already told us in the beginning and it will tell us again later. These are the ways that our afflictions are portraying. These are the ways of our karmic obscuration. No need to mention that cultivation is difficult. For anything that you attempt to do, there will be obstacles when you truly wish to

advance. With anything, even climbing the stairs, sweeping the floors, nothing is an exception. If you see some difficulties and stop, then you will stop [your progress]. Yet if you could stop being afraid of it and push forward one step at a time, you will be able to breakthrough any difficulty.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 43B, 28.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P103, L10]

So in our mind, when this kind of subjective aspect arises, it is clear that it concords to our afflictions. So you must recognize it. Once you recognize it, you won't [go along with it]. [The problem is] we usually don't recognize it. Ah! We would say, "This, it's true, to cultivate the teachings well, you want to recite and recall Buddha [and his good qualities]. But now I am just afflicted. Shoot!" Just can't bring your spirit up. That is because you have not yet recognized it. Once you have truly recognized it, you will know clearly, and say, "Ah, no mistake in this! There, There, There! This is the thing. This is the thing." At that time, the first thing that happens is you would recognize it and stop being turned by it. [But] is that enough? Not enough! There needs to be all sorts of remedies. So what we really to learn is to learn that. In every place, it explains it so clearly. It doesn't matter what the subjective aspects of the afflictions are in your mind, it tells you clearly what they are, so you won't be deceived by them. The remedies are explained clearly [as well]. Once you have both of them, [it is as if] you know what the sickness is and the medicine for treating it. [All you have to do is to] take the medicine! It's that simple!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P181; 44A, 00.12; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P109, L1]

Needless to say that there are so many people around you who are helping you, isn't it so? Everyone around you is helping you! They tell you not to go out. Why? They are afraid that you will not be cured of this sickness and you end up getting worse! They tell you to come to class, tell you to be there, it is because there are doctors next to you, along with the best medicine, there are nurses around and all kinds of things.... but everyone is just not willing [to go along]. That is our karmic obscuration. This is very clear and obvious. Okay, let's continue. The good quality of the body is such, how about the good quality of the speech?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 00.43; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P109, L6]

(b) The good qualities of the Buddha's speech

Reflect on the marvelous manner of the Buddha's speech. Even if every living being in the universe asks him a different question at the same time, he comprehends them all with one instant of his wisdom. Then he answers all the questions with a single word, which all beings understand in their own languages.

Ah, incredible! It says that in **“the universe,”** all the living beings in the universe, and that is an infinite number of living beings! **“At the same time,”** every being asks him **“different questions”** all at once. If it were us, it would be impossible. When one person speaks to us, and another tries to talk to us

at the same time, we would be lost. Yes, it's like that, we can't even handle two people. Now there are an infinite number of beings with various questions addressed to him, and he "**comprehends them all with one instant of his wisdom**". At any moment, he can resolve all the issues. He "**answers all the questions**", regardless of what questions beings have, he knows them all clearly, and he knows the way in which to answer you. He resolves all your issues. Ah, Buddha is extraordinary!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 01.41; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P110, L5]

Why can Buddha be like that? It's simple. Whenever he speaks, he is in concordance with wisdom. When we speak, ah, it's terrible! We don't speak about anything else but this. Even when we try to help others, and we say that, "Ah, I'm doing this for your benefit!" But truly, does it benefit them? Let me tell you, if you had truly wanted to benefit them, then in your mind, it should have been very clear that first of all, there will not be a little bit of afflictions in your mind, not a single bit of afflictions.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 02.12; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P110, L9]

I will just mention something here. For example, often when we are now, we have morning and night time rituals. This is most important! Sometimes, someone may sound [the dharma bell] a little slower, some a little faster. Everyone has his own habit. Then in another's person's heart, he may

dislike the sound being too fast or too slow or whatever. He may then try to go tell the person [playing the Dharma instrument] off. That would be wrong! What do you think of this then, is he being correct? You can't say that he is incorrect. At these times, for those who are seriously cultivating the teaching, you should weigh, weigh yourself against the teachings. If you've maintained a tranquil state of mind, then regardless of how fast or slow he did it, it wouldn't have bothered you. However, you [also] would realize that because of his pace, being too fast or slow, by not matching the normal tempo, this may affect everyone in there. Then you may take steps to help him. Then it's the correct way! With what you've said, you've then said it correctly. Otherwise, you are merely asking him to suit your own taste. You may feel that he is too slow today, so you'll try to tell him to go faster. Or if you think he is too fast, you'll try to tell him to go slower. Your own affliction is churning. Although you may say, "Ah, I'm telling you this for your benefit!" But I'm sorry! Your words do not accord with the teachings. This is very clear, very obvious! This is just one small example for us.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 03.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P111, L3]

How has Buddha obtained this good quality of speech? He is in accordance with wisdom and compassion. What are the qualities of wisdom? What are the qualities of compassion? We have not talked about them yet. I just wanted to bring it up and briefly discuss it here. So I raised that issue earlier because there are still many things which we do that do not make sense. I was going to point them out.

However, I thought that after you gradually, gradually understand the principles, then when I let you know, things will resolve easily. Since this example happened in the spur of the moment this morning, so I thought I will just mention it here. After Buddha has given us answers, ah, it's marvellous! **"All beings understand."** We can completely know and understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 04.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P111, L9]

[Reflect on the marvelous manner of the Buddha's speech.]

[Translator's note: According to Chinese text, the last sentence is the first sentence of the paragraph in English version. Repeat it in order to be in accordance with Chinese version.]

Ah, it's rare!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 04.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P111, L11]

The *Chapter of the Truth Speaker* says:³¹⁵

**It is like this: if all living beings simultaneously
Ask questions using many different expressions,
He understands them in a single moment,
And with a single utterance
gives answers to each.
Therefore, know that in the**

**world the Leader Knows how to
be eloquent.
He turns the wheel of teaching
That eradicates the suffering of deities and humans.**

His speech is the one that truly turns the wheel of the sublime teaching with great skills. When he speaks and we understand it, it will rescue us from sufferings and torments. That's the correct way. So when we wish to truly propagate the teachings, it should be done this way. We are not perfect as such, but we have some relative qualities and so we advance one step at a time. However, the foremost important matter is that before we open our mouth, we should first assess the status of our mind, what do we abide in now? This is the most important thing! So the first thing to do is still to learn. After learning it, after understanding it, then when you go about to practice, it would be best!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 05.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P112, L6]

Furthermore, recall what is taught in the *Praise in One Hundred and Fifty Verses*:³¹⁶

**Your face is so captivating;
Listening to your pleasant speech
Is like seeing nectar**

Flow from the moon. [136]

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**Your speech, like a rain cloud,
Settles the dust of attachment;
Like the *garuda*,**

It expels the snake of hostility.

So in this section, I should briefly explain, it will help us! His “**face**” is so beautiful. Like that. The Buddha’s body and face, they represent Buddha. Buddha who is so captivating and beautiful, when he speaks, his voice is so pleasant. The meaning of his speech is also excellent. How excellent? It can “**settle**” all sorts of ways of our three mental poisons. With these three mental poisons, attachment is like dust. Why is attachment like dust? You cannot see dust but it is everywhere. You can’t see it. However, when you look around after a while, you’ll see a layer of dust everywhere. That is the way of our attachment. Our attachments are just like that. Sometimes we can’t even see the coarser manifestations, [and thus] with its subtle ways, we certainly do not see any of it, not any of it. Yet we are constantly turned around by it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 06.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P113, L1]

Then what else? **It expels the snake of hostility.** Hostility is really something! It’s much like a poisonous snake. When your hostility arises, ah! Everyone else sees it clearly. Everyone is scared. Not only can he (Buddha) settle the dust of attachment by showering rain – when the rain falls, all the dusts are cleansed. Then, also for the poisonous snake, no matter how poisonous it is, when the garuda comes, ah, it is the end [for the snake]. The most poisonous creature is the poisonous naga. Their poisons are very strong. With the ordinary snakes that are poisonous, they can’t hurt you unless

they bite you. With the poisonous naga, if he just blows air at us, all of us here would die. It's that powerful. And that poisonous gas could last years in a certain place.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P182; 44A, 07.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P113, L7]

In our Chinese history, there was a great master. Ah! He was incredible – Dao-Xuan (南山道宣律祖), he was amazing. He practiced pratyutpannasamādhi, the samadhi and moved the nagas. Ah! So many nagas came to praise, were happy, they rejoiced, they came to rejoice. So at the time, many nagas came to visit this world having transformed into the human form. There were many sons and daughters of the nagas. One daughter of the nagas was very beautiful. When a Shramanera (novice monk) saw her, he had a defiled thought. The naga can see that clearly. So the naga generated one thought of hostility. Nagas tend to have strong hostilities. However, the naga was aware of it immediately and thought this shouldn't be, he immediately confessed and told master Dao-Xuan, "hurry with the well." So the naga quickly spewed his poisonous gas into a well and sealed it. [The naga said,] "This well definitely should not be touched." It is then sealed. Later, if there was just a bit of a leak, if smoke leaked out, the smoke would be very powerful, much like limestone reacting with acid. Ah! Surging and churning. Look at the power of the poisonous nagas, it's so powerful. Ah! When it meets up with a garuda, [all that power] becomes futile. In other words, the sublime teachings that Buddha speak of, regardless of how subtle and difficult it is to pin down the attachment, ah, the teachings can completely clear

it away. Or however strong and harsh the hostility, the teaching can transform your state of mind to calm and tranquillity.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 08.52; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P114, L3]

**Again and again, it is like
a sun
Dispelling the darkness
of ignorance.**

Then what else? The last one of the three mental poisons, ignorance. Ignorance is an utter darkness where you can't see anything. However, just like the "sun," when the sun comes, as soon as the sun shines, all will vanish! Now we have a few lights in here because the sun does not shine in here. If the sun were to shine in, we certainly won't be able to see our fluorescent lights. Therefore, it's a bright illumination. Buddhism is like that too.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 09.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P114, L8]

**Since it razes the
mountain of pride,
It is also like the vajra.**

Oh, the vajra (diamond scepter or thunder bolt) is very powerful. No matter how great is the mountain of pride, if we

try to break it using the vajra, then the mountain of pride will shatter into many pieces.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 09.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P114, L11]

**Because you see the truth, your speech never
misleads;
Since it is faultless, it is correct;
Since it is well-composed, it is easy to understand.
Your words are well-spoken.**

These I won't explain in detail.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 09.43; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P114, L13]

**At first your speech
Captivates the listeners' minds;
Then if they give it thought,
It clears away attachment and delusion.**

Hmmm, see! With Buddha, as soon as you listen to him speak, anyone who listens to him speak, he will captivate your mind. What does it mean by captivating your mind? When we ordinary people speak, no matter how you say it, no one really listens to you. Like that. No one really listens to you. Even when you specifically address someone to tell him something, he may still not listen. Therefore, in a normal state of mind, people really don't hear you. It's different with Buddha. When he speaks, all of the people will focus their

attention on him. He has this great appeal. Why don't we have that? That is something we should ask ourselves. We won't talk about the reasons for that here, the principles are listed in the later sections and are explained very clearly. Then not only are you drawn, you are drawn to him but what he says can touch your heart. You will know what he's saying and the teachings will resolve problems of your mind. Though it can be resolved but if you don't reflect upon it, then the effect won't be that great. **If they give it thought, it clears away attachment and delusion.** If you can reflect according to the teachings properly and in appropriate measurements, then your three mental poisons will be disposed of. Once you've disposed of the three mental poisons, you are liberated from cyclic existence. It's that supreme!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 11.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P115, L10]

**It relieves the destitute,
Protects the unruly,**

Oh! Now in the cyclic existence, we are lacking in everything. Only Buddha's words provide the best relief. Ah! **"Protects the unruly"**! This is the home of us unruly ones.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 11.27; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P115, L13]

**And induces the reveler to renounce—
Your speech accords with everyone's needs.**

To us who revel and feel difficult to let go – this “**reveler**” means those who find it difficult to give up attachment, they can generate the thought to renounce. Buddha has such good quality!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 11.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P116, L2]

**It delights the learned,
Improves the minds of the middling,
And dispels the darkness of the lowly—
This speech is medicine for all living beings.**

To those who are truly wise, upon hearing the Buddha’s speech, ah, they are extremely delighted. This delight brings their tears and makes their hair on the body stand on straight. This is absolutely true. So we can see in the sutras, up until now there are still people, when they study the parts which they feel a certain concordance, ah, they would tear unknowingly. With what Buddha tells us, it is that inconceivable. When persons of middle level hear him, ah, they increase wisdom. When the lowly ones hear him, we can eliminate our darkness and ignorance. That is the good quality of Buddha’s speech.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 12.27; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P116, L8]

This is how we should reflect on the Buddha. On one hand, when we reflect like this, after reflecting, there will be a goal established in our mind – ah, this is what’s supreme!

Once you have that goal, all the small rewards or benefits that are readily in front of you can no longer entice you, they can no longer entice you. Now when we come across things like that, such as when we sit down and as soon as we hear something, our ears immediately begin to pursue the sound. Now, with your whole heart, ah! Let's say there is something that's really good here, your eyes will open wide, and feel that it's so good. It doesn't matter what other distractions may come your way, nothing can deter your attention. Like that. It's just like how it is for children. I think we've all had this experience when we were little, perhaps we've forgotten it. You may want to take a look at your younger brothers and sisters. So then let's say this kid enjoys eating chocolate. When you put it there and won't allow him to eat it, he will be staring at it. Then if you tell him to go somewhere else, he won't go, and perhaps won't even be able to hear what you've said. Why? It's the same principle.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 13.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P117, L3]

Why do I say this here? This is for us to experience. If we can skillfully apply this principle, the description above will become an inevitable result. If you truly think of Buddha this way, may I ask then, would you be turned around by the external sensory objects? Of course not! In this case, how can you not be reborn in Pure Land? If you recall and recite Buddha's name this way, how can you not go there! This is because your mind is solely focused on this at all times. Why would you have this situation where you feel, "Ah! I do wish to go, but as for being mindful of this, I don't know how to recall [or recite the names of Buddha]!" There, There, There! The

principle has been stated right here. So here it tells us this. Oh! So when you go for refuge, this is how you go for refuge. Therefore, with the word “Namo”, there is a great deal to be learned. What is “Namo”? Refuge! Okay, now when we formally learn from Buddha, we should learn it this way.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 14.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P117, L10]

So far there have only been the good qualities of the body and speech, there is still the good quality of the mind next. He is a role model for us to follow. If you follow the teachings, eventually you will have the same achievements. Now when we speak, no one wants to listen. Don't worry about it, just follow the Buddha and learn. I guarantee one day they'll listen to you! The moment you open your mouth, they will be drawn toward you. Even before you open your mouth, they will follow you around all day anyway. Aren't we like that? No need to mention when Buddha comes, even when a great Dharma Master comes, ah! We would follow him around all the time. For a great Dharma Master, we would already be following him around. It's the same case. So let's continue with the third part.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 15.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P118, L1]

**(c) The good qualities of the Buddha's mind
These are explained in terms of the good qualities of knowledge and the good qualities of caring.**

With Buddha's body, speech and mind, this is now the good qualities of the mind, divided in 2 parts, knowledge (wisdom) and caring (compassion).

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 15.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P118, L3]

(i) The good qualities of knowledge

Without obstruction the Buddha's knowledge contacts the real nature and diversity of all phenomena, as if they were a *dhatrī* fruit³¹⁷ placed in the palm of his hand.

What are the good qualities of knowledge? His knowledge contacts the real nature and diversity of all phenomena. The detailed contents of real nature and diversity of all phenomena will be discussed later. With “**real nature**,” we often have another way of describing it which is equipoise that directly perceives the ultimate truth. With “**diversity of all phenomena**,” it is post-equipoise condition which refers to the general characteristics of all the phenomena, they are appropriately posited. Actually, what is the characteristic that the real nature perceives? It is emptiness. Diversity of all phenomena, describe the manifestations, the ways of dependent arising. Well then, but we are not clear on these concepts. He said “emptiness”, after a while, you can believe there is emptiness but cannot fully realize it. He said everything is dependent on the laws of cause and effect and dependent arising, but how did the causes and dependent factors come about? We don't know either. Like that. When Buddha sees things, it is as if they are like a dhatri fruit in the palm of his hand, as if you have the fruit in your hand, being

able to see it so clearly. His knowledge is “**without obstruction.**” There is not a bit of impediment. Thus only Buddha comprehends all. There is not one thing that he does not know.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 16.42; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P118, L13]

Thus, the Sage's knowledge comprehends all phenomena, whereas others' limited knowledge cannot comprehend the vast objects that are to be known.

Yes, other than Buddha, a person’s knowledge can be limited or vast, but it cannot comprehend all [like the Buddha]. This is why we said earlier that Buddha is the only object of our refuge.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P183; 44A, 17.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P119, L3]

You should reflect on this knowledge as it is described in the *Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honor*:³¹⁸

**Only your sublime wisdom
Comprehends all
objects of knowledge;
For everyone other than
you There are objects
yet to be known.**

Although there are others who know things, the knowledge is not complete. Some know more and some less.

Those who know more, perhaps we can say the bodhisattvas of the 8th level. Then the knowledge decreases as we move down the levels, and on down to Pratyekabuddhas and Sravakas...etc.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P184; 44A, 17.26; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P119, L6]

And also,

**O Bhagavan, the entire origination
Of all types of phenomena throughout time
Is within the range of your mind,
Like an *ambalan* fruit in the palm of your hand.
Like the wind moving across the sky,
Your mind is unimpeded
With respect to the single and the manifold
Animate and inanimate phenomena. [137]**

The Bhagavan, with all phenomena in the world, everything, all of it can be seen as if it's in his palm. Whether animated or inanimated, "**single and manifold**," everything can be encompassed. With all sensory objects, Bhagavan sees them clearly, much like the wind in space, without any impediment. So when we see things now, we can't see this or that clearly. Buddha is not like that. Buddha is not like that. Actually when we talk about the ambalan fruit, we are still using the example of this world, using an example of this world. Even if we people of this world put something in the palm of our hands, we still won't see it clearly because when we see one side, we don't see the other. Buddha is not like that. For anything in the ten directions, in all the spheres of

reality and in all space, there isn't anything [that he does not know]; as if he is holding it in the palm of his hand. And he would know it inside out. Thus we say his knowledge contacts the real nature and diversity of all phenomena, there isn't anything he does not know completely. If we take anything in our world and look for the very first cause of its existence, we can't find the very beginning. This won't happen with Buddha. There is not one thing that he has not completely understood. Without any exception, he completely understands all and has completely resolved all issues. This is the good quality of the knowledge.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P184; 44A, 18.59; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P120, L4]

(ii) The good qualities of caring

In the same way that living beings are bound inescapably by the afflictions, so is the Sage bound by great compassion,

The reason we are ordinary living beings, what is it? It is that we are tied down by our afflictions. So we are not free. Buddha is also not free from one thing. What is that? He is tied by his great compassion and therefore he is “**bound.**” So what does this section tell us? Though Buddha has resolved all his problems, he is still busy. What is he busy with? Due to his great compassion, he helps us all the time. This is the difference between Buddha and us.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P184; 44A, 19.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P120, L9]

which thus arises continuously as he beholds the suffering of living beings.

Because he is turned by his great compassion, so as long as he sees suffering, that living beings are suffering, his great compassion continues to arise. The subjective aspect of the great compassion is to think of those who are suffering and then help to alleviate them from suffering. That is called great compassion. Since there are suffering living beings and Buddha has great compassion, of course he is trying at all times to help us. This we should understand. As soon as we think of this, we should remind ourselves immediately that we still lack the internal factor. So we should diligently learn from Buddha.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P184; 44A, 20.18; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P121, L1]

**You should reflect on this as set forth in the *Praise in One Hundred and Fifty Verses*.³¹⁹The afflictions bind all
These beings without exception.
You, in order to release them
from the afflictions, Are eternally
bound by compassion.
Should I first make obeisance to you,
Or to the great compassion
that causes you To dwell for
so long in cyclic existence
Despite knowing its faults?**

All of the living beings are bound by afflictions. Well then the Bhagavan, in order for Bhagavan to save living beings from afflictions, there is only one thing that he is bound to. What is that? Great compassion. Just like how we living beings are bound by afflictions. That is a special characteristic of the Buddha. This explains the above. Because Buddha is bound by great compassion, thus he continuously abides in cyclic existence to help us. That is why the Buddha is referred to as non-abiding in the peace that is nirvana.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P184; 44A, 21.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P121, L7]

Also, the *Chapter of the Truth*

**Speaker says:³²⁰ The
Supreme Sage feels great
compassion**

**When he sees beings whose minds
Are constantly obscured by the dark
gloom of ignorance, Locked in the
prison of cyclic existence.**

He sees how this dark gloom of ignorance has obscured all of us living beings and how we dwell in these long nights of ignorance. Because of this, we are locked in this prison of cyclic existence. So Buddha generates great love and compassion to come and help us.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P184; 44A, 21.46; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P121, L10]

And also:

The Conqueror feels great compassion when he sees beings

Whose minds are overwhelmed by attachment,

Who have great craving and always

long for sensory objects, And who have

fallen into the ocean of craving's

attachment.

The One Possessing the Ten Powers feels compassion

Which seeks to dispel all suffering

When he sees the afflictions of beings

Harmed by a multitude of

illnesses and miseries. The

Sage's compassion arises

constantly; It is impossible

for it not to do so.

The Buddha is free of faults

because he is concerned With the

needs of all living beings.

With the last verse, let me explain it. That last verse says, **“The Sage’s compassion arises constantly,”** the **“sage”** is Buddha. He constantly, meaning his compassion is always active without stopping for any moment. Thus **“it is impossible for it not to do so,”** in any situation, it’s impossible for him to be without great compassion. This does not only refer to our Bhagavan, but to all the Buddhas of the ten directions. Therefore, because he has great compassion,

he is always helping us. The subjective aspect of the great compassion is to think of the living beings who are suffering. Therefore as long as there are beings suffering in this world for a day, Buddha will always abide in this world to save us, thus **“he is concerned with the needs of all living beings.”** Though he is living with us, but he has no faults, he has resolved all his problems, completely resolved. This is what we should understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P184; 44A, 23.03; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P122, L6]

Once we understand this point, as it has been explained before, we will naturally reflect upon ourselves and realize that we lack the internal factor. This is the first point. Then to go another step further, the second point is that when you truly seek an excellent teacher, you wouldn't reproach the excellent teacher's faults. The reason a teacher reveals certain faults is to help us. Why is it that we can't find an excellent teacher now, why? We can't see our own faults, we don't see it. We only see the faults of others. This is the real reason. So some people would say, "Ah, well how about those people, are they truly excellent teachers?" These people...yes! They may be excellent teachers and they may not be. But it is precisely because there are these situations now which will allow you to begin to work at it. So then you can change from looking at others' faults to looking at your own faults. Once you have this ability, then when Buddha is in front of you, you will have a chance to be close to him. Otherwise, when Buddha comes, your beginningless habit of seeking for others' faults will arise. When Buddha is truly in front of you, as you

begin to observe his faults, you've committed immeasurable sins. At that time, there will only be one path for you, to fall [to miserable realms]! Once you realize this, with the faults of the person that you are facing, you would feel so appreciative. Why would you reproach them? So once we understand this principle, it's impossible for us to reproach others. Conversely, if you did reproach others, ha! You've never even understood the principle. So now we would often feel that we stand on the correct principles and would say, "You are wrong!" When we get to this point, we should know clearly that when you say that "you are wrong!" for a person who truly seeks to learn the teachings, you are the person who is 120% wrong!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P184; 44A, 24.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P123, L4]

Let's open up to page 102, (English text, Page 185). At this point, we have truly found refuge, have truly found refuge. At this time, we finally understand what it means by going for refuge. After you have understood this and then go for refuge, this merit becomes immeasurable. Then base on this understanding, if you go for refuge and dedicate this merit to go to Pure Land, you will certainly get there. Otherwise, even if you think, "Ah! Refuge has these great merits," you will not get the merits. Though you may be reciting Amitabha Buddha's name, you can't get to Pure Land. So as far as for the basic principles, we have briefly gone through them. Next it tells us the principles of refuge. There are 3 parts to this: body, speech and mind. After body, speech and mind, there is one last part, the good qualities of the enlightened activities.

Let us now take a look on page 102, the second portion (English text, page 185).

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44A, 26.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P123, L10]

(d) The good qualities of enlightened activities

The enlightened activities of the Buddha's body, speech, and mind, being both spontaneous and everlasting, help all living beings. If disciples are open to his guidance, the Sage will give them that which is excellent, and lead them out of trouble. [138] Thus, the Buddha's activities are certain to do everything that needs to be done.

Well then, what are the things that Buddha does? Let me explain the good qualities of the things that he does. Buddha, under any circumstances, with these enlightened activities of his body, speech and mind, they are ever continuous and without interruption in terms of time and the way he does them is natural and spontaneous. For us, we always have to make an effort, for anything, it would be impossible for us to do it naturally. However, for him, it is so natural that he is that way in any situation. Just like that. As if he was born with it and there is never interruption in terms of time. Thus these two attributes signify that he does nothing besides helping all sentient beings, he does nothing besides helping all sentient beings. Yes, under any circumstance, Buddha is helping all sentient beings at all times. And Buddha, we all know that the reason Buddha has become Buddha is because he attained the “ten powers, four fearlessness and eighteen

different characteristics as compared with bodhisattvas.” His great compassion extends to all living beings without omitting anyone. He is the same to all living beings without differentiating like or dislike. His wisdom understands all and he is able to help us. And the way he helps us is spontaneous and everlasting. So the reason that we are not able to obtain the teachings and transform ourselves, the reason we cannot resolve our problems, what is it? The problem is still us.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44A, 28.42; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P124, L7]

Therefore, **“If disciples are open to his guidance,”** the disciples are us the living beings. Since the dispositions, karmic obscurations, or situations of every individual being is different, those who can accept his guidance, **“the Sage will give them that which is excellent, and lead them out of trouble.”** Buddha will not leave anyone out. He will help those who can be guided so that they can completely resolve their troubles and be alleviated completely from suffering. It is certain that Buddha will do that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 00.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P125, L1]

Therefore, when we think of Buddha’s good qualities of his enlightened activities, on one hand we are extremely thankful and go for refuge with unsurpassed admiration. On the other hand, we should strive to reflect upon ourselves. Why do we remain sunken in this cyclic existence? In what

areas do we not concord with the Three Jewels? How should we purify ourselves? This is most important in learning the teachings. We don't need to speak of the people who aren't learning Buddhism. For those who are, if we've learned for quite a while but have not gained any benefits from it, [we should know that] the problem stems from ourselves. With this point, we should strive harder and harder at it. The moment you find your own problems and are able to correct them, that's when you immediately benefit from it, you immediately benefit from it! When you gain the benefit, then all sufferings and troubling issues will all leave you. All the good things you desire will come to you.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 01.39; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P125, L8]

You should reflect on this as set forth in the *Praise in One Hundred and Fifty Verses*.³²¹

**You explain the destruction of afflictions,
Reveal the deceitfulness of demons,
Proclaim the terrifying nature of
cyclic existence, And show the
way to fearlessness.**

All the teachings the Bhagavan explained are for nothing other than the destruction of afflictions. It is because the root cause of all deterioration and sufferings of the world come from this. Like that. If you understand this and can eliminate it from the root, then all the problems are resolved. All the things in this world are deceitful and demonic. This demon does not necessarily mean celestial demons. In other words,

they could be things which may interfere and prevent us from practicing according to the teachings. With what's false and mistaken, through Buddha's explanation, we now understand. For the things we normally don't understand, we now do. We now realize for all the things in reincarnation, there is nothing other than suffering, nothing but being within cyclic existence. We should absolutely not be confused by it here, but that we need to develop a correct understanding and be deeply disenchanted! Then you practice according to the teachings and escape in this way. Thus, Buddha is the only one who has explained this path to us. At the same time, not only has he pointed out the downfalls of the mundane world, he has also told us how to escape this and reach a place of fearlessness. This is Buddha.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 03.34; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P126, L8]

**O Compassionate One,
wishing to help, You act
for the sake of living
beings. How could there
be something helpful
Which you have not
done?**

The Bhagavan, impelled by his great compassion, he wishes to help all living beings. This Buddha and all Buddhas in any of the ten directions are all like this. Whatever that will help us, help the living beings, Buddha will certainly act upon it. For all that Buddha does, there is nothing else besides helping

the living beings of the ten directions. This is what we should know.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 04.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P126, L12]

**And the *Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honors* says:³²² What trouble is there away from which You cannot lead living beings?
What excellent thing is there That you cannot bestow on the world?**

It says that for Buddha to not lead living beings away from trouble, how could that be possible? Impossible, Buddha would do no such thing. If Buddha did not reveal the realities of the mundane world, then nothing good would have happened in the world. From the supramundane world to the mundane world, from the very top level down to the bottom, all [good things] came from the instructions of the Bhagavan. Then, for living beings with varying dispositions, however much they concord with the teachings, and how they practice will result in the good things of superior, middle and lower grades. “**Excellent things**” are good things. Regarding this point, for us who cultivate the teachings, we should put it in our mind and take it up often to reflect and analyze for ourselves. Regarding how to reflect on the Buddha, there is a sutra named *To Recollect the Three Jewels*. This is really excellent, really excellent, a very thin book. If we are able to follow the principles in this book to recollect often, then

without you knowing, infinite merits will arise. So then here, it has only briefly explained a concise outline of it. Next.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 06.07; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P127, L7]

The preceding briefly summarizes the way to reflect on the Buddha. If you reflect in a variety of ways, your faith will also arise in many ways. The more you reflect, the stronger and more enduring your faith will become. The same applies to the good qualities of the other two jewels.

The above briefly explained the principle on how to reflect on the Buddha. If we were to use a variety of ways, to reflect and analyze from various perspectives, then the greater and deeper your analysis, the more your faith will be increased and inspired. Why? This is because we don't normally understand the truth of things. There are two issues here. This is the first one. The second, we normally follow the ways of our defiled consciousness. So without us knowing, the mind continues to increase the contaminating collections of cyclic existence. We don't even know it. Our lives are passed in this senseless stupidity, in the midst of attachment, hostility and ignorance. So now if you can reflect on the Three Jewels, then immediately we will transform this defiled consciousness to an undefiled virtuous karma. It is such an incredible merit, such an incredible merit.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 07.46; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P128, L2]

Therefore, as long as you recollect the Three Jewels, immediately you will generate uncontaminated, virtuous karma. Then the object in which you recollect, we say that Buddha...ah...is like that. Of course, first, we should first know clearly the order of things. Why did we come here to reflect on the Three Jewels? What is the cause of going for refuge? Since it's because of this we go for refuge, then who should be the objects to which we go for refuge? With the objects we seek for refuge, what good qualities do they have? Under this circumstance then, naturally for each section, you will appropriately and intricately accord with the teaching in intellect (or reason) and emotion, we will be completely in concordance, completely in concordance. When you start to think of how we are suffering immensely in this cyclic existence, and then, how perfect the Buddha is. He is indeed the one who deserves our utmost admiration, one who deserves to be our role model. And he is continuously helping us, worthy of our refuge and reliance. With this attitude of really wanting to go for refuge and rely, you can't help but naturally develop this attitude. Then when you begin to think of his many good qualities, your yearning for refuge will increase, will become purer and closer to perfection.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 09.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P128, L11]

Then at that time your pure faith will be inspired and increased. "Purity" means to purify the defilements that we originally had. Then at this time, we can truly speak of "faith." Normally we would say our faith, the faith. We really can't be talking about faith, really cannot even begin to talk about faith.

This we should know. So if you can reflect and analyze in many aspects, then your pure faith will develop. I must express my regret on this matter! For many who cultivate the method of reciting and reflecting on the Buddha, they don't want to learn these principles. Then may I ask how can you actually do it well? So I say this again and again, so many people would say, "Ah, need to cultivate. Need to be locked up in a shack in a mountain." So once locked up, if you had virtuous root from previous lives, which we had already said that this would qualify as an exception and we won't need to discuss that here. Other than being the exception, if you lock yourself up, I guarantee there will be problems, I guarantee your efforts will be in vain. The reason is this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 10.28; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P129, L3]

So he says next that, "**The more you reflect, the stronger and more enduring your faith will become.**" If you follow this to reflect, continuously reflect, continuously, continuously, continuously to recollect this principle, to reflect on this principle. Then the force of your faith will become stronger and more enduring. It will continue forth unceasingly. Regarding the force of faith developed from reflecting upon the Three Jewels, this place calls it a force. (Note: it is called force '勢力' in the Chinese text). Actually, this is our uncontaminated virtuous karma. If you can continue this unceasingly, you will achieve when reciting Buddha's name, you will go to Pure Land should you seek it. So the above refers to the Jewel of Buddha. For the jewels of the teaching and the community of Sanghas, the same principle applies.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 11.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P129, L9]

When you have gained certainty by meditating in this way, you will understand that the scriptures and their commentaries are instructions, in that most of them teach the good qualities of the three refuges.

If like what was said earlier, we are able to skilfully understand it (the principles), reflect and practice in accordance with it, then we would know that all different kinds of scriptures and commentaries are really teaching us about “going for refuge to the Three Jewels,” the way to go for refuge to Buddha, teachings and the sangha community. If you practice accordingly, you will obtain the merits of going for refuge to the Three Jewels. Because you’ve read, understood, and obtained, therefore, these scriptures and commentaries are the best instructions for us now.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 12.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P129, L14]

However, now we seem to have this paradox where we would say that we’ve studied the scriptures and commentaries at length and yet our practice can’t seem to concord with the principles? The reason is you haven’t skilfully understood this principle. In the end, even though the scriptures and commentaries are the best teachings, but because you are not skilled, you can’t see the true quintessence of the teaching. Then at this time, you would feel that, “Ah, the scriptures and

commentaries are useless!” You may then try to find some alternative. Therefore, the text mentioned this in particular earlier that suppose the scriptures and commentaries are not right, who else can teach us better than what is said in the scriptures and commentaries? The scriptures are words spoken by the Buddha and the commentaries are composed by the Bodhisattvas. If you think the teachings from the Buddha and Bodhisattva don’t work, could there possibly be anyone better than the Buddha and the Bodhisattvas? If there is someone better, why would you want to learn from the Buddha, wouldn’t that be the biggest mistake?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 13.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P130, L6]

Now that we get to this point, all the reasons have been pointed out and we have understood it that, oh! The problem was that we weren’t skilled, we weren’t adept at it, and perhaps weren’t clear of the order. Thus we did not comprehend the nature of this and after comprehending it, we did not practice until reaching the proper measure (quantity). But of course, in order to actually accomplish that, there needs to be a necessary order. Since we have gotten this aspect wrong, and therefore have wasted our efforts. After striving for a long time, we’ve gone through so many unnecessary sufferings. But as we realize this, we felt a great sense of delight. On one hand, we are now delving into the teachings accordingly, advancing step by step. On the other hand, we feel such true delight from the teachings.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 14.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P130, L11]

Let's continue. Well then, in this place, the text reminds us of something in particular.

What is that? There, the section below says that so many of us talk about practice (meditation).

When you truly begin your practice (meditation), study and reflection are extremely important. However, so many people would say, "This is not necessary." As a result, because you've taken away the most useful and needed tool for meditation, in the end, you are unsuccessful in your meditation. Thus, other than explaining this in particular in the section on meditation where it refutes misconceptions, this topic is brought up again here as a reminder for everyone.

C. Page 103

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 15.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P131, L1]

People who reject analytical meditation as a practice, thinking that it is mere conceptualization, shut off many such ways of accumulating merit and clearing away obscuration. Therefore, be aware that such a rejection is a great obstacle to taking advantage of the boundless potential of a life of leisure and opportunity.

He reminds us again here, which is the same as what was said before, just being brought up again. It says that some people say, "If you reflect and analyze, these are all conceptualizations. However, when you are practicing (meditating), you are not supposed to conceptualize. Thus

when you practice (meditate), you should give it up and not reflect/contemplate.” Such idea or argument is a big mistake, a big mistake!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 15.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P131, L6]

Before we actually set out to practice, what’s the most important foundation prior to that? It is to eliminate obscurations and to accumulate merits. But both of these things require hearing/studying the teachings properly. Once you hear/study the teachings, you reflect accordingly. The more you reflect and analyze, the greater the effect will be. The greater the effect will mean the more obscurations you will have eliminated, and the merits you will have accumulated will be greater and deeper. Now you don’t want this (study and reflection). As a result, it’s bad, the result of that is bad! These two things, the best method for the elimination of obscurations and accumulation of merits, have been instantaneously and completely shut off by you. Shut off means to block you from, to prevent, to sever, to sever. So then in this scenario, even though you have obtained this human life of leisure and opportunity and wish to practice, you have encountered the greatest obstacle. Yet you do not know, and think that, “Yes! You do not need to conceptualize when you practice (meditate).” As a result, it’s over! It’s over! You already have obtained this life of leisure and opportunity and you know you need to practice. When you go practice, you are blocked and erred by this wrong knowledge and wrong view. Thus you end up wasting your entire life for nothing. That is the greatest pity!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 17.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P132, L1]

This has been explained in detail before but here he earnestly tells us again so that we can recollect the principles stated before. Then we can bring up the correct mindfulness and then thoroughly go in depth in this section. Well then, at that time, you will gain all the merits from reflecting on the Buddha. Then naturally in all 24 hours, there isn't a moment in which you are not accumulating merits or eliminating obscurations. Then whether it is temporary happiness or omniscience that you seek, you will certainly attain them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 18.09; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P132, L5]

The more you practice these things, the more accustomed your mind will become to them,

The preceding principle of recollecting the Three Jewels, in other words, it is on refuge. So far, up to this point, just for this topic on refuge, oh, just for this topic of refuge! If you can follow this teaching and practice in accordance with the principles, **“the more accustomed your mind will become to them.”** How much your mind changes will commensurate with the amount you practice. Before you practice, what is the state of your mind like? It is concordant to defilement, concordant to defilement. Then, after you modify your behaviour and train, the part of defilement decreases and the part of pure virtue gradually increases. Of course you would

have changed. Then as much of your obscurations would have been eliminated and as much merit would have been amassed. It's just that simple and that efficacious!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 19.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P132, L11]

Therefore, as soon as your thought is in the right place, you are immediately aware of it and know, "Ah! This is right." So reflecting on the Buddha produces this kind of good quality. I think everyone at least should know this clearly by now in terms of its path of reasoning! This is not something you wait and see at the moment of your death, ah, to see whether if you can make it [to Pure land] or not and you ask others to come pray at the moment of your death! It is that at the current moment of your thought, you are clear that this thought will take you there, and that thought will not get you there. With any thought it is so and with any day it is so. Then through days, months and years of accumulation, you will know clearly where you will be heading after this life. At that time, you will certainly be in control and are not controlled by others.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 20.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P133, L3]

However, the level of control is different at different levels. The level of control of a staged Bodhisattva is different from us. Our control is that you can keep this mindfulness of the correct thought. So you are aware that you definitely can advance. It's on this point, for this particular situation. For

those who seek for Pure Land, in other words then, they should know clearly that they are able to reach Pure Land. So this place tells us, if you follow in this way, and do it continuously, ah, your mind will change and will be in accordance. So we should know this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 20.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P133, L8]

and the easier it will be to practice what you had initially found difficult to learn.

So when we first begin, it is more difficult. Why? Because in the beginning, you don't have much understanding and there is no strength. Your every thought is in a defiled state of mind. However, if you feel that it's difficult and choose to sit there and do nothing, you will never have a chance. This is a difficult point [to breakthrough]. Therefore, we should know from the beginning until the end that we shouldn't think, "Ah, it would be best if I can just sit there and this thing can just fall from the sky." No such thing would happen even in the mundane world, needless to say in Buddhism! If you sit there and wait for it to fall on you from the sky, then you are completely wrong, completely wrong. Therefore we certainly will need to first understand it, and then strive to practice. If you can do this, then it's right. At the same time, when you feel that it's difficult, this happens to explain that, ah, you are on the right track. Why? Because, what was your original state of mind? It was defiled. In other words, if we borrow a word from the mundane world, it would be called inertia. Now, to truly practice, it would mean to

change. Otherwise, what would be practice? Practice means to change your [wrongful] ways. The original state was incorrect, so you change it. Let's think about this, isn't it the same with everything in this world? So once you understand this, you will be very clear.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 21.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P134, L4]

Normally we always feel that, "Ah! I feel that I'm in a state of tranquillity, it feels pretty good." Then when a certain sensory object comes your way, you can no longer maintain your feeling. That is because you do not understand the true subjective aspects. If you truly understand the subjective aspects, you will know that when is the best time to cultivate? It is when you are irritated. When you recognize that and bring up the correct thought in your mind.

That is the best time. That is the best time [for practice]. Therefore, at that time, if you can overcome it, then you've broken through another barrier. That's what is real. That's what is real. Like that. That is why we should take a look at wood logs. In the summer, trees grow really fast but the layers are loose. However in winter, though the trees grow slowly but they are much more solid in its layers. That is because the wood had to endure difficult trials [of the winter] in order to survive. It is the same with practice (meditation). So you can see how we grow bean sprouts in a bucket, we try so hard to shelter it and make it grow. But sorry! You can only use bean sprouts as bean sprouts. There is no other purpose for it. If you let the sprouts be exposed in the sun, get blown by the wind or be rained on, oh well! They will

either wilt or rot. Nothing will grow from that. For us who truly wish to cultivate the teachings, don't be like bean sprouts. This is something we should make a note of!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 23.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P134, L14]

Or we should say it this way, other than using the bean sprouts [as an example], if we go a step further to talk about this, what is truly important is that we must train ourselves in the course of facing sensory objects [i.e. when experiencing situations]. This sensory object is not something of the external environment, but that when the sensory object arises, you begin to pay attention to your mind, what is the state of your mind. At that time, if you do have an understanding of the sublime teachings, you will know then, "Ah, the mind is being pulled away by the external stimulus." You then try to pull it back. However you'll feel that when you try to pull it, you can't. This is when it becomes difficult. Or it could be that when you try to bring up [the correct state of mind] and you can't, there is difficulty then. However that is when the real work of practice happens, upon that sensory object. This is the time. If you can strive at it for a period of time, then later, ah, **"easier it will be to practice what you had initially found difficult to learn."** Gradually and gradually, as time goes by, as soon as you try to bring up [the correct thought], you'll be able to. Then in the end, even if you did not intentionally try to bring up the correct thought, it just comes to you. Once you are at the level where as soon as you wish to bring it up, it is up. Then that is when you can delve deeper [into the teachings].

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 24.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P135, L7]

Thus, if you had trained on pure faith to the teacher, a human life of leisure and opportunity, mindfulness of death and impermanence, and sufferings...etc, then when you are doing a sitting meditation, if your mind begins to wander off after a short while, you can try to bring to mind any of the preceding concepts, and you will be able to bring it up immediately. When you fall to laxity, you can think of the difficult of obtaining leisure and opportunity, ah, you would feel that for yourself, "It's true, I've obtained this, I'm fortunate! I must quickly strive!" Your laxity will be gone. If at the time, you become distracted again, you can't let go of this or that in your mind. So you immediately think of death and suffering. Ah! When you think of the suffering of death, you will immediately be rid of all attachments. Therefore, at that time, you would have eliminated laxity and thoughts of attachments. Of course it would then be very easy to achieve meditative concentration. Like that. So the previous order of the teachings presents such benefit! OK. Let's continue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P185; 44B, 25.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P136, L1]

You will develop the spirit of enlightenment, thinking, "I, too, should obtain buddhahood, like the Buddha whom I recollect."

Ah, marvellous! We often speak of spirit of enlightenment, spirit of enlightenment, what is spirit of enlightenment? Though we speak much about it, but we may not truly understand its essence. Just like that. So, now that we are here, if we truly and correctly understand the concept of going for refuge, then with our first step, we would think, “Ah, yes! We now go for refuge to the Buddha. Buddha is so perfect. He is our goal, our refuge, our reliance. I want to learn to become like the Buddha too.” If you can follow accordingly to recollect in this way, such that, “I hope to become like the one I recollect, rely and go for refuge. I wish to attain this [his good qualities].” Then what is this? This is developing the spirit of enlightenment. So what is spirit of enlightenment? To benefit all living beings, may I become Buddha! Mm, in order to alleviate the sufferings of all living beings, I want to become Buddha too. This is the spirit of enlightenment. So from the beginning you are in concordance with that when you go for refuge. So for example, if we take a look, for those people who study the method of reciting Buddha’s names/reflecting on Buddha, if they can develop the spirit of enlightenment, it will become an extremely great power. Then what is spirit of enlightenment? When we speak of it, we seem to know it. However, true concordance with it will be difficult. Now in this place, it tells us we can be in concordance starting from the beginning - there are these benefits. If you can reflect on the Buddha and generate this kind of mentality, then....

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 44B, 27.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P136, L12]

You will have visions of the Buddha day and night. No matter how much you suffer at death, you will not lose your recollection of the Buddha.

Because you are constantly recollecting the Three Jewels, regardless of day or night, you will have “**visions of the Buddha.**” If you reflect on the Buddha you will see the Buddha, he will come. Be it now or in the future, you most certainly will see the Buddha. You will not lose that recollection. This fully reveals the chapter on reflecting on the Buddha (念佛圆通章) composed by Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. So we are now at the beginning, but of course as you advance deeper layer after layer, the meaning becomes deeper and more expansive. Since at all times you are recollecting the Buddha, even at death, it doesn't matter what kind of suffering arises, you will not lose that recollection of the Buddha.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 44B, 27.58; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P137, L4]

Why is it that you won't lose it despite your suffering at the moment of death? This is an important concept! In the past, we may be reflecting on the Buddha while feeling happy and comfortable! We might have felt that it's pretty good to recollect the Buddha. However, whenever a little affliction arises, we would give up the recitation of Buddha's name. With just a bit of pain and suffering, we would give it up. So if you could give it up for a small suffering normally, needless to say when you are sick. If you could give it up during the time of sickness, then needless to say at the time of your death.

Now it says that even at the moment of death, you can continue to recollect, will not lose this. Why? Why? Ah, this is something that if you look back, the path of reasoning becomes very clear.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 44B, 28.41; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P137, L9]

Why do we recollect the Buddha? What is recollection of the Buddha? After you go for refuge you naturally will recollect. But why do you go for refuge? There are two reasons for refuge. Because you have suffering and you wish to be liberated. But to be liberated from suffering you can only rely on this. So this suffering is the primary reason for truly spurring you to go down this path. Therefore, the more suffering you have, the more earnest your refuge. Isn't it so? At the time of death, it is precisely a time of suffering. Of course then your refuge is even more earnest! Thus once you truly understand this idea, then from the very first time you recite Buddha's name, you will be like this (have such mentality). [Later], the greater the suffering, the more your recitation of Buddha will be in concordance. Thus, with small sufferings, you recollect the Buddha in a small amount. With great sufferings, you recollect the Buddha in a great amount. At the time of death, you are just in time to go [to Pure Land]. Isn't it 100% [assurance]!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 00.07; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P141, L1]

So from the very beginning we must be very clear of the path of reasoning. Then we should recognize clearly what are the subjective aspects. When you comprehend the path of reasoning clearly, you're at the level of knowing the principles. The content or essence, in which the principles point to, would be the subjective aspects. If you can grasp the subjective aspects and follow accordingly to practice, then you will be in concordance! Now what are the subjective aspects [that we speak of]? It is the state of being or condition of our body and mind. If you understand the principles and your body and mind concord accordingly, then how could you not end up going to Pure Land after much recitation of Buddha's name? Right? Why would you be giving up the recollection upon suffering? Impossible! If you give it up during suffering, then you fundamentally do not know what refuge is. If you understand what it is, then you certainly will not give it up in times of suffering. Not only will you not give it up, the more sufferings you have, the better your recollection of the Buddha (reciting Buddha's name). Are you clear with this? Up to this point, does anyone have any questions? Ah! Therefore the presentation of the complete teaching is so beautiful! Speaking of this, we cannot help but to appreciate and express our gratitude toward Buddha, Bodhisattva, and past great masters from the depth of our hearts and what is this mentality? It's the best way of recollecting the Buddha. What a joy! Let's continue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 01.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P142, L1]

The *King of Concentrations Sutra* says:³²³

I instruct you

And you should understand:

Peoples' minds become absorbed in something

To the degree that they reflect on it.

So this teaches you, it tells you this principle. Then once you understand it, comprehend it, then in your everyday life, you follow this to observe/analyze. Because you can analyze in accordance with the teachings, then it becomes only natural. Ah! Your mind will then be in concordance.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 02.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P142, L5]

Therefore, recollect the Master of the Sages as having a conqueror's Physical posture and limitless sublime wisdom.

If you constantly familiarize yourself with such recollection,

Your mind will become absorbed in it—

Just like this principle, you would recollect the Buddha, recollect the Buddha. Buddha, because of his numerous [good qualities], you recollect his body, speech, and mind, limitless [good qualities]. **“Physical posture and limitless sublime wisdom”** includes everything that was explained earlier. If you can often recollect in this way, then what happens to your mind? Ah! Will concord with it, will concord with it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 2.42; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P142, L9]

**You will desire the sublime wisdom
of a holy being
Whether you walk, sit, stand, or
recline.
Because you yourself will want to become a
supreme conqueror in the world,
You will also make prayers aspiring to
enlightenment.**

In that situation, whether you walk, sit, stand, or recline, you will be like this, “It’s great, great, great.” You will feel joy and have great desire! Thus not only will you want to go for refuge and seek reliance, you will think that “I hope one day I could be like that as well.” This is where the truly superior first step will take us, the generation of the conventional spirit of enlightenment.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 3.16; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P142, L13]

And also:

**Constantly give praise to the buddhas
With your body, speech, and
mind of clear faith. By
conditioning your mind-stream
in this way,
You will see the Protector of the World day and night.**

**Should you suffer the approach of death
In sickness and sorrow,
Your recollection of the
Buddha will not be lost; It will
not be erased by your
suffering.**

This is like what was said earlier, but here it cites from the sutra, from the sutra. If you can practice and reflect according to the previous words, ah, your defiled state of mind will gradually be purified. Then at that time, the karma of your body, speech and mind will gradually become clear and pure. Of course, certainly, must constantly recollect, praise, go for refuge and rely upon the auspicious qualities of the Three Jewels. This kind of recollection, reflection, analysis, going for refuge, and reliance would be **“conditioning your mind-stream.”** Mind, in this place, the text calls it, **“mind-stream.”** In other words, it means a continuum of our body and mind, which is where true cultivation takes place. If you can actually practice as such, then **“you will see the Protector of the World day and night.”** This is speaking from the point of the eye of the mind. In other words, usually our eye of the mind is in defilement. We go along with foolishness and ignorance. Now, we will go along with wisdom. Thus in day or night, we are in concordance with Buddha. At that time, whether you are sick, agitated, or even at the most critical time which is upon your death, ah! **“Your recollection of the Buddha will not be lost.”** With **“sufferings,”** ah, no matter how bad the suffering is, it cannot and it won’t be possible to alter your mind’s will to recollect the Buddha. This principle was just said earlier. This principle was just said earlier, right?!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 5.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P143, L12]

Thus, we shouldn't keep saying "Ah! I need to cultivate, need to cultivate!" You don't even know the key points of cultivation or its principles, how are you going to cultivate? So once you understand this principle, you just need to follow this principle to reflect and analyze. Isn't that the best cultivation? If you can follow this and practice, then no difficulty will strike you down. On the contrary, difficulties will actually become a force that propels you to cultivate. Because it can become a force to help you cultivate and you have received the most skillful method of practice to help you overcome each difficulty, as a result, your difficulties will change to become your good qualities. Before, this difficulty kept blocking you from advancing forward and has kept you in the cyclic existence to suffer. Now, hey! This painful obstacle becomes a force that propels you. It has become the best support for you to purify karma, right here! This is what we should truly strive to learn! So with these few sentences, it is worthy of our reflection and analysis again and again. If you can get a good grasp of this point, then you will have no problem, no problem.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 6.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P144, L7]

Bo-do-wa said:

So then the past master tells us this in the next section. The text quotes from the past master. This is how the past

master practiced. He shares with us his experience and his instructions.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 7.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P144, L10]

If you reflect on the Buddha's good qualities again and again, you will receive a blessing commensurate with the strength of your faith and the purity of your mind.

If we follow what is described previously and continue to reflect according to the teachings, then at that time you will gradually increase “**the strength of your faith.**” With this “gradual” word, pay attention to this! There is no exception to this when you cultivate. It is certainly like that. We often will talk about immediate awakening, immediate awakening. When you truly awaken, that does come in an instant. However, when you are cultivating, it is done gradually! Cultivation is done gradually. There is no exception to that [concept] in this world [too]. Yes, with anything that we do, we may be trying to figure it out for a while, then all of a sudden, “Ah! I get it.” Yes, you’ve reached an understanding in that one instance, but this understanding definitely did not fall from the sky. You have already tried to figure this out for a while, and then? Oh, you got it! It is the same for things around us now. With a light bulb, you just turn it, um, it’s on! However, you must have had the electric generator on the outside and had connected the wires on the inside. Oh! There was much effort involved with that! Because you’ve spent much effort and did it correctly, then at that time, when you simply turn on the switch, the light comes on! This is what we should

understand. This is what we should understand. Therefore, if you can continuously reflect on this, ah, then slowly, slowly, your obscurations are eliminated, and your merits are accumulated. Thus, your faith increases and strengthens. Then at the time, “**you will receive blessings**,” the blessings of the Buddha thus come. So it is not that Buddha does not bless us! This we should know. It is that our own obscuration remain.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 8.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P145, L7]

Because you have gained certainty about them, you will go for refuge from the depths of your heart and

Through this principle and after going in depth into this, that’s when you will gain “**certainty!**” Now we have not reached certainty yet. We’ve only listened to the principles. To reach real certainty, you must reflect upon it for yourself. This reflection must be in accordance with the teachings. Otherwise, if you only engage in erroneous thinking, then even if you think for 10,000 years, it would be futile! [Now, having done proper reflection], then at that time, the pure faith generated in your mind will become certain. Ah! It’s just as such. At the time of gaining certainty, you are determined with no reservations that to alleviate all sufferings and to gain all happiness, all will come from this! Then the way you go for refuge is truly correct. It is a sincere refuge. Otherwise, it’s all said in vain. Otherwise, it’s all said in vain. One would say, let’s go for refuge....ah! Okay, okay, let’s seek refuge. Then even if you do go for refuge like that, you would always say

things like, “Oh please let me make more money and for something else.” You will be seeking for things of the mundane world. Then you would be acting as if you are non-Buddhist, completely like a non-Buddhist. This does not accord with Buddhism. You would be seeking for longevity, health, and hope for blessings so that my whole family can be safe and sound!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 9.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P146, L3]

To the people of the mundane world, we shouldn't laugh at them. Buddha wouldn't laugh at them. Buddha in many places will go along with what we desire and then entice us [toward the teachings] from these places. So with what I said earlier, what is the main purpose of that? It is to exhort us. In places like this, you should understand this! Whenever I say something like this, every single place that I mention something like this, it is meant for exhorting ourselves, for us to observe our own minds. We most certainly do not want to use this standard on other people. This we should know. Well then, he now says, “Ah! That's the time when you truly go for refuge with sincerity and veneration.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 10.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P146, L8]

train yourself in the precepts of refuge. Then everything you do will become a practice of the teaching.

Marvellous! This is if you are able to learn correctly the precepts of refuge! Correctly “**train yourself**” - you learn correctly and learn well in depth, then with everything that you are doing, they will all become a practice of the teaching. There is great reasoning behind this. I had specifically written this on the board before, “If you forget the spirit of enlightenment, even if you cultivate virtue, they will become demon’s activities.” This is cited from the *Array of Stalks* sutra. But this is also told in many of the Mahayana sutras. They say that if you have forgotten the spirit of enlightenment, then regardless of what you are trying to practice, sorry! It is not Buddhism but the activities of the demons. Now in this place, as long as you can genuinely practice according to this, then everything you do will become Dharma practice. Hey! Hey! It is that great. So if you say everything can become a practice of the teachings, then eating or putting on clothes should of course be included as well. Within our minds, we would often think, “Ah! That’s the way of the past masters because they have gained great awakening already. Therefore, whether he is eating or putting on clothing, these can become a practice of the teaching for them. This is not something us ordinary beings can achieve.” No! It is exactly something we ordinary beings should be doing. If you are able to receive the correct instructions, study and reflect on the teachings in accordance, then as long as you follow the principles to practice, all things can become a practice of the teachings for you. If you dedicate this to advancing to the Pure Land, this becomes your pure karma, your pure karma [to go to Pure Land]! Therefore this is why you must “train in both the actual and the supporting practices [正助双修]”.

Otherwise, for support [助], what does the supporting practice mean? It is exactly this! If you did this correctly, it accounts for both the actual [正] and the supporting [助] practices!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 12.13; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P147, L6]

It is said that we value the Buddha's knowledge even less than that of an accurate diviner.

Oh! When we hear this, truly, it is rather painful for us. Actually, for us now...in reference to us now, this was said in Bo-do-wa's time. Now, how long ago was Bo-do-wa's time from us? It was, let's see...he was a person who lived at the beginning of Sung dynasty, a person who lived at the beginning of Sung Dynasty. It was almost 1000 years ago. Not quite 1000 years. But the situation had already been like this then. Ah! It's even worse in our days now. Buddha's great knowledge, Buddha is omniscient! Yet, in our minds, Buddha's knowledge is not even as great as a fortune teller, not even as great as a fortune teller. What does this mean? It explains that below.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 13.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P147, L13]

If a reliable diviner says, "I know that this year you will not face any problems," we are relieved.

Then next, are these words. For instance, there may be this diviner and this diviner is usually quite reliable in his predictions. So then you go and ask him to tell your fortune. Then this diviner foretells your fate and says, “Ah! This is a good year for you. There will not be any trouble.” When you hear this, you are pretty happy. However, if this is not the case...

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 13.34; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P148, L3]

If he says, "This year you will face problems—do this, and not that," we strive to follow his advice. If we do not, we think, "I did not follow his advice," and worry.

If this diviner says, “Oh, its bad! This is a bad year for you! You need to do this and that to overcome your troubles. You shouldn’t do this or that. It’s a taboo for you this year!” Ah! We would work so hard at it, so hard at it! If you did not follow the diviner’s words, you would think in your mind, “Ah, it’s not right! The diviner told me not to do this, but that I should do this and that. However, I didn’t do them and so I feel something is not quite right.” This is how you are with the fortune teller. There are so many other things in this world that are the same. It may be a doctor telling you something, “Oh! So and so, this is not good for you.” Or sometimes, someone is trying to convince you to do something. We would all believe, accept and listen to them. But next, he says,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 14.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P148, L11]

But when the Buddha says,

Buddha will tell us in the vows of ethical discipline or in the sutras,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P186; 45A, 14.37; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P148, L13]

"You should give this up; you should practice this," do we commit ourselves to these injunctions?

If Buddha tells us, don't do these things! Don't do these things! You should do those other things! Would we commit to it in our mind? Would we commit to it in our mind? Whenever I get to this sentence, I would often stop here for a few minutes and ask myself this. I would also suggest that for all of you, you can ask yourself that here. Now whether it's with the diviner or the doctor, when they tell us things, oh! We really listen. Now Buddha is telling us what to do and what not to do! Do you pay attention to it? Do you commit to it in your mind?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 15.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P149, L6]

Do we worry if we do not follow them? [140]

If we did not follow them, do we worry about that? Ah! Buddha has taught us this, ah, how come I can't seem to follow it?" We have no such worries.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 15.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P149, L9]

Or do we say,

We even say this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 15.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P149, L11]

"Well, the teaching says that, but right now, under the circumstances, I can't follow it—I must do this instead," and completely forsaking the Buddha's teaching, proceed straightaway with disregard, according to our own ideas?

Not only do we not listen, we turn around and say, "Um, in the scriptures, although Buddha tells us this, but the times are so different now. This does not work! We don't want to do this!" And we do things **"according to our own ideas."** This means we do things according to what we know. Therefore, make note of this! We are often not here to learn from the Buddha but that we are here to learn to increase the "ego self"! If you are here to truly learn from the Buddha, we would most definitely say, "Buddha said we shouldn't do this. Yes! But why am I not able to carry it through? I must strive!" We are not like that now. Ah! When I think of this, whenever I hear this and read this, I would always stop myself for a while and genuinely introspect. So with everyone here now, ah! I feel that every one of us has too many faults. With just the people here now, I don't know about other people and I don't

dare say anything either but at least, I have first seen my own faults. Then with our fellow practitioners sitting here, I also have discovered theirs as well, which are very serious! Yet, we don't see any of our problems. Buddha told us, you shouldn't be like that. The key point is for yourself to strive and purify your own afflictions but we don't see a bit of our own afflictions and yet we see others' afflictions clearly. Even if there was just a bit [of faults of others], our eyes would be wide open and we would say this is not right, that is not right! Then we would run there, as if we are better than Buddha, we would try to reproach them and exhort them [to change]. However, is that the right way? We shouldn't be doing that! Therefore, what this section speaks of is absolutely true.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 17.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P150, L11]

To take this one step further, there is something that we would often say here; there are many rules of this place. After we talk about the rules, everyone forgets it completely. Let's talk about the simplest one [to follow], I had already asked that you do not use the small alarm clock, do not use it. However, up until now I still hear the small alarm clock ringing. I heard two this morning. One rang some time past 2 o'clock and then another one rang again after 3 o'clock. I heard them all. So I thought, "Ah, it is because I lack good qualities! Fine, then we can only let it be!" We are learning to become Buddha, and everyone says, "Ah! Teacher this and teacher that." However, I have already told you so many times about this but no one listens. Therefore, this is learning the teaching. Pay attention to this! I'm not trying to tell you not to use an alarm clock. No!

If you truly want to be diligent, I very much praise you. You can use some kind of method, some kind of method of waking yourself up. Okay! But you can't wake others up because we share a common area. This is a small thing to mention here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 18.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P151, L4]

However, from this place, I mainly wanted to remind ourselves. The past master had already told us this, why are we not successful in our cultivation? It is just like that. Ah, when a person possessing whatever small abilities in the mundane world tells you something, you would really listen to him, but when Buddha tells us things, in our mind, we would treat it like a matter of no concern. That is because we have no concordance. Thus, previously it tells us over and over again, it says that the **“Teacher has already fully realized the external factor or cause.”** There! Not only just one Buddha, but the infinite Buddhas of all ten directions are waiting here! However, how come we are not saved? There, There, There, that's where the problem is. Think about it, isn't it so? This is because I am deeply entrenched in this fault myself, thus I suffer in this agony. I think that my painful experience may be of use to you and so I explain this to you today. It is also because the fellow practitioners here who have a rare faith in me, and so I sincerely share with you what I have seen. This is something I've truly seen for myself and I exhort all of you. If we are able to introspect here, with however many faults we correct, however many issues will be resolved, and however much benefit will be gained. Now that

you understand this principle, there is another sentence below which will exhort us anew.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 19.39; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P151, L13]

If you do not examine your mind, you will be pleased.

With the above principle, if you do not examine your mind, ah, then what would it be like? **“You will do what pleases you.”** These words are so marvellous! These words are so marvellous! Though you have listened, understood, and you feel this great delight, “Ah, its great!” If you do not follow it to reflect and examine accordingly, then at that time, though you’ve heard [the teachings], you will still do things according to your own ideas. In this case, those words were then spoken in vain. So what do we actually do normally? This is what we are accustomed to doing – after we listen to the teachings, we take this mirror and attempt to reveal the demons in others. He is wrong here and he is wrong there. The only one not shown in the mirror is you, yourself. Oh! And we are pleased with ourselves. Oh, that is the condition [we’re in]. So, we should strive diligently here!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 20.37; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P152, L6]

If you are not misled by the superficial,

“If you are not misled by the superficial,” what does this mean? That is, it doesn’t mean not examining, but that if

you had truly examined your own mind, then what would happen at this time?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 20.46; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P152, L9]

look within your mind and reflect carefully, "This condition is despicable."

Ah! That's when you would be correct. You take this Dharma mirror, this Dharma mirror, or we can call it a mirror that reveals demons, you turn it around and use it on yourself. You examine carefully "**within your mind.**" Ah! You discover the problem. It is right here, it is right here! If you can find problems in this way, and purify yourself, then problems are solved.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 21.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P152, L13]

Thus, reflect again and again upon the good qualities of the Buddha, and strive to attain certainty from the depths of your heart.

Ah, yes! Aren't we going for refuge to the Buddha? We should think of why Buddha became Buddha? Why does Buddha possess these good qualities? If we can think like this, use our understanding to encourage ourselves and to use it to purify ourselves, then great! Then it would be great. So it tells us this, so we should strive! From this perspective, we should

reflect and examine until attaining certainty from the depths of your heart.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 22.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P153, L5]

Once you gain this, you reach the very core of the practice of going for refuge, for you will gain certainty with respect to the teaching from which the Buddha arose, and the community that practices the teaching.

If you can generate this toward the Buddha, then you can do so toward the teaching and the community. The teaching is “**from which the Buddha arose.**” What is the teaching? How did the Buddha become the Buddha? It was because he practiced the teachings to reach this attainment. So of course if you go for refuge, rely and admire this Buddha, [then you would ponder] how did Buddha become Buddha? From the teachings. Of course you would then go for refuge [to the teachings]. Then, since it was because he practiced successfully [that he reached this attainment], with the community who practice, of course you would go to them for refuge as well. Then it’s right!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 22.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P153, L10]

So when we speak of refuge at this time, you would be right on track! You would have gotten a good grasp on this key point. Once you have a good grasp of this key point, then

you are on the right track. Now when we say refuge, with the meaning of “Namo”, we are now clear because of this!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 23.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P153, L13]

Without this, there is no practice of going for refuge that transforms your mind, not to mention other paths.

If you didn't have this, then you don't yet have a refuge that **“transforms your mind.”** A real refuge, what would that be like? That is you have gone for refuge and reliance. These two words of refuge [in Chinese] are marvellous! How do you write it? It is the word “white” and the word “reverse” together. Why should we write the word “reverse”? It is very interesting! Before, our mind is defiled and dark. Now that we understand. Oh! This is wrong, wrong, wrong! Now we need to turn it around and reverse it. What would it make by reversing it?? White! So this is the word “refuge” [in Chinese]. This is what you have relied upon! Then, this is correct. What did we rely on before? Endless ignorance! So once you understand this, your mind is transformed. A transformed mind means a real refuge. Once you have gone for refuge, then with your whole heart, you want to advance. All good qualities will arise from this. All obscurations will be eliminated through this. So if you do not have this, what's the point of talking about anything else? You don't have the root (the fundamentals)! This is absolutely true. When we learn the teachings, it begins from going for refuge. Just like that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 24.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P154, L10]

So now we should feel happy! Though we are unable to actually accomplish it now, but we don't have to be afraid! The foremost important thing is we now know that we needn't be afraid of not being able to accomplish it, but that we should be afraid of "not having knowledge of it!" There is no exception to Buddhas, they all started out being ordinary people and eventually escaped cyclic existence. We are now also ordinary people in the cyclic existence! Buddha is an example right there, telling us, "If you can find the right path, you are willing to walk on it, you will definitely succeed!" What is the key? It is whether you've found the path. When we get to this point, now we would feel happy!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 25.09; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P154, L15]

So as for me, with what we were just thinking earlier, on one hand, we feel this way, "Ah! We feel quite miserable!" On the other hand, we feel an unsurpassed joy. Ah! What is the misery for? We feel that what we have done before was wrong. Why do you feel miserable about your mistake? This is because you know it was wrong! Why do you know that it was wrong? This is because you now have something that is right! So then at that time, you should feel joyous! There is an extremely great and wonderful benefit to this. When you do not know, you must rely on this force to allow you to know. Once you know, you will feel miserable. At that time, usually when we feel suffering, ah! Our minds do not work well but

should you contemplate from the opposite angle, we would feel happy. And that force which propels our mind power is regenerated. So in every place, there are two methods to train us, two methods of training us.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 25.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P155, L6]

It's much like what was said earlier about the skilled smith. A skilled smith is the one that makes jewelleries at the jewellers. They use both water and fire. It is the same for us. On one hand it exhorts us to move forward, which would bring about pain. On the other hand, it initiates a joy in us. Like that. So once you truly understand this principle, you will be very skilled at this yourself. On one hand you will understand your errors and become miserable, and on the other hand you will know what is correct and feel joy. Ah, it's beautiful! In this way, you will advance step after step, advance step by step. When you become lazy, you will sting yourself with it. Ah, once the feeling of suffering arises, you are no longer lazy. Then when you make effort, your mind may shrink gradually. Take some time to think of how fortunate you are, then your mind will elevate. Therefore, normally [when you practice], there certainly are skilful methods for cultivation. So the preceding section was on the good qualities of the Buddha but this was really a simple and key summary only. The next section will be on the good qualities of the teachings.

The following is the good qualities of the teaching.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 27.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P155, L14]

2" The good qualities of the teaching

Once you have made respect for the Buddha your primary cause, you should then recollect the teaching jewel as follows: "The Buddha possesses limitless good qualities, all of which arose from meditating on and realizing both the verbal teachings and the teachings as they are put into practice. That is, he actualized the true cessations, thereby eliminating faults, and meditated on the true paths, thereby giving rise to good qualities."

Because we know the sufferings from what we discussed earlier, we seek for a refuge, and the only refuge is Buddha! Then it says Buddha has such great qualities! So we go for refuge with our whole heart and admiration. Then we would start to think, Buddha has such good qualities but where do these qualities come from? They come from these two things, actualizing the true cessations and meditating on the true paths, and therefore faults are eliminated and all good qualities have risen. Through understanding the verbal teachings, the teachings are realized as they are put into practice accordingly. It's this way! It's just like what the cited sutra says below.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45A, 28.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P156, L6]

The Compendium of the Teachings (Dharma-samgiti) says:³²⁴

These *bhagavan* buddhas possess infinite and limitless good qualities. Such qualities are born from the teaching, from the proper practice of the teaching. The teaching creates and governs them. They arise from the teaching and are within the scope of the teaching. They depend upon the teaching, and the teaching produces them.

So the next section cites from the sutra. To speak of its content simply, it is just like what we've just said before. Where did the limitless good qualities of the Buddhas of the three worlds and ten directions come from? They came from the teachings. He (Buddha) has accepted the teaching and practiced according to the teachings, and gained realizations portion by portion to have reached his achievement. **"The teaching creates and governs them,"** this mainly speaks of how he depends on the teaching. **"They arise from the teaching"**, this also tells how he has practiced and realized the teachings. He has depended on the teachings and in the end has gained all good qualities, only then can he become a Buddha. Oh! Because you are able to respect the Buddha, go for refuge to the Buddha, so you would naturally go for refuge to the teachings. So at this juncture/, let us rest for a while. We will continue with the session later.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 00.05; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P157, L1]

So we have explained Buddha and the teaching's good qualities, so now let's continue.

3" The good qualities of the community

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 00.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P157, L3]

This is the good qualities of the community. What is a community?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 00.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P157, L4]

Chief among the members of the community are those persons who are noble beings.

It is the noble beings. Regarding the Sangha community, we normally have 4 kinds of monks. They are called different names in [various commentaries and treatises such as] Zhi Du Lun (智度论), Di Zang Shi Jin Lun (地藏十经论), the Bodhisattva Levels. Though the names for them are different, they are pretty much similar in meaning. I've written two sets on the black board. What is written here in the beginning describes "the monks of ultimate truth", and "the monks of the conventional truth". Those terms came from the commentary Da Zhi Du Lun (大智度論). The other set written here, the "Shramana of the Way of Sages", this is speaking in terms of Shramana, the "Shramana who speaks of the Way", the "Shramana who lives the Way", the "Shramana who defiles the

Way”; these came from the Bodhisattva Levels. There is another source that talks about this, which is the commentary Di Zang Shi Jin Lun. Also, another source Shi Song Lù (十誦律) talks about “the different monks” (別眾僧), thus, five different kinds [of monks] are listed. But in general, for “the different monks”, they existed only in Buddha’s time. I think for this we all understand. To explain this simply, the “monks of ultimate truth” or the “Shramana of the Way of Sages”, they are noble beings who have cultivated and realized attainments. Well then for “the monks of conventional truth,” who are they? Although they are those who have not achieved realizations, they practice according to the principles, to the teachings, following their moral duties as dictated by the Sangha community. They follow these purely as ordinary beings. As for the “Shramana who speaks of the Way”, this includes both “monks of ultimate truth” and “monks of conventional truth”. Just like that.

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[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 02.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P158, L7]

As for [another] 2 types [of monks, namely,] “mute sheep” and “without shame”, these are the worst. Regarding the “mute sheep” and “without shame”, there are two different descriptions of them in the scriptures, which are completely opposite. The first one describes that he does know how to adopt the good and cast aside the bad, and doesn’t know how to purify, he doesn’t know anything. He is much like a mute sheep, muddleheaded for the entire life. This kind is called

“mute sheep”. The other one is called “without shame”. Even though he knows [what he did wrong], he does not feel guilty for it. So there are these two kinds. Well then, in brief, for the “mute sheep” and “without shame”, they will fall [into miserable realms]. They are the “Shramanas who defile the Way”, defile the Way. Then who are the Shramanas who lives the Way? They do things according to the teachings, seriously and genuinely, genuinely trying to practice. The detailed content of these is in the commentaries. Well then here, what they are telling us here are the noble beings, and then the types described subsequently are approximations of them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 03.13; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P158, L14]

Hence, the commentary Di Zang Shi Jin Lun tells us this in particular, the true essence of this sutra is to guide and lead practitioners on what we should do after we have been ordained. For the ordinary lay persons, we should not take this standard to measure others. Therefore, Di Zang Shi Jin Lun tells us this in particular - don't belittle a Shramana who defiles the Way! Even if he is the worst villain and that he has transgressed the fundamental vows, if he still wears a monk's clothing, then for you who are a lay practitioner, as long as you can offer things to him with utmost sincerity, you still gain merits. The commentary gives another example saying no matter how shabby the golden vessel is, no matter how shabby, or even if this golden vessel contains filth and foul smelling substance, the golden vessel is itself a golden vessel! Just like that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 04.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P159, L5]

With this point, then if this is so for those lay practitioners, then for us who are ordained and are learning, we should be a little better than them! Right? If the criteria is set this high for lay practitioners, then for us who think we are ordained monks, we should be even more careful as to not casually and readily gossip about our fellow practitioners, or deride. Absolutely not! We should pay attention to this everywhere. Then reason you are better, why are you better? It is because you can uphold the teachings in practice! Now the lay practitioners demand so little from you, and for you who uphold the teaching in practice, of course your standards [for yourself] should be set higher! If you understand this point, then this kind of disputes and quarrels will naturally be gone. What is there left? If you concord with him, and from a virtuous mind you advise others' errors – helping others with the mistakes they've made and helping them to correct their misdeeds and engage in virtues. If this can be done, ah! The Sangha community will certainly be harmonious. Buddhism will certainly be prosperous. This is pretty understandable. Then to us who are actually practicing, of course you will accrue immeasurable merits! Just wanted to bring this up.

Now, let us look at the characteristic of the community.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 05.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P159, L14]

Think of them in light of their mindfulness of the good qualities of the teaching and their proper practice of it.

Oh! Why do you do that? It is because one has previously taken refuge in Buddha, respected Buddha, and therefore realized that Buddha came from practicing in the teachings properly. And this teaching has such great benefit. Therefore since I wish to learn, I wish to be like him and practice according to the teachings. Um, since it is like this, therefore, all community members came about like this! So in this way, we recollect them. If we can think of them in this way, then things become simple. Yes, we want to go for refuge and respect the Buddha. The reason Buddha has become Buddha is because he practiced the teachings and in the process of practicing the teachings, you are a member of the Sangha community! Ah, we should now strive as such! If you are able to think of this point, you will naturally feel that you want to strive according to the teachings! You won't use this teaching to harm yourself. What does it mean by using the teaching to harm yourself? That is you don't take the teachings to introspect and purify yourself, but that you use it to demand others to comply with it. If you use it to demand others to comply, then you've got it wrong.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 06.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P160, L8]

Therefore, when you practice, are you cultivating yourself or cultivating others (making others practice and improve)? If you are trying to cultivate others, then it's ok. Like a barber, you would trim other people's hair and after that, then you

take a mirror to show him and let him take a look. Since you are trimming it for him, then there is nothing wrong with that! However, if you are here to cultivate yourself, to cultivate yourself, of course you will need to use this mirror on yourself to see if you've acted correctly. This is very clear and very obvious. Therefore, this is then what? **“Think of them in light of,”** when we truly recollect, we should think in this way, we should think in this way. If we can think of them in this way, then it would be right, it would be right! Therefore, he will tell us later that, for us who are real practitioners, ah, we will only see our own errors, and desperately try to cultivate ourselves. If you can in this way see your own errors and practice, you will be able to reduce your own errors! If you can reduce your own errors, you will increase your good qualities/merits! Then you will gradually distance yourself from sufferings, and you will gradually gain happiness. This is a very natural principle. Next it cites from the sutra. Still [along the same line].

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 07.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P161, L1]

The Compendium of the Teachings: ³²⁵
Think, "The community

With the Sangha community, we should think of them in this way.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 07.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P161, L3]

teaches the teaching, practices it, and reflects on it. It is the teaching's sphere. It upholds the teaching, entrusts itself to the teaching,

Oh! It says what about the “Sangha community”? With the teachings that we hear, these are all imparted by the ordained renunciates. Therefore, when we obtain a human life of leisure and opportunity, there must be the four types of followers of the Buddha. In order to have the four types of followers of the Buddha, we must rely on them, they need to come and propagate the teachings! Oh, it’s like this! Then, on one hand, on one hand you accept and practice the teachings, and then, when you practice, you reflect and examine. Due to reflection and examination, you go deeper one step after another. Oh, the sublime teachings all come from this! Therefore it is called **“the teaching’s sphere.”** The community accepts the teaching, upholds the teaching, and **“entrust itself to the teaching.”**

worships the teaching,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 08.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P161, L10]

Then we worship the teaching. To practice according to the teaching is worshipping the teaching.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 08.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P161, L11]

and conducts itself according to the teaching. [141] It has the teaching as its sphere of activity,

Everything is conducted in accordance to the teachings. The sublime teaching is the sphere of activity.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P187; 45B, 08.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P162, L1]

and is the most excellent practitioner of the teaching. It is naturally honest and pure. It is endowed with the quality of compassion,

Oh! This is the characteristic of the teaching. The characteristic of the teaching are honest, pure, and compassionate. Speaking of this, we now have another best indicator. The characteristic of the teaching is such that if you are in accordance, then when you see others at fault, you will feel pity. You will pity him when you see that. Then you will try to help him in a mild and non-confronting way. We won't be blaming him. Then,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 09.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P162, L5]

and has [great] compassion. It always has solitude as its field of activity, is always absorbed in the teaching, and always practices virtue."

What is a practitioner like? He **"always has solitude as its field of activity."** What are we like now? We are defiled,

attached, difficult to let things go, constantly stuck on this. Truthfully speaking, we are not stuck on the external sensory object, what are we stuck on? Our defiled consciousness but we don't understand this. If we don't understand this, then you can't even begin to learn anything. Every thought arises for that. Ah, this is really terrible! Therefore, to truly be disenchanted, one begins from the external sensory objects and gradually works towards being disenchanted with what's in his own mind. If you can understand your own mind stream and become disenchanted, then your disenchantment is pretty much at the right level, **"always has solitude as its field of activity."** At this time, one will be **"always absorbed in the teaching,"** then you will become pure and virtuous! These are the Sangha community, the Sangha's good qualities. We should think of them in this way. When we think of them in this way, on one hand, it is refuge and admiration, and on the other hand, we are practicing in accordance to the teachings. Your recollection at the present is itself a practice. Well then, the preceding section explains the good qualities of the Buddha, the teaching and the community, tells us we should recollect in this way, to go for refuge in this way. This is the first one. Through **"knowing the distinctions,"** then next.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 10.43; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P163, L1]

b" Going for refuge by knowing the distinctions

Well then within the Three Jewels, to truly talk about them in detail, they have different characteristics. Here it will go on to explain that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 10.53; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P163, L3]

According to the *Compendium of Determinations*,³²⁶ you go for refuge after understanding the distinctions among the three jewels.

Normally, when we formally talk about the Buddha, the teaching, and the community whom we go for refuge, what are their differences? What are their distinctive characteristics, the detail content to each? This is then explained in accordance to the *Compendium of Determinations*, there are six distinctions.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 11.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P163, L6]

**1" The distinction based on their defining characteristics
The buddha jewel has the defining characteristic of full, perfect enlightenment. The teaching jewel has the defining characteristic of arising from the buddha jewel. The community jewel has the defining characteristic of correct practice by means of personal instruction.**

The differences, the distinctions of the Three Jewels are here. The person who has attained the unsurpassed, perfect enlightenment is the Buddha. The fruit attained is the teaching. Once attaining this ultimate fruit, he teaches others the way. Those who follow accordingly are the community. Therefore, these are the defining characteristics of the Three

Jewels: the Buddha jewel, the teaching jewel and the community jewel. This is the distinction based on the definition characteristics.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 11.56; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P163, L11]

2" The distinction based on their enlightened activities

Well then are the activities? What do they do?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 12.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P164, L1]

Buddha has the enlightened activity of giving sermons. The teaching has the enlightened activity of focusing on the eradication of afflictions and suffering. The community has the enlightened activity of fostering enthusiasm.

What does Buddha do? He skilfully turns the wheel of the teaching, teaches and transforms all sentient beings. That is the Buddha. Well then, what about the teaching? That is what we focus on. Once we focus on the teaching, we can eliminate afflictions and sufferings. Once the afflictions are stopped, then the karma will be stopped. Once afflictions and karma are stopped, the sufferings will be stopped. This is the effect of the teaching. What about the Sangha community? **"Fostering enthusiasm"** is to practice according to the teaching, to persevere enthusiastically, to increase white and virtuous karma.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 12.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P164, L6]

3" The distinction based on devotion

The third one is during the time of learning, how do you devote yourself, and how do you understand it!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 12.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P164, L8]

You should appreciate the Buddha as the one to venerate and serve. You should appreciate the teaching as that which is to be realized.

To Buddha, we should establish this kind of veneration and service. He is whom we should truly be close to, should truly serve. We should pay attention to this point! Who are we close to now? Who do we serve now? Now we are normally close to our family, friends, like that. Then when we are ordained, it becomes the Three Jewels. Of course it's the Three Jewels. Well then here, we should carefully examine whether we have really done that? Therefore, normally we should pay attention, we should tell ourselves often that we wish to learn from Buddha, we should be close to Buddha, and serve Buddha. How do we become close to him? How do we serve him? It is to take your mind, and think of him with your whole heart, think of him with your whole heart.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 13.56; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P165, L2]

Who do we think of now? If we don't ask and examine ourselves, we are still clueless and do not realize it. Once we examine ourselves carefully, then it's hard to say [that you truly think of Buddha]. With myself, in my own experience, who do we normally rely on? We rely on the "ego self." We are always serving the "ego self." Oh! My head hurts, hurry! I need to find some medicine. Ah, maybe it's lack of nutrition, and couldn't sleep that well last night... All day long, you are busy for this, just like that. It's not that you should neglect it (the body), you do need it. What do we need it for? We need it to practice. We need to recognize this point. Because you need to use it for practice, therefore you should give it the least required amount of nourishment. That is why Buddha tells us this again and again, you do need this car. Ah, you do need to wax the car but it's only a wax for the car. Pay attention here! Do not be deceived by this car.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 14.47; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P165, L9]

The one whom we should venerate, serve and truly be close to is Buddha. Therefore, who do you "**serve?**" Buddha. Then, normally with our body, speech and mind, for example, we would clean the temple, the main shrine really well, take care of it. Then we will practice according to the teaching and serve with our body, speech, and mind. This is what we should do. To the teaching? It is "**to be realized,**" this is what we truly seek and hope for. We wish to realize the

teaching accordingly. So then, how about the Sangha community?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 15.18; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P165, L13]

You should appreciate the community as those with whom you should associate because they have attributes that are similar to your own.

If you wish to formally begin to practice, you will certainly need companions in practice. The companion to your practice is the Sangha community. Don't think that you can successfully cultivate by yourself! It's impossible, it's impossible. For your short term practice now, yes [it could be true that there are times to be practicing by yourself]. Also there will be a time in the future when you need a period of time like that. For instance, when you are practicing meditative concentration, serenity, that's when you need a secluded and peaceful place. Yes, you would need it [then]. However, in the entire process of cultivation, it is absolutely impossible for you to lock yourself up and practice by yourself. If you don't have someone next to you to tell you, how could you do it? Then in our daily lives, when we are in a community, there are all sorts of advantages where people help one another grow. I will gradually talk about this later. To live together, what do you want from this? To have **“attributes that are similar to.”** Everyone will correct each other, and also exhort each other, be looking out for each other and so will compliment and help each other along the way. This point is too important, too important! The reason

the Sangha community has rules, the goal for that is none other than this. I will go into this in more details later. Actually, this is particularly important to our group. If you cannot get a good grasp of this point, ah! Then everything else is wrong. If you say you want to cultivate, you will end up doing the exactly opposite and create non-virtuous karma. Well now let us continue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 16.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P166, L10]

4" The distinction based on practice

You should worship and serve the Buddha. You should become familiar with the teaching by applying yourself to yoga. You should cultivate a relationship with the community through sharing the teaching and material goods.

Before it is on how to devote and understand. Once you understand, then next is cultivation. When you cultivate, you “**worship and serve**” the Buddha. You worship the Buddha and serve the Buddha, like this. Then with the teaching, you would be “**applying yourself to yoga.**” Once you understand, then you go further to concord it. This “**yoga**” means concordance. Following this method, gradually and gradually your practice will concord with it. When you concord with the sublime teaching, then that’s the time you are gradually purified from defilement and ignorance, and be distanced from them. Then when you wish to practice, what would you absolutely need? You need a community of companions, friends. That is the Sangha community. Therefore you share

material goods and you share the teaching. **“Sharing the material goods”** is to nurture the physical body. **“Sharing the teaching”** is to nurture the life of wisdom. To be able to practice and increase the life of wisdom, we need to rely on this human life of leisure and opportunity, need this human life of leisure and opportunity, and material goods. The material goods are the goods/wealth of the mundane world. So with the **“wealth”** of the mundane world, you practice and grow in the **“teaching.”** So these two things are **“shared,”** harmoniously. When you practice, you need to be like this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 18.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P167, L6]

5" The distinction based on recollection

Well then in general, what do you recollect?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 18.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P167, L8]

You should recollect the good qualities of each of the three jewels by reciting "Thus, the Bhagavan "

You want to recollect often. We've talked about this earlier.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 18.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P167, L10]

6" The distinction based on how they increase merit

The last point, when you do this, what's the benefit? The merits you generate from them, what are the differences?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 18.42; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P167, L12]

Supreme merit is increased through the influence of either persons or the teaching.

Yes, to the Buddha and the Sangha community, the merits are generated based on persons. For the teachings, the merits are generated based on the teaching. Well then, even though Buddha and Sangha both rely on the persons, but Buddha is a single person. Now it says.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 19.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P168, L3]

The Buddha and the community are instances of the former.

Meaning, they are [instances of the former], the persons.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P188; 45B, 19.07; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P168, L5]

Also, you can increase merit in dependence on either a single person or many persons. The community is a case of the latter, because it requires four monks. [142]

In other words, there is only one Buddha, where as “**many persons**” mean the Sangha community. The Sangha must be a group of people. Four people will make up a community and increase merits. Therefore, “**the community is a case of the later, because it requires four monks.**” We understand this principle. Well then, this is on knowing the distinctions.

Well then, the third one.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 19.28; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P168, L9]

c" Going for refuge through commitment

When you truly go for refuge, you make the commitment.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 19.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P168, L11]

According to Dharmamitra's *Commentary on the "Sutra on the Discipline" (Vinaya-sutratika)*, going for refuge through commitment means upholding the Buddha as the teacher of refuge, the teaching—nirvana—as the actual refuge, and the community as those who assist us to attain refuge.

When we genuinely go for refuge, we certainly will make this commitment. We would vow that from now until death, we will take refuge in Buddha. For a Mahayana practitioner, it is a refuge for all future lives. Not only that, but that for all my future lives, I shall help all sentient beings in the entire sphere of reality, in all space [to take this refuge] for all their future lives. This says that when we take refuge in Buddha, we see him as our teacher and we will no longer take refuge in others. Then what about the teaching? That is to uphold “**nirvana—as the actual refuge**” to be the teaching which we cultivate. Then, the Sangha community is one who assists us to cultivate. This is much like what we normally, like how we normally go for refuge, as described in the *Vinaya*, which is the sutra of ethical discipline. This is explained in great detail in there. Lastly, number four.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 20.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P169, L6]

d" Going for refuge by refusing to acknowledge other refuges

Going for refuge by refusing to acknowledge other refuges means first of all understanding the differences in worth between Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers, teachings, and disciples, for then you will uphold only the three jewels as your refuge, and refuse teachers, teachings, and disciples that do not accord with them.

Well then, to truly go for refuge, you will only take refuge in this! You will no longer acknowledge other refuges. Once you go to the Buddha for refuge, you will no longer take

refuge in others, even if it's the divine creator...etc. After you go to the teaching for refuge, you will no longer take refuge in the ways of the mundane world...etc. Why is that? That is because you understand that "internal" is Buddhism, "external" is the external path. The reason why they are called the external path is because they do not understand the characteristic of Buddhism and wrongfully seek for solutions externally. Therefore the great teacher of the internal path is the Buddha. His teaching is Buddhism. Those who learn the teachings are the Sangha members.

The external path also has a great teacher on the path, a teaching, and those who practice it. We should know the differences among the two, one is auspicious and the other is inferior, inferior and mundane. Since we understand now, therefore these three things are truly precious, truly worthy, and truly our refuges. And we will not choose anything else which do not accord with them. No longer will we go for refuge to the other things!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 22.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P170, L3]

However, there is a point here that we can bring up for everyone to contemplate a little. Normally, when we speak of other external paths, we will say their refuge is only this...etc. If one looks at this only in relation to the external behaviour, then a non-Buddhist will also say, "Ah, your Buddhism is the same way. You also say that your truth is the special truth and you also reject the non-Buddhists. Isn't it right? Well may I ask then, in what way are you better than the others?" It would certainly seem that everyone says his own [religion] is

good, and so you are very much acting the same way! If we take on this worldly perspective, then it absolutely seems that way. Well then, when you come upon a situation like this, what do you do? May I ask, when you come upon a situation like this, what do you do? We think we are better and they think they are better. So then it would seem that everyone is acting the same way. Yes. But can you make the distinctions here clearly? At this point, will you be able to explain yourself clearly to a person as such? If you think you can explain it clearly then please raise your hand. What is the difference [between us and others]? This is a vital key point! Even though you've raised your hands, I won't let you speak now, because I need to continue but tomorrow, I will let you know where the key point lies. This is very important! This is very important!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 23.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P170, L13]

That is by this time, the principles have already been told to us. However, it was rather brief, not in great detail. With this, we will certainly need to be able to discern clearly the real difference between Buddhism and non-Buddhists (the external path). If you can truly comprehend this, then yes, for ourselves, we will not sway. As for the criticisms from others, the criticisms from others, we will be able to discern the right and wrong very clearly. We will be able to discern very clearly. You will certainly be able to convince him.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 24.29; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P171, L2]

There is a point which we should always realize. If you come upon someone who will not reason with you, you do not have to explain it to him. No need to mention that we should not have to explain this to someone like that, even when Buddha was on earth, he gave the best example for this. When you come upon non-Buddhists who decide to quibble with you, Buddha had a great method — there are fourteen questions which Buddha will not answer. [This is because] it wouldn't have mattered even if He had explained it to the person. Even if you are convincing, the person will still say, "Even if you are right, I won't believe you." When you get into a situation like that, don't speak! However for those who will truly listen to reasons, then there are complete and profound principles here [to be explained].

This is why, I wanted to bring this up here to tell you. This also tells us why we do not go to others for refuge, but instead we take refuge in Buddha, in the Three Jewels. If you are a Buddha's disciple and you cannot understand this point clearly, then sorry, you can't say that you are the Buddha's disciple. For the lay practitioners, we would reluctantly say that it may still be okay for them to be like that. However, for ordained persons, you should have a firm grasp of this point.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 25.26; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P171, L10]

The distinctions between the Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers, etc. are as follows.

It says for these two, what's the difference in terms of the person and the teaching?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 25.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P171, L12]

The distinction of the teacher: The Buddha is without fault and has perfected good qualities, but the teachers of other religions are the opposite of this.

What's the distinction among the two? For this teacher, which is in terms of the person, Buddha has perfected good qualities, all the immeasurable good qualities. All the other "**great teachers**," yes, we do refer to them as great teachers, but they are opposite of this, they are different. Therefore, there is a great deal behind this word, "**opposite!**" To be opposite means they contradict, in other words, they completely oppose each other like enemies. Suppose, I have said this before, we would often in many situations leave a hole somewhere. Well then once a hole is left, sorry, as time goes by, you will not be able to patch up the hole. Here, they completely oppose each other. In other words, it is light versus darkness. In this context then, there is no such thing as partially light or partially dark. What is partially light and partially dark? There is no such thing. If you can see then it's light. If you cannot see, then it's dark. That's it. Therefore, all the other great teachers are opposite to Him.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 26.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P172, L7]

Udbhatasiddhasvamin's *Praise of the Exalted One (Visesa-stava)* says:³²⁹

Having forsaken other teachers, I go to you for refuge, O Bhagavan.

If someone should ask why, it is because

You have no faults and possess [all] good qualities.

I have forsaken all other teachers, all the teachers revered by the people of the mundane world and take refuge in the Bhagavan, the Buddha. Why? There, only Buddha has not even a single fault, only Buddha has perfected all good qualities. This is the difference.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 27.13; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P172, L11]

And also:

The more I reflect on

Other, non-Buddhist, traditions,

The greater becomes

My faith, O Protector.

Their minds are ruined by the faults of tenets

Devised by those who are not omniscient.

Those whose minds are ruined

Cannot even see you, faultless Teacher.

Other than Buddha, for all the rest external paths, the non-Buddhist teachings, if you truly and aptly reflect on this, then at that time, you will certainly come to one conclusion: you will certainly go for refuge. To whom will you go for refuge? The place you will go for refuge, should go for refuge,

and can go for refuge is Buddha! You will not go to others for refuge, why? They are “**not omniscient.**” They are not the omniscient ones who understand ultimately and completely everything and can resolve everything. Well then these types of persons are non-Buddhists. The tenets of the non-Buddhists, the tenets are the teachings, there are faults to them. Once there are faults, then it’s not perfect. Because it’s not perfect, it is defiled. Since it is defiled, it’s bad. Therefore, the “**minds are ruined.**” As the minds are defiled, then they will not be able to see the correct and perfect Buddha. Therefore, the non-Buddhists will put on a rival show against Buddha. I understand but I won’t go to Him for refuge. Just like that. For the objects of refuge in terms of person, this is the difference between Buddha and the non-Buddhists. Then next.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 28.43; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P173, L7]

The distinction of the teaching:

What about the teaching they speak of?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 45B, 28.46; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P173, L9]

The Conqueror's teaching allows you to attain its goal of bliss through a joyful path. It stops the stream of cyclic existence, clears away the afflictions, does not mislead

The teaching is the complete teaching that Buddha teaches us. It is the correct path, joyful and steady. Since the path is like this, therefore, the fruit obtained is a fruit of bliss as well. What about this blissful fruit? Hey! It stops the stream of cyclic existence.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 46A, 00.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P177, L1]

You can view cyclic existence in a shallow or deep definition. The shallower one is of the Hinayana perspective. The deeper one is the Mahayana's perspective. Hence, by thoroughly purifying all the afflictions, this will definitely not be a mistake at all. Therefore,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P189; 46A, 00.24; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P177, L3]

those who desire liberation, is completely virtuous, and clears away faults. Non-Buddhist teachings are the opposite.

For those who truly desire liberation, this is the only skilful and subtly wonderful teaching that can clear away all faults. The teachings of the Non-Buddhist differ. They contradict and cannot accomplish this. This is the difference between the two. Then it cites scriptures as proof.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P190; 46A, 00.57; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P177, L6]

The *Praise of the Exalted One*:³³⁰

**Your teaching causes one to attain
Bliss through the joyful;
Therefore, O Lion of Speakers,
Intelligent beings have faith in your tradition. [143]**

Why should we be looking for this? Why should we take refuge in the Bhagavan's teaching? This is because he has said this before, "**allows you to attain its goal of bliss through a joyful path.**" Therefore, to the teaching taught by the Dharma instructor, you go for refuge. Following this, you can help all sentient beings to solve all problems.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P190; 46A, 01.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P178, L1]

And the *Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honor* also says:³³¹

**The difference between your words, O Hero,
And the words of others is
That the former should be adopted,
and the latter rejected; The former
purifies and the latter defiles.**

Then below it says this too. What Buddha has said: we should adopt the pure and reject the defilements. To adopt means we should follow and do accordingly. Defilements are those we should stop doing. To adopt and reject according to the correct principles is exactly the teachings that our

Bhagavan speaks of. All the other worldly great teacher who contradicts with him, this is the difference between them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P190; 46A, 02.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P178, L5]

**The former is strictly reality,
The latter only misleading teachings—
What other difference do you need
Between your words and those of others?**

Well then this is the teaching that Bhagavan teaches, “**strictly reality.**” It completely reveals the reality without any error. Reality is the truth, correct without any mistake. “**Those of others**” are the non-Buddhists. They are erroneous and give misleading teachings. This is the difference between the teachings of Bhagavan and non-Buddhists. Other than this, there isn’t anything else. The real difference is this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P190; 46A, 02.56; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P178, L9]

**The former is purely virtuous;
The latter only creates obstacles—
What greater difference could there be
Between your words and those of others?
The former purifies;
The latter defiles and stains—
This is the difference, O Protector,
Between your words and those of others.**

This is very easy to understand. Therefore Buddhism is completely, purely virtuous. Since the others are defiled, therefore create obstacles. The difference between the two is this. Because they are defiled, the defilements in turn will build on each other and increase but the Buddha is pure, [increases pureness] and therefore supreme. The difference between the two is just this little bit.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P190; 46A, 03.34; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P179, L1]

Through this citation you can also understand the distinction of the community.

Similarly, since Buddha and the teaching are this way, then the sangha community upholds the teachings accordingly. This is the correct way.

**CHAPTER 12:
THE PRECEPTS OF
REFUGE**

Chapter 12 Outline

- 4' Once you have gone for refuge, the stages of the precepts
 - a" How they appear in the *Compendium of Determinations*
 - 1" The first set of subdivisions
 - (a) Rely on excellent persons
 - (b) Listen to the sublime teachings
 - (c) Fix your attention properly on them
 - (d) Cultivate a practice that conforms with the teachings
 - 2" The second set of subdivisions
 - (a) Do not excite your sensory faculties
 - (b) Take up the precepts correctly
 - (c) Be compassionate toward living beings
 - (d) Strive to make periodic offerings to the three jewels
 - b" How they appear in the oral tradition
 - 1" The special precepts
 - (a) The proscriptive precepts
 - (b) The prescriptive precepts
 - 2" The general precepts
 - (a) By recalling the distinctions and good qualities of the three jewels, go for refuge again and again
 - (b) By recalling the great kindness of the three jewels, strive to worship them constantly and offer the first portion of your food and drink

- (c) Establish other living beings in this practice by considering them with compassion**
- (d) Whatever activity you engage in, and whatever your purpose, make offerings and supplications to the three jewels, forsaking any other worldly methods**
- (e) After you have understood the benefits, go for refuge three times in the day and three times at night**
 - (i) The benefits as they appear in the *Compendium of Determinations***
 - (a') The first set of four**
 - (1') You will obtain vast merit**
 - (2') You will obtain both joy and supreme joy**
 - (3') You will obtain concentration**
 - (4') You will attain purity**
 - (b') The second set of four**
 - (1') You will have great protection**
 - (2') You will reduce, extinguish, and totally annihilate all obscurations derived from incorrect belief**
 - (3') You are counted among excellent persons, who genuinely accomplish the sublime**
 - (4') You delight and receive the approval of your teachers and religious companions, and of the deities who take joy in the teaching**
 - (ii) The benefits as they appear in personal instructions**

- (a') You are included among Buddhists**
- (b') You become worthy to uphold all
vows**
- (c') You reduce and eliminate previously
accumulated karmic obstructions**
- (d') You will accumulate vast merit**
- (e') You will not fall into the miserable
realms**
- (f') You will not be thwarted by human or
nonhuman hindrances**
- (g') You will accomplish everything you
wish**
- (h') You will quickly achieve buddhahood**
- (f) Maintain your refuge and do not forsake the
three jewels, even in jest or if it costs you
your life**

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P192; 46A, 03.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P179, L3]

4' Once you have gone for refuge, the stages of the precepts

The preceding section explained refuge. Well now that we have gone for refuge, since we have taken refuge, what should we do after refuge? Therefore, at the end it tells us the precepts to be learned for refuge. To learn the precepts, there are stages. The stages are divided into two parts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P192; 46A, 04.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P179, L6]

The precepts are explained in two ways:

- 1. How they appear in the *Compendium of Determinations***
- 2. How they appear in the oral tradition**

The *Compendium of Determinations* is passed down through the Dharmalakṣana sect, from the two great teachers, Asanga and Vasubandhu, two Bodhisattvas. The *Compendium of Determinations* is from the Dharmalakṣana sect. The oral tradition is from the Dharma-nature sect, which is passed down through Nagarjuna and Aryadeva.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P192; 46A, 04.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P179, L9]

a" How they appear in the *Compendium of Determinations*³³²

Here the precepts are explained in two sets of subdivisions.

1" The first set of subdivisions

(a) Rely on excellent persons

The first subdivision is to rely on excellent persons, listen to the sublime teachings, fix your attention properly on them, and cultivate a practice that conforms to the teachings. Now let us look at them one at a time.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P192; 46A, 04.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P179, L11]

As explained previously, you rely on excellent teachers when you see them as the source of all good qualities,

After we have gone for refuge and formally begun in our learning, there are these stages, there are these stages. When we formally train in the teaching, the first thing to do is to rely on an excellent teacher. Since we have gone through these sections one by one earlier, then we know that the excellent teacher is the source of all good qualities. All good qualities will come from this. Now that we understand this point, then of course we need to rely on them, of course we need to rely on them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P192; 46A, 05.28; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P180, L5]

In the beginning we talked about relying on excellent teachers, here we talk about relying on excellent teachers as well, what is the difference between these two? We can make

some comparisons here. In the beginning, it first addresses an outline. Now following this outline, you go through the stages one step at a time, by now, the meaning behind this is vastly different from before. What is the difference? We now understand that everything in this mundane world is obtained through cultivation. If you want to cultivate, you must do so now. In fact, you must do so immediately because it is very difficult to obtain this human life of leisure and opportunity. Then when we formally begin to practice, he tells us the principle of impermanence. When impermanence/death occurs, there is the issue of going to the upper or the lower realms. Due to these reasons, you will seek for a place of refuge. Once you find the place of refuge, you will go for refuge. The real reason to going for refuge is that you wish to escape [suffering]. In order to escape, you must follow the teachings and practices. In order to follow the teachings to practice, you must [first] follow by learning. Since you must follow and learn, then of course who would you get close to and rely on? This excellent teacher. After going through this sequence of order, that time you will develop a different level of understanding of the excellent teacher in your mind.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P192; 46A, 07.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P180, L14]

Therefore for this principle, let me go on to explain this. It is something that we should understand when we formally begin to practice. When you follow the order of the stages and delve in step by step, then at that time, you will develop a different level of concordance in your mind. It has told us from the very beginning that the first step to cultivation is to rely on the excellent teacher, the benefits of relying on the excellent

teacher, the faults for not relying on the excellent teacher, how to rely, the characteristics of the excellent teacher, the characteristics of the students, and even the parts which were not explained so clearly, it is summarized together and explained. Now that you have understood the principles, you can then apply the principles again here, then immediately, with the cultivation method of relying on the excellent teacher, you now have actual substance behind the meaning. You now have the stages of practice and a place to begin your first step. You can then put these principles to practice, one by one. If you can practice according to the teachings, you will immediately begin to derive benefits. Let us continue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P192; 46A, 08.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P181, L7]

for you have already gone to the Buddha for refuge and thereby uphold the teacher of the path as your refuge. The practice that conforms with this is actual reliance on the one who teaches the path to you.

This says that why should you go to Buddha for refuge? That is because Buddha is the great teacher who has shown you the path. He is the great teacher of the path, meaning he is perfect without any errors. Well then you follow him to practice, **“the practice that conforms with this.”** We may not be able to find Buddha readily now. So we find one who concords with the Buddha. Who may that be? A teacher who can teach the perfect path to us, he would be the excellent teacher. Why should we rely on an excellent teacher? So

we may understand the principles and then practice according to the teachings. Therefore,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 09.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P181, L12]

(b) Listen to the sublime teachings, and (c) Fix your attention properly on them

You should listen to whatever is appropriate among the sutras and the like, teachings which are sublime because the Buddha and the Buddha's disciples explained them.

This is on listening. After following an excellent teacher, then “**listen to whatever is appropriate.**” In other words, at the level which we concord with, we will listen and train according to the stages, the correct principles and in correct measure that which were said by the Buddha, the Buddha’s disciples, the sutras or commentaries and words from the past masters, all these which accords with the sublime teachings.

After listening,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 09.51; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P182, L3]

In addition, fix your attention on whatever serves to dispel the afflictions, for you have already gone to the teaching for refuge and you have thus undertaken to actualize both the verbal teachings and the teachings as they are realized. The practice that conforms with this is

listening to and fixing your attention properly on the sublime teachings.

What is then fixing your attention properly on the teachings? Once you understand the principle, then you can follow this principle and fix your attention properly. To fix your attention is to bring it to mind, then reflect upon and analyze it. If you can do so this way, our afflictions will be purified. This is the characteristic of the teaching, which has been said earlier. What is the characteristic of the teachings? It purifies defilement. Defilement is affliction. Now, this exact remedy can subdue and cease afflictions and this is the true teaching. This is what we should truly learn and practice. Now that we are fortunate enough to rely on an excellent teacher and have been able to listen to what is correct and errorless, we should then follow and practice. If you can follow and practice accordingly, then at that time you can subdue and cease your afflictions. That is the time you can go about to practice. At this time, however much [afflictions] you are able to subdue and cease, that is however much defilements can be cleared away, however much obscurations cleared away, however much good qualities increased, however much wealth of the teaching obtained, and however much Dharma bliss gained. This is what cultivation is, this is what cultivation is! This is what we should understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 11.24; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P182, L13]

Now all these things presented earlier are all preconditions, to build the foundation, the foundation. These

are all needed. If you do not recognize that correctly and think the precondition is the whole thing, then you are in trouble. You are in trouble. This is something we should absolutely understand. Therefore, we would often say that the elementary school is a precondition. If we go a step further, we can even say that there is another precondition before elementary school, the kindergarten. So you first enter kindergarten, it is only to attract you, to help you generate some happiness. So that even though you have left your dad and mom, you can still be happy attending school. Then you advance to elementary school and then middle school. But you absolutely cannot say that, “Ah, whatever I need to learn, it is all in kindergarten.” Then you are finished, you are finished. It would not be possible for you to make a living by applying the few tricks you learned in kindergarten! How is it possible for you to make a living with the things you learned in kindergarten? That is a joke. In fact, this is true with learning Buddhism as well. You want to absolutely pay attention to this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 12.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P183, L7]

Therefore, when we first arrive at the temple, we learn a little bit of the rules here, learn to recite some sutras and mantras, [we should know that] these are all preconditions! You absolutely do not want think that “this is it” and use it to measure against others. Even those who have learned the sublime teachings should not criticize others, needless to say with this (what you have learned)! This is what we should understand. However, contrarily, you absolutely cannot say

that “this is not it and it is not right to be doing these things (the preconditions).” Then that is wrong too. You must first advance from this step by step. Therefore, you should be clear with this concept as well. This was explained previously and I thought I will mention it here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 12.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P183, L12]

In particular, when you fix attention properly on them, what are you reflecting upon? It is the teachings. What are the characteristics of the teachings? It calms afflictions. Teachings which can calm the afflictions are what we should really keep in our minds and contemplate. Why do I mention what I just said earlier? It is because you normally do not have control and this type of thing constantly churns in your mind. Since your mind is filled with these things which do not accord with the teachings, can you be reflecting on the teachings? We must quickly remove the garbage from before. Only when you remove the garbage can you fill it up with things that are clean. That is what we truly need.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 13.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P184, L2]

It says “**for you have already gone to the teaching for refuge,**” because you can do so this way, this is true refuge. Therefore, “**you have thus undertaken to actualize both the verbal teachings and the teachings as they are realized.**” With the teachings given, you realize them. Teachings tell you how to do it. After you understand how and follow along

to do so accordingly, you can then realize them. **“The practice that conforms with this is listening to and fixing your attention properly on the sublime teachings.”** If you can fix your attention properly on the teachings (to reflect properly) and engage in a practice that conforms to it. If you can do this, once you become familiar with it, you can then truly cultivate. Therefore, at last, you are truly cultivating, it is called,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 14.07; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P184, L6]

(c) Cultivate a practice that conforms with the teachings

Right, with this teaching, ah, you can now concord with it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 14.13; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P184, L8]

You should practice in accordance with the teachings on nirvana.

Through previously relying on the teacher, one would correctly and completely understand [the teaching]. If you listen as such, properly reflect, and follow with practice, then that is the right way.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 14.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P184, L11]

When you have gone to the community for refuge, you have thereby taken as companions persons who are on the path to nirvana. [144] The practice that accords with this is training in the way of those who are intent upon liberation.

Well then this is the last part which is going to the community for refuge. This says that when we cultivate, we need companions, companions. Well then, **“The practice that accords with this is training in the way of those who are intent upon liberation.”** This would mean being with the people who are here now, people who are here now. You help me and I help you. We help each other along. If I have some faults, I depend on you to advise me. I depend on you to let me know when you see it. Like that. Therefore we should know and this was said yesterday. Yes, when you see others making a mistake, we should advise them but your mentality should be entirely different. As soon as you examine your own mind for a little bit and you will know [what your mentality is]. If in your mind you cannot stand the ways of others, and feel that they are wrong, then you would have already been wrong yourself. The first thing you should do is to purify yourself. If you are acting correctly and discovered that others have made a mistake, at that time, you can, in a mild and non-confronting way, address it, “So and so, you have done this wrongly!” You can then gently let them know, that is the right way. This is one example that we can readily see now.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 15.47; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P185, L7]

Of course, the real community [the characteristic] is not only limited to this. We should understand that. As for the true characteristics of the Sangha community, when we go into this topic specifically later, I will go through it in detail. For the situation at hand now, it is such that based on what we have discovered in our lives now, we should know how to apply the teachings in order to develop a harmonious environment that accords with the teaching. This becomes a good quality that will further our learning. This is what we all need to learn. This is the first one.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 16.18; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P185, L10]

2" The second set of subdivisions

This is also divided into four parts. The first one is,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 16.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P185, L12]

(a) Do not excite your sensory faculties

What is excitement? That is to be distracted. This is a distraction which concords particularly to attachment. Normally when we become distracted, there is a distraction which is like laxity, like being muddleheaded. There is another kind such that one thinks of all sorts of things, one cannot let this go or cannot let that go, one keeps thinking of this or that. That is the subjective aspect of excitement.

Normally we all have a tendency of grasping something with our mind. This grasping is a particular subjective aspect of excitement. Often, this thing is very strong, but for most of us, we do not even realize it. This is something that is very serious. Therefore, when we formally begin to cultivate, realistically, one will need to go through a long period of time with great efforts at studying and reflecting before one can understand the subjective aspect of excitement. Otherwise, if you do not even understand the subjective aspect of excitement and you think that you are cultivating, then you are really kidding yourself. Now let us continue to read.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 17.13; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P186, L7]

When the sensory faculties draw the inattentive mind to objects, you should view this excitement with regard to sensory objects as a fault, and withdraw the mind from them.

Well then what is the characteristic of excitement? When our six sensory faculties are unguarded and chanced upon the six sensory objects, the inattentive mind becomes drawn toward the objects. The mind just follows along. Therefore, **“draw the inattentive mind to objects.”** This is called excitement. Regarding this state, the state in which your mind is drawn toward the objects at any given time, you now recognize & understand it, recognize & understand it and you also deeply understand that this is a great fault, a great fault. You must understand that this is a fault, that is when you are

able to develop disenchantment (to withdraw the mind).
Therefore, this is the first one. This is what we should learn.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 18.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P186, L13]

It is simple when we explain it. However, it is not easy to recognize that this is happening, not to mention doing it. In order to help everyone understand this correctly, let me explain this one more time. When the sensory object arises, your mind runs after it. Think about it, is it not true? It does not matter what situation may come up. Needless to say how your mind goes when you see delicious foods. When someone scolds you, you throw a tantrum. Then in our daily lives now, this happens often: when we go through the morning and nightly rituals, when someone sounds the Dharma Instruments a little faster, a little slower, or does it wrongly, what are you thinking in your mind? Therefore, earlier I have spoken about this. There was a student here who sounded the instrument completely wrongly and I am so appreciative of that! I did think that he did it wrongly but then my second thought was, “Oh, I am so substandard! I could not keep my mind steady and my mind had gone after it.” Does everyone understand what I mean? I realized I was wrong but do you have this mentality? When you see it, [you think,] “What is wrong with this guy!?” Then you get increasingly anxious, increasingly anxious such that you wish you could go up there and help him. Then somebody actually did go up in the middle of it, just interrupted him and started to play it for him and he thought he was right. May I ask, is this right?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 19.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P187, L9]

Therefore, this is what we should feel happy about. We should feel incredibly joyous and happy! I am not reproaching you at all. I am telling you truly that because I have made this mistake myself, I have discovered my mistake and I see that everyone's virtuous roots are so great at wanting to learn. Therefore here, from the bottom of my heart, I wish to tell you my painful experience in order to exhort you. To truly learn Buddhism, this is where we should begin! The first thing to do is to realize, "Ah, something is wrong, my mind is being drawn again." Then we should steady our minds. For real practitioners, absolutely, even when the sky collapses, their minds will not become unsteady. Then they can go on to help others. At that time, one must be tactful. This is how it should be. I just wanted to mention this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 20.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P187, L15]

In order to become steadfast, many conditions must be met. **"You should view this excitement with regard to sensory objects as a fault."** This is easier said. I have first pointed out the subjective aspect of it but as of now the real faults have not been pointed out. So, I do not ask that everyone change immediately. I have only pointed it out so that when you come upon situations like this, you try not to let your mind go after it. If you can withdraw your mind from it, then it is already very good. No need to mention withdrawing your mind, in situations like this, when this subjective aspect

develops in your mind, if you can just recognize it, you will be on the right track for now. Oh, this is what we...therefore with the things we need to learn, there absolutely are many levels within it. For right now, when it arises, you just need to recognize that, “Ah, this is not right, not right, it is not he who has the problem, but that I have the problem. He did make a mistake, but when I am learning the teachings, who am I cultivating? I need to cultivate myself or am I here to make him cultivate? I am here to cultivate myself. If you wish to help him, in order to help him, you will need to do it right yourself. Therefore, the first person you need to handle is yourself. If he is wrong, the responsibility still rests on me.” You will inevitably reach this conclusion. Right?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 21.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P188, L9]

Therefore, for us who learnt and trains in the teachings now, the first thing we need to recognize is this. If we can do this, ok, we have already passed, we have already passed. Later he will teach us the faults to this and how to remedy it. There is a complete set of instruction at every place. Once you understand this, you will develop disenchantment (your mind will with draw from the sensory objects). Therefore, since this will be covered later, we would not go into this for now. This place only tells us the stages for learning. This is the first one. What is the second one?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 21.51; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P188, L13]

(b) Take up the precepts correctly

Then, once we recognize the faults, when we formally begin to improve upon them, there need to be methods. Therefore, once we formally take refuge, what should we do? What should we learn? This is what we need to learn.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 22.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P189, L2]

You should take up the trainings set forth by the Buddha—as many as possible.

The precepts, in a strict definition, mean vows (ethical discipline). In a broad definition, the boundary encompasses the entire three scriptural collections. Yes, from the perspective of conduct, it is referring to ethical discipline but you need to understand why the ethical discipline is stipulated in this way. These are all described in the sutras and commentaries. Therefore, the sutras, the disciplines and the commentaries are three facets of the same essence. Once you formally go for refuge, the next step is to learn. When you have a correct understanding, then you can follow it to learn and change your faults. This is spoken with respect to one self.

Then one more step further,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 22.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P189, L7]

(c) Be compassionate toward living beings

Benefit others. There is a special characteristic in there. Why do we need to be compassionate toward living beings?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 22.57; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P189, L9]

The Conqueror's teaching is distinguished by compassion. Therefore, once you have gone to his teaching for refuge, you should also be compassionate toward living beings and forsake harming them.

Well then, this is compassion. The real difference for Buddhism [as oppose to others], is the true distinction of the Conqueror's teachings on whether you have this (compassion). The conqueror's teaching, you can also call it the teachings shared by the five vehicles, or the teaching shared by the three vehicles. However, the Conqueror's true teachings does not focus primarily on the mundane world. The worldly things or you can say the defilements are what we wish to escape from. In order to be liberated, there are only three vehicles which can achieve this: vehicles of the Shravaka, the Pratyekabuddha, and the Mahayana. To divide this more clearly: the ones who benefit oneself are in the Hinayana vehicle and the ones who benefit others are in the Mahayana vehicle. What is the difference between these two? It is in the aspect of compassion. The path that this treatise truly wishes to lead us toward is the Mahayana vehicle. Actually, all that Buddha has said is this as well, since only this is ultimate and complete. Therefore, the *Lotus sutra* at

the end exposed and disposed of the temporary or partial teaching, and revealed the final and real truth. It was said clearly that Buddha had come to earth for one single purpose. Even though there is only one purpose, there are different ways manifested. So why are there such differences? It is precisely on this issue. Therefore, now that you understand this point, then starting from the beginning of your journey, your first step should be to recognize that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 24.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P190, L5]

Therefore, after we formally begin to learn, the next step is to be compassionate toward all beings. Therefore, **“you should also be compassionate toward living beings and forsake harming them.”** At this point we are not able to help them [by liberating them from cyclic existence]. The least we can do is to sympathize and pity. We should not harm them. This is within our ability now. We should not measure others against the teaching on every occasion. That would qualify as harming others. Therefore [with this point that I am making], some people may criticize that this would seem then your aim is to maintain relationships. It is true that to simply maintain relations is not Buddhism, but Buddhism cannot be apart from maintaining relationships. This, we should know. To simply maintain relations is not Buddhism, no mistakes in that but Buddhism cannot be apart from maintaining relationships!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 25.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P190, L10]

Therefore, at this point, let us think over the story that I told earlier. There was this person who stole a goat from someone else. Then, the son came forth to become a witness for the crime and said, “My father stole the goat.” According to the people of the mundane world, “Ah, this is right.” To the sages, this is not right. What would a sage say? What did Confucius say? “A father will be concealed by his son, and a son will be concealed by his father and uprightness is to be found in this fact.” The real upright path is like this. The real upright path is like this. This is so with the sages of the world, no need to mention for Buddha! Therefore, when Buddha guides us, he will also use all sorts of non-confronting and tactful ways to help us. This is what we should understand. Regarding this point, with the word “harming,” we do not need to even mention the profound principles behind it, just take a look at yourself when others reproach you by using the principles. Do you feel sincerely convinced and willing to take the criticism like that? I am sorry. I think very few of us can do that. If we cannot do this ourselves, then we should not be using big principles to curb others. Since we are here, I thought I will mention this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 26.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P191, L3]

The first thing to do is that we should always try to sympathize with others. Why did he do this, why? It is because he is foolish. Ah! It is such a pity. When you think of his foolishness in doing this, then a sympathetic attitude will arise. Truthfully speaking, when we see many animals, normally, we will always feel pity for them. Then if you see

someone having obtained a human life of leisure and opportunity and yet act so foolishly, they would seem even more pitiful than the animals! As soon as your sympathy arises, then the situation described earlier will be easily resolved. On one hand, the situation at present is resolved. On the other hand, when you develop sympathy and pity, you are then in concordance with the teaching, you are in concord with the teachings. There are so many benefits. You have benefited yourself, the community is in harmony, and others will easily accept your help when you wish **to help**. That concludes the third point. Lastly,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 27.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P191, L10]

**(d) Strive to make periodic offerings to the three jewels
Each day you should make offerings to the three jewels.**

Then, at the end “**periodic**,” this periodic means at all times, we should diligently make offerings to the Three Jewels. The next portion is very easy to understand. The offerings that we can do now, is with what we can understand as of this time, we should do so accordingly. From the moment we wake up until the moment we go to sleep, when we are doing things for the temple, in our cultivation and so on, we should just do them to the best of our abilities. The first thing we should check is, “Ah! Do I have the correct concept now? Am I doing this for the “ego self,” or am I in concordance with the teachings?” This is important. If you can examine, remove the “ego self,” concord with the teaching, then you probably would not be too off track in the entire day. If you can often

bring this concept to mind, then your day will not have been wasted.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46A, 28.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P192, L3]

Regarding the preceding explanation, once we have gone for refuge, this is how we should learn. Speaking of this, now let us go back to look at this. Let us look at this again. Let us open up to page 98 (English text, page 178). In page 98, look at the outline, the outline, **“ii) Relying on the means for achieving happiness in the next life.”** This was then divided into two parts. It is from here that we progressed step by step to where we are now. We have understood that we will quickly die in this life. After death, we do not know where we will be going. It is just like that. Then we will realize that we have no control of where we will go for it is controlled by karma. The karma will dictate us to fall into miserable realms and it is a horrendous thing should we fall. Ah! Therefore, while we still have the opportunity to practice now, we are seeking for a correct method, a method that can help us obtain happiness. Well then this is then what we should strive to practice.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46B, 00.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P193, L1]

In here it is divided into two parts. The first one is to go for refuge and the second one is what to do after refuge. Then within the first one of going for refuge, it is divided into 4 parts. Let us review this again. **“1' The causes of going for**

refuge.” Does everyone remember this? What is the reason that you go for refuge? Two causes. It is because we fear suffering, that is the first cause. Since we fear suffering and hope to escape the suffering, we seek for a place of refuge. By then we wish to seek refuge, and so with the objects of refuge, what are the necessary qualifications? **“Based on that, the objects to which you go for refuge.”** You will naturally and inevitably find objects as such. Yes, and then how to go for refuge? Here it tells us this as well. The text goes over it one by one. After you go for refuge, why is it that he can become your refuge? Why do you go to him for refuge? Why was he able to obtain this [achievement]? So it is because he had practiced according to the teachings. He also tells you that since you have gone to me for refuge, what should you then be doing? Therefore, **“4' Once you have gone for refuge, the stages of the precepts.”** This is the content to be learned. Now with what we have just said, **“4' Once you have gone for refuge, the stages of the precepts,”** it is divided into two parts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46B, 01.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P194, L1]

Now let us go back to page 106 (English text, page 193). What this place is explaining is how they appear in the ***Compendium of Determinations***. This is the first part. The second part is **“how they appear in the oral tradition.”** Now we are going to discuss the oral tradition. In other words, after we have gone for refuge, what we truly need to do is this. Therefore, refuge is not a ritual which you just recite through. Refuge itself implies a proper measurement of an attitude that

concorde with refuge. After we have gone for refuge, we should then learn to do these things. When your mind wholeheartedly goes for refuge and reliance, and if we are applying this to the method of Pure Land, this will be called the “actual practice.” All the other times are called “supporting practices.”

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46B, 02.41; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P194, L7]

With what I have just said [from the *Compendium of Determinations*], in regards to “**Rely on excellent persons, listen to the sublime teachings, fix your attention properly on them, cultivate a practice that conforms with the teachings**” ...and so on. These are all what the entire treatise will be telling us. These are all what will be coming. A large amount of material will be discussed later. Here it is simply giving us a general outline. Similarly, for the second subdivision, “**Do not excite your sensory faculties, take up the precepts correctly, be compassionate toward living beings, strive to make periodic offerings to the three jewels,**” this is a general outline. The detailed content to them will be covered later. Now that we have heard this general outline, we will already feel that, “Ah! So happy, this is so great! Oh. We now know the mistakes we have made and know what we should do from now on. We feel such happiness!” Then we can diligently pursue our learning, and naturally, what whatever amount you learn, you will understand as much. With as much you understand, you follow to practice and you can improve as much. For whatever amount you improve, your obscurations will be

eliminated by as much and you will accumulate the collections as much. If you can strive as such in the causal period, then naturally a beautiful and perfect effect/fruit will be waiting for you. Therefore, to truly cultivate Buddhism, you begin from here. Otherwise, it would be as if you are climbing the trees to catch fish or trying to go south yet driving your chariot north. Therefore at this place, we can take a look at the topic of how they appear in the oral tradition. We will take a look at this topic today.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46B, 04.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P195, L2]

b" How they appear in the oral tradition

In the oral tradition, the precepts are divided into special precepts and general precepts.

One is on special precepts and the other is the general precepts. Let us keep reading to see what is to be learned in the special precepts and what is to be learned in the general precepts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46B, 04.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P195, L4]

1" The special precepts

These are explained in terms of proscriptive and prescriptive precepts.

(a) The proscriptive precepts

The special precepts listed the special things such as what things are proscriptive and what things are prescriptive. Well then with the proscriptive precepts, let me briefly explain this. After we go to the Three Jewels for refuge, we will only take refuge in Buddha and no one else. After we go to the teachings for refuge, we will only do what concords with the sublime teachings. After going to the sangha community for refuge, this becomes the only one and we will not take refuge in others. In other words, we do not take refuge in others anymore, those are the proscriptive portion. The proscriptive portion is very important for us, very important. Before we go through the actual texts, I just wanted to mention this, to tell you why the proscriptive precepts are there for. I wanted to explain the reason so that everyone can understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46B, 05.18; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P195, L11]

What is the reason that we are ordinary beings? That is because the subjective aspects of our consciousness are defiled. Wherever the conscious mind goes, it acts like a monkey, wherever it goes, it grasps. Wherever it goes, it grasps. Wherever you go, as soon as you see something, your mind will be in concordance with that. Just like that and this is not something you have control over. This is a concept we should be clear with. Let me give you an example. For example, let us say a commercial. Ah! When there is a commercial, in the middle of a program, the vendors will for sure buy a time slot during the program. The content of the program may be very beautiful, and then all of a sudden, it breaks for a commercial midway. When you see this

commercial, you will find it annoying. So, you reject this with reason. But this is the interesting thing! It is precisely due to this concept of rejection that the idea of the commercial is now planted in your mind. Then the next time when something comes up [relating to the topic of the commercial], you will remember that “Ah, there is such thing.” Is that not true? So, do not think you have the ability to actually reject it. It does not matter what. As soon as you see it, the shadow of it is implanted and it will develop into an effect. In the future, you will be led by it. This is very important. Therefore, a learning environment for people who first begin to cultivate is extremely important. This is why we keep talking about the excellent teacher, the excellent teacher. The excellent teacher is not just the superiors who teach us, but the people we associate with. [There is a Chinese saying,] “He who gets in contact with vermilion will become red; he who comes near ink will be stained black.” Only when you understand this principle can you then talk about why there should be the proscriptive precepts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P193; 46B, 06.52; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P196, L11]

After going for refuge, we have already discussed “**how they appear in the *Compendium of Determinations*.**”

Today we will discuss “**how they appear in the oral tradition.**” Now let us read on, it is divided into the special and general precepts. Within the special precepts, it is divided into two parts. The first part is the proscriptive, what should not be done. The second part is the prescriptive,

things which should be cultivated. With what should not be done, let us read the paragraph.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 07.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P197, L1]

The *Great Final Nirvana Sutra* states:³³³

Those who go to the three jewels for refuge

Come closer to the truly virtuous;

They never go

To other deities for refuge.

Those who go to the sublime teaching for refuge Harbor no harmful, murderous thoughts.

Those who go to the community for refuge

Do not associate with non-Buddhist philosophers.

This is a citing from the sutra. It says that after one goes to the Three Jewels for refuge, one is called “**closer to the truly virtuous.**” You rely and venerate the Three Jewels and so you gradually and gradually become closer to them. These are the people who we refer to as upāsaka and upāsikā. In general, we refer to them as householder practitioners (lay practitioners). They are the ones who reside in their houses to learn the teachings. When does the distinction begin? It begins the moment you go to the Three Jewels for refuge. Once you have gone to the Three Jewels for refuge, “**they never go to other deities for refuge.**” Once you have gone to the Three Jewels for refuge, have gone for refuge to the Buddha Jewel, then you no longer can take refuge in others, even in deities. For the divine creator that we talked about

earlier, the divine creator resides in the sixth heaven of the form realm, 摩醯首羅天. This level of heaven has two parts to it, one part is the heaven of the non-Buddhist, and the other part is the heaven of the Buddhists. Here it refers to the non-Buddhist heaven. In other words, within the three realms, the formless realm has no form and therefore you cannot see. So with the highest level of deity, you will not even take refuge in, needless to say others. This is what happens after you have gone to the Buddha Jewels for refuge. What happens after you go to the teaching for refuge? You will “**harbor no harmful, murderous thoughts.**” This was said earlier, we do not want to go to refuge in others, and in particular with harming others and causing damage to others, we do not want to do this. Once we go to the community for refuge, we no longer will associate with non-Buddhist philosophers. The explanations are below.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 09.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P197, L12]

Thus, there are three proscriptive precepts: not going to other deities for refuge, abandoning harm and malice toward living beings and not befriending non-Buddhist philosophers.

You will not befriend non-Buddhist philosophers. Befriend means living together because these are the times when you exert influence on each other. I have said this briefly yesterday. When you are together, naturally, without you being aware, you will become stained (such as being stained by a color). Whether you like it or dislike it. Even

with the commercials, when commercials come on, you are just annoyed. When you are annoyed, this leaves an imprint on your consciousness and one day, an effect will be produced. The habits of many people, [in fact] we can say that the habits of most people are set from their childhood through following their parents and the family. They have nurtured these habits without being aware of them. As soon as you are stained by them, you will be like this for the rest of your life.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 10.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P198, L5]

This is why the environment we exposed ourselves to is very important, very important. In particular for us ordinary beings, therefore we must understand this principle. Now there are many practitioners who wish to cultivate, yet they lock the doors up and practice themselves. Good gracious! Now if one has achieved a certain level of qualifications and he wholeheartedly engages in meditative concentration, then yes, he should do so. However, in order to be at that level, how difficult that would be! For ordinary people, they are completely ignorant in the body and mind, completely defiled. If you lock yourself up here, you are destined to not achieve anything. You must expose yourself to a good environment where it can gradually exert an edifying influence on you so that you may improve yourself. This is a very important point. Now let us continue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 11.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P198, L11]

Not going to other deities for refuge is explained as follows: since you should not even hold worldly deities such as Rudra and Vishnu as your ultimate refuge, what need be said about *nagas* and the local divinities who are hungry ghosts?

After we have gone to Buddha for refuge, Buddha is the only great teacher. Under this circumstances, everything else is no longer what we should go for refuge. Needless to say the nagas, the ghosts, and local divinities of the world, even for Rudra or Visnu, those at the top of the form realm, we would not even go to them for refuge. Now all the ghosts of our world are governed by the Yama, and in turn governed by the Jade Emperor (玉皇大帝), who is in the second heaven of the desire realm. If you compare this to the top level of form realm, Mahavira (摩醯首羅), the former is more much inferior. For the top level of the form realm, with its governing deities, we would not even go to them for refuge, needless to mention others. This is what we should understand. The next part explains something.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 12.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P199, L3]

While it is improper to entrust yourself to these beings without full belief in the three refuges, it is proper to merely seek these beings' help for some temporary religious purpose, just as, for example, you would seek the help of a benefactor in acquiring the means of

**livelihood, or consult a doctor for the cure of an illness.
[145]**

What does this mean? It is that in our minds, what we resort to and depend on are the Three Jewels. Like that. We no longer will go for refuge and resort to these. It is pointing this out. If under the circumstance of the way we live in this world, we still need to depend on each other for our livelihood, for things to eat, wear, use and so you need to help each other. That would be okay, would be okay. Even when you are sick and need to see the doctors...etc, that is okay. However, with the concepts of the world and what Buddhism is teaching us, if they are different and in conflict, then your standards for adopting and casting aside things must be set in accordance with the Three Jewels. This is what is important. Well then this is the first one, after you have gone to the Buddha Jewel for refuge.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 13.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P199, L11]

The second proscriptive precept entails refraining from doing harm or injury to living beings through thought or deed. This includes actions such as beating, binding, imprisoning, nose-piercing, and overburdening humans, animals, and so forth.

The second one, you will harbor no harmful, murderous thoughts, regardless of the objects being people or animals. By beating, or all sorts of ways of harming, or even if you demand that it carries a load which it cannot handle, yet you

force it on, that is not okay either. Thought is what is in your mind. Deed is your physical action. In both ways you should no longer harm others.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 14.32; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P200, L3]

The third proscriptive precept entails not agreeing with those who do not believe in the three jewels as a refuge and who repudiate them.

Therefore, members of the community are those we live together with. For those who do not believe in the Three Jewels and those who slander the Three Jewels, we should not be living with them. I brought up a question yesterday, “We often say that with Buddhism, it is pretty fair and very reasonable whereas the non-Buddhist religions do not act accordingly in such and such ways. Yet when we go for refuge, we act like non-Buddhists and only go to our great teacher for refuge, only go to our teaching for refuge, and go to the practicing Sangha community jewel for refuge. We forsake all other refuges. The non-Buddhist religions are the same way. Well then they can now ask you, how are you better than them?” Did everyone think over this? Yesterday, a fellow practitioner came and brought up this question to me. Since he had reflected upon it properly using the teachings, as a result, I think he felt a great joy last night, a great joy. As long as you can fix your attention properly on the teaching, genuinely reflect and analyze, there will immediately be many concordant benefits. I do not know if other fellow practitioners have given this some serious thoughts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 16.03; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P200, L12]

Well then today, let me explain this you. Yes, judging from the appearance, it may seem so. The non-Buddhist religions would also say, “Once you have gone to me for refuge, you will need to forsake all other refuges. I am the only true god, the only domination, no others can be.” Well then, that is true with Buddhism as well. From the appearance, it would seem the same way but in substance, if you analyze in a deeper level, you will come to a very different result.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 16.41; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P201, L2]

For people of the mundane world, generally, we can divide people into two main categories. There is one type of person who is stronger in reasons, more logical. Another type of person is more emotional. Those who are more emotional, they care more about feelings. Ah! When they are in good terms with you, they are so intimate with you. They cannot discern the good from the bad. Since they are in good relations with you, they follow you around all the time. Just like that. With these two types of persons, there is a great distinction between them. For those who are logical, when they do something, when they make a decision, it is a choice made with reasons. After seeing the truth of the matter, they then proceed. For those who are the emotional type, they are not like that. They are happy today so they follow you around. Later, when they are not happy, they will blow up at you. Just

like that. Therefore, they are always going back-and-forth, back-and-forth. They themselves do not know what they are doing. I think that this is something we all can relate to in this world.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 17.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P201, L9]

When the relationship seems good, ah, the two of you, one would feel that the other person is all that he needs. Normally, we would frequently see the young men and women in this state of being. Ah! They pledge eternal loyalty, as if nothing can break them apart. Then when they are unhappy the next day, they fight until the whole world turned upside down. That is the state. Therefore, these are all not reasonable. However, if it is a choice made with reasons and it has been done with serious consideration, then this [choice], yes, you are certain that this is it, you are certain with it. Therefore, in the mundane world, you can categorize the two types [of persons], can categorize the two types. The two types of persons can say the same “this is it” but the end result will be entirely different. What is the difference? One’s choice has been done with reason, it is truly correct by principle. Therefore, for anything in this world, as long as you have found what is correct and of course, this is correct. The only this path is correct. Inevitably you will be looking for the correct path to walk on.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 19.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P202, L2]

Well then now with the situation of being in these three realms (desire, form, and formless realms), in order to find the correct path, it will inevitably come down to this. Therefore, by the same reasons stated earlier, for the sufferings of this world, in order to escape the suffering, you must find a place of true refuge. Therefore, under these circumstances, you will possibly have two ways of doing this. One way is by emotion, with whatever you encounter, you stick to it. This may not prove to be very reliable. Even though when you speak of it, it may seem really good, but it is not very safe. The other way is not like that. After you choose with reasons, truly, according to its principles, this is the path which can help you resolve the problems and it is the only path. May I ask then, will you change your mind again? If you change, you will have lost your purpose entirely.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 20.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P202, L9]

Also, when we measure the quality of these two, we did not even use a religious standard to measure them, but that we have used a mundane world reasoning/logic to measure them. Does everyone understand this point? Why do I say this? If you use the religious perspective to measure them, then when we talk about them, sorry, you speak of your Buddhism faith and I do not believe it. You can say that yours is better. Just like if we are selling melons, we would say melons are great. Everyone is like this, you believe in your religion and I do not believe it. Thus, it is futile to be doing this. Therefore, now I am not using the religions [to compare], but using a measurement commonly shared by the world. Do you

agree with this principle? Agree. If you agree, then let us compare. This is how I have chosen. How about you? As soon as you choose between the two, then I am sorry, one will see how the two situations will become entirely different. Do you understand or not? This is what we should be able to discern as ones who learn and practice Buddhism. We should be able to make a distinction.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 21.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P203, L1]

Therefore, with Buddhism, once you have truly entered it, then what you will do afterwards are going to be different [than being in other religions]. At the time one enters other religions, one enters in a similar way. It is by faith that you enter. Faith is the doorway. This is common [among all religions]. After you have gained faith and entered, you must then discern with reason/logic. Therefore, you listen to the sublime teachings and fix your attention properly on them to reflect. In this process, as you go further, in particular for the Zen sect, they have said something really spectacular, “with small doubts, you will have small awakening; with great doubts, great awakening; no doubts, no awakening.” Previously it has told you to believe. Later it asks you to doubt. This seems to conflict but actually, they do not conflict because before you understand the truth to things, he needs to explain it to you. So, he explains the principles to you and you begin to develop faith. By the time you truly gain faith, you will need to actually delve in deeply step by step, to get to the root of it, to understand it thoroughly and experience it. This is the time when you need to breakthrough many difficult barriers. In

every process, you must personally experience it. There are many things that do not happen just because others have said so. If you just repeat after others, it is useless. Therefore, when we come to this stage, yes, you should at every stage, go into it deeply in accordance to the teaching and in proper measurements. Then at that time, through your own logical analysis, of course then you will develop many questions, key questions. Then through your own in-depth research and study, the end result becomes what you have discerned.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 22.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P203, L12]

This is not only true for the Zen sect, it is said throughout Buddhism. Buddha said that you should not just believe what I said, but that you should experience it, that is when it counts. Therefore, throughout Hinayana and Mahayana teachings, this holds true but this is not the same for non-Buddhist religions. [They would say,] you should believe, believe in me, that is it, and you cannot give up your faith in me. If you ask them some questions, they will say, “Ah! Sorry, you are struck by demons. The demon has come.” Just like that. Anyway, they would not reason with you. Therefore, as you go further into it, the situation becomes entirely different, entirely different. This is what we need to understand correctly. We would not go into in detail here but as we get to this point, we should have a correct understanding of this concept.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 23.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P204, L3]

(b) The prescriptive precepts

There are three prescriptive precepts.

Well then what initiatives should we take?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 23.51; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P204, L5]

The first is to treat images of the Buddha as objects of reverence—as though they were the Teacher himself—not pointing out their faults regardless of their quality, and not disrespecting them or treating them with contempt by putting them in dishonorable places, pawning them, etc.

For the three things we should cultivate with respect to, what are the primary things to do for Buddha, teachings and the community? Now that Buddha has passed into nirvana, the only thing left in this world is Buddha's image. This Buddha's image, it does not matter if the image is a statue or a painting, or whether it is good or bad. The painting quality may be good or bad, but that is the difference in the skill of the craftsmen. However, the image of the Buddha itself is absolutely great. We should recognize it as such. Therefore, whether the image is a statue or painted, whether it is drawn well or not, we should absolutely not casually deride it, or to go as far as casually setting the Buddha's image in dishonorable places, to use it as a security, to pawn it...etc. This is absolutely not a monetary asset. Whenever you disrespect it, "belittle" - what is this "belittle" targeting at? That

is whenever your mind has no respect towards it, that is when you belittle it ! This here does not just refer to you looking down on it, that is not the meaning. It is when you do not highly value it; even this should be eliminated.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 25.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P204, L14]

What should you do then? Under any circumstance, one should hold this as the reverent field. This is what we should pay most respect to because it is the same as the great Teacher, just like the Buddha. Everyone seems to know how to say this but no one can actually do this. Now here I want to remind everyone of something in particular. I do not mean it for us to be able to do this immediately but there is at least one point that we should understand. What should we understand? Understand that we do not even have this concept. Everyone can think about it. Can we truly view Buddha's image as Buddha? Can anyone of you say, "I can do it, I have done so." If you have done so, please raise your hand. Have you? Now **on the opposite**, for those who truly can say that "I have not done so," please raise your hand. Not bad. There are still many fellow practitioners. This is actually true. In reality, we in general really have not obtained this understanding in our minds. This point is very important.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 26.26; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P205, L7]

Let me just give an example. I am not trying to do anything here except to raise our awareness at many

instances [in our daily lives]. Once you recognize the state of being, then there is a chance for improvement. For us normally, we have two set sessions a day, one in the morning, and the other at night. When we enter the main shrine, how do you feel? You will immediately feel that this is where Buddha is. If with this point, we have an understanding, then at that time you will feel this immediately as you enter: Ah! I am in front of Buddha! I am in front of Buddha! do not overlook this, do not overlook this! From the beginning of our treatise, it tells us a few things. It says that when we cultivate the teachings, we should “eliminate the three faults of the vessel and rely on the six ideas.” What is the first idea within the six ideas? We are struck with this sickness. What sickness? A sickness of ignorance. Looking at it from a coarse perspective, it would be attachment, hostility and ignorance. It is because of this that we create karma and continue the pain of rebirth. Who now saves us? Buddha. Buddha is everywhere. Well then why cannot we see? That is because of our karmic obstacle. How can we then purify and eliminate it? It is only through repentance with utmost sincerity and respect. If we want to repent, etc, we will first need to recognize where we are wrong. Thus we say we are intoxicated with the three poisons.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 28.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P206, L2]

If we normally have this understanding and bring this thought to mind, as soon as we enter the main shrine, the feeling will immediately arise, “yes, with what I see now, it is not Buddha, it is an image of Buddha. Why do I see Buddha’s

image? It is produced through my karma. It is the fruit produced by my afflictions and karma.” The moment you see that, your mind will develop a matchless shame and embarrassment. The flip side of shame and embarrassment is that respect is then generated. Therefore, we now will often say we need to respect and cannot, what is the reason? It is because you do not even fundamentally have this concept in mind. Or even if you do have it, you have not fixed your attention on them to reflect properly. If with this concept, you truly understand it and have reflected upon it accordingly, if you can often do this, then wherever you go... Perhaps normally, even though we say that “Vairocana [Buddha] is everywhere”, we cannot develop that feeling. This is because truly as an ordinary being, we are burdened with heavy afflictions. However, when we enter the main shrine, its solemn and dignified ambiance should be able to rouse your awareness. You will then be able to feel it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 46B, 29.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P206, L11]

Therefore, once you have this standard, you can weigh it against yourself and will know what your state of mind is. This is what is most important to us now that we recognize where we have gone wrong. Once you recognize where the mistake is, that is when we have the opportunity to improve it. This point, this is the most important point right now. Therefore, at this particular place, we should go from here to recognize the subjective aspects of our minds and advance through this. If with this point you can truly raise the awareness in your mind,

there are infinite benefits, infinite benefits. You can think of that yourself.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 47A, 00.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P211, L1]

Let me just briefly explain it to you. When this type of awareness/attitude arises, wouldn't you want to "make obeisance" to the Three Jewels? You will want to. Then when this thought arises, are you going along with the afflictions? You are not going along with afflictions. Then there will be "follow the teachings of the Buddha at all times", "make abundant offerings," and then in your mind, you concord with the teachings. In short, as soon as you start to think about it, analyze it, within the Ten Great Vows, you will have engaged in at least 5 or 6 of them. It is that great! Think about it. Therefore, over here, there is no other way. Others can point things out for you, but whether you can benefit from it will entirely depend on whether you can fix your attention on them to reflect and analyze properly. If you can just change one thought to reflect and analyze according to the teachings, that is the thought that is eliminating obscurations and accumulating the collections. This is what is said in the preceding section. Next it will cite from Bodhisattva's commentary.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P194; 47A, 01.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P211, L8]

The *Friendly Letter*.³³⁴

**Just as the learned worship an image
of the Sugata, Whatever it is made of,
even wood ...**

Whatever the skill level is in creating the image of Buddha, whether it is good or bad, whether it is made with good skills or poor skills, or made of wood, clay, gold, silver or it is painted, it does not matter! For those who have real wisdom and are learned, they should really make offering, make offering to this Buddha image.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 01.58; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P212, L3]

The *Exegesis of the Discipline*³³⁵ relates how Manavakapila, who slandered the community of learners and those with no more to learn in eighteen different ways—saying, for example, "What do you know of the teaching or nonteaching, Elephant-head?"—was reborn as a monstrous fish with eighteen different heads, remaining an animal from the time of Teacher Kasyapa until the time of the King of the Sakyas [the Buddha].

The following are two stories. I will read them once and then talk about them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 02.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P212, L7]

The *The Ksudraka Bases of Discipline (Vinaya-ksudraka-vastu)*³³⁶ relates how, after the nirvana of Teacher Krakucchanda, King Carumat ordered that a great *stupa* be built. A workman cursed it twice, exclaiming, "We'll never be able to complete a *stupa* this huge!" Later, when it was nicely finished, he regretted his curses and used his wages to have a golden bell fashioned and placed on the *stupa*. [146] As a result, he was reborn as Supriyavat ("Sweet Voice"), with an ugly complexion and tiny body, but a beautiful voice.

These are two stories. These two stories are from sutras. I have heard about these two stories but I did not actually read them myself. Instead for the same two stories, I will talk about what I have read. These stories are from the *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*. In the *Sutra of the Wise and the Foolish*, Prasenajit, king of Śrāvastī, had something to do and led his army by Buddha's Jetavana [a place where Buddha resided]. At that time, there was a bhikkhu reciting in Jetavana and his voice was beautiful. Ah! It was so beautiful. Whoever walked by was enticed by his voice. This even affected the horses and elephants which were providing transportation for the army. As the horses and elephants listened, they were also mesmerized by the voice and came to a standstill.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 04.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P213, L4]

Prasenajit was in the back of the army and thought, "Ah! Why did they stop moving?" He asked, "What is going on?" [Someone answered,] "I do not know." The person who was

sent to ask also came to a standstill after hearing the voice. It was like that. After Prasenajit heard the voice, he said, “It is strange. What is going on here?” [Someone answered,] “Oh! In Jetavana, there is an ordained bhikkhu who has a very beautiful voice.” Prasenaji felt it was a beautiful voice after hearing it. Everyone was attracted to him and forgot what they came for. So, what did they come for? To catch Angulīmālya because he murdered people. But we would not talk about that story here. That was why they walked by Jetavana. He said, “Buddha, since there exists such a very beautiful voice that I have never heard before, I hope to meet him and I wish to offer ten thousand dollars.” The Buddha said, “You want to offer ten thousand dollars. If you wish to meet him, it would be better if you offer it first before you meet him. It is because after you meet him, you will no longer wish to offer.” Prasenajit said, “That would not happen, it would not happen.” Everyone said, ah, this person’s voice is so beautiful!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 05.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P213, L13]

So then, they invited that person to come out. Yet when he came out, since he was very ugly looking, everyone who looked at him felt like vomiting. Even if you ask only for one coin, no one will be willing to give it. Though everyone was feeling the regret, they then asked, “Buddha, how is it possible? The voice is so beautiful. Beautiful as such, but the appearance is so ugly. It makes everyone who looks at him want to vomit.” So then Buddha told him, “A long time ago, more than 91 eons ago, it was the time of the Kasyapa

Buddha, there was a person.... Kasyapa Buddha, he had passed into nirvana already. Kasyapa Buddha was the third Buddha of the noble eon (Bhadrakalpa, the present eon). Our Shakyamuni Buddha was the fourth Buddha of the noble eon. So that was during the time when man's lifespan was 20,000 years old. So, then the king wished to build a stupa for Kasyapa Buddha. He was prepared to build a huge stupa, a very, very huge stupa. Since it was going to be a very huge stupa, he did not know how to construct it. This touched the naga king and he came forth to help.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 06.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P214, L6]

The naga king helped and told him, "The city that surrounds you now, if you take the water from the east gate, upon scooping, it will become lapis lazuli. If you take the water from the southern part, it will become gold. If you take it from the west gate, it will become white silver. If you take it from the north gate, it will become white jade." Therefore, ah! That was going to be built into a seven-gem stupa, incredibly beautiful. Therefore, everyone diligently worked on it. Then for this project, an important official was assigned to supervise the work for each side. There was one official who was supervising, he was not careful and did not do a very good job. Then when the king saw how it was done poorly, the king reproached the official. After being reproached, the official complained and said, "Why do you have to build such a huge stupa. Ah, it is too much!" He had just complained for a little. He complained for a little and felt very unhappy, "Such a huge stupa, so difficult to construct!" That sort of feeling. It is much

like asking us to do something which we find troublesome and inconvenient. So, he detested and resented it. So, the king left. After the king left, the official still worked very hard at it and finished the construction.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 07.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P214, L15]

Ah! After finishing the construction, he thought that this stupa was so beautiful. He then got a small golden bell to hang on the stupa. From this one cause, from then on, for 91 eons, he was a horrible looking person life after life, extremely ugly. That is because he detested, detested it. When you detest in your mind, the subjective aspect of your mind will show. However, he got a golden bell to hang on the stupa. Ah, the sound on the stupa was extremely beautiful! It was because of this cause, [this manifested in] all his lives from then on until now meeting Shakyamuni Buddha. Therefore, what little and slight action you do to Buddha's image may generate such fruitional effects. If you just generate one thought wrong, you will be getting this but then, he still confessed! After that, he still hung a golden bell. If he did not confess, he will surely fall into miserable realms! This is one story.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 08.41; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P215, L7]

The other story was still one in the time of Shakyamuni Buddha. One day our Shakyamuni Buddha went out with his disciple. While outside of the city, on their way, there was a

group of people fishing. There were small and large fishing nets. The largest net was really large, needing 500 people together to pull the large net. That day, the net happened to have caught a large fish. Ah, the fish was extremely big. The five hundred people could not pull the net up. Everyone hollered for help. It so happened that there were people farming next to them, so one came, two came, eventually finding 500 cows, and then, ho! With 500 people, 500 cows, this big fish was dragged onto the bank. Once the fish was on the bank, people discovered that he had all sorts of heads. Wow! Strange heads. They thought it was strange, this never happened before. Well then everyone said this and that, more than a thousand people by now, everyone was looking at it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 09.43; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P215, L15]

Buddha happened to be walking by with his disciples. Since everyone thought it was interesting, they also went to see what happened. Well then of course Buddha knew what is going on. So he told Ananda, “Ananda! Go take a look. What are those people doing, all running toward the river?” When Ananda went to look, oh, such a monstrous fish came from the river! Then, “JiJigaga,” the fish made a sound too. So he came back and told Buddha. When Buddha saw that, he smiled. Then Ananda asked, “What is going on with this? I have never seen such a monstrous fish!” Buddha then went over to him and said, “Okay, okay, let me bring you over.” So they went to the bank of the river. At the bank of the river, Buddha called out to the fish, “Are you Manavakapila?”

Buddha asked him discreetly. “Are you Manavakapila?” The fish said “yes!” “Are you Manavakapila?” It said “yes!” Buddha asked him discreetly three times. After the third time, Buddha said, “Where are those who told you to reproach the renunciates?” “In the Unrelenting Hell.” Then tears flowed from the fish. Um? Everyone thought it was strange, “What is going on?”

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 10.57; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P216, L10]

It turned out that during the Kasyapa Buddha’s time, there was a non-Buddhist person, a Brahman. This Brahman had a son who was very intelligent, with a fine and delicate complexion. He was extremely bright among the Brahmans. Even though he was extremely bright among the Brahman’s, his father told him, “We who are in the Brahmans caste are great, but those Shramana Brahmans – Sharmanas are those renunciates following the Kasyapa Buddha – you absolutely should respect and keep a distance. You do not want to touch them! Just like that. You need to respect them.” Well then because of his father’s will, he was always very respectful to them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 11.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P216, L15]

After his father passed on, after the father’s death, this mother, of course, the Indian society had also been a patriarchal society. The mother asked, “Son! You are the most intelligent one here.” Of course, the parents are proud

of their children. He said, “Yes, but I cannot beat the monks.” “Oh, why is that?” He said, “They know whatever I say, but I do not know many things that they say.” “Um, if that is true then why do not you learn from them?” “If I want to learn from them, I need to become a monk! How can I do that if I am a Brahman?” The mom said, “There, you should pretend to be a monk first. Once you have learned it, then you will be fine.” “Okay.” Though he was not that willing, but he had his mother’s command. Though they have their own habits for their religion, do not belittle them. Brahmans still have good rules and they also value filial piety. Well then the mother asked him to do this again and again and he could not help it. He pretended to have the desire to be ordained and went to the renunciate community.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 12.56; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P217, L9]

Since he was really intelligent, not long after he came to learn, he had learnt everything. So, he thought that since he had learned everything, the mother had told him to go home after learning everything, and so he returned home. After returning home, the mother was very happy. “Son, now you are good!” He said, “I am still not good.” She said, “Why is it that even though you have learned it, you are still not good?” He said, “This is not a matter of speaking the principles. I do know the principles, but I have not experienced them! If we just talk about the principles, I can still do it but if you are talking about experiential knowledge, sorry, I am all but the same.” She contemplated on this for a while and thought, what do you do if you do not have experiential knowledge? “If

you have to experience it, would not that mean you will have to completely change over from being a Brahman to becoming a monk?" So, what did the mother say after that? "Do it this way. If next time you come upon the situation where you cannot beat them, do not even bother talking to them. Reproach them and say that you are an animal. You are an elephant. You are a dog. You are a cow. What do you know? This is because the Shramana Brahman will absolutely not fight you, no, the Sharmanas are renunciates, Buddha's disciples will definitely not fight you."

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 13.51; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P218, L3]

Well then, he was really unwilling to do so but his mother forced him to do it. He has no choice. In future, when he meets with such situation, whenever he saw a renunciate, he reproached them. From that life onward, he fell to become a huge fish for 91 eons until now. For the different types of animals that he used to degrade the monks, each formed a head on his body. Ah, he was extremely miserable. How about his mother? The mother who taught him to do that continued to dwell in the Unrelenting Hell. Therefore, when everyone heard this, everyone felt very sad. They asked Buddha, "When can she be released from this?" Buddha said, "As one thousand Buddhas appear in this noble eon, I do not see any opportunity for her to be released."

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 14.42; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P218, L9]

If you slander these objects, such serious fruits/effects will be produced. Therefore, there are the two case studies. Well then, these two case studies described earlier are pretty similar. Of course, there are also all kinds of people similar to that. So, for this point, we should absolutely pay attention here when you come upon those who are truly respectable, especially for us who have gone for refuge. For the Brahman who is mentioned earlier in the case study, he had not gone for refuge. He was a non-Buddhist. However, regardless if you are a non-Buddhist or a Buddhist, this remains a field of great merits, a field of great good qualities. Within this great merit field, if you incur a karma which causes a little damage or a little benefit to the field, damage would mean harm done and benefit would mean offering – there will be an infinite amount of fruitional effects to be issued later.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 15.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P219, L1]

Thus, you should never quibble over

Therefore, with regards to Buddha’s image, you absolutely should not say, “Ah, this, this....” You absolutely cannot criticize, absolutely cannot criticize.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 15.56; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P219, L4]

the quality of images, despise others for using fine materials for images and the like or for making them large, discourage their makers from finishing them, and the like.

Similarly, with regards to the Buddha's image, you should not criticize it under any circumstance. If other people are constructing the image, we should act the same way, no matter what reasons you have. Now we often have this scenario, of course it is the case where we should not be criticizing the badly made ones but this holds true even with the good ones. Often, we do not only criticize the bad ones, we also criticize the good ones. Why? Sometimes one is not actually criticizing the Buddha's image but that he is jealous! When others create a good Buddha statue, he would say, "What is the big deal about that!" You are jealous of the person. As a result, you have caused harm, harm for yourself. For places like these, you need to pay attention!

The following is a classic example below. This is how the past masters have set a good example for us with their conducts. They tell us what we should do.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 16.51; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P219, L11]

It is said that the great yogi [Chang-chup-rin-chen] once gave a statue of Manjughosa to the Elder for him to examine. He asked, "How good is this? If it is good, I will buy it with the four gold coins Rong-ba-gar-gay-wa (Rong-pa-mgar-dge-ba) gave me."

Je Atisha's attendant was the great yogi [Chang-chup-rin-chen]. One day, someone gave him a statue of Manjughosa and he asked his teacher, "Ah, how good is this? If it is good,

we can buy it with the four gold coins that someone who happened to have offered.” What did the Elder say?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 17.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P220, L3]

The Elder replied, "Venerable Manjughosa's body has no defects—the sculptor is middling," and

There! Did you see that? Oh, the Manjughosa Bodhisattva is most “venerable”! Though Manjughosa Bodhisattva manifests as a Bodhisattva, he became a Buddha a long time ago.

How can his body have defects? He is absolutely like the unsurpassed, unsurpassed Bhagavan! However, the skill of the sculptor was just middling. After the Elder said this,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 18.09; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P220, L7]

placed it on his head.

He placed it on his head. This is the most respectful, most respectful way. Like that. Therefore, at that time, one of the habits of the Indians was such that whenever there are respectful things related to the Three Jewels, one will certainly place it on his head. I do the same thing now. Whenever I see anything related to the Three Jewels, for the Buddha’s image, of course we would place it on our heads [first], but for the scriptures, I would also place it on the head. Therefore, I always hold scriptures high up instead of carrying the books

carelessly, swinging and swinging, which is not right. You should hold the scriptures up high. Like that. Then for the scriptures, it is absolutely not something to throw on the bed when we go to sleep. Absolutely not. The place you put it, wherever you put it, that is how it should be [- with respect]. This is what we should pay attention to. Therefore,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 18.53; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P221, L1]

It is said that he did the same with respect to all finished images.

This is regarding the Buddha Jewel. We would treat the Teaching Jewel in the same way. Next,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 19.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P221, L3]

The second prescriptive precept is never to show disrespect for writings on the teachings, even those composed of as little as four words. Further, you should not pawn volumes of scriptures, treat them as merchandise, place them on the bare ground or in dishonorable places, carry them together with shoes, walk over them, etc. Treat them with respect, as though they were the teaching jewel itself.

Well then regarding the teaching jewel, we would treat it the same way, even if there are only four words. He said four words but actually, this is true even if there is only one word,

“Buddha,” even the word “Dharma,” or the word, “Sangha.” Under any circumstance, do not become disrespectful, do not become disrespectful. Then in general, when we take care of anything, with the scrolls of scriptures...etc, treat them **“as though they were the teaching jewel itself.”** This place is pointing to an object which has a form [that which you can see.] Actually, we should treat ones without form as such too. Therefore, this is why I tell everyone here, that in our everyday life, we should absolutely not belittle the instruction of teachings, should absolutely not belittle this. You absolutely need to pay attention to this. You should always carry an attitude of respect in your mind. You can say that, “I am busy right now for my portion of the work, but I do concord with the teaching. Therefore, I do not have to go listen now.” However, you should absolutely not belittle it. This is something that you need to discern clearly, to discern clearly.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 20.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P221, L12]

It is said that whenever Geshe Jen-nga-wa saw a scripture being carried, he would stand up with his hands joined together in front of him in a gesture of respect. In later life, when he was unable to rise, he would simply join his hands.

In his biography, Geshe Jen-nga-wa who was one of the three heart-disciples of Dromdon-ba, he would stand up and join his hands upon seeing anyone who comes by carrying a scripture. He was that respectful. Then when he advanced in

age, he could no longer stand, but he still joined his hands with respect upon seeing this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 21.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P222, L3]

Also, it is said that the Elder once encountered a mantra practitioner in Nga-ri who initially refused to listen to him teach. However, one day the Elder witnessed a scribe rubbing a page of the teaching with plaque from his teeth. Unable to bear this, he cried out, "Hey! Do not do that, do not do that!"—as a result of which the mantra practitioner gained faith in the Elder and received the teaching from him.

These are all conducts of great excellent teachers. When Je Atisha first entered Tibet from India, he entered through Tibet's most north-western corner, Nga-ri. When Je Atisha first arrived there, there was a Dharma Master who practiced mantra and thought very highly of himself, so this person did not go to Je Atisha for teachings. One day, when he saw Je Atisha reading some kind of biography. Je Atisha was flipping through the pages, he saw some marks, likely to be saliva or something, stuck on the pages. As soon as he saw it, he felt, "Ah, this should not be, it should not be!" Normally when we flip the pages, we would often lick our finger and then flip the page. do not do this, do not do this. This habit, once nurtured...we often have many strange habits when we flip the pages, for some it is licking the fingers. The saliva is very dirty, definitely do not do this. Many who flip the page, and glide the

page with fingernails, “Ga!” Then there are many who are very casual about it. People would open the book and casually fold it. You should not do this. Whenever you see the teaching jewel, you must treat it with the most respectful method.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 22.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P222, L14]

When Je Atisha saw this, he knew that this person lacks respect. Ah, he thought, “this should not be, should not be!” He developed great pity and respect. What does this explain? It shows how Je Atisha respects Dharma throughout his daily activities, even though he is a person with such great achievements. Therefore, upon seeing this, this mantra practitioner, who is a practitioner after all, understood right away that Je Atisha is a great person. Then he began to listen to teachings from Je Atisha. Therefore, (we should know that) when we instruct the teachings, but our hearts do not actually concord with the teaching. We are truly far off, far off!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 23.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P223, L6]

Now right here, we are just listening to others’ stories. In the beginning I have said this, we can weigh it against our minds to see if we have the respect (for Dharma) or not. If you truly weighed, after doing so, that is when you recognize the subjective aspects of our minds. Under this circumstance, when you go and listen to the sutras and scriptures, you will then easily concord with them. Otherwise, we might feel that

it is very good at the time of listening, but afterwards, our mind will act like it has nothing to do with what we have just heard. Just like that. Yet if you can go one step further for a closer examination, your mindset will be different. Therefore, you should pay attention to this in many places regularly. You might not have known this before, but now that you do, you will invariably want to condition yourself to form this habit. It is not something you can wait until you enter Buddha's shrine. By the time you enter the shrine, it is already too late because what would be in your mind if you enter [like how you are now]? It is defiled, a greatly defiled state of mind. So, when you enter, your heart is still like this, still like this. An already conditioned habit is very formidable.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 24.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P223, L14]

Therefore, what you must do after listening is to immediately lift your mind up. Ah! Bring the principles just mentioned to mind for some analysis. What was my state of mind like? Then often examine and reflect. This is because if you often examine and reflect on this, when you go to places where your thought process concords with, whether it is entering the main shrine, or reading the sutras, that is when you will be able to recognize your own subjective aspects. Once you recognize your own subjective aspects, you can make a comparison and then when you read the stories again, that is when you will be able to weigh the difference. There! A practitioner under any circumstance will act very differently [from us]. They have a natural concordant behavior to cultivation and therefore they are naturally different in their

gestures and movements. The difference is this. Otherwise, we would only be paying lip service and the truth to what we are doing is – a mere elaboration, the truth to what we are doing is we have engaged in a mere elaboration.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 25.28; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P224, L6]

Actually, with this thing, it is not only true in Buddhism, but it is also true in the mundane world, true in the mundane world. Therefore, people would say, “As soon as the expert acts, you will know the difference!” This is a saying of the world. However, those who really are expert, they can tell whether it is for real or not. It is true for us who practice the teachings, it is the same. As long as you understand (the teachings), and act accordingly, you will be able to distinguish with ease as well. Once you have attained this and only when you get this, can you then have the opportunity to find – Oh, this Dharma Master is an excellent teacher! Otherwise, we would always be circling outside. It is not that there are no excellent teachers around but how do you recognize him? The issue is this. Let us continue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P195; 47A, 26.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P224, L12]

Furthermore, Sha-ra-wa said: "We are playing around with the teaching in so many ways. Showing disrespect for the teachings and its teachers ruins our wisdom."

These words, the past master told us...let us talk about the latter portion first. We should understand that for us who truly practice the teachings, what is most important is (knowing) that where everything [we want] comes from? It comes from confessing karmic obscurations and accumulating the collections [of wisdom and merit]. The reason we are inferior [in our learning] is because we lack merits, and we have weighty karmic obscurations. Well now that we wish to do this, what should we do? Repent, because we have done wrong in the past. Then accumulate and it must begin from respecting others. This is the most important, most important. If you cannot respect others, what is this? Not only is this not accumulating (merits), but it actually ruins them. The foremost important thing in learning the teaching is wisdom. If you do not respect the teaching and the teachers, it is a cause that ruins your wisdom. If you seed this cause, it will certainly bear the fruit of ignorance. This is why we are foolish and ignorant now. We have already tasted the fruit. If you do not strive now, what hope is there? In reality, are we striving? We are not! What is our state of being? **“We are playing around with the teaching in so many ways.”** We are very casual with it. Oh, if there is a class then we go listen to it and we go only when we are forced to. If not (forced), we feel it is best to be sleeping. How do you possibly cultivate the teachings this way? This is very important. He continues to say:

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47A, 28.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P225, L9]

We are stupid enough now

We are ignorant enough! Way more than enough! If we do not work hard, what else can you do? There is only one path. The reason we cannot advance is because our non-virtuous karma is too strong. Therefore, the most important thing is to work really hard. This is certain. I have recently observed that a few of the fellow students are still lazing about. This is such a pity, very regretful but most of the students are working very hard. I am very happy to see this and very much in praise of them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47A, 28.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P225, L14]

Let us not create more stupidity!

This is an explication for us to not create any more, to not amass any more of the causes for ignorance! What is the cause for ignorance? To look down, to not pay respect.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47A, 28.56; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P226, L3]

If we become even more ignorant, what will we be able to do?"

If we get any more ignorant, any more inferior, what else can we do? We already feel that it is really difficult to be here right? We already feel that it is difficult to advance. Buddha is obviously here, we are sitting in the Buddha's shrine room but we only see wood statues and we only see paper. That is [the

result] of our ignorance! This is obviously the most venerable field, the field of most merits. Yet once we have this field, we are not even capable of cultivating anything in this field. At least for now, we feel that we can still see and we still have the opportunity to serve! Therefore, while we can, we should take advantage of this opportunity to strive diligently, to strive diligently! Hence this phrase, if we become even more ignorant, by then, you would not be able to do anything!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 00.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P227, L1]

Once you fall into the miserable realms, once you regress, you do not know when you will come out! This is in regards to the teaching jewel.

Thirdly.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 00.20; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P227, L2]

The third prescriptive precept is never to revile or despise members of the community, renunciates, or those who merely possess the symbols of a practitioner of virtue [someone who is dressed as a monk or nun but has no vow]. Nor should you do this to the mere symbols [part of the robes] of these practitioners.

Look at that! Yes, “**members of the community, renunciates.**” We have said this yesterday that there are four kinds of Sangha community members, four kinds of Sangha

community members. For the monks of ultimate truth or you can call them Sramana of the Way of Sages, these are the ones who have attained fruits (certain levels of achievements). Then the other ones have not and can perhaps be even the dumb sheep monks (ignorant, one who does not know good from bad, nor enough to repent of sin) and no-shame monks. However, what does the text tell us? It is different from above. When we recollect their good qualities, we are thinking of the monks of ultimate truth or the Sramana of the Way of Sages. Now here it tells us that, “**Nor should you do this to the mere symbols [part of the robes] of these practitioners.**” This means that as long as he displays the symbol of the Sramana, then with this symbol, you cannot revile or despise. Take note of this! Therefore, in the *Ten Cakras of Kṣitigarbha, Mahāyāna Great Collection Sutra*, it tells us over again that even though he may be Sramana who defile the Way, may be dumb sheep monks or no-shame monks, I am sorry, when you compare them to the cakravartī (a ruler the wheels of whose chariot roll everywhere without hindrance), or to Indra/Brahma, these monks are still far more supreme. An analogy would be that with a golden vessel for sputum, no matter how dirty the vessel is filled with vomit, but gold is gold! With a clay pot, no matter how beautiful you make it, it is still clay! These two are different. Therefore, the symbol of the Sramana is very precious. We absolutely do not want to revile or despise.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 02.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P228, L4]

Never in any way divide yourself and others into opposing factions and view the others as enemies. [147]

We should respect.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 02.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P228, L6]

Always treat members of the community with respect, as though they were the community jewel itself.

This is the same principle, the same principle. We have earlier cited two stories related to the Buddha's jewel but actually in regards to the teaching jewel and the community jewel, it is the same, the same. Earlier, we have talked about how the monstrous fish came about with a hundred heads, the story of Manavakapila. He actually did not revile the Buddha but the renunciates. Therefore, this place tells us that we should be respectful, we should absolutely be respectful!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 02.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P228, L11]

The *Exhortation to Wholehearted*

***Resolve* says:³³⁷**

**Those dwelling in the forest,
desiring good qualities, Should
not scrutinize others' faults.**

They should not think,

"I am superior; I am the best"—

Such arrogance is the root of all unruliness.

**Do not despise inferior monks,
Or you will not achieve liberation for an eon.
Such is the way of this teaching.**

This says that we now desire good qualities, therefore we have left our households, renounced the households. **“Forest”** is a place of peace. They are places of grass and trees. Normally we would say the past masters live by the waters and forests, they do not dwell in the busy metropolitan areas. So, this refers to a place where practitioners are. In other words, it is because we yearn for the bliss of peace, that is why we have renounced from our households, left the busy and muddled bustling places. What should you do then? You want to whole heartedly practice according to the teachings. You would not even have enough time to eliminate your own obscurations, why would you be looking at other people? If you look at other people, you will be completely wrong. Therefore, you should absolutely not scrutinize others’ faults, **“They should not think, ‘I am superior; I am the best.’”** On one hand, you do not scrutinize others’ faults. On the other hand, you do not want to increase your arrogance, such as I am good at this, I am better. These are forbidden. As soon as you have arrogance, all sorts of problems ensue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 04.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P229, L8]

“Such arrogance is the root of all unruliness.” This arrogance, being self-assured, is the root to all unruliness, root to all unruliness. All afflictions come from this but actually, the root to affliction is the “ego self.” The subjective aspects

of the ego self are arrogance. Just like that. Arrogance is to look down on others and prop the self-up. As soon as you do this, it would not work! Therefore, **“Do not despise inferior monks.”** No matter how bad they are, how bad the Bhikkhu, you do not want to look down on them. If you cannot do this and look down on them, **“you will not achieve liberation for an eon. Such is the way of this teaching.”** If you have any thoughts of looking down at them, sorry, you will not achieve this for an eon...this sinful obscuration can be that great, such a serious obscuration. Now that we have been ordained, or we have not been ordained but we have begun to learn Buddhism, you despise this person, despise that person, ah, what would be the year for us [to achieve anything]? Therefore, now that we understand, starting from now, we should repent this well. This is the first thing. If we do so this way, we will have a chance [to advance]. Let us take a look at the standards to which the past masters hold their conducts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 05.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P230, L1]

We should train ourselves to practice like the Precious Teacher [Drom-don-ba] and Nal-jor-ba-chen-bo, who, if they saw a mere scrap of yellow cloth on the path, would not step on it, but would dust it off and carry it to a clean place.

Drom-don-ba and Nal-jor-ba-chen-bo were the two great disciples who were closest to Je Atisha. They saw a piece of yellow cloth on the path...what does the yellow cloth represent? It is the kasaya (monastic robe), the kasaya's

color. This is because it is a symbol of pureness, it is the color of the symbol of pureness. Therefore, as soon as they see it, even just for the color yellow, they thought, “Oh, this is the pure symbol of the Sangha jewel!” So, they immediately picked it up, dusted it off and put it somewhere that is clean. They were that respectful and now a piece of yellow cloth has been made into a robe, worn by a person, and we look down on the person! This is why we cannot achieve. This is what we should understand. We should follow this to learn to the best of our abilities.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 06.13; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P230, L9]

For, as much as we respect the three jewels, so will living beings respect us. The *King of Concentrations Sutra*:³³⁸

**You will obtain a
result similar
To the kinds of
karma you do.**

If you can be this respectful, then others will respect you as well. This is what the scriptures tell us. It is like that. When you are able to perfect this, you will become Buddha. On the other hand, [this means] you will have alleviated all your sufferings. Therefore, when we truly practice, we should examine from this perspective. Then we should practice according to the teachings to achieve the correct measure of this attitude and we should do so to the best of our ability. This is the “special precepts.” There are three things which

we should stop doing and three other things which we should strive to learn to do. Do not look down on these! These three things, if we can really act according to this and achieve proper measure, there are incredible benefits. The principle seems easy when you talk about it, but when you actually try to practice it, there is a great deal to be learnt, a great deal to be learnt. Therefore, what do the ancients say? “When one drinks water, only he knows how cold or warm is the water.” Once you do it, that is when you will realize, this is something you will have to do, something you absolutely need to do.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 07.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P231, L4]

For us now, when we talk about our problems, they all stem from this particular thing. It is that our karmic obscurations are very weighty. These obscurations can be divided into two aspects. One is our view. We always want to have our own views and they hinder us. The other one is our emotion, our own habits, our own habits. Therefore, these two things are great obstacles. The foremost important thing to do is for us to first recognize them and then find ways to remedy them, find ways to remedy them. If you wish to purify and remedy them, or you wish to increase good qualities, the most important thing to do is to begin from respecting the Three Jewels. All the good qualities of the mundane world or the supramundane world will increase from doing this, will increase from doing this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 08.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P231, L10]

Therefore, just like for us now, we see many fellow practitioners who have their own virtuous roots. However, people will often not take into consideration the aforesaid, or are partisan to certain sides of things. Just like that. For instance, let me give you an example. When we arrive at this place, we always set up our own room and arrange a Buddha statue in it. Then we would go find incense and water for offering and spend quite a while doing that! We do this in our own room, but when we go to the main shrine, we do not do anything for it! This is really interesting, really interesting. Are you really offering to Buddha or offering to yourself? You can see this clearly and obviously. Like that. Then you focus only on your own practice, but you do not care about the tasks and duties of the monastery. You just take care of yourself and you do not take care of the Sangha community members. What does the Buddha tell us? Sangha, [one of] the Three Jewels whom you go for refuge! Within the Three Jewels, it is very obvious that Sangha is a community, a community which is in harmony based on the teachings. This is what we should truly respect and go for refuge! However, why does one only focus on his own room? That is because he indeed has some virtuous roots, but with his virtuous roots, he has but done it wrong in the causal period, he practiced it wrongly. This is what we should pay attention to.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 09.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P232, L4]

Therefore, in the morning when we sound the drum, at the beginning, I did not understand this. Then, the more I

think about it, the more this makes sense. When the drum is sound, [and we would say,] “Official business first, official business first, once the official business is done, you can go about your private matters.” At the time I thought, this seems very mundane! Ah! Now I understand it, this rule is common to both the mundane and the supramundane world. If things are done this way in the mundane world, it is for the collective good of the mundane world but if you do this in the Buddhism world, then truly this will benefit everyone. Therefore, at this particular point, I raise this issue. Upon this simple standard, you can weigh yourself against it. In this place of the Three Jewels, if you can truly respect in accordance to the teachings and achieve the proper measure of the attitude, you will clear away many obstacles for yourself and amass numerous good qualities (merits). In the future, this will issue the effect of enabling you to enter a group that upholds the sublime teaching. When you learn the teachings, you will not have to worry about not finding an excellent teacher. This is the least that we can do and what we should pay attention to.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 10.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P232, L11]

So, the preceding section explains the special precepts. The special precepts separate them individually such as what should you do for the Buddha jewel, the Dharma jewel, and the Sangha jewel; to speak of them separately. Well then for the general precepts? That is to be observed without separating the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha, not separating the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha. The precepts are observed in general [with respect to the Three

Jewels]. Like that. This is what we should understand. Therefore, whether it is general or special, this is what general versus special means. Thus,

2" The general precepts

There are six general precepts:

- 1. By recalling the distinctions and good qualities of the three jewels, go for refuge again and again**
- 2. By recalling the great kindness of the three jewels, strive to worship them constantly and offer the first portion of your food and drink**
- 3. Establish other living beings in this practice by considering them with compassion**
- 4. Whatever activity you engage in, and whatever your purpose, make offerings and supplications to the three jewels, forsaking any other worldly methods**
- 5. After you have understood the benefits, go for refuge three times in the day and three times at night**
- 6. Maintain your refuge and do not forsake the three jewels, even in jest or if it costs you your life**

English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P196; 47B, 11.28; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P232, L14]

(a) By recalling the distinctions and good qualities of the three jewels, go for refuge again and again

The general precepts are divided as indicated above. To recall the good qualities of the Three Jewels, that is for all of

the Three Jewels and because you have recalled their good qualities, your mind will naturally “**go for refuge again and again.**”

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 11.47; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P233, L3]

As previously explained, you should repeatedly keep in mind the differences between non-Buddhists and Buddhists, the distinctions among the three jewels, and the good qualities of the three jewels.

The first one.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 11.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P233, L5]

(b) By recalling the great kindness of the three jewels, strive to worship them constantly

Recall often the great kindness of the Three Jewels, the great kindness. How are they kind to us? That is because they have good qualities and when we offer to them, the resulting benefit is ours. We learnt from them and we gain the benefits in the end. Actually, the Three Jewels have long been teaching and transforming us. All the benefits of the mundane world and supramundane world come from this. As long as you recall their kindness, your respect will naturally arise and this will be good for you in many areas. When you do not recall their kindness, what are you thinking? Ah, it is a pity, [you are thinking] afflictions! Since you have not recalled

according to the principles of the teachings, you will then go along with afflictions, churning in this cyclic existence. What is worse is we think we are really principled, ah, we think we are really principled. That is one mistake after another, one mistake after another! Therefore, this is what we should do, to follow how He tells me to recall, to recall the kindness of the Three Jewels. This now says:

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 13.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P234, L1]

and offer the first portion of your food and drink.

Under any circumstance, even when you drink a sip of water, a bite of rice, or eating whatever, as soon as you pick it up to eat, you offer it first. Ah! I offer it to Three Jewels. You think of this at all time: Why were we able to obtain this? In particular for us who are Buddhist disciples, we understand deeply that the good things of the world and supramundane world come from the Three Jewels. Since we have obtained it from the Three Jewels, so when we pick this up, the first thing we should think of is its source. Therefore, “when one drinks water, one must not forget where it comes from!” Even the ancients said so. For every thread, we should think of the difficulties of obtaining it! Now we should be even more like that. For us who practice Buddhism, we should have even higher standards than the mundane world. People of the world only know how difficult it is to obtain the material, but they do not know the real source. We now not only understand the difficulty of obtaining it, we know the root reason for obtaining this is due to the Three Jewels.

Therefore, we say, “Ah! Since this came this way, we should be grateful and offer.”

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 14.07; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P234, L9]

The *King of Concentrations Sutra*:³³⁹

Though they obtain food due to the buddhas' merit, The childish do not repay their kindness.

There! The sutra keeps telling us this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 14.16; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P234, L11]

Thus, knowing that all the temporary happiness and certain goodness that you experience, symbolized by food, are due to the kindness of the three jewels, you should make offerings with the intention of repaying their kindness.

This is what we should understand. This is just using food as an example. Therefore, for all other good things, we should know that they are the kindness of the Three Jewels.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 14.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P235, L1]

With regards to offerings, there are (1) the actions of offering and (2) the attitudes.

This is divided into two parts. One is the action of offering. The second one is the attitude of offering. When we make offerings, with what sort of attitude should we have to make this offering.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 14.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P235, L4]

The first of these include the following ten types: [148]

There are ten types of offering. This is easy to understand. It would be good enough to just read it through once.

- 1) ***Offerings to the Buddha's body*** means offerings to the actual Buddha's embodiment as form.
- 2) ***Offerings to stupas*** means offerings to *stupas* and the like for the sake of the Buddha.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 14.59; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P235, L7]

The first one is offering to the Buddha's body. This says "**offerings to the actual Buddha's embodiment as form.**" [Then] it is "***offerings to stupas.***" This is the stupa constructed in order to offer to the Buddha, which are the temples that we see. A real stupa will be our temples. We now would often refer to stupas as places where we put the ashes of the dead. This is wrong. How did this [idea] come about? After the Buddha's nirvana, the bones left from the

cremation, or His image, [where these are placed], these are called stupas. That is a real stupa. We now use only a portion [of the meaning], we would say the cremation ashes [are stored in stupas], and these ashes are not even from the Buddhas! Of course [normally] you are only referring to [ordinary] stupas, but the ones referred to by the scriptures, and the ones we conceive in our minds, the stupa of the Buddha among the Three Jewels, it is this type of stupa temple [that we are referring to], a stupa temple.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 15.52; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P235, L13]

3) *Offerings to a perceived object* means offerings to the abovementioned two as they are manifest to your own sensory faculties.

That is what you perceive in front of you, either Buddha's embodiment of form, or that which is in the stupa temple.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 16.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P236, L2]

4) *Offerings to a nonperceived object* refers to offerings made to a buddha or his *stupas* that are not actually present, and made for the sake of all buddhas and *stupas*.

This is offering to a nonperceived object.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 16.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P236, L4]

Offerings made for the sake of the Buddha to one or more images and *stupas* after his nirvana are also considered offerings to a nonperceived object.

After Buddha's nirvana, we have built Buddha's statues and then the temples. These are all now offerings to nonperceived objects.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 16.27; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P236, L6]

When you make offerings to either an unperceived buddha or his unperceived *stupas*, you are also making offerings to both of the perceived objects, for the reality or emptiness of one of them is the reality of all of them. It is standard to make offerings, both to perceived and to nonperceived objects, with the thought, "I make offerings to all the buddhas of the three times and to the *stupas* of the ten directions of the limitless universe."

Well then whether it is perceived or unperceived, when we offer, we should have this kind of thought to visualize and offer – the reality or emptiness of one of them is of all of them; that which is of all of them is of one of them. Therefore, when you offer to a perceived Buddha and stupa, you are essentially offering infinitely to all [the Buddhas and stupas] in the three times and the ten directions.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P197; 47B, 17.03; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P236, L11]

This is the same when you offer to both perceived and nonperceived objects, you would have even offered to all [the Buddhas and stupas] in the three times and ten directions. This way of offering accumulates the most merits. Therefore, this cites from the commentary.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 17.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P237, L1]

It is said that making offerings to a perceived object produces a vast store of merit and making offerings to an unperceived object a greater store; making offerings to all the buddhas and *stupas* produces a store far vaster than that.

Take a look at this point! We always feel that, ah, it would be best to meet the Buddha. This is the best because this would make it a perceived offering. Yet at the end it tells us that the first way [is good], yes, to offer to a perceived object, you will obtain a vast store of merit but the second way produces an even greater store of merit. To offer to a nonperceived object will give you a greater store of merit! Then the third way gives you even greater [merits]! Therefore, we should not be saying something such as, “Ah, we can no longer perceive Buddha [with our own sensory faculties]!” No. This is a not an issue of whether the Buddha is perceived by you or not. It does not matter whether the Buddha is present or not, as long as you can offer, there will be one type merit

when you offer to a perceived object, a greater one if it is unperceived, and an even greater one by the third way! Why is it that we have not obtained this type of merit? This is the issue of whether the mind of the person who makes the offering truly concords. When we go into the temple, “Ah, today is my turn to do the incense and lights. They ask me to light one stick of incense.” So, I do so with grievances. How can you then obtain the merit? You have not even stepped out of the boundary of sin. Your mind is entirely consumed with arrogance [at that point]. Therefore, there are many who attend the morning and nightly rituals, [and they would think], “Ah, we just keep doing this over and over, I feel so miserable. If the great abbot is not there, it would be best if I could get away, best if I could get away.” That is the kind of mentality [you have]!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 18.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P237, L11]

This is what we should understand and you should examine your own mind in many areas. Thus it is said over again that once you examine your mind, you will be able to see that this is very clear and obvious. [This is when] you should not be saying, “Ah, I am now foolish.” If you do not pay respects now when you are already so foolish, what year will you have to wait until [to achieve anything]? It is precisely because you are inferior now, so you must quickly strive. Then gradually, you will change. The principle stated below denotes the same [idea]. The past masters have already set themselves as examples for us, set themselves as examples for us.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 18.59; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P238, L1]

Thus, it is important that when you make offerings to a single buddha or his image, and the like, you recollect the indivisibility of reality and project the thought that you are making offerings to all of them.

Therefore, even if we offer to one Buddha, or a Buddha's image, in any situation, you must first recollect the reality. The indivisibility of reality, what is true for one is the same for all and what is true for all is the same for one. It says that, **"it is important."** This is very important.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 19.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P238, L5]

Well then once we are here we can stop for a moment. No matter how you put it, in brief it is this principle. You must understand the principle indicated and what is the real meaning behind the principle? In other words, this points to the subjective aspects of our mind (our intent). Take a look at our intent and see whether we are really respectful. Even though we are incapable of producing the image as we attempt to visualize, such as when we visualize Samantabhadra Bodhisattva. Even if he is in front of us and we cannot visualize him, it is still okay. However, in your mind you should be thinking, "I am with utmost sincerity. Though I cannot see Him, the Buddha can

see me.” Therefore, in the 《止觀》 it tells us this clearly, the 《大乘止觀》 also tells us this, the scriptures also speak of the same thing: for those who are blind, though they cannot see others, but others with visions can see the blind ones. Though we cannot see the Buddha, but the Buddha can see us. As soon as your thoughts arise, He sees it. Even ghosts and deities can see it. Once we understand this point then naturally when you do this, ah, you will be filled with utmost sincerity. If you can do this, then slowly, slowly, from having done this, and continually, continually practice, with practice your ability is increased. Our problem is now that, “Ah, I cannot do it!” If you cannot then you will forever stop there, forever stop there. As a result, you will be stopped and if you just stop and do not fall back from this point, it will not be as bad. However, the defilements of the mundane world will come to you in torrents! This is what you should understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 20.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P239, L2]

5) Offerings made by yourself are offerings made manually by yourself. Do not have others make them for you out of your laziness, indifference, or carelessness.

What are offerings made manually by yourself? It is not something that, “Oh, we have made this!” No, it is not like that. It is not just done with your body and speech; your mind needs to be in this as well – you will have to not be lazy. Pay attention to the word “lazy.” Lazy means your mind does not concord with joyous perseverance. If you do

not use the teachings properly to motivate yourself to do this, that is called laziness. When other people force you to do it, you do so with grievance. That is considered laziness. Even though you have done this, you will have accumulated merits, but this is just too bad! We all behave this way, wasting our time and wasting our energy for nothing! We would have accumulated meagre merits, and perhaps even amassed many sins! This is most unfortunate.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 21.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P239, L9]

If at this time you are able to change yourself by gaining the correct view, then even though you are still doing as much work as before, this will issue an entirely different effect. Many of the things [you wish for], you will be able to obtain them now. So, when you have some free time, instead of chatting with one another, you might want to look for those who are really diligent, and ask them [about their practice]. There are quite a few students here who have discussed this among themselves, they have personally experienced it. Ah and they are truly joyous and happy! [Therefore,] this type of result is not necessarily derived from having done a 7-day meditation, but instead through what? It is through listening to the teachings, having properly fixed your attention on them for analysis, and then following to do so accordingly. [After that], whether you go to the kitchen, or are cleaning up the bathroom, a joyful concordance with the teaching naturally rises and this is only an effect manifested at the present moment. The real fruition effect in the future will be incredible! This is what we should understand. Therefore, I

want to encourage everyone here to strive in your studies. If you understand it and then practice, it will certainly become something that can be easily accomplished.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 22.51; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P240, L3]

Therefore, the text has told us again and again, **“The result of hearing is to engage in substantive practice; you will be released with little difficulty from the fortress of rebirth.”** There! If you listen well, understand and follow to do so accordingly, there is no need for too much effort to escape cyclic existence. Why would we be the way we are now, spending a great amount of effort [with meagre results]? It is because you have not concord with it. So, you sit there feeling miserable and tormented. During the day, you force yourself to do those things, as if you are a machine, as if you are an animal forced to so. This [type of action]do not count. Therefore, this segment tells us that it is not through an attitude of laziness, indifference or carelessness, nor is it something you tell others to do, but that you do this yourself! This is the case. Therefore, at this point of the text, by just looking at the words, it seems to simply say that you should make the offering yourself and do not tell others to do it. Actually, when you are doing this yourself, you should pay attention to your attitude as well. Then next.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 23.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P240, L10]

6) Offerings that you help others to make refers to offerings that you, out of compassion, cause someone else to make. This occurs when you have some small things to offer and you think, "These suffering living beings, who have little merit and nothing to give, will gain happiness by making these offerings."

This is offerings that you help others make. Pay attention to what is helping others make offering! It is something that one has to offer, and he knows the merits of offering but because he noticed how others are worse off, so he is willing to give up his merits to help others [accumulate]. It is not because he is stingy and not willing to [make the offering]. It is not something which he finds difficult to give up for offering and so he tells others to make offerings instead. This [type of action] would not count! We should understand the key points throughout the texts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 24.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P241, L1]

There! Therefore, this is when you ask others to offer because you are compassionate towards them. You see this great opportunity and you let others have it. Much like a good business transaction, you know very well [the profits], but ah, you see how poor this person is! Okay, I let you have it. That is the mentality.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 24.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P241, L4]

Furthermore, the merit of offerings made both by yourself and by others you have helped to make offerings are shared by both of you, the difference in the size of the meritorious results of these three being similar to the above discussion in the fourth section. [149]

Similarly, the merits of offering made by oneself is the smallest. If you let others do so with compassion, the merit becomes even greater! However, we should understand that, this is done out of compassion, knowing full well of the circumstances. The third way, an offering shared by both produces even greater merits! Therefore, from the text, we saw that when you offer to the Buddha, the merits of offering to a perceived Buddha are smaller than merits of offering to a non-perceived Buddha. The scriptures and commentaries have clearly said this! We now would often say, “Ah, we are not in the Buddha’s time. How unfortunate!” If you do not live in the Buddha’s time, but you do things according to the teachings, the merits will not be less than doing so if you lived in the Buddha’s time, perhaps gaining even more merit than if you lived during His time. It is that great! Thus, offering here is the same way, the same principle applies. Perhaps we might feel that, “Ah, I do not have money!” If you can truly act according to the teachings as you help others make the offering, the merits are greater than you offering it yourself. The principle is absolutely true here. If you can encourage and share the offering, then it is even better.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 25.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P241, L12]

7) Offerings of wealth and service are offerings to a buddha or his *stupa* consisting of gifts of clothing, food, bedding, seats, medicine, personal necessities, incense, aromatic powders and ointments, flower garlands, music, and various types of lamps. There is also offering respectful speech, prostrations, rising before the other, hands joined together respectfully, a variety of praises, obeisance with your limbs and head touching the ground, and clockwise circumambulation. Moreover, inexhaustible gifts such as fields can be given, as well as offerings of jewels, earrings, bracelets, and the like. At the least, there are offerings of bells, silver coins, or spools of thread.

This is offerings of wealth and service. With wealth and veneration. Wealth is external but when you offer, you must do so with veneration. It does not matter what you are offering, could be all sorts of things, but you would offer it with veneration.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 26.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P242, L4]

8) Vast offerings mean offerings of the above wealth and service over a long duration.

What is vast? As in the preceding section, you offer with great veneration over a long duration.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 26.57; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P242, L6]

Furthermore, they have seven qualities: being copious, excellent, both perceived and non-perceived, done by both oneself and others, and being offered with heartfelt delight, fervent aspiration,

This is divided into 7 qualities. For the materials being offered, the materials should be copious and excellent. It can be perceived and nonperceived, offering done by oneself and others. With a heartfelt delight means when you offer, you are very happy. Also with a “**fervent aspiration**,” the fervent word modifies all three things, heartfelt, delight and aspiration (or conviction). That is when you make an offer, you should have conviction. What is conviction? You are certain of the reason for making this offering. When you pay your respects, you have an attitude of gratitude and veneration. You are certain that this is an unsurpassed merit field, an unsurpassed field of good quality, an unsurpassed field of kindness. You offer with a heartfelt respect, with sincerity and delight. There is not a place where you cannot do this. Once you understand this, this place is a stupa temple and when you make an offering to this, the merits of this offering will surpass offerings to a [perceived] Buddha! Therefore, in this case, even if you just light one incense, offer one flower, even to just sweep the floor, just taking care of anything, to even sweep up something dirty from the floor, remove something [dirty] that you see, all these will generate a limitless and vast effect. It is just that we have not really understood it. That is really too bad! Other than this,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 28.18; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P243, L4]

and with the merit being dedicated to perfect enlightenment.

You will certainly obtain a great store of merit. So, then you will want to dedicate it. That is vast offering.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 47B, 28.27; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P243, L6]

9) Offerings not contaminated with the afflictions are offerings with six qualities: they are made (1) manually by yourself, not making others do them out of contempt, carelessness, or laziness; (2) respectfully; (3) without distraction; (4) free of the afflictions in that they are not mixed with attachment and the like; (5) without expectation of receiving wealth and service from kings and so on who have faith in the Buddha; and (6) with proper material accompaniments.

Well then, what is “not contaminated”? That is though you have offered it, but if you have an attitude of “contempt,” of “carelessness,” of “laziness,” and you ask others to do with these attitudes, though you have the money, [you would act in this way,] “Just take it! Take it and offer to the Buddha!” This is not right. Of course, this appears to be helping others to make offerings but in reality? You have done so with contempt. With this act itself, the main issue with this is the lack of respect. You are careless and muddleheaded. This is

the state of the mind. Therefore (to do it right) you want to manually make the offering. It is with respect and sincerity that you offer it and you should do so **“without distraction.”** Then when you offer, you are **“free of the afflictions in that they are not mixed with attachment and the like.”** What does this mean? This is the state that we are in now when we offer to Buddha, “Oh, Bodhisattva! I offer you three kilograms of banana, [bless that] I will have great harvest in the next season!” This is it. You need to pay attention to this. [Instead], what should we be doing at all times? We should be dedicating for the unsurpassed enlightenment. We do seek for something, we seek for this, and only this is correct!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P198; 48A, 00.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P249, L1]

Well then for this, **“without expectation of receiving wealth and service from kings and so on who have faith in the Buddha,”** it is not just because others, ah, since they have faith, and so you obtain the materials from them. **“With proper material accompaniments”** means that which you concord with. For example, normally, in particular for us renunciates, for us renunciates, do not be praising (the merits of offering) in front of those with faith, making them feel, “Oh, right (feeling this is what they must do).” So, then they offer you a lot of money. This, this is not right, this is concordant to contamination. You take what you have, **“proper,”** what concords, such as what is obtained in mendicancy (to beg for food). You have whatever you have obtained while begging. After you have obtained it, you offer it with a heartfelt respect. That would be correct.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 00.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P249, L6]

Proper material accompaniments include whatever is

There! This is explained very clearly, this is what is pure. Your mind is not concordant to contamination, you have obtained it properly. Do not be making a great effort [to obtain them]. Now we use all kinds of methods, all kinds of thoughts to obtain something, making it an improper material. Improper materials are useless for they will only create the plight of the three lifetimes.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 01.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P250, L1]

free of inappropriate things,

Well then other than not being pure in the mind, there are many things which are inappropriate.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 01.12; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P250, L3]

as well as proper acts such as anointing something with *bala (ba-bla)* medicinal ointment, soaking something in clarified butter,

Then?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 01.16; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P250, L5]

burning a fragrant *gugul* resin,

This “gugul” resin, I do not know what it is either.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 01.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P250, L7]

offering white *arka* flowers,

Anyway, this type of thing, it is not good.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 01.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P250, L9]

and so forth.

According to my understanding, flowers with thorns, we normally do not offer. We also do not offer flowers that are poisonous. There are also many flowers which look good, but the smell [is unpleasant] etc. Anyway, with these types of things, we will not offer them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 01.42; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P250, L12]

If you have neither prepared these offering materials yourself nor requested them from others, you should delight in all the appropriate offerings to the *tathagatas*

that exist throughout the universe, imagine them to be vast and pervasive, and rejoice in others offering them. [150] Having made this great, measureless offering, you will, with little difficulty, amass the accumulations necessary for attaining enlightenment.

This is wonderful! The abovementioned offering of materials, suppose the condition is that we do not have it and there is nowhere to request it. This point is what we renunciates should pay attention to particularly. Therefore, renunciates should not be busy for this, “oh, I want to have so many of this.” If you can practice this point well, the merits from doing so are incredible. In brief, offerings from the renunciates should focus primarily on it being purely [procured]. This is not in concordant when it is about how much I wish to have.

With whatever amount you seek for, even if you have obtained it, it is an offence, an offence!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 02.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P251, L7]

Well then what should one do at this point? If you do not have any and have not obtained any, then at this time, you can imagine “**throughout the universe.**” Actually, you have no idea how many there are throughout the ten directions, incredible. “**All the appropriate offerings to the *tathagatas,***” with delight and great conviction, that is [you feel that], “To Buddha – In a Dharma assembly of Tathgatas in the ten directions, there are innumerable deities, noble beings, offering to the Buddha.” Then at that time, “you think of them

all.” In other words, you think of everything, and rejoice! It is that simple. You just have to rejoice. It is not even asking you to offer it yourself! They are so great! Seeing how they offer to Buddha, you praise and feel happy about it. That is the attitude. Then at this time, you will be able to amass vast merits. We now would say that to amass vast merits seem difficult! Here it does not cost you a penny. You just have to do this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 03.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P252, L1]

Strive constantly to do this with a contented, happy mind.

There is such great benefit and it is so simply convenient! Thus commonly, we should strive to practice this with a mind that is genuine, virtuous and happy. We start [our journey], right now. We can certainly do this. We will be able to do it in this life. We will be able to quickly accomplish this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 04.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P252, L5]

As it says in the *Cloud of Jewels Sutra* and the *Array of the Three Pledges (Tri-samayavyuha)*,³⁴⁰ you can also give unowned flowers, fruit, trees, jewels, and the like.

Well then, the sutra tells us also that for unowned things, such as the wildflowers that we see, or they can be flowers, fruits or jewels...etc, you can offer them but you cannot offer ones owned by others.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 04.39; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P252, L9]

10) Offerings of practice entail

So, the abovementioned is the offering of materials. What is then offering of practice? That is your cultivation. Within the ten great vows [of Samantabhadra], the third one is to widely cultivate offering, it is just like this, offerings with external materials. Then for the services with body and speech, the best one is to practice in accordance to the sublime teachings and make this an offering. This is the offering of practice. It is as described below.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 05.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P252, L13]

for at least as fast as it takes to milk a cow [ten to fifteen minutes]

This says for the offering of practice, even if it is for a very short while. To milk a cow, that only takes a short time. Milking a cow is something you do every day, for a very short while. What do you cultivate during a time [as short as this]?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 05.16; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P253, L3]

striving for all the followings:

You strive to cultivate, to cultivate.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 05.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P253, L5]

recollecting the four immeasurables, the fourfold condensation of the teaching [(1) all composite phenomena are impermanent, (2) all contaminated things are miserable, (3) all phenomena are selfless, and (4) nirvana is bliss and peace], the three refuges, and the perfections; admiring profound emptiness and fixing on it without conceptualization;

An understanding of emptiness, stay focus on this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 05.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P253, L7]

disciplining your mind through the vows of ethical discipline; and meditating on and striving for the factors of enlightenment, the perfections and the four ways to gather disciples.

These, regarding the meanings of these, these will be explained one by one in later sections.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 05.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P253, L9]

To make these ten types of offerings to the three jewels is to make a complete offering.

Incredible! This is a complete offering, this is a complete offering.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 05.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P253, L11]

The second aspect of offerings, the attitudes, is as follows. When you make these ten types of offerings, there are six attitudes

The above speaks of action, the way we offer and our behavior. Below is attitude, what kind attitude should we have. Divided into 6

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 06.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P254, L2]

that will render immeasurable the result of even a small offering to any of the three jewels.

No matter Buddha, Dharma or the Sangha, this applies to any, needless to say all of them. If you can do this constantly, the result will be incredible! At this place, if you can contemplate it a little, just contemplate a little, there will be immeasurable result! You will obtain immeasurable benefits which will issue such great result. Therefore, when we make any offering, we should understand this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 06.42; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P254, L6]

You should make offerings with the thoughts that

(1) there is no higher field of good qualities

All good qualities will come from this, whether it is the Buddha, the Dharma or The Sangha. If you can respectfully offer, there will be these great benefits.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 06.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P254, L9]

(2) there is no higher benefactor;

Why? This is because all benefits of the mundane world and supramundane world comes from this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P199; 48A, 07.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P254, L11]

(3) he is the best of all living beings;

This is because He is true and only He is precious and worthy.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 07.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P255, L1]

(4) he is extremely rare, like an *udumvara* flower;³⁴¹

The udumvara flower, a legend which appears once every thousand years. Therefore, this signifies such good quality, such great kindness, such preciousness, worthy and rare.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 07.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P255, L4]

(5) since only one buddha appears in a universe of three billion world systems, he is the only one; and

Within the entire three realms, only the appearance of them, there are no others [as worthy as] the Three Jewels of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. Once you have the Buddha Jewel, that is when the Dharma Jewel comes and then comes the Sangha Jewel. Of course, the community is not one person but the entire group.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 07.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P255, L7]

(6) he is the foundation of all mundane and supramundane good.

This is because all the completeness and foundation of good things of the mundane world come from this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 07.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P255, L9]

This is the attitude for offering.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 07.53; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P255, L11]

I have written about these ten types of offerings and six attitudes as they appear in the *Bodhisattva Levels*.³⁴²

This excerpt was taken from the *Bodhisattva Levels*.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 07.59; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P256, L1]

You should always make the best offering you can. Make especially good offerings on auspicious occasions and holidays, to the best of your ability. Furthermore, since you constantly have to eat and drink, always offer the first portion of your food and drink. [151] If you do this without fail, you will easily amass a large accumulation of merit. Thus, from the depths of your heart, always offer the first portion of whatever you consume, even water.

We should do offerings to the best of our ability but if there is a special occasion, then we should try even more to make excellent offerings. This was said earlier. Well then there is a point here now, this point is that we would normally say, “Ah, we understand the principle stated but when we do it, try to visualise it or something, it seems rather inconvenient.” However, what is stated below is something that we can do at any place, at any time, something we can do readily in our daily lives. If you can understand the principle behind it and

do it, then you will be able to accumulate vast merits. What does the section below say?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 08.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P256, L7]

Furthermore, since you constantly have to eat and drink, always offer the first portion of your food and drink. [151]

Since we constantly will eat and drink, we drink water, tea, any beverages and even meals.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 09.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P256, L9]

If you do this without fail, you will easily amass a large accumulation of merit.

There! If you can offer before you eat and drink and “do this without fail” genuinely and constantly, then without much effort you will be able to amass vast merits. Therefore,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 09.29; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P256, L12]

Thus, from the depths of your heart, always offer the first portion of whatever you consume, even water.

This is what we should do when we first begin to learn. Regardless of what you are going to use, “pure water,” in

other words, even just water, it needs to be pure! Even if you are just drinking water, as long as this is clean and pure. The quality of pure is determined in two parts. One is that it is clean, it cannot be dirty. The second one is that the source of it should be pure. This point is very important. Therefore, when we have obtained this material with a contaminated mind, this would be wrong. Do not be such that, ah, you go all over the places and then get a lot of materials. There is no concordance [to the teaching in this way]. Therefore, with the meaning for “pure”, if you can offer like this, it would be right.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 10.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P257, L5]

It is now that I see this. I truly see how the great masters for anything they do regularly, even...when we were in the U.S., there were a few great masters who came. We offered a cup of water and he raised it up with both of his hands for a long time. At first, I did not know so I thought, “What is he doing?” Then later, we understood. So, he would raise the cup, say something for a while, raise it up higher and drink. Oh. Then I realized. This is absolutely true. It is not that there are not great excellent teachers who truly uphold the teachings around. With people like them, if you truly understand, for them, whether they excel in teachings or in conduct, they really have extraordinary characteristics. So, do not be looking for faults at those whom you consider casual, careless or those who are careless. For those you consider careless, sorry, it is really hard to tell [who they really are]!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 11.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P257, L13]

Even those who appear careless, they can be quite extraordinary. You should look at how he truly behaves. For example, like the Golden Mountain practitioner who portrays “wild conduct.” Even though he is careless, there are areas where he is quite serious! This is an understanding that we should have. Let me try to tell you something funny. The Golden Mountain practitioner is a great master of recent times. We all know who he is. He has got all kinds of interesting behaviors. When some people gave him money, dollar bills, he would eat it. No one understands why he did that but he had great reasons for doing that! What is he really obtaining? What is he obtaining? There, [the purpose is] to fill his stomach. Therefore, if you give him one dollar, he will eat it. If you give him a \$100-dollar bill, he will eat it. If you give him \$10,000-dollar bill, he will eat it too. That is what it is! This is the reason. Just like that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 11.57; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P258, L5]

With the things that you give him to eat, whether it is raw, or even if you are in the southern tradition, sometimes the food can be mixed with dirt, but as long as you have given it to me, I will eat it. There is really no distinction [of good versus bad materials] in their minds. It is just like that. If it is something good, he will give it away. Then, if someone wants to take a picture of him, he does not like to take picture. If you ask him to, he will pull his pants down and show you his rear.

Ah, when we think of it, it seems ridiculous but within this, there is a great deal to be learnt! When we take picture, what are we seeking? Face. What is face? Once you understand this principle, you will understand his behavior. Oh! So, for those with real practice, minor gestures could have great meanings behind it. Of course, for Golden Mountain practitioners, he is one who is much higher than our level, so his meaning behind this must be far reaching. I can only understand a small portion of it. So, you might want to think of this from this angle and you will then understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 12.56; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P258, L13]

Therefore, at this place, what we need to learn is, what this treatise is telling us. When we begin our first step, if you can do this, **“you will easily amass a large accumulation of merit.”** We always feel that we are really poor in our practice, we are very inferior. So now, there are ample opportunities for you and you do not strive at it but keep sitting there and claim how inferior you are, “Ah, I have poor practice!” If you have poor practice, should not you be making an effort? The opportunity is right here! This is very clear and obvious. As long as you can work hard, hey! There is no need to fear, no need to fear. Therefore, what you should really fear is that you should fear a lack of understanding and you should fear that you do not strive diligently. Once you understand, as long as you can do this at the causal period, then naturally you will obtain a good result! Then when we do make an offering,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 13.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P259, L4]

Further, Sha-ra-wa stated:

Do not offer things such as mouldy sweet cheese and yellowed leaves but use what you have that is good.

When we offer we should not offer things that are bad. We should offer things that are good. Now we would often say, “Ah, this is not good.” So, we give the bad things to other people, to offer to Three Jewels, to make an offering. Speaking of this, there is something which I will just mention here, just mention here. Often, we will see that sometimes for householders, let us say there could be a great celebration banquet today. So then after the celebration, the leftover food is sent to the temple. This is something that lay people do. For us renunciates, we are not likely to do that. Of course, when others give us things, when they give, we would still eat it. We are still happy to receive it. For Golden Mountain practitioner, he would eat whatever that is given. Are we better than Golden Mountain practitioner? However, from the perspective of the lay people, this is a very awful thing. What does this essentially mean? The renunciates, in this action of the lay people, unknowingly, in this action of the lay people, they have treated the renunciates as servants. Pay attention to this everyone! When you have an opportunity, you might want to tell those lay practitioners with genuine faith to absolutely not do this – to give away the leftovers from a house banquet. However [how about us,] what do we do normally? We are the same way! After we eat something

good, with what is leftover, “Okay, take it, split it up.” Do we not do that? Therefore, when we truly offer, there are many details that [we should pay attention to]. So then, we should offer the best things.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 15.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P260, L2]

Also, we often see the people in the temples having this interesting habit. Let us say today there is Dharma Assembly so then they will fry some things. After things are fried, they offer the foods. After offering, you take it back, cook it up nicely and then eat it yourself. So, when you eat it, you cook it up nicely and what was the reason that you fried it earlier? Why? So that it will last and not spoil after frying. Oh, that is how you have offered this! Do you understand this concept?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 15.43; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P260, L6]

Therefore, with whatever you do not find pleasant or like, things that you cannot eat, definitely do not just offer it. With what we do bring then, we should genuinely offer. When fruits are brought here, we first set it up for offering to the Three Jewels. Yet, you do not open up the package. You wait until you eat and then open it. That is wrong! When you brought it, you should open it first. The best way [to offer] is to offer as if we are going to eat it. If we cannot finish eating it afterwards, then we can give it away to others. Give it to birds and animals. That is okay. People meant for the food to be offered to Three Jewels, to the Buddha. If he meant to

offer it to you, then you can say, “Ah, I want to use it this way.” That is okay. However, if we were to use a broad definition of offering, then you will use the most respectful method. You cannot say that you want to briefly offer it and then bring it back later to enjoy it yourself slowly afterwards. If you are afraid that once you open it, it will spoil very fast – you should not be thinking that! This is where we should understand the real meaning behind this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 16.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P260, L14]

Offering the first portion of tea will not be beneficial if it is done like the clearing away of some dust.

So, we have seen the above, oh, under any circumstance, we should offer first. So some people will take out something to offer, offering the first portion of tea but do so only symbolically [without substance], acting as if clearing away some dust. That would not work! You must use the most respectful, the best method to offer.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 17.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P261, L4]

He tells us next.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 17.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P261, L6]

A sutra says:

For example, it will not work just to put seeds on a fertile field without actually planting them in season.

It is much like having the best and biggest fertile field. When it is time to sow the seeds, you do not and you let it become barren. Ah, we cannot bear to see this happen. Look at the normal mundane people in the world. Even if they have a small plot, ah, they would make great efforts to plough. Just like that. Now for us, for the meagre benefits we see in many places, we would open our eyes widely and hurry to fight for it. Yet now there are such great merits of the Three Jewels right here, we seem to not care. We are truly foolish, foolish!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 18.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P261, L12]

The earlier sections told us this very clearly! How did it tell us clearly? The merits accumulated from offerings to a nonperceived object are far greater than offerings to a perceived object, right? We are offering to nonperceived objects now, are not we in a stupa temple? Therefore, when you go and do things, to attend upon, to serve, are not we developing devotion and practicing? Are not these relying, venerating and offering? Are not we engaged in the best way of relying and venerating? Within this temple, as long as you make an effort to tend to the temple, to beautify it, would not that be the best thing? Is this not the best way of amassing your merits? You [often] speak of this, “Ah, I do not have anything, do not have any [merits].” Well then, this great merit field is right here, if you so choose not to sow the seeds, why

would things just fall from the sky for you? This is what we should understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 18.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P262, L5]

So, it is appropriate continuously to plant the seeds of temporary happiness and certain goodness throughout the four seasons in the fertile field that gives rise to all temporary happiness and certain goodness in this and future lives

The above mentioned says that for these fertile merit fields, if you can follow along and make efforts to cultivate the field earnestly, you will be able to give rise to good things now and all the good things in the future. This field can be cultivated under any circumstances. When we normally obtain a most fertile field, sorry! There are only certain times when you can cultivate.

You cannot cultivate at an inappropriate time but now for the merit field, this kind of field, you can do so for all four seasons of the year, every season without an exception, under any circumstance. Yet we do not make any offering. That is most unfortunate! Therefore, under any circumstance, seeds of virtue and bliss can be planted. Well then, when you do cultivate, when you do sow the seeds, how should you do it?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 19.59; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P262, L13]

—but you till this field with the plough of faith.

You must have faith. This is truly our merit field. We should make efforts in this aspect.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 20.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P263, L1]

If you do not do this, you will be extremely poor in merits.

If we cannot do this, that would be too bad! Therefore, we now would often feel that we are not good at doing this, not good at doing that. We would complain about this and complain about that. What we should really complain about is ourselves. Now, ah! The gold is everywhere waiting to be found. Yet everyone does not care for it and instead complain about everything. Therefore, you have given up the best opportunity, and on top of that, engaged in sins.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 20.39; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P263, L5]

In particular this, there is a saying, “best to practice as government officials.” If you think of this from an opposing angle, you can say that those who are truly virtuous in the world will often not want to become government officials. Why? You will create sins. This is the same for being in Buddhism. If you can do well, it is great for practice. If you do not do it well, you will fall [into miserable realms]. [The reasons are] all here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 21.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P263, L8]

Therefore, with the three scriptural collections, there is one scripture called, 《Anan Wen Fo Jixiong Jing (阿难问事佛吉凶经) 》, and another one called 《Man Fa Jing (慢法经)》、《Fo Shuo Man Fa Jing (佛说慢法经)》. As for the content of the scripture, let me give you a general outline. The text says, “Someone had served the Three Jewels and obtained merits. There are others who have served the Three Jewels, yet not only have they not gained merits, they have fallen [into miserable realms]. Why?” Buddha told him, “Simple, you who have served with pure faith and respect will gain immeasurable merits. If you do not have that, then sorry, it would be bad!” Therefore, now here, we should not be complaining, we just have to see if we have pure faith. We should think back right now; the earlier section of refuge had already told this to us. This was said clearly before, to go for refuge, you need both the internal and external factors. The Teacher has already fully realized the external factor. The primary problem is that we lack of the internal factor. Therefore, we are making efforts to learn here. If we cannot do this, that is when we should say, “Ah, too bad! Why is it that I have not made any efforts? I must strive!”

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 22.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P264, L2]

If we feel that we are ignorant now, that our bodies are weak, that is all because we did not strive in our previous lives. If you should now quickly strive, it is not too late. Therefore, the scripture of 《Brahma's Net Sutra (梵网经)》 tells us, if you are sick, or you are suffering from all sorts of adversities, “even if a black storm should rock your boat...etc.” Ah, normally when we become sick or we come upon something, ah, we would be looking for solutions here and seeking that, but the sutra tells us, you should quickly recite this. I did not understand that before. Hmmm, if I have trouble with these things, why should I be reciting the scriptures? The principle is very simple. What is the reason you encounter these unfortunate and adverse situations, why? That is because you have created adverse causes in the causal period! Therefore, you are now experiencing an adverse effect! Since you have experienced this adverse effect and feel awful, in order to seek for a favorable effect, you must quickly come here! Look for it here! So, you would begin by reciting, listening, studying, and contemplating. Is that not very clear and obvious? If you can do this, you will immediately obtain it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 23.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P264, L10]

Hence, as the *Praise in Honor of One Worthy of Honor* says:³⁴³

**No field of merit like you
Exists in the three worlds-
You are the supreme recipient of gifts,
The pure one who makes a row of monks pure.**

**Just as the height and breadth
Of the firmament
have no limit, There
is no limit to the
fruition Of helping
or harming you.**

To be like the Bhagavan, actually all Three Jewels are like this, this type of merit field is something which you cannot find in the mundane world. Therefore, if we truly wish to develop our merits, there is only this place, only this place. What is this similar to? This gives you an analogy, like the firmament. Its height and breadth are limitless. Then within the Three Jewel merit field, if you should sow a few good seeds, or on the contrary, do a little slandering, the fruitional effects that you would receive will be limitless! This is something we who learn the Buddha teaching should understand. Unfortunately, if you do not understand this, what would it be like? The below section describes the situation of having no understanding.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 24.29; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P265, L4]

Since our practice is such that we cannot even think of a supreme field of merit as we would an ordinary field,

The most supreme field is obviously there, yet we do not see. We do not even value it as much as an ordinary field, not even an ordinary field! With a little benefit elsewhere, we would try really hard to get it. Everyone would crowd there

and try to get a scoop of the good stuff. Yet with such supreme field, should you just offer a little something, you will obtain such great benefit, but we do not care! What does this mean really? That we are quite poor [in our practice]! **“Since our poor practice....”** This is a point where we should recognize. We should recognize that we are in the middle of a sickness! Oh, if someone comes to offer you a little money, ah, you think this person has helped you! You will then try to get in touch with that person well! Hmmm, in order to try to get more things. With this here now, you just have to offer a little to receive so much. Yet you ignore this. Ah, that is because of our **“poor practice.”** We do not recognize it!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 25.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P265, L12]

we should always strive to make offerings to the three jewels.

After you understand this, then under any circumstance, we should strive to offer to the Three Jewels. If you can do this, what are the benefits?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P200; 48A, 25.48; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P266, L1]

By doing so our mind's power with respect to the stages of the path will increase as a result of the strength of the roots of virtue grown in this excellent field of merit.

If you can do this, since within this most supreme field, the merit field, the kind field, you have planted roots of virtues. Also in here, you strengthened your roots of virtue. So then, with an increased strength of roots of virtue to cultivate the stages of the path, your mind's power will have also increased. What would be the benefit to increasing your mind's power? Take a look.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48A, 26.18; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P266, L5]

Therefore, when our mind's power is so weak that we cannot retain the words when we study, understand the meaning when we reflect, or gain knowledge when we meditate, we should rely on the power of the field of merit. This is a personal instruction.

This section, remember it well! Now it is because we are too inferior and therefore when we listen, ah, we do not understand. Even if we heard it right, we cannot remember it. After we remember it, we cannot reflect according to the teachings. When we reflect, we do not understand how to reflect and cannot obtain the meaning. Then after we have obtained [the meaning] and practice, we still cannot cultivate right. When we try to learn meditative concentration, we cannot achieve it. When we recite Buddha's name, we cannot do so with a one-pointed concentration either. Needless to say when we try to study the more profound teaching. What do all these depend on? Mind power. We are too weak in our wisdom. If under this situation, what should we do? We need to rely on the power of the field of merits. There! If you can

rely on this field of merits and strive to make offerings (to the three jewels), then you would give rise to all these abilities. This is an important “**personal instruction.**” This is the most important personal instruction. There are no others. “Personal instruction!” Make note of this! Buddha and past masters have told you the most crucial point here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48A, 27.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P266, L14]

Now we often feel that we want to practice, practice! There, there, there, there, the knack for practice is here! Now we say we cannot seem to do this, and we say that when we recite Buddha’s name, we cannot seem to achieve one-pointed concentration. I want to do sitting meditation but why do I fall to laxity and feel sleepy? When I read, I cannot understand. After reading, I cannot remember. When I listen, I cannot [comprehend]. The problems are all here. What do we do? This is it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48A, 27.59; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P267, L4]

Therefore, everyone says, “Ah, I have come here because I want to learn diligently but we end up having to do this and that for the temple. This does not work!” Right, yes, with the things that you can learn and practice, you should do so with top speed. If you are not able to learn and practice, then you want to quickly get busy to help the temple to do things. However, what is different now? Your attitude will be

completely changed, completely changed! Though what you are doing is the same thing, as your attitude change, the resulting effect will be completely different, completely different! We used to do things with grievances, unwilling to do it and we feel that we have been forced by others. Now we feel happy because we know that this is exactly where I can begin my first step. The best opportunity is here, the most fertile field! This is an opportunity where others cannot find even if they look for it. So we must quickly strive to do this! If you can do this, ah, you will soon obtain all sorts of things.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48A, 29.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P267, L12]

In this vein, Sri Matrceta also says:³⁴⁴

**By depending on you, [Bhagavan,]
My mind, though weak, has broadened
Like a river in the rainy season,
Attaining great skill in composing poetry. [152]**

The past master, actually, let us say that we speak of Sri Matrceta, this great master. In India, who were they then? They are great sages, most excellent in the knowledge of both mundane and supramundane world. What does he need to have? Why has he succeeded? Yet why are we so foolish? That is, there, because he has virtuous roots, he has the root which is common to the world and then he learns the teaching. That is how he is able to go deeper.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 00.09; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P269, L1]

Where does this kind of great virtuous roots come from? **"By depending on you."** This is said very clearly, in dependence of the Three Jewels. [This would happen] if you can practice according to the teachings and follow the above method to offer. This offering is divided into attitude, action, materials and practice. Each of them, perhaps even in drinking a sip of water, you can do this in doing anything. Even when you offer one stick of incense before the Buddha, to sweep the floor, or even to pick up a little trash, or perhaps you see how things were not arranged right, but you go and arrange it correctly. If you can do this, **" My mind, though weak, has broadened like a river in the rainy season."** What are the rivers like in the summer? After the winter, the snow has fallen on the mountain in the winter. The snow is frozen there. Then water which flows down from before has flowed until it is almost dried. Ah, but when summer comes and the sun comes, day and night, the snow from the mountain will gradually, gradually melt and flow down. It does not matter whether it rains or not, the snow melt will become greater and greater. Therefore, as long as you are willing to do this, it will become like that.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 01.17; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P269, L9]

It is taught that offerings are not determined by the material objects offered, but by your faith.

This is not determined by the material objects offered, but primarily by your faith. Therefore, the most important thing here is, it will depend on your faith. The pure faith in your mind.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 01.34; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P270, L3]

Thus, if you do not have material possessions to offer, then offerings of mandalas and water, or of things not held as property and the like, will suffice if you have faith.

If you truly have faith, you can use mandalas. Mandalas is a way of offerings used by the Indians before. This was kept in the religion in Tibet. So when you look at the biography of Je Atisha, oh, if he had incurred an infraction against his vows, he will instantly confess, and immediately set up an offering of mandala. In other words, with the mandala, you will pick it up and sit down to this. If there are good things around, then you can offer seven jewels but if there are not, you can the least use rice or wheat. So, he will grab a bunch, then visualize. In the centre [of the mandala] there is the Mount Meru, then the continents of Pūrvavideha (east), Jambūdvīpa (south), Godānīya (west), Uttarakuru (north), the eight subcontinents, then the seven jewels, eight precious things, visualize all of this and offer. Immeasurable merits! It has been said before, if you can offer as such, even if it means one cup of water, just having faith will suffice. Even if I cannot visualize it, by just having a little something to offer, I can still develop the feeling that, "Ah, everything came from Buddha!" As long as you offer earnestly, there will be

immeasurable merits but this place is saying that if you did not have anything real precious. If you really have something precious and you cannot bear to offer it, then it is not right! If you truly have pure faith, would you be keeping something good and not be willing to offer it?

And when you take something [not so good] and offer it symbolically only, is there real faith? Of course, for those who have good things to offer, you go ahead and use it to offer. Those who do not have good things to offer, then even if you can do this, there will be immeasurable fruits.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 03.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P271, L2]

Some have possessions but are unable to give them up, quoting the verse,³⁴⁵ "As I have no merits, I am very poor; I have no other wealth for offerings."

If you actually have something and are not willing to let it go, and then you say, "Ah, I am really poor! I do not have anything else!" Then it would be wrong. It would be like this,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 03.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P271, L5]

This is as Bo-do-wa said, like a blind person trying to fool a sighted person by dropping a bit of sod incense into a smelly conch cup and saying, "This is water scented with sandalwood and camphor."

Bo-do-wa is the disciple of Drom-dun-ba. This is essentially equivalent to having a broken cup, a twisted broken cup, whereby you drop a bit of sod incense inside and then you say, "sandalwood, camphor, and scented water.... etc!" You would say the actual rites, you can use the best descriptions for it but what does this equate to? One who is blind and tries to fool a sighted person. You absolutely cannot do that!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 04.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P271, L11]

Of course, for us now, we in general will not do this but if you were to analyze this carefully, we actually may be doing that! What do you mean? Well for us now, oh, we read things many times throughout the day, such as reading offering, reading dedication. After we read it for a while, our minds do not accord. That is how it is when you read the mantra for offering. Actually, when you do not accord, that is exactly the situation being described. However, it is not that we wish to intentionally deceive, but why are we doing this? We are in the midst of foolishness and ignorance. Therefore, this is what we should understand. We should at all times pay attention to the state of our minds and try to improve it. So then the above cites from the scriptures and words of the past masters. Then the next sections show us what the past masters have actually done.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 04.46; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P272, L4]

Pu-chung-wa said, "First I gave sod incense with a sharp odor. Next I obtained sweet-smelling, long sticks of incense made from four substances to give. Now I give aromatic *akaru, turuska*, and the like."

This says that in the beginning when I first began to offer, I did not have that much but I would offer to the best of my ability. So the incense that were offered then had "**a sharp odour.**" The incense was not as good. Though they were all incense. See how the inferior incense will have a sharp odour, the inferior incense all have this. Later, gradually because one offers, the fruits will come. Therefore, he offers one which is made from four substances, a great incense made from four substances. This kind of incense is "sweet-smelling." Now when we offer, we all offer *akaru* incense (A kind of wood with lots of oil and will sink in the water.) This is the best kind, the best kind. Now when we speak of this, it is really too bad. It is the collective karma of us sentient beings. Real *akaru* incense, in these few years, it has been more than 10 years now, I have been looking for this. I have not found it, have not found it anymore. The *akarus* now are.... When I was first ordained, I still have seen that. I think I have told you once but this type of *akaru* is already much, much worse than what it used to be. Ah, that is our collective karma! Therefore, we must quickly strive. If you can strive, we will then have this opportunity to be issued the effects of such good things.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 06.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P273, L1]

Thus, if you despise small offerings and do not give them, your entire life will pass in that way.

If we do not make small offerings, then you will forever be like this, forever be like this! Your entire life will be like so. If you do not offer in your life now, you will have wasted your previous roots of virtues for nothing. Then you will have no opportunity in your next life. Conversely.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 06.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P273, L4]

However, if you make earnest effort in stages, beginning with small things, conditions will improve. You should practice as Pu-chung-wa did. It is said that on one occasion he made a preparation of incense worth twenty-two gold coins.

This says, conversely, even if it is little, though it is small, but you offer it with faith and earnestness. Then conditions will improve. So, you should learn to be like Pu-chung-wa. It is said that on one occasion, he used 22 gold coins to make incense. Oh! Now the economy is excellent and you do not think much of 22 gold coins but at that time, it was an enormous amount! Have you seen the biography of Je Atisha? With the effort of the king and the whole country, after a few decades, how much did they gather, there was only so much gold. So, then he had offered that much at once. Why? This is a condition issued from the effects of his karma. So as long as you truly go do this, the fruits will arise very quickly.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 07.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P273, L12]

So this is why we say when we review at night, we should read about Mr. Liao Fan and Yu Jing Yi Gong. They do not even have a correct understanding of Buddhism! They just did things not so carefully. With the principles described earlier, they do not know any of it! However, after they have tried to practice what they know for a while, their whole lives were changed, becoming much better than what they have had originally. Is that not a very obvious fact? Therefore, these are all absolutely true. This is what we should understand.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 08.05; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P274, L3]

Great beings who have gained control over material things emanate many hundreds of thousands of bodies, each of which in turn emanates hundreds of thousands of hands. Visiting all the buddha realms, they make offerings to the Conquerors for many eons.

The sutra tells us very clearly regarding the great beings who have gained control over material things. These are high level Bodhisattvas. They will still need to do these, to emanate...many hundreds of thousands of bodies, then each of which in turn emanates hundreds of thousands of hands, visiting all the Buddha realms, and make offerings to all the Buddhas for many eons. Even they do this. Yet, lacking

resources as we are now, we dare say we do not need to do this! Then it says.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 08.47; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P274, L9]

They can do all this, while others settle for small achievements that look good, and say, "I do not expect enlightenment through making offerings." This is the nonsense of those who have little exposure to the teaching.

Now that we have only achieved small achievements that look good, we then feel happy and satisfied, "Oh! I have gained this much." After reciting a few times of Buddha's names, we feel, "Oh this is good!" We would prostrate to Buddha a few times, and say "Oh, when I prostrate I feel it is good." Or perhaps, we cannot even do that much but we would go as far to say that, "There is no need to learn Buddhism like this!" That is because we do not fundamentally understand the sublime teaching. We are speaking nonsense! This is what we should understand! Therefore, we should...

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 09.26; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P275, L1]

Thus, we should do as it says in the *Cloud of Jewels Sutra*.³⁴⁶

What should we be saying?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 09.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P275, L3]

Therefore, we should study and reflect from the sutras.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 09.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P275, L5]

Study any of the vast offerings and acts of service in the sutras such as these. With supreme wholehearted resolve, sincerely dedicate these offerings and acts of service before the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

Therefore, we should study diligently, study according to what the great sutras and commentaries tell us, do vast offerings, do great acts of service, with a genuine heart, wholehearted resolve, continuously offer and dedicate the effects of the offering. This is what we should do, what we should do. This is on the part of offerings.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 10.13; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P275, L10]

At this point, I will tell you a story, which will be mentioned later, within the karma section, and then later.... Let me tell you one today. During Buddha's time, there was a Bhikkhu, there was a Bhikkhu. This Bhikkhu's name was Bao-Tian. Why was he called Bao-Tian? He was a son in an elder's household, a household of great wealth. The day that he was born, suddenly there it rained seven jewels from the sky and that filled his entire household's storage vault. Then

after that, a well naturally appeared in his house which is 8 meters long and all sorts of room sprung out from the well.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 11.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P276, L2]

Well then, the way of the Brahmas, in general in India, after one is born, they will always invite Brahmans to come, much like taking our birth date to a fortune teller to tell fortune. Then during the fortune telling, the Brahman will usually ask, other than his birth date, were there any signs when he was born? The great elder told the Brahman, what happened. “Ah! That is propitious, very good luck. This child should be called Tien-Bao (Jewel from the Sky).” Actually, I cannot remember if it is Tian-Bao or Bao-Tian. So the parents were very happy. After he grew up, he had excellent looks and was extremely intelligent. Of course, they were happy. Then, when the time came for marriage, as they looked for a wife for the son, they feel that they need to find someone with similar backgrounds and characteristics, so they searched for a long time and could not find one to match. Eh, as it turns out, there was another great elder somewhere else who had a daughter. He had a daughter and when she was born, a well of 8 meters long also appeared in his house. They were in the exact same situation where this elder was looking for a husband of similar background and characteristic for his daughter. The two households came to know each other, ah, as soon as they began to talk they realized such fantastic similarities! So then the two young people got married. After marriage, they lived a very good life. By that time, it so happened to be the time when Buddha appeared in this world. They came to

listen to the teaching and were delighted. Later, both of them asked to be ordained as renunciates. After ordination, they eventually attained high level achievements. Everyone thought it was very strange, how did the causes and conditions of these things come about? So Buddha told them.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 12.56; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P276, L15]

The causes and conditions were formed during the last Buddha's time, during the time when Kasyapa Buddha appeared in this world. When Kasyapa Buddha was here, it was the same as the time our Buddha appeared, he had gone out for alms, to beg for food! Well then many of the devout great kings and elders came forth to make their offerings. At that time, there were two poor people, who often had not even enough to eat for the day. So, one day, the husband was out and saw people making offerings, he greatly admired them. Ah! He heard the teachings as well. So when he came back, he was very distraught and said, "I am already very poor. The only way to develop merits now is to make offerings to the Three Jewels. Yet, as poor as I am now, I do not know what I can do?" The more he thought about this, the sadder he became. The sadder he became, the more he cried. When his wife saw this, she said, "Why do you feel so sad?" "We are so poor already..." So he thought of this. "Ah, no, this is a good thing. Let us see if we can find anything in our house, perhaps we can really find something, whatever that is worth anything, we should try to offer it." So the two went through the house, ah, they actually found a coin that was left on the floor that no one noticed before. Ah, they were so delighted!

Then they took the coin and washed it. Then along with the coin...they also found a vase. They cleaned that as well and filled it with clean water and then along with the coin, they also got a very good mirror. So they took these things to offer.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 14.52; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P277, L13]

At the time, Buddha was receiving an offering of food. For Buddha, their etiquettes then were to wash hands before and after one eats. So this poor person very happily offered a vase of clean water, a bright mirror, and a coin. Oh, such were the causes and conditions. Ah, they were so happy and they went home. Just for that one cause and condition, they were overjoyed. Pay attention to this! They were so devout before they went, and when they offered, they were so happy. After offering, they worked hard. Therefore, for 91 eons after this, after that lifetime, he was born in the heavens. For 91 eons, these were the conditions that he was born into. Wherever he was born, jewels will rain in that place.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P201; 48B, 15.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P278, L4]

Therefore, if you can truly offer in accordance to the teaching, there will be such great merits. We say that Buddha is not in our world now. He said this very clearly just now! There are greater merits if you offer to an unperceived object than a perceived object. Right? Therefore, we should not say, “Ah, we are too inferior!” We should be happy and say,

“Ah, now that we understand this, we are so happy! We should quickly strive!” Therefore, instead of chatting nonsense here, we should really let that type of mindset go. When you are chatting irrelevant nonsense, you are really just creating sins, just creating sins! Then we must quickly strive. There are things we can actively practice at all times. If you can practice as such, gradually, all the things that you want will come, all the things that you want will come. We have now finished number three, oh, actually, number two. We have now finished the section on offerings.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 16.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P278, L10]

(c) Establish other living beings in this practice by considering them with compassion [153] This means that you should use all available means to caringly establish other living beings in the practice of going for refuge.

Well this is on offering. Then next is " **considering them with compassion.**" This is what was told to us earlier, the difference between Buddhism and compassion. Now that we understand the path, we should ultimately walk on is one which is the most complete and supreme and of course then we should walk on this path at the very beginning. Therefore, from very beginning we should also understand and learn the compassion of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. It is also for this reason that not only can we liberate ourselves, we can let all sentient beings obtain such benefits and we want all sentient beings to obtain refuge. Thus, through considering them with compassion, because we consider others in our

own place, we develop a great compassion to allow all sentient beings to find a true place for refuge and to alleviate their sufferings. This is number three.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 18.27; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P279, L4]

Regarding compassion, it is the heart of Mahayana Buddhism which is what this treatise primarily wishes, to guide us towards this path. Once the foundation, the preparation, the path shared with small capacity and the path shared with the medium capacity are learnt, then when we enter the great capacity, this is explained in detail at the very beginning. We will discuss the detailed content in future. Next.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 19.12; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P279, L7]

(d) Whatever activity you engage in and whatever your purpose is, make offerings and supplications to the three jewels, forsaking any other worldly methods

This says that after we have gone for refuge to the Three Jewels, in this circumstance, regardless of what we do, what we need, we should offer to the Three Jewels and supplicate to the Three Jewels, wishing for the blessings of the Three Jewels. Then, we supplicate for the guidance of the Three Jewels, for everything, the Three Jewels are our principal reliance. This is true refuge. We forsake all other worldly methods.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 19.12; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P279, L7]

Whatever activity you engage in, and whatever your purpose, rely on and do that which accords with the three jewels, such as making offerings to them but never do that which does not accord with the three jewels, such as relying on the Bon (Bon) religion. Always entrust yourself to the three jewels.

Well then regardless of what you do, whatever important things, whether they are big or small, you will rely on the Three Jewels for everything. You will follow the principles given by the Three Jewels. You will do what accords with the Three Jewels, offer to the Three Jewels. Under any circumstances, you will no longer rely on what does not accord with the Three Jewels.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 21.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P280, L3]

Why do we need to rely on the Three Jewels, go to the Three Jewels for refuge and accord with the Three Jewels? We should always remember one principle firmly, that the world has so much suffering and is so impermanent. In order to be liberated from suffering and wishing to find a place of reliance, under this circumstance, when you use reasoning to analyze and choose, you will discover the only objects worthy of refuge and reliance will be the Three Jewels. Of course, now that you have found it, how could you not follow their principles! This is very plain and clear but in the beginning,

before you gain the correct understanding and before you can completely change your habits, we should know this principle. After you understand it, with everything that you do, you will follow the guidance of the Three Jewels. This point is very important, very important! Otherwise, even though you have gone to the Three Jewels for refuge, you will still follow your own old method. This will equate to not having gone for refuge, equate to not having gone for refuge!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 22.52; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P280, L10]

As for the details of this, when we learn further along, in particular on the section of karma, once we understand the subjective aspects of karma, then when we come back and take a look at this principle. It will become very plain and very clear to us. We would then know why we need to follow the principles given by the Three Jewels. At the same time, you will also understand, “Ah! This is the real auspiciousness of ethical discipline.” It is not just a restraint so that you cannot do this or you cannot do that, nor is it just asking you do this and do that even though you do not want to. The truth is you have been confused and suffered without knowing. Now we have found a place where it can help us to alleviate our suffering. It points out what we should not be doing this and tells us officially how we can prevent ourselves from creating non-virtuous causes which will in turn cause suffering. Similarly, with what we do not like to do, it tells us that we should do it. It is telling us to quickly plant causes of happiness in order to obtain the fruits of happiness. This principle becomes very plain and clear. Well then, before we

learn it completely, before we establish the correct view, we should first have a good grasp of the greater principle of refuge. Then after we have gone for refuge, with whatever that we do, we will certainly rely on the instructions of the Three Jewels.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 24.47; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P281, L4]

Normally when we receive the refuge, the teacher or Dharma Master conferring the refuge vows will often give a specific teaching. In this teaching, there is [usually] a very good analogy. It says that such and such person had committed a crime and he ran away to some place. Let us say from somewhere else, someone who committed crime there had escaped to come here. So he comes here for asylum or perhaps to this particular country to hide. So then the people of this place will say, “Okay, I can help you but you better be an honest man here. Since you have now come to my place, you must follow my order and you cannot disobey the laws here.” If you can follow through to do so, then as long as you remain within this area and the people of this area will protect you. Is it not so? This is very plain and clear. If you so choose to violate the laws here, then this place will no longer tolerate you. You will have to leave this place but the people of the other places are just waiting for you out there and they will catch you. This is the same situation whether you are in the mundane world or the supra mundane world. Therefore, upon this point, the preceding section tells us that after we have gone for refuge, in any situation, at any time, you naturally will see the Three Jewels as your earnest refuge

and reference. You will no longer take refuge in those that do not accord with the Three Jewels.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 26.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P281, L13]

With what was just said, we should have a deeper level of understanding. It tells us earlier that even with divine creator.... If we just listen to the words, we would often overlook the meaning behind it. What is the meaning behind it? In other words, the real teacher who shows us and guides us on the path can only be Buddha. Not even the divine creator qualifies, needless to say the deities and ghosts who are at an even lower level! Even the deities and ghosts with many supernatural powers do not qualify, thus no need to mention those people with wealth and power. However, since we live in this mundane world, of course we will need to abide by the rules of the mundane world. This is something we absolutely need to abide by. Buddhism will certainly not go against the rules of the mundane world. However, with our general habits, our concepts and views, we must certainly get rid of the mundane world's standard of measurement. Instead, we should use the fundamental concepts provided by the Three Jewels as a basis for all our conduct. This is what this point is particularly trying to tell us, what this point is particularly trying to tell us.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 28.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P282, L6]

As for all the principles spoken later in this treatise, they all nonetheless tell us this particular principle's content, importance and the reasons for it in a clear way and at a deeper level, a deeper level. Therefore for now, we are just relying on our faith. Once you have this faith and you continue to diligently learn, the path of reasoning will become clearer and clearer. By then, your faith will become purer and purer. Naturally your practice will become more and more perfect. Thus, we need to strive to learn diligently.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 48B, 28.39; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 6, P282, L10]

**(e) After you have understood the benefits, go for refuge three times in the day and three times at night
The benefits of going for refuge are explained first according to the *Compendium of Determinations* and then according to the personal instructions.**

Then next, since we now understand the auspicious benefits of going to the Three Jewels for refuge, now that we understand then naturally we would at all times and places....at all times and places sound pretty general, so here it is divided into days and nights. There are three times for the day and three times for the night. Regardless of day or night, you can also say that under any circumstance, whether your eyes are open and your brain is clear, or when you are sleeping, your mind is still wholeheartedly going for refuge, still conscientiously practicing. Well then here it is further divided into two parts, one is the auspicious benefit said in the *Compendium of Determinations*, the other is according to the

personal instructions. In other words, one is the Dharmalakṣana sect and the other, the Dharma-nature sect.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 00.16; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P3, L1]

(i) The benefits as they appear in the *Compendium of Determinations* These are explained in two sets of four.

In the *Compendium of Determinations*, Dharmalakṣana sect explains [the benefits] in two sets and each set can be divided into four subdivisions.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 00.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P3, L3]

(a') The first set of four

(1') You will obtain vast merit

As the *Immortal Drumbeat Dharani* ('*Chi med rnga sgra'i gzungs*) says:³⁴⁷

This is the first one. After you go for refuge in the Three Jewels, you will obtain vast merit. Then he cites from the sutra that

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 00.49; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P3, L5]

**The Bhagavan Buddha is inconceivable.
The sublime teaching is also inconceivable.**

The noble community is inconceivable. For those having faith in the inconceivable The fruition is also inconceivable.

The Buddha, the teaching, and the sangha community, these three things are inconceivable. The inconceivability can be explained from two aspects. The first one is the aspect of quality. It is not something we can imagine with our current consciousness of the mind. In other words, it is absolutely very profound and subtle. As for the measurement (or quantity), it is just inconceivable. It is so vast that we cannot imagine! Therefore, whether you look at it in terms of quality, measurement, nature, or subjective aspects, the meaning of the Three Jewels is incredible! How can you accord with it? Hey, **“for those having faith,”** if you have faith in it. The faith—even though we are so unfocused, ah, and we would say, “I believe in the Three Jewels.” Though as unfocused as you are, this can still produce vast benefits. There is a mathematical formula such that if you take any number and multiply it by infinity, this will always equal infinity. When you take one and multiply it by infinity, it still equals infinity. If you use the number of one million, ten million, thousand million, or one billion, no matter how big the number is, when you multiply it by infinity, it will always equal to infinity. Due to the inconceivable merits of the Three Jewels, any tiny thing that you do [to the Three Jewels] will become inconceivable.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 02.38; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P4, L8]

Therefore, this faith is truly incredible! Of course, in terms of what we can feel and experience, that will entirely depend on our faith. The purer the faith you have, the purer of what you shall receive. Therefore, though the Three Jewels are inconceivable but the faith in which you can have in the Three Jewels is also inconceivable. If both of these accord, then the fruitional effect will be inconceivable as well. In the past, we have cited many stories, they all refers to this. We will talk more of this later. This is cited from the sutra. Then how about in the commentaries?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 03.18; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P4, L13]

Also, *Aryasura's Compendium of the Perfections (Paramita-samasa)* states:³⁴⁸

**If the merit of going for refuge took form,
Even these three realms would be too small to
contain it—
A cupped hand cannot measure
The great ocean, the storehouse of water.**

If you have faith in the Three Jewels and go for refuge, then your merits will be incredibly vast. If the merits can take shape, can take form so that you can measure it, ah! It will be so large that you cannot even fathom its greatness, cannot even fathom its greatness. Normally, with anything, when we wish to use a container to hold it, for example, there is this table here, or you may put something inside this room, and then [also] we may put grains of wheat in a bag. In this case,

if you were to use something to hold the merits of going for refuge, hey! Sorry, you would not be able to contain it. Ah! You would not be able to contain it! In other words, the three realms would be too small for that. So you cannot even begin to comprehend how vast is the merit of going for refuge. Look at how vast is the merit of going for refuge! What is this like? Let us say the merit of going for refuge is as great as the ocean. Now you put your little hands together to try to hold some ocean water, can you even measure the vastness of the ocean water with your cupped hands? It would be impossible to measure the ocean. Like that. Therefore, the merit of going for refuge is that great.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 04.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P5, L9]

Speaking of this, we may have some doubts and would say, “Yes, we have now all gone for refuge, how come we do not have such great merits?” Yes, we have gone for refuge in name, but have we truly gone for refuge? This is the problem. That is why I have written this on the black board – when you go for refuge, you must obtain the substance (essence) of refuge. If you have truly gone for refuge, and you are.... if you can take refuge well normally, then to go to heaven after death would be something very simple, very easy to do. If you go for refuge to Amitabha Buddha and wholeheartedly go for refuge, you will be able to go to Pure Land. To go to Pure Land means to transcend beyond cyclic existence. Ah! You will have transcended beyond cyclic existence. It is something incredible. The vast merits of it...think about it, how can the three realms contain it? This is absolutely the

truth. Therefore, at this point we should understand, just going for refuge produces such great merit.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 06.06; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P6, L1]

Having gone through the earlier teachings up till now, quite a few students have mentioned to me that, “Ah! There is so much to know for refuge. We have never heard this before!” There! Actually, when you truly go for refuge, it is just as such! When the student said that he has not heard it before, this also explains that when we used to say we go for refuge, refuge, we can only say that we had just begun our journey then. We have planted some virtuous roots and have gone forward one step at a time. However, we have not truly understood what refuge is. If you do not even understand it, can you truly go for refuge? Therefore, if you truly understand and go for refuge according to the principles and obtain the true substance of refuge, then it is absolutely true that you will obtain such great merits.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 07.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P6, L6]

(2') You will obtain both joy and supreme joy

We may say that once you have merits, of course you will be joyous. Ah, this is not necessarily true! There are many people when you look at them, they seem to be very fortunate since they have money, many children and grandchildren, high social status, and fame. Yet, they seem pretty miserable.

They do not necessarily have joy but here it says that not only will you obtain merits, but joy. He first cited from the scriptures.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 07.29; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P6, L10]

The *Collection of Indicative Verses* states:³⁴⁹

**Those who, recalling the Buddha
During the day and at night,
Go for refuge to him,
Gain the advantage of being human.**

This says that suppose " **During the day and at night** " which means at all times and places, if we can accord to the Three Jewels, recall the Three Jewels — the Buddha, understand every auspiciousness of the Buddha and truly go for refuge according to the teachings, this is a benefit which we humans can obtain. I need to explain this a little more so that we can understand it. You have to know what is the real auspiciousness of being a human. In the three realms, why is it that the only chance to learn Buddhism as a beginner is to be born as a human? What is the reason? There is one characteristic of human that is especially strong — to be able to contemplate. This is very important, very important! What is the function of this? This needs to be explained. Normally with all of us living beings, all the living beings possesses a few things, the six sensory faculties. For the same six sensory faculties, of course, form does not exist in the formless realm, well then there are perhaps some things in the higher realms, since they are in a state of concentration,

perhaps there are many points which are different. However, in general, with the objects that our eye sensory faculty meets - what our eyes see, what our ears hear, then nose, tongue, and body...etc. When you meet up with objects, then immediately the consciousness, the so called the five consciousness (五俱意識) will arise as well. Therefore, normally our minds will follow these five sensory faculties and this state is very coarse and strong. Therefore, under this condition, the mind keeps following the outside world, keeps following the outside world.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 09.38; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P7, L8]

Well then, since you are following the objects on the outside, you are always in a situation where you are dependent, passive. With the external phenomena, you will have no way of penetrating through the surface of the issues, to understand the deeper meaning behind it. Under what condition can you do that? That is with your consciousness, you must be able to retrieve it back from your five sensory faculties, retrieve it and not be turned by the external objects. By that time, you will be able to gather and focus your consciousness, focusing it on what you are analyzing and contemplating. Let me give you just any example. This is very simple. For instance, if we ask you to read, we ask you to read. Then as you are progressing well in reading, if there is a lot of noise outside or if someone comes to bother you, you can no longer read very well. Why? There! This is because you cannot handle the inputs to your ear sensory faculty. Right? It is just like that and then, there are many

things which your mind loves to do, so when something very difficult to let go is right there, it is an external object which keeps luring you. You must first be able to take this away, and then focus your consciousness before you can truly go in depth.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 11.09; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P8, L2]

Therefore, now regarding the principles spoken earlier, we have come to understand one thing, what is that? This requires reflection and analysis. This is when you must retrieve the consciousness from focusing on the external object and instead, focus on this, focus on this. Then after you reflect properly and in the correct measurements according to the teachings, after reflection, then can you understand all the meanings which accord to the teaching and you can then understand it. Well then, at this place, with "recalling," and others, they operate the same way.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 11.52; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P8, L7]

Then you can think, "Ah, this world, even though it is this happy and great on the surface level, but actually, ah! This is false. On the surface it may seem that year after year, the heavens gain years and people gain age but actually, the reality is that though heavens gained years, but people's lifespan is reducing. You can then go from the surface and delve deeper into the meaning of the phenomenon. Then after you reflect and analyze, the result you obtain will be: Ah!

Now you need to go for refuge because this is the only place that you can rely on. If you can reflect as such, then you will discover what truth? You will feel: Ah! You have been fooled by the external objects and all sorts of sufferings arise from this but now, no! Ah, the external objects can no longer deceive you and so you will no longer be led by the nose. Since you were led by the nose before and thus all sorts of sufferings and torments arose. Now, you will immediately feel liberated and feel a freedom with all that you do because you now can control it. Well then under this circumstance, you will have what kind of feeling? "Ah! Normally I am turned by afflictions because of the external environment, but now because of knowing this, you will no longer be turned by it. Afflictions are immediately stopped and you feel a sense of coolness, freedom and liberation. Are you not delighted?"

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P202; 49A, 13.38; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P9, L2]

Therefore, if you say that you can truly do this, then in your mind, truly by then there will be this happiness. What is this happiness called? A Dharma joy, a Dharma joy. Actually, we do not even have to discuss this in such depth! Even if you just talk about the recollection of Buddha, you say, "Yo! This world is so horrendous. To go the Pure Land will be so much happiness!" If you can just think like this, as long as you think through this according to the teachings, truly, you will feel so much joy internally. There are quite a few fellow students here who have reflected according to the Buddhism principles, and then ah! They have discovered with so many things which they have found to be miserable before, they

now feel completely different about them. Even just using a little bit of it, you will gain so much benefit. Therefore, not only does one gain merits, but also joy. So, think about this, we can say that we have barely scratched the surface of entire Buddhism, yet we already feel such happiness. When you truly go deeper to experience it in the future, there will be boundless happiness!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 14.57; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P9, L10]

You should apply this to the other two jewels as well.

This is the same for the teachings and the community.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 15.03; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P9, L12]

Thus, the one who relies on these three refuges grows more joyful with the thought, "I have really gotten something worth getting!"

We would think, ah, we would say, "This is great! It is because we do not understand things before, therefore we have consistently been wrong. In the end, we have walked down the wrong path! Now that with what is correct, we should go for refuge, we can go for refuge, and should go for refuge. Ah! This is truly excellent." If you can continue to bring this to mind and contemplate, then this joy increases, this joy increases! Normally, it is just like how when we have done things wrong, we think we have done it right. All of a sudden we would feel that, "Ah! we have been fooled before."

By then you will feel, "Ah! it is so great that I have not been fooled now." Then you continue to strive, you will discover more of the benefits of not being fooled. Of course, you will become happier and happier as you go on this path.

The third benefit is

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 16.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P10, L6]

(3') You will obtain concentration and

Moreover, you will obtain concentration. You have to know that once you obtain joy, it will be easy to obtain concentration and you know why? You have to understand that concentration must be obtained with a very peaceful state of mind. If you are agitated in your mind all day long, can you obtain concentration? Of course not. Therefore, one must definitely be liberated from the coarse and fierce afflictions and accord with the teaching [first]. Under that type of joyful condition, a joyful state of mind is in general more peaceful. Then, you can advance from this foundation in order to obtain concentration. With concentration, you will obtain wisdom. With wisdom, you will be liberated. Being liberated is to “**attain purity.**” Therefore, the fourth benefit:

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 16.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P10, L12]

(4') You will attain purity [154]

You will be liberated through training in concentration and wisdom.

It is just like this. Well then there are these four [benefits]. What is another point to know? We should know the order of these four. The first one is the merits obtained when you go for refuge. That is our collection of merit. Based on this collection of merit, your virtuous roots can increase. Then you fix your attention properly on the teachings and follow to do so. If you can do this at many places, your mind will accord. What is a correct concordance? Ah! That is, you no longer concord with afflictions. Therefore, at this time, you will absolutely not create more bad karma and will increase virtuous karma. This is in the beginning where what you do falls within the boundary of ethical discipline. Under this circumstance, your mind will naturally achieve concordance with ethical discipline and be able to tame the coarse and fierce afflictions. You will obtain the coolness from clearing away afflictions and achieve a shallower joy in your mind. From this you can delve deeper into concentration and wisdom to obtain liberation. Therefore, with these four things, there is a definite order.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 17.57; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P11, L6]

(b') The second set of four

(1') You will have great protection. This will be explained later.

(2') You will reduce, extinguish, and totally annihilate all obscurations derived from incorrect belief

All the mistaken and incorrect viewpoints, "**belief**" means your previous viewpoints. These viewpoints are not limited to going for refuge to the divine creator, the non-virtuous deities, but that in our mundane world, there are many [wrong viewpoints]. Actually, for us mostly, people all live in the ways of the mundane world. The ways of the mundane world.... this was said time and again, it is not that we do not want anything from the mundane world but just that in order to live, there will be many concepts that you encounter in the mundane world, such as meeting with the doctors and the businesses of the world. With the help that the lay practitioners provide us to help us survive, the conditions that help us are okay and should be there. However, we should never make them our primary focus! Therefore, under normal circumstances, for instance, when its concept conflicts with Buddhism's concepts, we must certainly choose Buddhism's concept and stop following the ways of the world, stop following the ways of the world. Make a special note of this! However, this does not mean that we do not want any of the things of the world.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 19.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P12, L1]

For instance, we often go see doctors and doctors would say, "This is not good for you. After you have taken faith in Buddhism, you started being vegetarian. There is no nutrition in that!" Sorry, that does not matter! Other than this, if he tells you to take a certain medicine, you must certainly listen

to him, as far as how to take it. However, if you have already become a vegetarian and he asks you to eat meat, then you should not listen to him. Of course, if you have not decided to uphold the vegetarian diet yet, then that would be okay. However, this is what you should make a note of! You should make a note of this. Therefore, the meaning of "incorrect belief" here, that is whatever that does not accord with the Three Jewels, or violates them, through your faith in the Three Jewels, you naturally will eliminate it and not let it become an obstacle for you. Otherwise, you will always be like this, "Oh, this has no nutrition, no, no, so you do not want to do it but then there is a certain way and you do not want to do that either. Then you will be wrong! Therefore now, with these things [views], you will gradually reduce and eventually totally annihilate.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 20.26; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P12, L9]

You will reduce and clear away bad karma accumulated on account of your believing in bad teachers, teachings, and friends and upholding them as refuges.

Before you have a correct understanding, who are the people you believe and what do you understand? They are "bad teachers, bad teachings and bad friends." Teacher, this is changed now, the teacher is now our great Teacher, Buddha. The teaching is the method that others around us tell us. Now it is the sublime teaching. Bad friends, it is through the bad karma created from before. Now because you rely and depend on Three Jewels, this is changed,

gradually reduced and even completely purified, even completely purified. Regarding this point, we should pay attention at this place! We are now learning and thus should forewarn ourselves at all times with this. In many of our views, we do not yet understand the Three Jewels. What is our arising thought now? Still having non-virtuous teaching in the brain, still having incorrect beliefs.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 21.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P13, L2]

Let me just give you any example. There was a fellow practitioner who came to ask me this. He said that he offered milk last night when he drank it but should he have been offering or not? I said, "You should, but someone told him otherwise. The fellow who came to me described how yesterday we talked about with whatever you eat, even pure water can be offered. So when he was drinking it last night, someone else next to him said, "You should not be offering." Um? Why? The one next to him said, "That is because the Three Jewels do not accept offerings at night." Do you think this is right? Okay, this is now a test for you, a test for you! Right! We do say that we are renunciates and the community does not eat after lunch. So now that you go and drink milk at night and you make an offer, should you be doing that or not? Is he right? I will let you think on this and tell you the answer tomorrow.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 22.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P13, L9]

Therefore, at many places, in terms of the concepts, we have not really got it clear. Therefore, before you are clear, there is only one thing to do, alert yourself at all times that you should not just open your mouth casually. Just because you have read a little bit, heard a little bit, you open your mouth to speak at any chance. The best way is when you are in this situation, you should reflect and analyze for a while on what you should really be doing. By then, if you are willing to learn, you will be able to gradually, gradually go deeper and improve. Otherwise, though we are learning Buddhism, but in reality, we are still learning the "ego self." Thus, once you truly go for refuge, you need to learn the precepts. You should learn it well. For at least five years, you should follow a very spectacular teacher and learn diligently. Why do you have to do this? That is that you must be on your guard to ascertain the most subtle points of the ethical disciplines. You must know how to conduct yourself and the reasons for that. If you are not clear, then sorry, you really cannot give up reliance on this for your entire life! We now do not know anything. Yet when we go out, we say whatever we think, this is very dangerous! I just want to mention that here. The third one.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 24.02; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P14, L3]
(3') You are counted among excellent persons, who genuinely accomplish the sublime You are included among excellent persons.

Once you have gone for refuge, your conduct from now on, because you genuinely accomplish the sublime, the fruit which this will produce in the future will certainly be excellent

and you will advance to be **“counted among excellent persons.”** Having relied on what is correct, this is what is true and unmistakable in the three worlds. Therefore, this is who we refer to as **“those who are supremely virtuous.”** Through refuge, you will be able to enter this circle.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 24.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P14, L8]

(4') You delight and receive the approval of your teachers and religious companions, and of the deities who take joy in the teaching

After you have gone for refuge...the “Teacher” being the Buddha and the “religious companions” being the community. The community in a strict definition means the four types of followers, but in a broad sense it means all who uphold the teachings through their conducts. As for **“the deities who take joy in the teaching,”** they are those who support and protect the teachings, they take joy in your doing.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 25.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P14, L12]

You please your teachers and religious companions.

There, so I often would say, normally we would say this, “Ah! do not offend anyone, do not offend anyone.” Pay attention to this! Of course if you could help it, you should absolutely not offend others. What if, especially when we learn Buddhism, after we have learned Buddhism, there are

many concepts and actions where we differ from the mundane world. When you come across situations like this, when you are stuck between the two and you cannot seem to delicately handle the situation, you should then make note of this! It may be that by taking care of some people's feelings so you do not offend them, you will end up offending Buddha and the deities. Conversely, this means in order to not offend Buddha and deities, you will have to offend people in that situation. May I ask then, which way will you choose? This concept is very important! This concept is very important, very important! Let me say this one more time. Of course, the most perfect solution is that you will delight the Buddha and deities and make everyone else here feel happy too. That would be best but if you cannot make both sides happy, think about it, what should you do? This is something I just want to mention here. Next, let us continue to read.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 26.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P15, L8]

How are the deities delighted? They sing praises of such people, joyfully thinking, "The person named such and such, who, like us, has gone for refuge, will die and be reborn here. This is because he or she has gone for refuge and has become stable in it, he or she will be our companion."

Why are the deities delighted? Once they see you going for refuge as such, they will say, "Ah, it is great! How were we born in the heaven? It was through refuge. We have practiced the teachings to accomplish refuge and therefore we

are able to leave the human realm to come here. Now that they are acting this way as well, ah, they will soon be reborn here.” So they are joyous! Actually, we are the same way too. Now that we are doing well here, when we see others come, we are all so joyous. It is naturally that way. Generally, it will be in this manner, in will be in this manner. Well then, there is also another point which is really interesting. The asuras, they often will fight with the deities in the heaven. They all fight, all fight. So when the deities increase in number, eh, then when they fight, the deities have a greater chance of victory. Therefore, they are happy for this. Thus, if you can become stable in refuge, the deities will increase in number. If you corrupt the teachings, the demons will increase in number. This is the principle. This is very plain and clear.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49A, 28.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P16, L4]

Well then other than this, there is another point [I can tell you], which will make you understand. Yes, when you are in the mundane world, even though the rules of the human world are different and people here might feel, “Ah, why do you have to be so different!” Yet, if you can follow the direction of the Three Jewels, you would say, “In the case when I follow the direction of the Three Jewels, though the world disagrees with me, and even though I have offended people, but I can make the deities happy.” What is the reason that the deities are happy? It is because you have become stable in your refuge. As a result, you end up going to heaven. May I ask then which way will you choose? The longest you can live in the human world is a hundred years

but if you can be reborn in the heaven, the heaven with the least number of years to live is the heaven of the four devakings (catur-maharāja-kāyikas), which is 9,000,000 human years! May I ask then, which way will you choose? Even if you end up offending people in the human world, even if I have to offend people for the entire hundred years, I would still be willing to do this. Even if I have offended people for one hundred years because of this, I can at least enjoy 9,000,000 years of heavenly bliss. Needless to say that I could actually end up in the heavens of the thirty-three devas! This is what we have to understand. There, there, there! This is something worthy of everyone to introspect and exhort themselves.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49B, 00.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P17, L1]

**(ii) The benefits as they appear in personal instructions
As explained in the personal instructions, the benefits of going for refuge are eight in number. (a') You are included among Buddhists**

This says that after you have gone for refuge and have formally entered the door of Buddhism, you have now entered the internal path, you are included among Buddhists (Buddha's disciple). He then says next.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P203; 49B, 00.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P17, L4]

In general, there are a number of ways to distinguish Buddhists from non-Buddhists. However, since it is widely acknowledged that the Elder and Santipa distinguish them according to the refuges they seek,

To truly make the distinction, there are many differences, some would say this and others would say that. However, according to the lineage teaching stated here, the teachings were passed down from these two. Whether it is from Je Atisha (Elder) or from Santipa, the way these two distinguish Buddhists versus non-Buddhists, distinguish whether one is a disciple of Buddha, is based on refuge. Once you have gone for refuge, you are included among Buddhists (a disciple of Buddha), you have entered the internal path. Therefore, **"distinguish them according to the refuges they seek."**

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 01.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P18, L1]

you should count as Buddhists those who have obtained and not forsaken their refuge.

Once you have obtained refuge and have not forsaken the refuge, then you should count as Buddhists. Pay attention to something here! "Obtained" refuge. When you go for refuge, there is something which you obtain. When you obtain the refuge, what is it exactly? It is this, to obtain the substance (essence) of the refuge. Up until now, you should remember this, there is a substance to refuge. For the real meaning of this substance, I will gradually, gradually explain it to you in detail later. This is very important, very important!

Therefore, we should learn this diligently. Once you obtain this, make note of this everyone, you will at least be reborn in heaven. If you should want to go to the Pure Land, you will certainly be reborn there. This is the real meaning behind refuge. Therefore, what is said to be learned in many places of the text later, we will be learning exactly this, learning exactly this (refuge). We are beginning to learn this now. What we have learned before was also this, was also this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 02.29; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P18, L9]

Thus, to initially be included among Buddhists you must uphold the three jewels as your teacher and so forth from the depths of your heart.

Therefore, this is the first criterion to begin to learn Buddhism - refuge. Well then after you have gone for refuge, you are now included among Buddhists. So then for us now, what can we accomplish, what can we understand for this refuge substance? That is you must uphold the Three Jewels from the depths of your heart - He is truly the Teacher. "**And so forth**" means this is the correct method and these are the companions who will practice with you together. This state of mind is not something which you just hear and talk about but that it is one which you go for refuge and rely from the depths of your heart. It is this point, this point.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 03.28; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P18, L14]

Well then here, we can use this to introspect a little, introspect a little. Let us say today we have been wronged by others. Um! Others complained a little about me, or today I have received less benefit than others, or perhaps I am a little sick, what are these? Suffering, right? Yes! Suffering. Now that you have come across this suffering, what should you do? Our normal reaction is pretty plain and clear. If you have been wronged, then either you dispute it or be in an argument. If you cannot argue or dispute, you would go behind his back and complain. This is how we are normally. This is our normal behavior. The customary way of the world is all like this. Then, perhaps you were shorted on something, or got some illness, oh, you hurry to pray to the deities and prostrate to Buddha, find doctors, buy medicine. This is the customary way of the world. This is normal. However, by saying this does not mean we completely neglect these after we learn Buddhism!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 04.41; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P19, L7]

What you should pay attention to is this, why should you go for refuge? Why should you go for refuge? Perhaps we did not know it before, but now that we understand, oh! We now realize that there is nothing but suffering in all three realms. What truly can help us alleviate suffering, to up root it completely is here. The issue is here and thus we go for refuge to them. This is the fundamental reason of going for refuge. Then since you wish to be liberated from suffering, therefore, with this reason you seek [for a solution]. Under this circumstance, who is the object of your refuge? If you

wish to be liberated from suffering, he must have what kind of qualification? Having followed this trend of thought you gradually, gradually come to this point. If this order is very clear and plain to you, and you can fix your attention properly to reflect on this often, what would certainly happen next? When you have suffering you would feel, ah, this suffering, I need to look to Him for a solution. Right? Is not it so? This is an inevitable result. Therefore, when we speak of refuge, the difference between a refuge through principle and an ordinary refuge is here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 05.58; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P19, L15]

Normally when you go for refuge, after the refuge, you are still unfocused. You now understand why? Though you act like you are learning the teaching but in reality, what are you learning? It has nothing to do with the Buddha. Now if you had followed the stages of the path and walked up one step at a time, truly, every step becomes very solid. Yes! It is because you have suffering, therefore you need to go for refuge. Since you want to go for refuge, you have found the objects of the refuge to be the Three Jewels. Now that this suffering has risen, what comes to mind? "Ah, this suffering!" Then you wholeheartedly go to him for refuge. Yes, after people have blamed you for some things, you feel a lot of suffering. By then where will you go to relate the injustice you have suffered? Who will you go to, you would go to Buddha and tell him the injustice you have encountered, it is very simple! Who will you go to? You will go to the teaching, go to

the community to tell them the injustice. We are only afraid that you do not go tell. If you do go tell, you will be right!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 06.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P20, L7]

Well then how do you tell Buddha this? [You would recite,] Namó Amitayā Buddha. Ah, that is it! Therefore, regardless of what things you encounter, you will naturally recollect the Buddha with your whole heart. How do you go to the teaching for refuge? What is going to the teaching for refuge? Why are you afflicted now? That is because you erred and do not understand [the truth]. We do not even have to go into this in depth, what is the simplest teaching that has been told to us? Emptiness, dependent arising. Therefore, all phenomena arise out of cause and effect. If he blames you today, he has reasons for that. There is a reason for that, there must be a cause for it. If I am wrong, when you blame me, I should then change! If there is no reason for what he is doing, then why is he doing that out of no reason? There must have been a bad cause which was planted from before. Now that I have paid my debt to him, I am so happy. After I have paid it back, I feel so free now that I have cleared my debt. Yes! Therefore this, at this time, we are only afraid that you do not go to the teaching for the injustice you have suffered. Who are the people who practice according to the teachings? They are the Sangha community! Then when you go tell him your story, this person will tell you, there, there, there, this is the principle. Ah, once you understand, you will feel so appreciative! Is it not like this? This is an inevitable result!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 07.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P20, L15]

Then, if you got sick, ah! We know that this world is worthless and that we all eventually age, become sick and die. Sickness is a cause of death, which means I am going to die. So I must quickly recite more refuges, then when I go to Pure Land I can advance to a higher level. So when the doctor comes to you, perhaps you may not even be willing [to be treated] because if you recover, you will have to stay a few more days in this Samsara world. This type of suffering is behind words. So you do not want it, do not want it! Unless if there are great benefits and for these benefits, I can forbear this [a bit longer], and thus cannot let these go yet for the time being. If you have truly gone for refuge from the depth of your heart, would not it result in you acting this way? Yes! Therefore, this place says, "**you must uphold the three jewels as your teacher and so forth.**"

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 08.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P21, L6]

Of course, this is the inevitable result from your understanding of the principles. Now truly there are two types of people in general. One type is strong in logic and another type is strong in emotions. So the logical type, yes, it is easy for him to understand this principle and one as such would often come in through reasoning. Therefore, once he comes in, he is skilled in using his logic to obtain this. For the emotional type, he may not necessarily be like that. He may

feel that, "Ah, it is good to go for refuge!" So he follows along to take refuge but if you truly can go for refuge from the depths of your heart, then the same thing would happen to you. With whatever you come upon, let us say when you have been wronged and you cannot tell anyone, one would usually go tell his mom and cry about it, like that. Therefore, when this happens to you, if you have obtained refuge, you will still go to the main shrine, even if you are just crying, "Ah, Amitabha Buddha, I have been wronged. Amitabha Buddha." You will still recite Buddha a few more times. Therefore, at this time you should make a note of this, "**must uphold**," these two words, "**the three jewels as your teacher...**" You will have accepted them (the Three Jewels) from the depths of your heart but what will this depend on in order for this to happen? It will depend on reflection.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 10.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P22, L1]

Therefore I often will remind everyone, what is most precious about being human? Being able to contemplate. Yet when we study Buddhism now, we just stand there foolishly, ah, do not even move our brains. We just hear how reciting Buddha's name is good, ah! So we quickly recite, hoping that by secluding ourselves in the mountains and recite Buddha's name three times, then we will be able to go to Pure Land. Actually, I have exaggerated this a little, of course, it is not quite like that. However, I just wanted to particularly explain [the situation] that there are too many people who act this way. Yes, they do feel the pains of the mundane world, this is in itself a good state of mind. They do

understand Buddhism, that is a good thing but what should they then do? They need to skilfully find an excellent teacher or try to understand how to practice. Then strive to use this precious tool that came with this difficult to obtain human life of leisure and opportunity and reflect according to the teaching. As a result, his every thought revolves around it, whether he is in the actual session or doing the supporting actions. This is something you absolutely need to pay attention, absolutely need to pay attention! Therefore, with what I have just said, you absolutely need to understand. You should understand that to recite Buddha's name is one of the best method but if you are not skilled at it, the result will become as what it is now, corrupt practices everywhere. I just wanted to mention it while we are here, just wanted to mention it, just wanted to mention it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 11.34; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P22, L11]

Without this you are not included among Buddhists, no matter what virtue you have cultivated.

If you do not have this, no matter what virtue you have cultivated, no need to mention sins. Even if you have done virtue, you are not included among Buddhists. Therefore, now we understand, what is to be a Buddha's disciple? "**You must uphold the three jewels as your teacher...**" If you go for refuge at this time, then you will obtain the substance of refuge. Then upon your every arising thought there will be a particular state of mind, you will begin to function through this substance. We do not have to keep dwelling on the terms.

What is it actually like? When you have truly upheld your refuge, as soon as something is up, ah, you begin to think about what would Buddha want me to do. What should I do now? As soon as a thought surfaces, ah, I think I should be like this, I will do this! You will naturally be like this. You will naturally be like this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 12.26; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P23, L4]

For instance, we have now shaved our heads and begun to wear this monastic robe. You may forget at times but as soon as you take a look at yourself, "Ah, cannot do this! I have a monastic robe on." This is particularly the case for those who first begin to wear it. Perhaps you have that kind of experience. Sometimes you are so happy to go out, and then you think about it, and look at your robe, no, no, no. I can no longer do what I used to do. Right? Why is that? That is the same principle. That is once you have obtained this thing, naturally, with any arising thought you will feel, "Ah! This is wrong, this is wrong, I need to do it this way now!" There will naturally be this force in your mind. Therefore, when you apply this to ethical discipline, it is called "preventing wrongs and stopping sins." If you apply this to refuge, then your every arising will be to take refuge and rely with your whole heart. You will use the method of the Three Jewels as the standard for your conducts. If you do not have this, then it would not count! No matter what virtue you do, hey, hey, you are not a Buddhist. Like that. Since you are not a Buddhist, you will not obtain the benefits. The difference is that great!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 13.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P23, L13]

(b') You become worthy to uphold all vows

First you will have to obtain, obtain the refuge. Then the next step is to uphold the vow. "Vows" are ethical disciplines, this means all the vows, all the ethical disciplines. With the vows, there is a point to know, which is the good root of keeping ethical discipline. In other words, once you have obtained this thing, you can certainly produce a good fruit. All the benefits derived from vows and ethical disciplines will depend on refuge. Therefore, normally, no matter what we are receiving, of course this holds true when we receive the three refuges, but even upon receiving the five vows, the eight vows, the shramanera vows, the shramanerika vows, then the Bhilkshu vows, the Bodhisattva vows, the moment you obtain the substance to them is the moment you receive the three refuges. It is the moment you obtain the three refuges. It is this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 14.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P24, L5]

The *Treasury of Knowledge Auto-commentary* says:³⁵⁰

Those who go for refuge enter the door leading to the taking of all vows.

Also, Candrakirti's *Seventy Verses on Refuge* says:³⁵¹

O lay practitioners, going for refuge to the three jewels is the basis for the eight vows.³⁵² [155]

The *Treasure of Knowledge Auto-commentary*, the *Seventy Verses on Refuge* both say this, it is the basis to all vows. Well then, the lay practitioners here refer to upasaka and upasika, people who are close to the Three Jewels, who serve the Tathataga. Well then in the beginning, we rely on the Three Jewels, this is the basis for all the vows. These eight vows will be the five ethical discipline, and then the eight vows that we speak of. Then with everything above, the basis is all here.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 15.03; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P24, L11]

The intended meaning of these passages is that you make your aspiration for nirvana firm by going for refuge, and that your vows arise from this.

Why is the reason for this? Due to your refuge, therefore, **"you make your aspiration for nirvana firm."** What is nirvana? It is peace, to ultimately solve all problems. The very beginning to ultimately solving all problems starts where? It starts with refuge, starts with refuge. Now this principle is very plain, very clear because we can feel this everywhere, why do we go for refuge? This is because we know that the world is suffering. Therefore, what is nirvana? The ultimate cessation of suffering. It is that clear. With such cause, you will obtain such fruit! Through this attitude in your mind, you recognize this in your mind and you desire it, and then you will strive step by step to obtain it. In order to obtain it, you must follow to do so. To follow to do so means to uphold the vows,

all the vows. This is because you have received the vows, you have obtained the substance of the vows. The substance of the vows is the basis. From this basis, therefore, the foundation to the five attributes of the wisdom body (dharmakaya) is the vows. Through vows you obtain concentration then wisdom and then liberation. The views of liberation is obtained this way. The order is this clear, this excellent! It is this excellent! Therefore, think about the merit obtained through refuge, it is certainly immeasurable!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 16.40; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P25, L7]

(c') You reduce and eliminate previously accumulated karmic obstructions

After you go for refuge, the previously accumulated karmic obstructions will be reduced and even completely eliminated.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 16.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P25, L9]

In the section where it teaches that going for refuge clears away sins, the *Compendium of Trainings* says:³⁵³

Here you should take the edifying tale of the pig as an example.

Well, in the *Compendium of Trainings*, when it explains how going for refuge can clear away sins, it says that one can

use an example to explain this. What is it? The edifying tale of the pig. For the story told here, let me explain it, also let me read it [first].

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 17.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P25, L12]

Thus, just as the god who was about to be reborn as a pig avoided such a birth by going for refuge, so too do you eliminate the condition for rebirth in a miserable realm by going for refuge. Consequently, it is said:

**Those who go for
refuge to the Buddha
Do not go to miserable
realms. After giving up
human form,**

They assume the bodies of deities.

The same teaching applies to taking refuge in the teaching and the community: some previously accumulated sins are reduced, and some are eliminated.

The conditions for him to be reborn in heaven after going for refuge is this. There was such a deity, in a sutra called, 《Jie Mo Na Fa Tianzi Yinyuan Jing (羯摩那法天子因缘经)》, or another sutra, [anyway], he was a god. So when a god dies, there will be five signs of decay or when the god is approaching death. What are the "five signs of decay"? That is normally a deity will never have clothes that are unclean, but when he approaches death, his clothes will become dirty. Then the flower on his body, in particular the flower on the head, it is normally fresh and will not wither. By that time, the

flower will begin to wither. His body is usually clean and does not smell, by then his body will become dirty and smelly. Some say that the glowing light of the deity will disappear. Anyhow, these traits of the body will change from good to bad. Also, they do not usually perspire, but by that time, they will perspire under the arms. Then there is the fifth one, they become uneasy in his seat. Normally he sits atop his seat of the god and feel pretty happy, by that time, he will feel very uneasy to sit on it. When the five signs of decay appear, that means you will die soon. It is very much like when a person becomes sick with a fatal illness such as cancer, he will die soon.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 19.05; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P26, L11]

Therefore, when the god's five signs appeared, he knew that he will die soon. The heavenly beings have deva-vision, instantaneous view of anything anywhere in the form-realm. Ah! He is going to die. He felt great misery yet he knows that death is unavoidable. So he wished to see where he will be reborn after death. If he can be reborn into heaven after death, then it will still be acceptable but as he looked! He was going to fall to become a pig. Ah! No need to mention the fall to become a pig from being a god. Even for us humans to be reborn as pigs, do you think you can take it? You will absolutely not be able to take it, absolutely not be able to take it! No need to mention about becoming a pig, even if we ask you to go to the pig sty, and live there for a day, we would not be able to take it. I do not think anyone can take it right? Needless to say if you are from the heavens. Ah! He was in

great misery. So he went all over the place to seek for a solution. He asked many powerful gods, no one knew what to do. No matter who he sought after, there was no solution.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 19.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P27, L4]

Finally, that happened to be the time when Buddha appeared on earth. One god said, "Ah! Yes, yes, now that Buddha has appeared in this world, he is the omniscient in all three realms, a teacher for humans and deities, only he would know. You can only ask him, he will be able to help you." Then, this god went and pleaded with Buddha. Buddha told him - go for refuge. As long as you go for refuge, you will not fall to miserable realms. Then Buddha told him all sorts of benefits of going for refuge. Hence, with these verses, "**Those who go for refuge to the Buddha, do not go to miserable realms. After giving up human form, they assume the bodies of deities.**" These are verses from the sutra 《Jie Mo Na Fa Tianzi Yinyuan Jing》. So when he heard it, he was really happy and he went for refuge from the depths of his heart. After a few days, he really died, he really died. After he died, afterwards, did he fall? He did not fall [to miserable realms]. He was reborn as a god again.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 20.47; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P27, L10]

These causes and conditions, this story, you can go read it for yourself, it is absolutely true. So the store of merits obtained through going for refuge is incredible! He was going

to fall to become an animal, look at the severity of the situation? There was nothing that could have resolved this. Ah! As long as you go for refuge but pay attention here! This has been said repeatedly earlier, what is refuge? To obtain the substance of refuge, do not just say that I am going for refuge now. Whether my refuge concords or not, this is where the problem lies. This is what we need to truly check and examine. Let us rest for a moment now.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 21.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P27, L14]

Therefore, there was this story, look at how great this is! The third one, after you go for refuge, you will obtain such benefit, you can obtain this benefit. Actually, to be reborn in the heaven, it is still very little, very little. What is there to being reborn in the heaven?! Even when we want to escape cyclic existence in the three realms, this is still obtained through refuge!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P204; 49B, 21.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P28, L3]

(d') You will accumulate vast merit

This has been explained previously.

(e') You will not fall into the miserable realms

You should understand this from the earlier explanation.

This was said very clearly earlier.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 21.53; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P28, L5]

(f') You will not be thwarted by human or nonhuman hindrances

Will not be thwarted by humans or non-humans' hindrances.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 21.58; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P28, L7]

As it says in a sutra:³⁵⁴

People who are terrified

Mostly go for refuge

to deities of the

Mountains, forests,

temples, And the trees

of sacred places.

Such refuges are not

the foremost; Such

refuges are not

supreme.

If you rely on such a refuge,

You will not be freed from all suffering.

There are many people who faced adversities or things which frighten them, they will always look for something to rely on. What do they rely on? Deities of the mountains, forests, temples and the trees of sacred places, all sorts of things. This, truly, for anyone suffering an adversity, he will be looking

for something, perhaps not even a person, even for us.... not necessarily can we find refuge but these are things we can imagine! There are some who seek after gods, predictions, diviner, or we will be seeking for this, seeking for that, these are all the same. For all these things, "**such refuges are not supreme**," it is not auspicious, not correct, and not respectable. "**Such refuges are not the foremost.**" To truly go for refuge, there is only one, it is the only one, and everything other than this one is incorrect. For what he has gone for refuge, "**If you rely on such a refuge, you will not be freed from all suffering.**" This is because what he relied on was not foremost but an erroneous entity in itself, therefore, even though one can take refuge in this, but his sufferings will not be freed. On the contrary,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 23.24; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P29, L4]

**When you go for refuge to the Buddha,
The teaching, and the community,
You will see with wisdom
The four noble truths—
Suffering, the origin of suffering,
Correctly overcoming
suffering, And the
happy eightfold noble
path Leading to
nirvana.**

If you can go for refuge to the Three Jewels, know the real truth of suffering and happiness and the origination for

suffering and happiness, only through understanding can you then overcome suffering. The course of action you take to overcome suffering is the path - the eightfold noble path, the truth of the path. Then you will attain the happiness of nirvana which is the truth of cessation. This is the real refuge that can free you from all sufferings.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 24.05; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P29, L8]

**This is the
foremost refuge;
This is the
supreme refuge.
If you rely on such a refuge,
You will be freed from all suffering.**

This, we should know, this is what? By wisdom, only by wisdom can you truly find the correct refuge according to the principle and obtain the benefits, you go to refuge to "**the four noble truths.**" This is most supreme. Supreme means exalted. This is the only one to be respected in all of the three realms because this is true, without any false and it is auspicious. Everything else is vulgar, only this is truly the foremost and the only [refuge]. Through your refuge to this, you will be freed from all suffering, freed from all suffering!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 24.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P30, L1]

It was said earlier you will not be thwarted by humans or non-humans' hindrances. Regarding this we would say, after you have gone for refuge to the Three Jewels, there will immediately be Dharma protectors to come support you. Oh, so we say, "So the non-humans' cannot hinder you but how can people not hinder you after refuge? It is an observable fact to us that after I have gone for refuge, people still give me a hard time!" With this point I need to explain this a little. I need to explain this a little. This is a misunderstanding. We should understand that Buddhism tells us that everything operates under the law of cause and effect, dependent arising. Once you truly understand this, no one can harm you, only yourself! What can truly harm you? Your ignorance. You do not understand the subjective aspects of ignorance and you pursue the sensory object. Then it is bad, it is bad! Therefore, if you understand that everything operates under the law of cause and effect, dependent arising, then when others harm you, ah, that is when you should think about it, why does he harm you? If there was a cause such that you had hurt him before, now that he harms you, of course, it is due to happen to you, so you have paid the debt! This is the principle spoken earlier. If you correctly understand the situation, then certainly - the only method, what would it depend on? It depends on refuge to the Three Jewels and your correct and adequate amount of understanding of the principle. Then the issue will be resolved. This is a very important concept. Of course! If you cannot even be thwarted by human hindrances, needless to say non-humans' hindrances. In all of the three realms, truly, humans are the strongest.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 26.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P30, L11]

Here you should use as examples the stories about the non-Buddhist who mastered the magic rope, and so forth.³⁵⁵ [156]

There is an example here, but I do not know the story.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 26.31; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P31, L13]

**(g') You will accomplish everything you wish
If, before undertaking a religious activity, you make offerings to the three jewels, go for refuge, and then pray to succeed, you will easily accomplish it.**

No matter what you wish for, through refuge you can accomplish it. No matter what things you wish to do which accord with the teachings, as long as you offer and go for refuge to the Three Jewels first, and then you pray, you will easily accomplish it. Of course, when you go for refuge to the Three Jewels, the things you wish for should then certainly accord with the teachings. Actually, even what you wished for does not accord with the teaching, it will be accomplished anyway, will be accomplished anyway. There was such a story from before, let me explain this now. There was a shramanera who went to the naga palace for offering, went to the naga palace for offering. Normally....no, [actually] there was an arhat. So the arhat [had gone to the palace]. Though this arhat had a disciple, but the arhat would normally go by

himself instead of taking the shramanera along. So there was one time later when this shramanera secretly hid under the power of the teacher and obtained some food from the naga palace. Ah! He thought that the naga palace was so great and wished to gain control of the palace. So he diligently upheld ethical discipline, offered diligently, and made aspirational prayers [for this]. In the end, as he wished, the shramanera became a powerful naga king. He went to the naga palace and killed all the naga kings. Just like that. Even a bad wish can come true, needless to say a virtuous wish! As long as you do things according to the teachings, you will certainly obtain this. Well then next is number eight.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 28.21; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P31, L11]

(h') You will quickly achieve Buddhahood

This is the most ultimate.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 28.23; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P31, L13]

The *Sutra Requested by a Lion (Simha-pariprccha-sutra)* says:³⁵⁶

Through faith you overcome a lack of leisure.

Thus, one who obtains a special kind of leisure, encounters the refuge, and trains in the special path will achieve Buddhahood without delay.

Much like what was said earlier in the scriptures, because you have pure faith, therefore you can overcome a lack of leisure. Once you overcome a lack of leisure, you can then practice, can practice when you encounter the auspicious refuge, train in the special path, then of course you will progress to become Buddha. If you achieve Buddhahood, ah! All problems are solved and all benefits are obtained. Then everything else before really becomes secondary.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 49B, 29.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P32, L4]

Each day, recall the benefits in the above manner. Then go for refuge three times during the day and three times during the night.

With this principle mentioned before, you want to continually recall and reflect. This is because after you recall and reflect, you will discover, ah! All the benefits you wish for are all within. By then, naturally you would be diligent and go for refuge. Why are we unable to do this? It is because some enjoyments, ah, are hard to let go! If you can reflect and analyze according to the teachings, you will discover that all the good things are, hey, obtained through refuge to the Three Jewels. (Not only) the enjoyment that you have now is so small, it cannot be any smaller, but, you will lose great benefits by being greedy for these little ones. Therefore, he does not ask you to forsake, quite the contrary, he wants you to obtain great benefits.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 50A, 00.59; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P35, L8]

So there are many people who cannot let this go, cannot let this go, I feel that these people are really good for nothing. If there should be things that you cannot let go of, they should be the great things! You cannot let go of small things now – what are the things I do not care, I cannot let go of? (It is) The worlds of the trichiliocosm, I cannot let go of Pure Land, I cannot let go of the Pure Land of all Buddhas in their saṃbhogakāya (enjoyment bodies) (or world of the Lotus sanctuary?). If these are the things that you cannot let go of, then you have got guts! If you truly feel that you cannot let these go, then you will certainly obtain them. If you are able to attain those, then you would not want this little bit [of a good thing that you have now] even if we give it to you for free. This is what we should truly understand. Therefore, we certainly need to understand its auspicious benefits. Once you can obtain such great benefits, ah, all the petty issues will go away. Therefore, this is why he tells us, we should reflect and analyze often. It is just like that. Normally when others block us from obtaining little benefits, ah! We become extremely mad! Now here lies such great benefit, and no one can take this away from us, it is there just waiting for us! Therefore, I said do not be someone who is good for nothing, we want to be someone promising and with prospects. That is the way to be!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 50A, 02.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P36, L9]

This is number five. Once I know the auspicious benefits, then it becomes easier. Thus, we often say, "Oh! How should I recite Buddha's name?" It is simple! As long as you know that there is such great benefit. Once you truly know, ah! It is easy to recite Buddha's name. We cannot stop you even if we want to. This principle is now very plain and very clear. (But) why is it that we cannot do it even it is very plain and clear? The answer (.....), let us pause for a while, and let you think about it carefully, think about it carefully. If you cannot figure it out, come and ask me. I will then tell you. If you figure it out, you might want to ask me as well, (just to check) whether your thought is correct or wrong? I may not know for sure, but at least I know what the scriptures and what Buddhas and Bodhisattvas tell us. I can point to you the complete instructions.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P205; 50A, 03.14; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P37, L1]

(f) Maintain your refuge and do not forsake the three jewels, even in jest or if it costs you your life

When you truly have gone for refuge, you will uphold it in jest, the least, but in the most serious case, even if it cost you your life do not forsake it. It is so refuge, therefore, if you can maintain your refuge, you will naturally be able to uphold precept, and others. Thus, as long as you can accomplish this fundamental, you will be able to accomplish all those mentioned above. The fact now is that we do not have the fundamentals down. So, there are many people now, oh, they hope to get the Bodhisattva vows and perhaps even the great

initiation of Mantra. do not occupy yourself with that. Practice refuge well first, and when you are good at that, the rest will, easily, come one by one. You will naturally obtain them all. If you do not have this foundation, then nothing is good for you, not the Bodhisattva's vow, not the Mantra initiations... not even if Buddha appears in front of you to give it to you, it would still be futile. Or if you go see the Buddha, it would be useless either. There are too many examples from Buddha's time [telling exactly this], too many. Next it says:

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 04.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P37, L10]

Inevitably you will lose your body, life, and resources but, if you forsake the three jewels for the sake of these, you will suffer continually throughout many lives.

We are unable to let many things go. We always have difficulty. Now here is the worst thing, even if it is your life. For those who truly go for refuge, even at the cost of his life, he will not forsake refuge. Why? This is because your life and the resources that you have now, even if you safeguard it now and forsake refuge, sorry, in the end, can you really safeguard it? You will still die in the end! There are many who have not gone for refuge and they did not live a long life either, this is very obvious. When the time comes, still have to die. If this is the case, would not you have done it (forsake the refuge) for nothing? Would not you have done it for nothing? Therefore, if you are trying to protect what is supposed to die, what you will have to give up anyway, and for this you forsake [refuge], that is really too bad, really too

bad! Therefore, if for this you choose to forsake the Three Jewels, then it is over. **"You will suffer continually throughout many lives."** So, under any circumstance, absolutely do not forsake [refuge], absolutely do not forsake it.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 05.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P38, L5]

Conversely, when suffering arise, if you can go for refuge, then what will gradually happen to this suffering? It will reduce because it is karma! This is because you have truly gone for refuge and come to know what is correct to do, this karmic obstacle will gradually be cleared away. Thus, this suffering will gradually be alleviated. All of this will begin with refuge and the reason you go for refuge is for exactly this. Thus, if you encounter suffering and choose to forsake refuge, can you going for refuge be counted as a [real] refuge?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 06.04; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P38, L9]

Thus, you should repeatedly vow that whatever happens you will not forsake your refuge-not even mouthing the words in jest.

Once you understand this, reflect and analyze this, you will then make a vow: Ah! You will bite your teeth down [and do it]. What is this vow? For what you aspire to, you will certainly accomplish it. That is a vow (a pledge). Thus, even in jest, you will not forsake refuge. Under any circumstance, you will not forsake it. This is the principle.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 06.33; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P38, L13]

Former teachers have said that there is a precept that you should practice going for refuge to the *tathagata* of whichever direction you are going in. I have not seen a source for this.

There is another point, this says that there are former teachers who say that after we have gone for refuge, there should be a precept. Now he tells us that after refuge, there are a few things to be learned. Some former teachers said there is one particular to be learned, which is wherever you go, such as: Oh, normally this may be said for the Mantra vehicle! In the direction of the east there is a certain Tathagata, in the south there is a certain Tathagata, in the south there is the Bao Sheng Tathagata, in the west there is the Amitabha Buddha and so forth. If you go to a certain place, you should then go to refuge to that Buddha and if you go to another place, you should go to refuge to this Buddha. There was such a saying. However, with this saying, Lama Tsong Kha Pa said, "**I have not seen a source for this.**" Not seen a source for this. [This means] to go for refuge, you will be going for refuge to the Three Jewels of all ten directions, just like that. This is the meaning. Thus, what you should learn primarily is the aforementioned precepts as how they appear from the Compendium of Determination and in the oral traditions.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 07.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P39, L7]

I have presented the six general precepts in accordance with how they appear in Atisha's *Commentary on the Difficult Points of the "Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment."*

The six general precepts mentioned earlier explains the comments on *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*. Why does he say this here? This is quite related because this shows the lineage teacher. For someone who is so highly achieved, whether Lama Tsong Kha Pa, or Je Atisha, just take a look at this. We know that in India, Je Atisha had been called the second "able in generosity" (Buddha), so had Lama Tsong Kha Pa. As brilliant as they are, as soon as they speak, they speak of lineage, where the original source came from, where did I receive this teaching, beginning from my teacher, his teacher, and the teacher before and before that, and at the very end of the line, this teaching came from Buddha. [They would say] what the commentary explains and what the sutra explains regarding this topic. Even for them who are so highly achieved, they are still this careful. Yet for us now, we are not even like that a little bit. We open our mouth to say whatever and we would even say, "Oh, you must do this, you must do that." This is where our mistake is.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 08.45; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P40, L1]

Make note of this! When you truly learn the teaching, the first thing you should recognize is - I am mistaken. You definitely should not think that "I am right" and ask others to follow to do things. Then you are completely wrong. Just by thinking that you are right, you are harming yourself. If you

are going to teach others, then you will be harming others. Um, this is very terrible! Though this seems irrelevant, it seems like that. Actually, this is really important here, when we truly begin to learn, we must begin to learn from this, begin to learn from this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 09.11; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P40, L5]

The first three of the special precepts are explained in the sutras,

Well then the above describes the general precepts and relates the source. So for the [earlier part of the] special precepts, there were [the first] three within the special precepts right? Between the proscriptive and the prescriptive precepts, the first three of the special precepts (which are the proscriptive precepts) are told in the sutras. Then within the special precepts, there are the last three precepts,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 09.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P40, L8]

the other three in Vimalamitra's *Six Aspects of Going for Refuge (Sad-anga-sarana-gamana)*:³⁵⁷

An image, verse, or

Discarded scrap of yellow cloth:

Out of faith and belief, consider it to be the Teacher;

Do not mistakenly deny anything he has said,

Rather place it on the crown of your head;

**View pure and impure persons
As though they were noble. [157]**

This is the same as in the special precepts, the same content as for the three prescriptive precepts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 09.54; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P40, L11]

**With respect to the precepts drawn from the
Compendium of Determinations,³⁵⁸**

The *Compendium of Determinations* also says this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 10.01; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P41, L1]

the sayings of Ga-ma-pa state, "Neu-sur-ba did not teach these [precepts of going for refuge], but he and I received them together from Gon-ba-wa."

This is where his teaching comes from. There, the lineage he speaks of, Gon-ba-wa was one of three great disciples of Je Atisha in Kangdi. From Neu-sur-ba, it has been passed down through one generation after another, all the way until Lama Tsong Kha Pa. So this represents the source. At every place, you can go through the sutra and commentaries and trace it back to Buddha.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 10.38; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P41, L5]

They appear in the presentation of the stages of the path transmitted from Gon-ba-wa through Lum-ba-wa (Lum-pa-ba).

So this tells us the source. Well then, the aforementioned is what we should learn after going for refuge. Let us continue.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 10.55; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P41, L7]

How contravening these precepts causes weakening and forsaking of your refuge is explained as follows.

Once you have gone for refuge, what if you have weakened it, what should you do? Then, what is forsaking refuge? Let me explain this principle a little bit.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 11.10; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P41, L9]

Some assert that if you violate six of the precepts—

There is one kind, one type of saying is that, "With the principles you have said earlier, if you violate six of these precepts, then you will have forsaken refuge." So which six [are they referring to]?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 11.28; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P41, L12]

the first three special precepts, plus the precepts of constantly going for refuge, not forsaking refuge even for the sake of your life, and making offerings to the three jewels—you have given up your refuge.

The first three are: once we have gone for refuge to the Buddha, we will not go to other teachers for refuge; once we have gone for refuge to the teaching, we should stop harbouring harmful thoughts; once we have gone for refuge to the community, we should not befriend non-Buddhist philosophers. These are the principles. With "**befriend**," this was explained earlier. We should remember that. Other than these three things, there are more. "**Constantly going for refuge**" is after we have formally gone for refuge, we should constantly be going for refuge. If we do not do that, it would be wrong. Also, the fifth one, "**not forsaking refuge even for the sake of your life.**" Then number six, "**making offerings to the three jewels.**" With these six things, if you cannot do them, it will be equivalent to forsaking the refuge. Then there are others who said this,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 12.15; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P42, L6]

Others include the last three special precepts and assert that contravention of nine precepts constitutes forsaking refuge.

Others said that contravening the nine precepts constitutes forsaking refuge. So this adds the last three precepts, which are the last three precepts from the "**special**

precepts." So taking the six mentioned above and adding the latter three precepts from the special precepts.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 12.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P42, L9]

Contravention of the remaining precepts weakens your refuge.

If you did not contravene the six or the nine above, then you will have done a little, you will have weakened it but not violated it. This is what was mentioned before.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 12.52; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P42, L12]

So here now, Lama Tsong Kha Pa tells us, if in your mind, you have this type of thought and concept, then you will be wrong. What is it? This says,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 13.08; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P43, L2]

However, an actual forsaking of refuge means that you have contravened the precept not to forsake refuge even for the sake of your life.

This says that, when you encounter difficulty, even if your life is in danger, if you have forsaken the Three Jewels, then you would have actually forsaken refuge. If this is the case,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P206; 50A, 13.26; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P43, L5]

Similarly, even if you do not forsake the three jewels, if you follow both of them and a teacher, teaching, and community that are contrary to them, you contravene the precept not to acknowledge other refuges. Since you are not fully entrusting yourself to the refuge, you have forsaken it.

What is the reason for this? He said that when you truly go for refuge, there is a certain ritual or something. Of course when you forsake it, you will have to face someone and say, "Oh, I do not go for refuge now, I forsake it." Actually, in your mind, even if you have not done so externally in a ritual, your mind has already forsaken it. Normally when one go for refuge to the Three Jewels, your mind definitely relies and chooses the Teacher to be the only refuge. Then His teaching is the only standard to rely on for conducts and the fellow practitioners aiding your practice, the collective companions make up the community. However, if you think of this in your mind, "Ah, this cannot be, cannot be. If I do this, it will endanger my life, oh, no, no!" If you think like this, you will have contravened against the meaning of the refuge. At this time, it would mean you did not truly entrust yourself to the refuge. If you have not truly gone for refuge, then of course the refuge has been forsaken.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 14.39; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P44, L1]

I think that if these two do not occur, other contraventions of the precepts are just contraventions, but not causes of forsaking refuge.

If your mind did not have these thoughts but with what was said earlier regarding the principles to abide by after refuge, if you have not done them well, you have contravened a little, then [the seed in] the causal period is not perfect. You have planted a seed to forsake the Three Jewels. However, you have not actually produced an actual effect of forsaking the Three Jewels.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 15.09; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P44, L5]

This being the case, going for refuge is the main door to the Buddha's teaching.

Therefore, refuge is the main door to the Buddha's teaching.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 15.16; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P44, L7]

If you go for refuge in a way that transcends mere words,

If this refuge is not just talk but that you have truly entrusted yourself to the refuge in your mind, then this is truly the safest, most auspicious, and most supreme power. This power is really an incredible power, an incredible power! This was said many times before.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 15.44; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P44, L11]

you will not be defeated by outer and inner obstacles, for you are relying upon the highest power.

Whether it is inner or outer. Outer will be other people, whether the harm is from living beings or non-living beings. Inner will be afflictions and karma...etc. They all cannot defeat you.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 16.00; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P45, L1]

Since good qualities develop easily and deteriorate with difficulty, they can only continue to increase.

Thus after you have gone for refuge, with refuge, the good qualities will develop easily and deteriorate with difficulty. After you have gone for refuge, it is easy to develop good qualities and they will not deteriorate. Even with deterioration...they will not deteriorate. Even if there is deterioration, it will be little. For us now, it is difficult for us to develop good qualities and they readily deteriorate. Once they develop? "**Continue to increase.**" They will increase exponentially at a rapid pace.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 16.35; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P45, L5]

Therefore, it is extremely important, as previously explained, to uphold the refuges by means of fearing suffering, recalling the good qualities of the refuges, and so forth, and to make an effort not to transgress the precepts.

Thus through this we understand. Once we know, yes, it is certainly through what was said earlier, from understanding the truth of the three realms, how fleeting impermanence is, and the suffering from having to fall to the miserable realms after death, that we fear this suffering and seek liberation. We then find the real refuge, uphold it with our hearts and strive to not contravene. This is the most, most important meaning to refuge. With this point, we should understand. If we follow to do so, we will certainly obtain this good quality.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 17.25; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P45, L10]

***Question:* Thus when you generate fear through mindfulness of death and the thought that, after death, you will be reborn in a miserable realm, the refuge that protects you from this is the three jewels. You uphold them as your refuge and do not contravene their precepts. Nonetheless, how do the refuges protect you?**

So next we have to think, "Right! Since through thinking of how fast death and impermanence approaches and how we will fall into miserable realms after death, ah, this is horrible! This is because we fear this suffering, we look for a haven for reliance and protection. As a result, you found the Three Jewels. Then after you go to the Three Jewels for refuge, he then tells us what we should learn. As we learn as such, how does He protect? How does he protect us? Ah, right, this is what we should understand! He then says next,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 18.18; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P46, L3]

Reply: The *Collection of Indicative Verses* states:³⁵⁹

I, the Tathagata, the Teacher,

Reveal to you

The path that stops the pains of existence;

You must follow it. [158]

Ah, now here it explains the principle. Therefore, the scriptures are cited first for proof and the principles are then explained. What does the scripture say? In the *Collection of Indicative Verses*, this says that what truly can stop suffering, "**the path that stops the pains of [the arrow of] cyclic existence.**" Arrow is what can harm us. For the real path which can help us avoid this suffering, let me explain this to you. Who is [explaining] this? He is the Tathagata, "**the Tathagata, the Teacher.**" The real Teacher. He can tell you how to solve your problems. "**You must follow it.**" You should follow Him, listen to him, and practice according to Him, then your problems will be resolved. Therefore,

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 19.07; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P46, L9]

Thus, the Buddha is the one who teaches refuge,

The real teacher.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 19.12; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P46, L11]

and the community assists you in accomplishing refuge,

The community, after you have gone for refuge, they are your companions as you practice. This is very important.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 19.19; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P46, L13]

but the real refuge is the jewel of the teaching,

Therefore, what is the real refuge? The Jewel of the Teaching. With this sentence, pay attention! What we really go for refuge to is the Jewel of the Teaching. So another question can be raised here. It has been said earlier that we go to the Buddha Jewel for refuge, not any other. Here it tells us that the real refuge is the Teaching Jewel. May I ask you then, which one is it? Many scriptures will say, "Oh! the only refuge is the Buddha Jewel." Here it tells us the real refuge is the Teaching Jewel. May I ask you then, "Is there any conflict here?" You think about it and I will tell you the answer tomorrow. However, sometimes, by tomorrow, by tomorrow I may forget. My memory is not as good now, so I hope that perhaps the students can remind me, can remind me. There seemed to be another question earlier, I have forgotten what the question was earlier, remind me again and I will tell you.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 20.22; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P47, L8]

Of course, my main purpose for doing this is to encourage you to really think about it. If you truly think about it, then as soon as I bring this up, you will get the key concept

to this, get the key concept to this. do not be afraid of being wrong as you think about it! Truthfully speaking, we are always going to be wrong. If we are always correct, why do we bother to come and learn? We would all be correct! Actually, it is because we are all wrong, that is why we must learn. Need to understand this principle. Therefore, do not be afraid of being wrong, but be afraid of not knowing! Not only should you stop being afraid of being wrong but you should understand that you do not know. Thus, through you reflecting on it, you will be able to find where your mistakes are. Through reflection, this is brought up, and you will be able to patch up the holes [in your logic]. Only this way can we advance step by step, do you understand? This is why I want you to reflect! You should also skilfully use this opportunity [because] this is the best help for you. If you keep thinking, ah, [here it goes again, he is] asking us to think on our own. That would be your greatest loss. This is something you should make a note of. Continuing on.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 21.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P48, L2]

because once you have attained it, you are liberated from fear.

This is because if you have truly attained it, then all the fears and sufferings are liberated, are liberated. Next it will explain this principle, this Teaching Jewel. Regarding this Teaching Jewel, what is this Teaching Jewel to attain?

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 21.50; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P48, L5]

With regard to this, the ultimate teaching jewel is defined as being the special fulfilment of the gradual increase of two things—the beginning practitioner's elimination of a mere portion of faults, and his or her knowledge that brings about a mere portion of good qualities. This is not something that appears adventitiously.

This is the real Teaching Jewel. The Teaching is comprised of the scriptural knowledge and the experiential knowledge, everyone still remembers this right? What is the teaching? The content of it is the scriptural and the experiential knowledge. "Scriptural" tell us the characteristic of the teaching, how you should practice and what are the benefits. Like that. Then once you have learned it, you follow the teaching to practice it, to "experience" it. This quintessential thing which you have attained according to the principles is called the Teaching Jewel. Therefore, at the very least, even a mere portion of it (the teaching), comes from properly listening, understanding, and practicing according to what is understood. As a result of this practice, you will move further away from faults and bring about good qualities. To eliminate a portion of the fault, you will eliminate a portion of the suffering. To bring about a portion of good quality, you will obtain a portion of happiness. From the point of "moving away from" faults, it means "elimination." From the point of "bringing about good quality," it is "experiencing." Therefore, it is nonetheless the two things of elimination and experiencing. Through the gradual increase of them you shall obtain [the teaching], shall obtain it. This means, it is not obtained adventitiously, something that came from anywhere

else. Therefore, there is absolutely nothing that will just fall [into your lap] from the sky. This is said very clearly here. The scriptures tell us this, the scriptures tell us this.

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 23.36; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P49, L2]

If no one wishes to learn then it is fine but if you do wish to learn, it is said very clearly here. Do not wait, to just plainly wait for nothing, you will be wasting your time for nothing! The only method is to practice it yourself. To practice, you must understand the method of practice. To understand the method of practice, you must certainly listen. To listen, you must find an excellent teacher. Therefore, the stages are very clear, very obvious. Then once you have obtained the excellent teacher's guidance and instructions, you follow it to reflect, to grasp and understand the characteristics of how to practice. Then you advance step by step and by then, you will obtain the Teaching Jewel. Once you have obtained this Teaching Jewel, sufferings will be freed, good qualities will be established, thus one by one, you will accomplish them!

[English Lamrim Text Vol 1, P207; 50A, 24.30; Original Chinese Commentary Script Vol 7, P49, L8]

Oh! Now that we understand, oh, we have finally found the source to be this. In order to be freed from suffering, the root is here, on the teaching. Well then what is the teaching? How do you practice? How do you go away from faults? How do you experience good quality? Of course, then with this

teaching, you should have a correct understanding! Therefore, it says.