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*A Drop
from the Ocean of Mind
and Mental Factors*

A Short Introduction to Mind and Mental Factors

Topic: Mind and Mental Factors
Translator and Compiler: Tenzin Dongak

A Happy Monks Publication



Happy Monks Publication

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Preface

This booklet on mind and mental factors is a collection of translated parts of different texts relating to the topic of Mind and Mental Factors.

Primarily it is based on Gachen Yeshe Gyaltzen's *A Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness* and Gyaltzab Je's *Commentary on the Compendium of Knowledge*.

It also contains small parts of Gyaltzab Je's *Commentary on the Introduction to Actions of Bodhisattvas*, Gyalwa Gedun Drub's *Mirror Clearly Reflecting the Meaning of the Middle Way* and others.

A tiny part is my own but still hopefully based on the above mentioned texts. I apologise for any mistakes in this text, which are entirely mine. If you feel there are mistakes please do not hesitate to contact me.

I put this booklet together because I wanted to offer an alternative to a normal literal translation from a Tibetan monastic text book and out of my desire to share dharma information that I have access to because of knowing Tibetan, and which may otherwise perhaps be hard to come by.

A Necklace for Those of Clear Awareness is itself a compendium on mind and mental factors that is primarily based on *The Compendium of Knowledge* by Asanga, and incooperates definitions and quotes from many other major sources. It is more detailed and scholarly than this text, and a translation is currently available from the FPMT Basic Program material.

The Compendium of Knowledge by the great pioneer Asanga is one of the two main sources for definitions and divisions of mind and mental factors. The other main source is *The Treasury of Knowledge* by the Venerable Vasubandu.

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Mind	3
Mental Factors	
Mental Factors in General	5
Fifty-One Mental Factors	
The Five Ever-Present Mental Factors	7
The Five Ascertaining Mental Factors	13
The Eleven Virtuous Mental Factors	19
Virtue and Non-Virtue	
Virtue	35
Non-Virtue	37
The Mental Afflictions	
The Way One is Kept in Samsara	41
The Sequence the Afflictions are Generated	42
The Six Root Afflictions	43
The Twenty Associated Afflictions	
In General	59
Ten Associated Afflictions Conjoined with Individual Afflicted Minds	61
Two Associated Afflictions Conjoined with all Non-Virtuous Minds	65
Eight Associated Afflictions Conjoined with all Afflicted Minds	67
The Four Changeable Mental Factors	71

Purchok Ngawang Jampa:

Consciousness is clarity and knowing.

A Drop from the Ocean of Mind and Mental Factors

A Short Introduction to Mind and Mental Factors

Introduction

Both the temporary happiness in daily life, as well as the ultimate happiness of liberation and enlightenment depend on the mind.

Lama Thubten Yeshe:

When you study Buddhism you are studying yourself - the nature of your body, speech and mind, with the main emphasis being on the nature of your mind and how it works in everyday life. Why is it so important to know the nature of your own mind?

Since we all want happiness, enjoyment, peace and satisfaction, and since these things do not come from ice cream but from wisdom and the mind, we have to understand what the mind is and how it works.

Shakyamuni Buddha said:

Not committing a single negativity and
Perfecting the accumulation of virtue -
Perfectly subduing one's own mind,
This is the teaching of the Buddha.

All the teachings of the Buddha are contained in the four noble truths, which are the blueprint for the whole of the Buddhist path. Suffering is to be known, its cause is to be abandoned, the cessation of suffering is to be attained and the path leading there is to be practiced.

In order to stop suffering one needs to go to the source of suffering, which is karma and mental afflictions. Out of these two, the mental afflictions are more significant because without them karma cannot ripen and one does not create any new karma.

It is therefore essential to identify the different mental afflictions in one's mind stream and then to counteract them with the appropriate antidotes. To this end the presentation of minds and mental factors is an invaluable aid, because it gives a good overview over the major mental afflictions and the mental states that counteract them.

From *The Debate between Wisdom and Ignorance*:

The reflection of illusory appearance arises
Within the mirror of the empty mind.

Mind

In general consciousness is defined as that which is clear and knowing, and while it can be looked at from many different perspectives, here it is according to its division into minds and mental factors.

Definition: A mind is a consciousness that distinguishes itself through its mere focus on the object. It does not need to be explained in the context of any specific function, such as keeping the object in mind, recognising its uncommon characteristics and the like.

.Divisions: Mind is divided into six types of main consciousness:

1. Main eye-consciousness
2. Main ear-consciousness
3. Main nose-consciousness
4. Main tongue-consciousness
5. Main body-consciousness
6. Main mental-consciousness

The six types of main consciousness are labelled in dependence on their uncommon empowering condition.

Because of the way the English terms have been assigned, mind is synonymous with main mind, main consciousness and the aggregate of main consciousness. They exclude mental factors.

Consciousness is synonymous with awareness and knower, and includes mental factors as well as main minds. There are three possibilities between main consciousness and consciousness:

1. Both: The main eye-consciousness is a main consciousness and a consciousness.
2. Neither: Blue is form and is therefore neither.
3. Consciousness but not main consciousness: The mental factor of feeling that accompanies the main eye-consciousness.

There is nothing that could be main eye-consciousness but not consciousness.

Chöden Rinpoche:

Like the illusory appearance of true appearance, the appearance of the reflection of form in the mirror comes about through a meeting between the form and the mirror.

Similarly, illusory conventional appearance comes about through a meeting between the mirror of the empty mind and external objects such as forms. Thus comes about a mere illusory appearance that does not exist truly. At the time of no investigation and analysis it seems to exist inherently, but when investigating as explained earlier then no inherent existence is found.

Whatever illusory conventional appearance there is to the mind, it is a mere appearance to the mind, it is merely adventitiously imputed by the mind, it is imputed by conceptual thought.

Mental Factors

(Mental Factors in General; Fifty-One Mental Factors)

Mental Factors in General

Definition: Mental factors are consciousnesses that are not merely focused on the object, but are characterised by a specific function such as keeping the object in mind, recognising uncommon characteristics and the like.

They influence the mind in much the same way as a mere drop of ink colors a whole glass of water. One harmful mental factor such as anger colors the whole of the accompanying main consciousness negatively, while a positive mental factor, such as love, puts the accompanying mind in a positive state. Once one has generated a positive mental factor one should keep it in mind with mindfulness, concentration and introspection.

Five Aspects of Correspondence

Mental factors and the main consciousness they accompany are conjoined in five aspects:

1. Corresponding basis: Relying on the same empowering condition.
2. Corresponding focus: Focusing on the same object.
3. Corresponding aspect: Arising in the same aspect.
4. Corresponding time: Being generated simultaneously.
5. Corresponding substance: Being of similar individual substance.

Example

The main eye-consciousness apprehending blue and its accompanying entourage of five ever-present mental factors are conjoined in five aspects:

1. Corresponding basis: All are generated from the same uncommon empowering condition - the eye-sense power that is their cause.
2. Corresponding object: All are generated from blue.
3. Corresponding aspect: All arise in the aspect of blue.
4. Corresponding time: They generate, abide and disintegrate simultaneously.
5. Corresponding substance: All are the same individual substance in that there is always only one substance of each. E.g., only one mental factor of feeling with only one main consciousness.

Lama Yeshe:

At that moment there is clear light experience, your consciousness vision. There aren't any sensory objects, there's no sensory beauty, there's no sensory color, there's no substance of sensory object at all.

So all your pride objects are gone, all your desire objects are gone, all your hatred objects are gone, all your jealousy objects are gone, all your egotistic objects are gone, at that time.

All your depressed vision is gone.

All the black vision is gone.

Only light vision. That's true, only light vision.

The Fifty-One Mental Factors

(The Five Ever-Present Mental Factors; the Five Ascertaining Mental Factors; the Eleven Virtuous Mental Factors; the Six Root Afflictions; the Twenty Associated Afflictions and the Four Changeable Mental Factors)

The Five Ever-Present Mental Factors

(Feeling, Recognition, Intention, Contact, Attention)

There is a minimum of five mental factors that accompany each main consciousness. These are called *the five ever-present mental factors* because if one of them is missing then the engagement of the object will be incomplete.

From a Sutra:

If it has not been established and compounded through attention and intention, then how could main consciousness arise?

Yongdzin Purchok Ngawang Jampa in *Awareness and Knowers*:

There is no definite need for them to exist manifestly because at the time of the subtle mind of death, or when one is just about to take a new rebirth, and also during the absorption on cessation and at some other times, feelings and some others engage merely in a non-manifest way.

Feeling - The Aggregate of Feeling

Briefly

Feeling is a consciousness in the nature of experience. If there is no feeling then there is no experience of happiness, suffering and so forth.

Elaborately

Definition: From the *Compendium of Knowledge*: What is the definition of feeling? Feeling is that which is in the nature of experience; through feeling, the ripening results of virtuous and non-virtuous karmas are individually experienced.

All happy, suffering or neutral experiences are the ripening results of virtuous, non-virtuous or neutral karmas respectively, being individually experienced. Even the pleasure one experiences from a cool breeze on a hot summer's day, or the slight discomfort of a headache are karmic results.

Divisions: Feeling has the threefold division into happiness, suffering and equanimity. Happiness is that which we wish to meet, suffering is that which we wish to avoid and equanimity is that, in regard to which we do not have a particular wish.

This division of feeling into three becomes a sixfold division by incorporating the bases of body and mind: three physical feelings and three mental feelings. The difference between physical and mental feelings is whether the feeling arises in conjunction with a sense consciousness or with a mental consciousness.

The three physical feelings: physical happiness, physical suffering and physical equanimity. The three mental feelings: mental happiness, mental suffering and mental equanimity.

Feelings to Be Abandoned and Feelings to Be Attained

Physical happiness arises only through contact with an outer object and is therefore fragile and fleeting. True happiness is mental happiness that arises without contact with outer objects. It is born only through the power of the mind, independently of outer conditions, and is therefore a stable and true inner friend, especially once combined with wisdom.

By generating positive thoughts such as love and compassion and reducing harmful thoughts such as anger and attachment, mental happiness is generated naturally.

His Holiness the fourteenth Dalai Lama:

Buddhism is a philosophy to make the mind happier.

Ultimately one needs to generate uncontaminated happiness, which arises in conjunction with the wisdom realising emptiness directly. This is the only feeling which can free the mind from the net of afflictions and liberate the person from the circle of death and rebirth in cyclic existence.

If one has no experience of uncontaminated happiness then one needs to make an effort to generate it in the mind by endeavoring to realize emptiness. Any other feeling lacks essence, from the general experiences of daily life up to the feelings of bliss and equanimity generated in the higher realms, which are even free from the fault of suffering of change.

Recognition - The Aggregate of Recognition

Briefly

Recognition is a consciousness that apprehends the uncommon characteristics of the object. Without recognition the accompanying main mind cannot apprehend these characteristics.

Elaborately

Definition: Recognition is a knower that apprehends the uncommon characteristics of the object through the meeting of the object, sense power and consciousness.

It recognises the special characteristics and patterns of the object and thus can discriminate it from other phenomena and label it. It labels the meaning one understands through seeing, hearing, and investigating the objects of consciousness. Without recognition no label would be attached to the object.

Correct Assumption, Inferential Cognition and Non-Conceptual Perception:

Recognition labels objects that are seen, it labels the meaning understood merely through hearing teachings, it labels the meaning understood through investigation in dependence on a valid reason and it labels the meaning understood non-conceptually with a yogic direct perception.

The attainment of freedom from suffering comes about through a progression from correctly assuming the lack of inherent existence of phenomena to a non-conceptual perception of emptiness via an inferential cognition of emptiness.

Recognition with Correct Assumption

Correct assumption understands the object on the basis of having heard a teaching or read about it, but has not ascertained the object with a valid reason. For example, merely through hearing or reading that the self lacks independent existence one thinks, "The self does not exist inherently." Recognition labels the apprehended meaning simultaneously with the generation of the correct assumption.

Recognition with Inferential Cognition

One then investigates the thus understood meaning with analysis in order to actually ascertain it and confirm it. Once one has realized the object,

e.g., the lack of an inherent self, in dependence on a valid reason, one has generated an inferential cognition. The simultaneously generated recognition labels the ascertained meaning.

Inferential cognitions are always generated from their substantial cause, which is a correct assumption. The correct assumption of understanding emptiness is the substantial cause for the inferential cognition realising emptiness.

Recognition with Direct Realization

After having realized the object conceptually with an inferential cognition the meditator deepens the understanding through continual meditation, until a clear and non-conceptual realisation of the object is generated.

The clear, non-conceptual realisation of the lack of an inherent self marks the beginning of the path of seeing. The simultaneously generated recognition labels the nondually realized meaning.

Divisions:

Recognition has a sixfold division relative to the six empowering conditions as well as a sixfold division according to the six types of objects. Recognition has also a twofold division into recognition with characteristics and recognition without characteristics.

Recognition with Characteristics

- Recognition proficient in combining words and meanings.
- Recognition focused on impermanent compounded phenomena.
- Recognition with clear focus and appearance.

Recognition Without Characteristics

- Recognition without the characteristics of name and elaboration, like the recognition of a child, untrained in signs.
- Recognition without the characteristics of impermanence and the like, being in equipoise on ultimate truth.
- Recognition in meditative equipoise on the peak of existence, lacking the characteristics of focus and appearance.

Intention

Definition: Intention is mental action that moves and directs its accompanying mind to the object. Without intention the mind would not engage with its object.

It is mental action manifesting mind and thus causing the mind to engage virtuously, non-virtuously or neutrally with phenomena.

Out of all the mental factors intention is considered to be the most important, because it determines which object its accompanying mind and mental factors will engage with. In the same way that iron filings are pulled by a magnet without any choice, this mental factor moves the accompanying mind and mental factors to an object without their choice.

Divisions: This mental factor has a sixfold division according to the uncommon empowering condition.

In general karma has a twofold division into:

- Karma of intent
- Intended karma.

From the *Abhidharmakosha*,

Regarding karma, there is intent
And that done by it.
Intent is mental karma, and
That generated by it is physical and verbal karma.

Therefore, karma is either the preceding intent, or the intended physical or verbal karma. There can be many manifestations of these, but the main ones are contained in the seven actions of body and speech. The karma here is not the physical action itself, but the mental factor of intent accompanying it.

Lama Tsong Khapa in *The Great Exposition of the Stages on the Path*:

Because it is ascribed to the intent engaging together with revelatory physical and verbal actions, both karmas are intent.

If one adds the three mental actions, then one gets ten karmic paths, but the three mental actions are not regarded as karmas. They are karmic

paths, but they are not karmas. They are still virtuous or non-virtuous, depending on whether they are white or black.

Lama Tsong Khapa in *The Great Exposition of the Stages on the Path*:

Out of these, intent is karma but not a karmic path. The seven of body and speech are karma and, being the basis for the engagement of intent, also karmic paths. The three of covetousness etc. are karmic paths but not karma.

Karma can also have a threefold division into:

1. Virtuous karma: Karma with a ripening result of happiness.
2. Non-virtuous karma: Karma with a ripening result of suffering.
3. Non-predicted karma: Karma with a neutral result.

Contact

Definition: Contact is a mental factor that, after object, sense power and consciousness have combined, establishes an object concordant with the happy or suffering feelings to be experienced.

Without contact, no feeling can be generated. Contact acts as a cause for the subsequent feeling. If the feeling to be experienced is happiness, then the preceding contact will establish the object as pleasant, i.e. the contact with the object will be pleasant.

Contact becomes a faculty generating the subsequent feeling in the same way that the eye sense power generates the eye consciousness.

Attention

Definition: Attention is the mental factor that places its accompanying mind on a particular object. It has the function of placing the mind on the object.

The difference between intention and attention:

Intention moves the mind to the object generally and attention directs the mind to a particular object. Without attention the mind cannot be placed on a particular object.

The Five Ascertaining Mental Factors

(Aspiration; Belief; Mindfulness; Concentration; Wisdom)

They are called *ascertaining mental factors* because they ascertain individual objects.

Aspiration

Definition: Aspiration is the wish to engage into actions to attain the aspired objective. It acts as the basis for effort.

The Way Aspiration is the Basis for Enthusiastic Effort

Lama Tsong Khapa in the *Great Exposition of the Stages on the Path*:

If one is not able to stop the laziness that is not inspired to meditate on concentration, and which likes its opposing conditions, then one does not engage into concentration from the start. Should one attain concentration in isolated instances, then one is unable to keep up the continuity, and it will degenerate quickly. For this reason it is essential to initially stop laziness.

If one attains the pliancy that is increased by physical and mental joy and bliss, then one has attained untiring engagement into virtuous actions day and night, and one has stopped laziness. To generate this pliancy one needs the ability to strive continually with enthusiastic effort, which is the cause for the generation of pliancy. To generate this one needs strong continual aspiration towards concentration. As the cause for this one needs stable faith captivated by seeing the qualities of concentration.

From *Discerning the Middle*:

The basis and that based,
They are posited as cause and effect.

- The basis: Aspiration is the basis for enthusiastic effort.
- That based: Enthusiastic effort.
- The cause of aspiration: Faith captivated by the qualities.
- The result of striving: Pliancy.

Belief

Definition: Belief is the conviction in the way an object was ascertained by one's prime cognition.

It has the function of preventing loss. It is a knower that thinks, "It is exactly the way I ascertained it." It prevents the loss of one's wholesome mental states and actions due to the misleading influence of others.

Having generated a prime cognition that the Buddha, the Dharma that he taught and the Sangha that has achieved this Dharma, are the sole non-deceptive refuges, one will have found stable belief into the three refuges.

Others will be unable to change one's mind, no matter what. This will greatly increase the strength of one's dharma practice.

From the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva Actions*:

The Able One taught that belief
Is the root of all virtuous dharmas.
As its root one meditates continually
On the ripening results.

To generate and protect this inner conviction is especially important in a western environment, where there is a multitude of distractions and misleading influences. It is good to keep in mind that misleading friends do not have horns and flames coming from their eyes, but mostly speak nicely and kindly and often have the best of intentions.

One may well adopt the destructive habits of others without any conscious intent from their side or from one's own side. Shantideva therefore always advises to guard the mind well with mindfulness and introspection.

Conviction in the Buddha's teachings is developed by following the threestep of listening to teachings, contemplating their meaning, and then meditating on the meaning understood through contemplation.

Lama Yeshe:

Real conviction into the teaching comes about through experience.

Mindfulness

Briefly

Mindfulness is non-forgetfulness of an introduced object and has the function of preventing mental wandering.

Elaborately

Definition: Proper mindfulness is a consciousness with the three characteristics of object, aspect and function.

Object: The object is an introduced phenomenon.

To have single-pointed concentration it is necessary to have uninterrupted mindfulness of a positive inner object, but this is only possible if the consciousness is introduced to the object.

The more familiar the consciousness is with the object, the easier it can later overcome sinking.

Aspect: Non-forgetfulness after having focused on that object.

Even if the consciousness is introduced to the object, there is no mindfulness if it immediately wanders away from the object.

The focus on the object needs to be complete to attain perfect concentration. This can be achieved by letting the mind become one with the object.

Function: Because mental abiding on the object increases through strong mindfulness, it is said that mindfulness has the function of preventing mental wandering. Proper mindfulness facilitates single-pointed focus on the object by preventing mental wandering.

The method of subduing the mind with mindfulness and introspection is extremely important in both sutra and tantra. The increase of all qualities of the grounds and paths depends on mindfulness and regardless of whether one meditates on concentration according to sutra or tantra, it needs to be attained through the force of proper mindfulness.

Mindfulness also acts as the basis for introspection. By keeping mindful of one's actions of body, speech and mind one can be aware when they become harmful and correct them through introspection.

Concentration

Definition: Concentration is a single-pointed consciousness that holds its object with continuity.

It is the single-pointed abiding on the object that comes about through continual mindfulness and has the function of acting as the basis for generating wisdom. It needs to possess the qualities of abiding as well as clarity with intensity.

Even though there are many different objects of concentration, they can all be condensed into four:

- Objects purifying actions.
- Objects purifying afflictions.
- Pervasive objects.
- Objects for the skilled.

The **function** of concentration is to act as the basis for wisdom. The higher training of wisdom relies on the higher training of concentration, which in turn relies on the higher training in ethics. Trying to generate wisdom without concentration is like trying to discern the details of a painting illuminated by a flickering candle light.

Shakyamuni Buddha:

If it is rare for a distracted mind to even attain a worldly mental stabilization, then what need is there to mention complete enlightenment. Therefore, until the attainment of complete enlightenment one should not let one's mind get distracted.

Gyaltsab Je:

Superior insight into emptiness endowed with calm abiding, which induces the bliss of physical and mental pliancy free from mental sinking and excitement by having meditated single-pointedly on any virtuous object, destroys the afflictions and the seeds of the afflictions of the three realms. Understanding this, one should work towards superior insight, which can induce pliancy by investigating the meaning of the mode of abiding. Therefore one strives initially in calm abiding, as it is impossible to generate superior insight without achieving calm abiding first.

Wisdom

Definition: Wisdom is a mental factor that thoroughly discerns the object of analysis.

It discerns in detail the faults and qualities of the object and has the function of eliminating doubt: e.g., it analyses whether an action is beneficial or harmful. The objects to be investigated by wisdom are virtue, non-virtue and non-predicted phenomena.

Wisdom and Non-ignorance

Non-ignorance is a stable virtuous wisdom combined with concentration that can counteract ignorance. It is the sole antidote to ignorance.

From *The Debate between Wisdom and Ignorance*:

The sentient beings of the three realms
And specifically one's own very mind,

Since time beginningless and non-abiding,
From whence ignorance came into being,
Have been abiding naturally with the mind's nature.
This is the mahamudra of the basis.

They who do not realize this, grasp at true existence
And thus wander up to now in cyclic existence.
The direct antidote to this is the wisdom
That explicitly realizes this selflessness.

There is no antidote apart from it.

From the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva Actions*:

The Able One explained all these different branches
For the purpose of wisdom.
Therefore, they who wish to pacify suffering
Need to generate wisdom.

As one wishes to pacify the sufferings of cyclic existence of self and others, one needs to generate the wisdom realizing selflessness. The branches of generosity and the other perfections were taught by the Buddha for the purpose of generating the wisdom realizing emptiness.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

Since beginningless time we have been forced to circle through the realms of death and rebirth again and again, repeatedly experiencing the whole samsaric package of life problems, the entire collection, over and over again.

We have never experienced the end of this, ultimate, everlasting happiness, the complete cessation of all problems and their cause, our own disturbing thoughts and the actions that they motivate, karma.

And achieving this great result, which we attain by actualizing the steps of the path, is just a one-time job. Once we realize everlasting happiness, the cessation of all suffering, we can never suffer again, because the seed of life's problems, which we have planted in our mental continuum, has been totally eradicated, completely purified.

Therefore, it's impossible to ever suffer again, there's no reason, no cause. Once we have followed the path to its end, we won't ever have to do it again, we won't have to keep on practicing. Once we attain the goal, it lasts for ever. Consequently, dedicating your life to this is extremely important. It is the most worthwhile thing you can do with your life.

The Eleven Virtuous Mental Factors

(Faith, Shame, Embarrassment, Non-Attachment, Non-Hatred, Non-Ignorance, Enthusiasm, Pliancy, Conscientiousness, Equanimity and Non-Harmfulness)

They are called virtuous mental factors because they are the antidotes against faithlessness and the other afflictions, and because they are conjoined with non-attachment, non-anger and non-ignorance.

Gyaltsab Je sorts these eleven into six groups:

1. Faith at the time of generating belief.
2. Shame and embarrassment at the time of refraining from negativity.
3. Non-attachment, non-anger, non-ignorance and enthusiasm at the time of engaging into virtue.
4. Pliancy at the time of meditating to remove attachment using a worldly path.
5. Conscientiousness and equanimity at the time of meditating to remove attachment using a transcendental path.
6. Non-harmfulness at the time of benefitting suffering sentient beings.

Faith

Definition: Faith is a clarity, an aspiring belief and a wish with regard to qualities, mere existence and ability, respectively.

Faith acts as the basis for aspiration and as such is a consciousness that, having the aspect of clarity, belief or wish, acts as the direct antidote against faithlessness.

There is a threefold division of faith:

1. Clarifying faith
2. Faith of belief
3. Aspiring faith

Clarifying faith is a clear awareness that is generated through seeing the qualities of objects which actually have qualities, such as the Three Jewels.

Regarding the word *clarity*: polluted water is immediately clarified when the water-clarifying jewel is put into it. Similarly, when this faith is generated in the mental continuum, it immediately purifies the mind from dirt and thus makes it possible to generate all realizations.

Faith of belief is faith in topics taught by the Buddha, such as the law of cause and effect, dependent arising and so forth and arises through having contemplated them.

Aspiring faith thinks, “I definitely have to attain this,” after having contemplated, for example, the four noble truths, and having ascertained that suffering and its origin are to be abandoned and that cessation and its path are to be attained. It is generated on the basis of understanding the possibility of realization if one practices accordingly.

The examples shown here for the three types of faith are merely indicative and do not cover all of the different possibilities.

Function: Faith acts as the antidote against faithlessness. It is also the basis for aspiration and thus helps to overcome laziness.

Generally, faith is praised by the sages as the root of all paths and grounds, and is therefore very important.

From the *Ten Dharmas*:

For people without faith
White dharmas are not generated.
It is similar to a seed burned
By fire and a green sprout.

Contrary to popular belief however, faith and reason do not have to be unrelated. In fact, the superior type of faith arises as a result of investigation and experience.

The faith that arises merely through listening unrelated to valid reason is unstable. It is like a leaf being blown here and there by the wind. As soon as one hears some other teachings, one generates faith in them even though they may be completely opposite to what one had heard before.

The faith that arises in conjunction with prime cognition in dependence on one's own investigation with valid reasoning is unshakeable. Therefore, faith and reasoning are not only non-contradictory, but are complementary, and further along the path reasoning and investigation become even necessary.

Topics like impermanence or emptiness cannot be realized just by believing in the Buddha's teachings, but one has to put these teachings to the test. But one needs to be sure that one has the ability to correctly investigate. Someone untrained in reasoning and inference can easily arrive at mistaken conclusions.

Faith and Liking

Sometimes in popular thought, faith is confused with liking. But while they do not necessarily exclude each other, they are also not always the same:

1. Liking that is not faith: Liking temporary pleasures.
2. Faith that is not liking: Faith in cyclic existence.
3. Faith that is also liking: A liking faith in the teacher and in the white karmic laws of cause and effect, which arise by contemplating their qualities and benefits from the depth of one's heart.

Shame

Definition: Shame is a fear of non-virtue by taking oneself as the reason.

Its function is to act as the basis for effectively stopping negative actions of body, speech and mind.

It is exemplified by thoughts like, "It is inappropriate to harm this person because I am a Buddhist," or "I am not going to do this action because it will create a black ripening result for me."

The necessary time for shame is when one is just about to engage into a negative action.

Embarrassment, Consideration

Definition: Embarrassment is a fear of non-virtue by taking others as the reason.

Its function is to act as the basis for effectively stopping negative actions of body, speech and mind.

It is exemplified by thoughts like, “If I do this action I will draw criticism from others,” or “I better not do this action because my teacher is going to know about it through his clairvoyance.”

The necessary time for embarrassment is when one is just about to engage into a negative action.

In regard to positing *acting as the basis for effectively stopping negative actions* as the function: The meaning is that in order to stop negative actions of body, speech and mind, shame and embarrassment are indispensable.

If there is no fear of the ripening result of one’s actions and no consideration regarding the minds of the lama and the Buddha, then there is no method to stop negative actions.

The Difference Between Shame and Embarrassment

While both are the same in being a fear of negative action, shame takes oneself as the reason and embarrassment takes others as the reason. The main objects of embarrassment are one’s teacher and the buddhas and bodhisattvas. It is generated by reminding oneself of their clairvoyant powers.

It is essential to generate shame or embarrassment when one is about to engage into a harmful action so as to stop oneself from doing the action.

Comment: It seems that also compassion would stop one from harming others, so consideration for the welfare of others, while not included here, also stops harmful actions.

Non-Attachment

Definition: Non-attachment is a consciousness endowed with renunciation that lacks attachment to samsara and samsaric perfections.

Its **function** is to act as the basis for not engaging into negative actions.

Non-attachment in the context of giving up the happiness of this life and directing one's attention to the happiness of the next life is the motivation of the practitioner of the small scope.

Non-attachment to the whole of cyclic existence, giving up the grasping for samsaric perfections from the depth of one's heart, is the motivation of the practitioner of medium scope.

From the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Actions*:

An impermanent person strongly attached
To an impermanent person
Will not see anything beautiful
For thousands of lifetimes.

Not seeing it they will not have joy
And their mind will not enter equipoise.
Although seeing it, one is not satisfied
And will be miserable due to craving as before.

From the *Sutra of Moonlight Lamp*:

Ordinary individuals do not have friends.
Even if one says words endowed with dharma,
They do not believe and show anger and hate.
These are the actions of the childish.

Further:

Although one relates well with the childish for a long time,
One can say that later they will become unfriendly and disagreeable.
Having understood the causes of the childish,
The skilled do not rely on the childish.

Non-Hatred

Definition: Non-hatred is a consciousness lacking the intent of harm towards sentient beings, sufferings and the sources of suffering. It has eliminated the generation of hatred.

Function: Non-hatred acts as the basis for not engaging into negative actions. As anger is generated due to not being able to be patient with one of the three objects of anger, non-hatred is contained in the practice of patience.

Chandrakirti in the *Introduction to the Middle Way*:

Resenting if one is harmed,
How could it undo the inflicted harm?
Therefore, resenting it definitely has no purpose here.
It also becomes the antithesis of the world yonder.

The results of non-virtuous karma created previously
Are eliminated by this alone, it is expressively stated.
Because of the suffering of retaliation and anger,
Leading to the mere seed in which ever way.

By being angry with a conqueror's child
Virtue arising from generosity and morality
Over one hundred eons is destroyed in an instant
Therefore there is no negativity like impatience.

The first Dalai Lama Gyalwa Gedun Drub in his *Mirror*:

Being resentful to the enemy definitely has no purpose because how could the inflicted harm be undone by resenting the enemy in return? It will not! Also, anger is the antithesis of achieving any purpose in the world yonder because it projects an unpleasant ripening result. Because the suffering created by retaliation and anger is greater than the suffering experienced presently, it is senseless to carry out actions leading in every way to the mere seed of suffering. That follows because the harm caused by the enemy is expressively asserted as the very thing eliminating the results similar to the cause of previously created non-virtuous karma. There is no negativity with greater power to destroy roots of virtue than impatience. A great bodhisattva destroys the virtue arising from generosity and morality accumulated over one hundred eons in one instance, by being angry with a conqueror's child.

Non-Ignorance

Briefly

Non-ignorance is a discriminating wisdom, attained either through birth or through practice, which is able to act as the antidote to ignorance.

Elaborately

Definition: Non-ignorance is a discerning understanding that arises from the practice of listening to the teachings, contemplating the meaning of what one has heard and meditating on the contemplated meaning. It can also arise through birth as the ripening of karma.

Ignorance is the root cause of cyclic existence, and its only antidote is the wisdom that is its counter-positive, which is non-ignorance. It is therefore crucial that one's dharma practice contains the three steps of listening, contemplating and meditating.

Ultimately, the wisdom arising from meditating is the only antidote against ignorance, but it arises based on the wisdom of contemplation, which in turn depends on the wisdom arising from listening.

The wisdom arising from listening has limitless benefits. Ultimately it leads to liberation and enlightenment, but also temporarily it generates joy and inner freedom. It is the true friend that will never desert one and the wealth that can never be taken by thieves. Someone with wisdom is always appreciated and can truly benefit others.

Function: Non-ignorance acts as the basis for not engaging in non-virtuous actions.

Non-Attachment, Non-Hatred and Non-Ignorance

These three mental factors are the heart of the path to enlightenment as all grounds and paths are for the purpose of overcoming the three poisons of attachment, anger and ignorance.

Whenever one generates a meditative state it should be accompanied by at least one of these three mental states.

Enthusiasm

Briefly

Enthusiasm is joy in virtue. It is the antidote against laziness and has the function of perfectly accomplishing and completing one's virtuous practice.

Elaborately

Definition: From the *Compendium of Knowledge*: What is enthusiasm? It is joy in regard to armor, training, confidence, not giving up and not being complacent.

Enthusiasm has the function of perfectly completing and accomplishing the side of virtue.

Division:

The five types of enthusiasm cover the practice of a whole life time. If they are integrated into one's life, then it will be impossible not to be successful.

1. Armor-like enthusiasm is the enthusiasm that is generated prior to engaging into a virtuous action.
2. Enthusiasm of training is the enthusiasm that accompanies the virtuous practice.
3. Enthusiasm of confidence is enthusiasm in one's abilities. It lacks low self esteem and counteracts thoughts like, "How could somebody like me ever achieve this."

From the *Life stories of the Buddha*:

Disheartenment does not benefit liberation from destitution.
Therefore, without making oneself miserable,
If one relies on skill to achieve the necessary aim,
Even the extremely difficult becomes easy and one attains liberation.

Therefore, without fear or dislike,
Achieve that which is needed with appropriate means.
If one praises steadfastly the splendour of skill,
The accomplishment of all aims lies in one's hand.

Being disheartened and worried does not benefit anybody. Therefore, without being miserable, one should initially investigate whether the aim is realistic at

the moment. If it is not possible at the moment one makes it the object of prayers and creates the causes to be able to engage into the action later.

If the aim is within the reach of one's present ability one skillfully engages into the action and does not stop until it is completed. In this way even the extremely difficult becomes easy and one can sequentially achieve the purpose of self and others.

4. Irreversible enthusiasm is the enthusiasm that prevents one from being sidetracked by other virtuous activities before having completed what one originally set out to do.

5. Enthusiasm of non-complacency is enthusiasm that protects one from being satisfied with an inferior or incomplete result.

For examples, some students are satisfied with just studying and implementing one small aspect of the path, and then think, "I have made great progress along the path." When they then later receive teachings on the whole path to enlightenment by someone knowledgeable in all the important points of the path, then they become discouraged.

The Difference Between Enthusiasm and Effort

Effort based on enthusiasm is joyous effort that helps to accomplish one's aims quickly. Mere effort, on the other hand, is difficult to sustain over a long time period and is usually less effective. It is therefore important to cultivate a sense of happiness with one's dharma practice.

Generating Enthusiasm and Enthusiastic Effort

There are two direct obstructive conditions opposing the generation of enthusiastic effort: Not engaging into a virtuous action even though one sees that one can accomplish it, and thinking, "How can I ever achieve this?"

Not Engaging Into Virtue Although One Sees that One Can Do It

Regarding the first, there are again two: the laziness of procrastination thinking, "I still have a lot of time," and being consumed by attachment for the happiness of this life, which leads to the laziness of being attracted to negative actions.

As an antidote against procrastination one meditates on how life is short, the likelihood that one will fall into the lower realms after death, and that it will be extremely difficult to attain a precious human body again in the future.

As an antidote against attachment one can meditate like this: The holy dharma is the cause for infinite happiness in this life and in future lives, but the distractions of mental excitement, of uncontrolled and purposeless chatter and so forth, are the reasons for me to lose the opportunity to accomplish the great purpose of this life and to experience many sufferings in future lives.

The Laziness of Low Self Esteem

Regarding the laziness of low self esteem, there are three possibilities:

Firstly, one may doubt one's ability to achieve the qualities of a buddha since they are infinite. In this case it is good to remember that all enlightened beings started out as an ordinary individual just like oneself. There is nobody that was a buddha from the beginning. Also, the Buddha predicted to beings much worse than oneself that one day they would be enlightened, so there is no doubt that if one applies oneself to the dharma, that one can attain enlightenment.

Secondly, one may doubt one's ability to practice the many difficult bodhisattva practices such as giving up one's body and so forth. Here one remembers that one does not need to engage in such practices if they create hardships for oneself. When one is ready, on the path of seeing and above, it will be very easy. At this level the cutting off of one's limbs will bother one no more than cutting up a vegetable.

Thirdly, one may be discouraged by the idea of having to experience the sufferings of cyclic existence because of having to take rebirth there infinite times for the welfare of sentient beings. Here it is good to remember that bodhisattvas do not experience the feeling of suffering because they have abandoned the cause, negative karma. Also, because they have a stable realization of the lack of true existence of cyclic existence, they view everything as illusory and thus do not experience mental suffering.

In such a way, because bodhisattvas do not experience physical or mental suffering and are actually fortified and nourished by physical and mental bliss, it is not a problem for them to take rebirth in cyclic existence. Hence one does not need to be discouraged.

Four Conducive Conditions for Enthusiasm

1. The power of belief: Generating aspiration for the practice of abandoning and adopting through meditating on the karmic laws of cause and effect.
2. The power of stability: Not engaging into actions indiscriminately but first weighing up whether one can accomplish the action or not.
3. The power of joy: Practicing joyful enthusiasm without contentment, like a child that does not want to stop playing.
4. The power of desisting: Taking a break when body and mind have become exhausted through intense joyous effort and then immediately starting again when mental and physical strength are restored.

Function: Enthusiastic effort is the third of the four antidotes against laziness. It arises from aspiration, which in turn is based on faith.

Short Meditation on Increasing Self-Confidence and a Positive Self-Image

- Sit down comfortably in an upright position.
- Pick a time span such as today, last week, last year etc.
- Remember consciously with a clear and relaxed mind, without judging, all the actions of body, speech and mind carried out in that period from the start up to the present moment.
- Rejoice in all the positive actions. (Most likely one finds more to rejoice in as one initially thinks).

- Now focus inwards and identify your qualities. (Find at least one.)
- Rejoice in your qualities, ideally until the thought, “I am good,” is generated.

- Repeat until the thought, “I am good,” is generated naturally.

Pliancy

Definition: Pliancy is the mere workability of body and mind that comes about through having severed the continuity of physical and mental destructive tendencies.

Pliancy has the function of eliminating all obscurations.

Being a consciousness that has cut off the continuity of physical and mental negative tendencies, pliancy creates the imprints for being able to place the mind on any virtuous object for as long as one wishes.

Physical and mental destructive tendencies refers to the inability to engage into physical or mental virtuous actions as one wishes. Mental and physical negative tendencies block joy in regard to abandoning the mental afflictions.

Their antidote, physical and mental pliancy, is an extreme suppleness of body and mind that is devoid of physical and mental negative tendencies and that makes it possible to easily engage into virtuous actions on a continual basis.

As such, the main cause for pliancy is a lessening of the mental afflictions. One can often observe that a very worldly person with strong mental afflictions such as attachment or anger, who strongly and joyfully engages into worldly and negative actions, experiences strong physical heaviness and mental darkness when trying to engage into the tiniest virtuous actions.

Divisions: Pliancy is divided into two, physical and mental pliancy:

1. **Physical pliancy:** Having purified physical destructive tendencies through the power of concentration, this pliancy makes the body very light. One can meditate for long periods at a time without physical discomfort.
2. **Mental pliancy:** A workable consciousness that, having abandoned destructive mental tendencies through the power of concentration, can engage the mind with an internal virtuous object without obstruction.

Concerning pliancy, Lama Tsong Khapa says:

The king that empowers the mind for absorption;
If placed, immovable like the power of a mountain;
If directed, engaging every virtuous focus;
Inducing great bliss of physical and mental pliancy.

Regarding eliminating all obscuration as the function:

Through the force of pliancy all physical and mental destructive tendencies are purified and one will naturally stay in concentration. This greatly increases concentration and through this, in turn, the bliss of pliancy increases also. The further increase of the bliss of pliancy leads to a further proportional increase in concentration.

In such a way pliancy and concentration feed and strengthen each other and one can practice continually with intense concentration. This enables one to purify the mind of the obscurations to liberation and knowledge.

Conscientiousness

Briefly

Conscientiousness is an awareness not under the control of the afflictions while abiding in enthusiastic effort toward remaining free from afflictions. It accomplishes virtue and protects the mind from contaminated phenomena.

Elaborately

Definition: Conscientiousness is an awareness that, while abiding with enthusiasm within non-attachment, non-anger and non-ignorance, protects the meditation on virtue and the mind from contaminated phenomena.

It has the **function** of being the basis for perfectly accomplishing and completing all ordinary and transcendental perfections, and thus is extremely important for accomplishing the grounds and paths.

It is the opposite of recklessness, where one thinks, “It does not matter if my mind is under the control of afflictions,” which leads to all kinds of inappropriate actions.

Divisions: Asanga lists five types of conscientiousness:

1. Relating to the past - correcting one's past actions according to the Dharma.
2. Relating to the future - determining to also act in accordance with the Dharma in the future.
3. Relating to the present - determining to also act in accordance with the Dharma without forgetfulness in the present.
4. Preparatory conscientiousness - adjusting the mind thinking, "If I continue to act in this way then it is unsuitable, but if I engage in these actions then it is appropriate."
5. Immediately following conscientiousness - in dependence on the above abiding in virtuous actions.

From the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Actions*:

Contemplate and strive in what has thus been explained,
To accomplish the trainings.
There is no medicine that can cure
If one does not listen to the advice of the physician.

Gyaltsab Je:

Contemplate in the above manner repeatedly. Make an effort to strive with conscientiousness in bodhicitta the way the Buddha explained it, and protect the trainings.

There are no sicknesses that can be cured only by medicine, without listening to the instructions of the physician that contain many truths. Strive in abandoning the afflictions in accordance with the instructions of the great physician.

Freedom from the memory of faults,
Increasing virtue without degeneration,
These depended certainly on meditation on conscientiousness.
Hence the proficient should always depend on conscientiousness.

Equanimity

Definition: Equanimity is mere mental equipoise, i.e., a consciousness that abides within non-attachment, non-anger and non-ignorance with enthusiasm, contrary to abiding completely afflicted. It is a mere abiding within the spontaneous natural mental state free from affliction.

Equanimity has the function of eliminating any possibility of affliction.

As such, it is a consciousness at the time of having attained the spontaneous abiding of the mind, on the ninth stage of mental placement.

At this time one does not have to strive in single-pointed placement in dependence upon the antidotes to mental sinking and mental excitement anymore, because one has attained the spontaneous single-pointed abiding of the mind on the object.

General division of equanimity:

- Equanimity of action.
- Feeling of equanimity.
- Immeasurable equanimity.

Equanimity of feeling is one of the three fundamental types of feeling. Immeasurable equanimity is absence of attachment for friends and anger towards enemies, viewing friends, enemies and strangers with equanimity. This virtuous mental factor is the equanimity of action.

The attainment of calm abiding is essential for abandoning the mental afflictions. Therefore, utilizing Lama Tsong Khapa's *Graduated Stages of the Path*, one needs to inform oneself about the process of how to progress from the initial placement of the mind on its object up to the attainment of single-pointed concentration by counteracting mental excitement and mental sinking with mindfulness and introspection.

Non-Harmfulness

Briefly

Non-harmfulness is a compassionate mind belonging to the family of non-anger that has the function of preventing harm.

Elaborately

Definition: Non-harmfulness, having focused on a suffering sentient being, cannot bear that sentient being's suffering, and wishes it to be free from suffering. It is without any harmful intent.

It has the function of preventing harming and belittling others.

Non-harmfulness or abandoning harm to sentient beings is the essence of the Buddha's teachings.

The Buddha himself said:

Patience is the supreme of all austerities,
Patience is the best of everything gone beyond.

The emphasis on non-harmfulness is also self-evident in the Buddha's advice to his monks, for example the rule to always pour water through a strainer to filter out any insects before drinking it.

The Buddha placed great emphasis on the fourfold virtuous practice of:

1. Not returning criticism with criticism.
2. Not returning anger with anger.
3. Not returning beating with beating.
4. Not returning harsh words with harsh words.

If one critically analyses the teachings of the Buddha one will realize the significance of non-harmfulness to a Buddhist.

Virtue and Non-Virtue

Virtue

Definition: That which carries a happy ripening result.

Divisions:

Fivefold Nominal Division of Virtue

Virtue by Entity: The above mentioned eleven virtuous mental factors are examples for virtue by entity because they are virtuous independently of motivation or other conditions.

Virtue is generated merely through their generation in the mind.

Virtue by Relation: The mental factors and the main mind that are conjoined in five ways with the eleven virtuous mental factors are all virtue by relation.

Virtue by Subsequent Relation: This refers to the virtuous karmic imprints.

Virtue by Motivation: This refers to physical or verbal karmas that are motivated by virtuous mental factors such as faith and so forth.

Virtue Through the Ultimate: Emptiness is called virtue through the ultimate because by meditating on it one can overcome all obscurations, but in itself it is not actual virtue.

Eightfold Division According to Occasion

Virtue Attained Through Birth: Faith or other virtuous states that are generated in this life merely through the imprints from former lives, without having meditated in this life.

Virtue Through Practice: Positive actions such as the wish to attain enlightenment generated in dependence on the four conditions of:

1. Listening in this life to the holy Dharma.
2. Doing so from a teacher.
3. Taking it to heart correctly.

4. Practicing a dharma that corresponds with liberation.

Virtue Generated in Relation to a Front Generation: Karmas such as making prostrations or offerings to an exalted front generation. These actions create powerful virtuous karmas through the power of the object, even without a positive motivation.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

If you make offerings to just one statue of Buddha, you collect unimaginable merit, creating causes for enlightenment, liberation from samsara and good rebirths for hundreds of thousands of lifetimes.

Put your palms together and prostrate to each guru in the merit field, or to the one deity that you are visualizing as everything, meditating that their essence is your root virtuous friend.

Visualize that each one receives numberless nectar food offerings and generate infinite bliss within his mind. Do these three actions of prostrating, offering and generating infinite bliss.

Virtue Arising from Benefit: The karma of benefiting sentient beings with the four actions of subduing disciples.

Virtue Through Tutelage: The white karma that causes higher rebirth, liberation and enlightenment.

Virtue of the Antidote: Karma that possesses the special power to directly counteract an obscuration.

The Virtue of Perfect Peace: Liberation.

Virtue From a Concordant Cause: The five clairvoyances and the ten powers generated through the force of having attained the truth of cessation.

These categories are a mix of actual and nominal virtues.

Non-Virtue

Definition: That which carries a suffering ripening result.

Divisions:

Fivefold Nominal Division of Virtue

Non-Virtue by Entity: Most root and associated afflictions are non-virtue by entity.

Non-Virtue by Relation: The main mind and mental factors that are conjoined with one of the root and associated afflictions.

Non-Virtue by Subsequent Relation: The non-virtuous karmic imprints.

Non-Virtue by Motivation: The accumulated physical and verbal karma motivated by one of these afflictions.

Ultimate Non-Virtue: Anything contained in cyclic existence is called ultimate non-virtue because of being the object of renunciation of superior beings, but not everything that is contained in cyclic existence is necessarily actual non-virtue.

As before, here also some are actual and some are nominal.

Sevenfold Division according to Occasion

Non-Virtue Through Birth: Refers to the negative tendencies one experiences merely through birth, without any conditioning in this life, e.g. , the karma of killing accumulated by a person who from childhood is naturally under the control of the wish to kill.

There are beings that from birth have the desire to kill. These could be non-humans such as certain animals, but there are also humans who from childhood have an affinity for killing.

Non-Virtue Through Practice: Negative actions of body, speech and mind done on the basis of relying on a non-virtuous teacher, listening to mistaken teachings, meditating on mistaken conceptions and the like.

Non-Virtue Generated in Relation To a Front Generation

Karmas like animal sacrifice that is engaged in due to being confused by a non-virtuous teacher.

Non-Virtue Through Harming

The karma of harming sentient beings with body, speech or mind.

Non-Virtue Through Tutelage

The projecting and completing karma that solely gives rise to suffering.

Non-Virtue Through Adversity

Wrong views that counteract the generation of an uncontaminated path.

Non-virtue Through Interference

Wrong views that counteract any type of virtuous action.

It is good to know the difference between the different types of virtue and non-virtue so as to be able to practice well. For example, by not being aware that some mental states are virtue by entity, independent of the motivation or the object, one may tend to dismiss or not engage in such virtuous actions because the motivation is not pure.

Concerning this, Chandrakirti said in the *Introduction to the Middle Way*,

Whoever is working only for their own purpose,
Having a very rough mind and inferior compassion,
Even their desired wealth arises from generosity that
Becomes the cause for completely pacifying suffering.

All beings strongly wish for happiness, but without wealth there is no happiness for humans. Having realized this, as well as that wealth arises from generosity, the Able One initially taught his disciples generosity since it is a method easily practiced.

But is not necessary that the giver practice generosity correctly in order to attain wealth. Why? Because even the desired wealth of someone with a very rough mind and inferior compassion, working only for their own purpose, arises from generosity and becomes the cause for completely pacifying their suffering.

Any act of giving contains a tiny virtue because ultimately one has to mentally let go of the object to be able to give it away. This minimum virtue becomes the cause for wealth in a future life, but it can also subsequently be transformed into a cause for enlightenment by dedicating it with the mind of bodhicitta.

All virtuous karma, however tiny, that one created in the past, can even now be transformed into a cause for enlightenment by dedicating them for complete enlightenment with bodhicitta.

Virtue generated in relation to an exalted object is always a cause for enlightenment, even if it is done without any particular virtuous motivation, simply through the power of the object. This is very valuable to know because to transform virtue into a cause for enlightenment through the power of the motivation is very difficult, since bodhicitta needs to be generated. Exalted objects are the Buddhas, the Dharma and the Sangha.

Virtue generated by birth is not virtue that is generated effortlessly, or that exists from its own side. It is generated without effort in this life, but still depends on effort in a past life.

If one has ever admired somebody for whom good qualities seem to come naturally, and if one would like to experience virtue through the power of birth in the next life in the same way, then one has to practice strongly in this life.

Similarly, if one wants to avoid non-virtue through the power of birth in the next life, one has to work at lessening the afflictions in this life. The negative tendencies that one has experienced from early childhood in this life did not come from nowhere, but are continuums of past negativities.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

We have enjoyed temporary happiness numberless times.

There's not a single new temporary happiness left for us to experience. What is new, what we have never before experienced, is the great peace that results from cessation of all suffering, death and rebirth; the ultimate happiness that arises through complete cessation of the true cause of suffering—ignorance, the disturbing, emotional thoughts and the actions motivated by these unhealthy minds.

We have never experienced this before.

The Mental Afflictions

Generally

An affliction is defined as a mental state that by its nature strongly disturbs the mind when it arises.

It is not always easy to see that an affliction disturbs or strongly disturbs the mind. This is because the mind is accustomed to being under the control of the mental afflictions and does not know anything better.

Contemplating the Way One is Being Kept in Samsara

Renunciation is the aspiration wishing to attain liberation. What is called liberation is the freedom from bondage. Here the bonds are karma and affliction. Karma and affliction are the shackles that bind one to samsara.

To generate true renunciation from cyclic existence, we first meditate on suffering and then we meditate on the truth of the origin, reflecting on the way one enters and wanders in cyclic existence due to karma and mental afflictions.

Out of karma and the mental afflictions, the core conditions are the mental afflictions. The reason is that, although we might still have non-virtuous or contaminated karma within our mental continuum, if the conducive condition of the mental afflictions is missing, these karmas cannot ripen.

On the other hand, we might not have any non-virtuous karma in our mental continuum, but if we have mental afflictions, then we will create further new non-virtuous or contaminated karma. The main cause of suffering to be dealt with ultimately are the mental afflictions.

The Six Causes of the Afflictions

1. Basis - the latent afflictions within our mind.
2. Object - an object concordant with the generation of the affliction.
3. Distraction - misleading friends.
4. Speech - listening to wrong teachings.
5. Habituation - generation through the power of previous familiarity.
6. Mistaken conception - projecting desireable or undesirable characteristics, grasping the impermanent as permanent and the like.

The Sequence the Afflictions Are Generated

Chandrakirti says in *The Introduction to the Middle Way*:

Initially starting grasping at self by naming “I”.

Then generating attachment for phenomena named “mine”.

Praise to whatever becomes compassion for migrators

Traversing without freedom like a bucket in a well.

The first Dalai Lama Gyalwa Gedun Drub elaborates this in his *Mirror*:

Migrators in cyclic existence initially start grasping at a truly existing self by naming “I”. Subsequently the view of the transitory collections grasping at “mine” generates attachment for the true existence of phenomena named “mine”, such as the eyes. This causes them to traverse in cyclic existence without freedom, like a bucket in a well.

The view of the transitory collections is the root of all afflictions and contaminated karma.

When the view of the transitory collections grasps at self it makes a division between self and other. After the division into self and other one generates attachment for self and anger for other. It also gives birth to pride, which is directed at the self, as well as to the extreme view holding the self either as eternal or as non-existent after death. It also generates the view holding the view of the self and the related negative actions to be supreme.

Likewise, based on the root of self-grasping, one generates the wrong view holding the Buddha who taught selflessness, the law of cause and effect, the Three Jewels, the four noble truths and the like to be non-existent, or one generates doubt regarding their existence and validity.

In the *Introduction to the Middle Way* it says that once a self exists, one knows other, one grasps at self, rejects other, and in close relation to that all faults arise. Because of the craving for self and the anger for other one then generates desire for what benefits the self, anger towards what harms the self and ignorance to what is neutral.

In this way the seeds of all afflictions and their faults arise from the view of the transitory collections.

Specifically

The Six Root Afflictions

(Attachment, Anger, Pride, Ignorance, Doubt, Afflicted View)

They are called *root afflictions* because they are the main mental states that make the mind afflicted.

Attachment/Desire (Desirous Attachment)

Briefly

Attachment or desire is a clinging to the objects of the three realms.

Elaborately

Definition: Attachment or desire is the wish for beautiful outer and inner objects and is based on a distortion of their attractiveness.

The distortion is caused by mistaken thought that imputes attractiveness where there is none or exaggerates the attractiveness that may be there.

This exaggeration can occur to such an extent that one believes one cannot live without the object. Once attachment has been allowed to latch onto the object, it becomes very difficult to remove the mind from this object. It is likened to trying to get oil out of cloth.

Gyaltsab Je gives as the definition of attachment or desire: a mental factor that aspires to contaminated phenomena, which it sees as pleasant by nature.

This definition refers also to the exaggeration of the object's pleasantness as existing from its own side, which is also due to mistaken thought.

There is a variety of exaggerations:

- Thinking that suffering is happiness.
- Thinking that the impermanent is permanent.
- Thinking that the impure is pure.
- Thinking that the non-inherent object exists from its own side.

Divisions:

1. Desire of the desire realm.
2. Desire of the form realm.
3. Desire of the formless realm.

Attachment has the function of causing suffering. The cause for experiencing all the sufferings of the three realms of cyclic existence is birth in cyclic existence, and the main cause for taking birth is attachment. Attachment also causes immediate sufferings such as dissatisfaction and mental wandering. It is also a major cause for worry and anxiety. Addictions are also forms of attachment.

Antidotes:

- Meditation on the impurity of the body of self or other.
- Meditation on impermanence in general, and on death and impermanence in particular.
- Meditation on the lack of essence of sensory pleasure. It does not matter how much one experiences them.
- Meditation on emptiness as the ultimate antidote.

From *The Debate between Wisdom and Ignorance*:

If the mind does not have me [32]
Then the mind becomes desire-less
And will not find its food or clothing.
Will the mind not be unwilling to abandon me?

The self-grasping has accompanied the mind for a long time and due to projecting a self onto the mind, attachment, anger and the like are generated. If there is no self-grasping in the mind, then attachment will not be generated.

Therefore the self-grasping thinks, “I am needed in the mind, because without me there would be no desire, and without desire it will not find food and clothing. The mind is not able to abandon me, to give me up. In case it is able to give me up, then it will not find new friends and it does not have friends from before. It will regret having abandoned me.”

Anger

Definition: Anger is harmful intent towards sentient beings, sufferings and the sources of suffering.

As such, it is harmful intent wishing to do harm after having focused on any of the three focal objects of anger and not being able to be patient with them. It acts as the basis for engaging in misbehaviour, and robs one of the ability to reason.

There are nine bases for the generation of harmful intent - self, friend and enemy related to the three times. One may get angry in regard to harm received by oneself or a friend, harm that oneself or a friend is receiving or that oneself or a friend will receive. One also may get angry about benefit that an enemy has received, is receiving or will receive.

Function: Anger causes one to be without happiness in this life and to experience suffering in future lives.

As Shantideva explained in the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Actions*:

If one holds the painful mind of anger
The mind will not experience peace.
One also will not attain joy and bliss.
Sleep will not come and one will become unstable.

Chandrakirti also says in his *Introduction to the Middle Way*:

By being angry with a conqueror's child,
Virtue arising from generosity and morality
Over one hundred eons is destroyed in an instant.
Therefore there is no negativity like impatience.

There is no negativity with greater power to destroy roots of virtue than impatience because even a great bodhisattva destroys in one instant the virtue arising from generosity and morality accumulated over one hundred eons by being angry with a conqueror's child.

Favorite semi dharma quote from *Castle*:

Castle: Do I look like a killer to you?
Beckett: Yes, you kill my patience!

Pride

Definition: Pride is a mind puffed up on the basis of the view of the transitory collections. It is a mental factor in the aspect of arrogance, that arises after having focused on any of the inner or outer bases for arrogance such as wealth and qualities.

Divisions: The *Abhidharmakosha* teaches a sevenfold division of pride:

1. Pride - a puffed up mind thinking, "I am better than that lowly person."
2. Superior pride - a puffed up mind thinking, "I am better," in relation to an equal.
3. Pride of prides - a puffed up mind thinking, "I am vastly better," in relation to someone superior.
4. Pride thinking "I" - a puffed up mind thinking, "I".
5. Pride in attainment - thinking one has attained something that one has actually not.
6. Modest pride - a puffed up mind thinking, "I am nearly as good," in relation to someone vastly superior. This is a very interesting pride, because even though one might not be puffed up enough to think, "I am better than my teacher," one might easily think that one is nearly as good as the teacher.
7. Wrong pride - confusing loss with attainment and negativity with virtue, such as giving up morality and following attachment while thinking that it is a beneficial action.

Any of the types of pride is generated on the basis of the innate grasping at an inherently existing "I", which gives one the feeling that there is such an intrinsic "I", the importance of which is then exaggerated.

Function: Pride acts as the basis for disrespect and suffering. Because of disrespect for the qualities of others and qualities in general, pride prevents the generation of new insights and realisations. It prevents one from listening to the scriptural Dharma and generating the realized Dharma.

It also causes one to be reborn in the lower realms and even if one eventually takes a human rebirth, one will be of low status, such as a slave or servant and so forth. In such a way pride prevents happiness both in this life and in future lives.

As Lama Tsong Khapa says in the *Lamrim Chenmo*:

Pride is the biggest obstacle to generating the path in this life and it is the cause to later become a slave and so forth. Therefore abandon it.

Pride closes the mind to new knowledge. It is also very dangerous because it causes one to harm others if one's inflated sense of self is somehow injured. It also causes one to dismiss the right to happiness of others. There is no limit to the harm caused by pride. Countries even go to war with each other because of pride.

Antidotes:

Considering the Disadvantages of Pride

These are explained in the functions of pride.

Contemplating Categories of Knowledge

Since pride is a mind that holds oneself to be superior, higher or to have more worth, upon having focused on real or imagined qualities, one of the best ways to overcome pride is to reflect on all the dharma subjects and all the categories of objects of knowledge and sciences that one does not know or knows only incompletely.

One can also reflect on the qualities and stages of the path one has not yet generated, or only generated partially.

Only a buddha has fully developed all qualities and knowledges.

Contemplating the Equality of Self and Other

Equalizing self and others by meditating on the dependent arising of self and other, and on how all temporary and ultimate happinesses arise from others, a natural humility towards others is generated in the mind.

Shantideva in the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Actions*:

Thus, although one works for the purpose of others
There is no exaggeration or superiority.

Experiencing Suffering

Cutting through our pride is one of the benefits of suffering. While everything is going well one easily generates conceit and pride, but suffering cuts through these afflictions.

Note:

It is important not to confuse being humble with generating a negative self-view, where one views oneself as unable or unworthy.

It is important to have a healthy ego where one views oneself as worthy and able, with qualities. When we think of ourselves, we should naturally have the thought “I am good.” One can build oneself up by meditating on the precious human rebirth, buddha nature, and by rejoicing in one’s qualities.

When one notices that one becomes arrogant and conceited, then one meditates on the sufferings of cyclic existence and the other antidotes against pride.

Having boundless qualities and self confidence does not exclude being humble. Bodhisattvas on the path of meditation have qualities, courage and confidence beyond conception, but at the same time experience a natural humility towards all sentient beings.

From the *Ornament of Clear Realization*:

Humility towards all ...

How humility and self confidence go together one can only understand from putting the methods into practice.

A bodhisattva’s vast strength and confidence come from a valid understanding of reality and a place of compassion, and should not be confused with narcissism or a god complex.

Divine Pride

Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

Divine pride needs to be free from pride and self-grasping.

Ignorance

Briefly

Ignorance is any not knowing contained in the three realms. It has the function of acting as the basis for ascertaining dharmas wrongly, causing doubt and causing one to be overcome by afflictions.

As such, ignorance is a not knowing mental factor in regard to the mode of abiding of the three realms.

Elaborately

Definition: Ignorance can take two aspects - a not knowing mental factor or a mental factor that distortedly apprehends the object.

As such, it is either a not realizing consciousness or a wrong consciousness, but the final antidote against ignorance is always the non-dual transcendental wisdom realizing selflessness.

The ignorance of self-grasping according to the Middle Way school is always a wrong consciousness that mistakenly apprehends its object.

Divisions:

1. Ignorance in regard to karmic cause and effect - causes the generation of non-virtuous karma, which results in a lower rebirth.
2. Ignorance in regard to suchness - causes the generation of contaminated virtue, which results in a higher rebirth in cyclic existence.

Function:

Ignorance causes one to apprehend phenomena wrongly; e.g., it causes one to apprehend that which is impermanent as permanent, that which is suffering as happiness, that which impure as pure and that which has no self as having a self.

The other mental afflictions are generated from ignorance, in dependence on which karma is generated. This acts as the cause for further suffering in cyclic existence.

From Chandrakirti's *Introduction to the Middle Way*:

Seeing with awareness that all afflictions and faults arise
From the view of the transitory collections,
And having realized the self to be its object,
Yogis strive to negate the self.

Taking the subject, "yogis aspiring towards liberation" - there is a reason why they strive to negate the self as inherently established. Being aware that all afflictions such as attachment and so forth, and all faults such as birth, aging, sickness and death arise from the view of the transitory collections, they wish to abandon the transitory view, and having realized the self to be the focal object of this view, they wish to negate the inherently established self.

In brief, one can say that ignorance is the root for all problems and suffering in cyclic existence and the basis for all other mental afflictions and karma, and that is why it is the first of the twelve links of dependent origination.

Antidote:

Ignorance is overcome by wisdom and the ignorance that is the root of cyclic existence is overcome by the wisdom realizing emptiness, which is the mental factor of non-ignorance.

From *The Debate between Wisdom and Ignorance*:

Of them to be subdued - due to this collection of causes,
The truth body, enjoyment body, emanation body,
As well as the grounds, paths, qualities, activities and so forth,
Exist, but only in mere appearance.

They are not seen as existing in reality.
Hence, that a self exists in reality
Is even more mistaken than mistaken.
Therefore, from now on, at all times,

I shall abandon you, the mistaken self-grasping.
Without generating any aversion,
Go where ever you have to go.

The qualities of the grounds and paths, i.e., the ten grounds and five paths contained in the disciples' continuums, and the enlightened activities and so forth, do not at all exist from their own side, but are a mere appearance to conceptual thought, a mere imputation by name. They are not seen as existing in meaning. Any virtue that is generated in the disciples' continuums is regarded as enlightened activity of the buddhas.

All phenomena, starting from the dharmas on the level of enlightenment down to the phenomena contained in cyclic existence, they all do not exist truly, they do not have a self, they do not exist from their own side. If one asks how they exist, they exist as mere appearances to thought, as mere imputations by name, and in no other way. Because our mind is habituated to grasping at a self since beginningless times, it is in the moment difficult to imagine this, and one should make prayers to realize it as soon as possible.

The wisdom realizing selflessness says to self-grasping: "Hence, as all phenomena lack existence from their own side and exist only as appearances to conceptual thought, as mere imputations by name, the grasping at a real self by you, the self-grasping, is so mistaken that it is mistaken beyond mistaken.

Therefore, from now on, as I have identified you as mistaken, I shall abandon you at all times. Therefore leave and go wherever you have to go to, without generating any aversion to me."

Doubt

Definition: Doubt is a two-pronged mental factor in relation to a truth such as one of the four noble truths, the law of cause and effect and so forth.

It has the **function** of preventing one from engaging into virtue.

Doubt interferes with any virtuous activity in general, and specifically it interferes with seeing truth. Doubt is overcome once one has reached the path of seeing where one sees emptiness directly. That is why doubt is classified as an abandonment on the path of seeing.

Antidote:

The antidote against doubt is non-ignorance.

By unknown Psychologist:

The greatest trick of the ego is to make us believe we are it.

Afflicted View

There are five afflicted views:

- The view of the transitory collections.
- Extreme view.
- Grasping views as supreme.
- Grasping at wrong moralities and disciplines as supreme.
- Wrong view.

View of the Transitory Collections

Briefly

The view of the transitory collections is an afflicted wisdom that, upon focusing on one's aggregates, grasps the "I" or "mine" in one's own continuum as existing from its own side. It has the function of being the basis of all afflicted views.

Elaborately

Definition: From the *Compendium of Knowledge*: If it is asked what the view of the transitory collections is, it is whichever patience, wish, wisdom, concept or view that sees perfectly "I" and "mine" on the basis of the five appropriated aggregates. It fulfils the function of being the basis of all views.

Regarding the list of patience, etc. listed in the *Compendium of Knowledge*:

- Patience because of not being afraid of the mistaken meaning.
- Wish because of aspiring to the mistaken object.
- Wisdom because of discerning the mistaken object.
- Concept because of grasping at the object.
- View because of focusing on that object.

The transitory view is a self-grasping at person that does not merely misperceive its object, but that actually aspires to the object.

As such, it is one of the main obstacles to attaining liberation and enlightenment, because it causes the person to not want to go to liberation, as the attainment of liberation means the non-existence of inherent "I" and "mine". It will therefore resist the attainment of liberation and anything that would cause it to loose its grip.

Explanation of the word: *Transitory* refers to impermanent and *collections* to many, which shows that the basis for this view is a phenomenon that is impermanent and multiple. It also shows that a permanent, single self does not exist.

Divisions: There are the twenty views of the transitory collections, four related to each of the five aggregates:

1. to 4. Relating to Form - i) viewing form as self, ii) the self as having form, iii) form as abiding on the self and iv) the self as abiding on form.
5. to 8. Relating to Feeling - i) viewing feelings as the self, ii) the self as having feelings, iii) feelings as abiding on the self and iv) the self as abiding on feelings.

The same model is applied to the remaining three aggregates of recognition, compositional factors and primary consciousness.

From Chandrakirti's *Introduction to the Middle Way*:

Form is not self, self is not endowed with form.
On form self does not exist and on self form does not exist.
Know thus all aggregates as four cases,
Thus are the twenty self-views posited.
The mountainous views disintegrating simultaneously
With the self destroyed by the vajra realizing selflessness
Are those high peaks resting
On the massively high transitory collections view.

The first Dalai Lama Gyalwa Gedun Drub in his *Mirror*:

Take the subject, "these twenty that form the high peaks resting on the massive high mountain of the view of the transitory collections belonging to the class of mental fabrications" - if they are abandoned one attains the fruit of a stream enterer - because when the mountain of the view of the transitory collections is destroyed by the vajra newly directly realizing selflessness, then they are destroyed and abandoned simultaneously with the destroyed self-view.

Function: The transitory view is the root for all other afflictions and views. The transitory view grasps at the self as inherently existent, and due to this one makes a division into inherent self and inherent other, which is the basis that generates attachment for self and anger towards others.

Focusing on self, one also generates pride and the views that the self is either eternal or will cease at the time of death. One also comes to hold the resulting negative actions as supreme. One may further generate the wrong view that the teacher who showed selflessness, his teachings of karmic cause and effect, the four noble truths, the Triple Gem and so forth are non-existent, or one may generate doubt in regard to their existence.

Extreme View

Definition: Extreme view is an afflicted wisdom that, having focused on the self held by the view of the transitory collections, grasps at its permanence or non-existence.

This view sees the five afflicted aggregates as eternal or non-existent, and fulfils the function of cutting off liberation, which depends on adopting the view of the Middle Way. As such, extreme view is a major obstacle to finding the Middle Way View.

Grasping Views as Supreme

Briefly

This view sees other harmful views and their basis - the five afflicted aggregates - as supreme. It acts as the basis for being attached to harmful views.

Elaborately

Definition: Grasping views as supreme is an afflicted wisdom that, having focused on other bad views and the appropriated aggregates that are their basis, grasps at them as supreme, main, special and extraordinary:

- Grasping as supreme exaggerates as exceptional.
- Grasping as main grasps that there is nothing better.
- Grasping as special grasps that there is nothing better.
- Grasping as extraordinary grasps it as unequalled.

The grasping at views as supreme is an afflicted wisdom that holds the transitory view, extreme views or wrong views as supreme.

Function: It conditions the mind to not be free from wrong views in all future lives.

Grasping at Wrong Moralities and Disciplines as Supreme

Definition: Grasping at wrong moralities and disciplines as supreme is an afflicted wisdom, that views wrong moralities and disciplines, and the five afflicted aggregates that are their basis, as pure, liberated and liberating.

An example is the view holding that by committing suicide at a certain moment in time, one's consciousness will pass into a spaceship passing overhead, and travel with it to another planet.

It has the function of being the basis for fruitless effort.

Wrong View

Definition: Wrong view is an afflicted wisdom that negates the law of karma, past and future lives and so forth, or holds that a creator god or the great principle and so forth, are the cause of sentient beings.

Divisions: Wrong view has a fourfold division:

1. Wrong view negating causes - negates that there are right and wrong actions.
2. Wrong view negating effects - negates the ripening effects of virtuous and non-virtuous karma.
3. Wrong view negating creation - holds the father and mother, or past and future lives and so forth, as non-existent.
4. Wrong view negating existing phenomena - holds foe destroyers and so forth to be non-existent.

In general there are many wrong views, but the wrong views denying karmic cause and effect and the existence of past and future lives are the worst, because they cut off all roots of virtue.

Function: Wrong view has the function of cutting off the root of virtue and causes one to hold onto the roots of non-virtue. It is the basis for engaging in non-virtuous actions and for avoiding of virtuous actions. An obsessed person may adopt a wrong view to justify living out their desires, such as the Bramin father denying cause and effect, to have intercourse with his daughter.

The Five Afflicted Views In General

The five afflicted views can be summed up into exaggerations and negations.

They also have many specific divisions such as the twenty transitory views, the sixty-two bad views or the fourteen unexplained views. The twenty transitory views were explained above. The sixty-two bad views are explained in the sutra called the *Net of Brahma*.

The fourteen unexplained views are the four views related to the past, four related to the future, four related to liberation and two related to the body and life.

- The four views related to the past are the views holding the self and the world as permanent, impermanent, both or neither.
- The four views related to the future are the views holding the self and the world as having an end, having no end, both or neither.
- The four views related to liberation are the views holding that a buddha exists after his passing, does not exist after his passing, both or neither.
- The two views related to body and life are the views holding that they are of one substance or of different substance.

These fourteen views are called the unexplained views. When the Buddha was asked by followers of certain Hindu tenets, such as the Enumerators and so forth, whether the self and the world are permanent or impermanent, both or neither, he did not answer, because the questions were based on the assumption of the existence of a self of person.

The Buddha on the one hand did not want to confirm the existence of such a self, but on the other hand the questioner was not ready for an explanation of selflessness. Hence, the Buddha stayed silent in these situations.

On other occasions however the Buddha clearly taught that the person and the world are impermanent, and also dealt with the other points extensively.

Nagarjuna said in His *Precious Garland of the Middle Way*:

When asked, “Do the worlds have an end?”,

The Conqueror remained silent.

Why? Because He did not teach a dharma

This profound to migrators not yet a vessel.

For that very reason the sages know Him to be

All-knowing omniscient transcendental knowledge.

The Twenty Associated Afflictions

(Wrath, Resentment, Concealment, Spite, Jealousy, Miserliness, Pretension, Dissimulation, Conceit, Harmfulness, Shamelessness, Non-Embarrassment, Lethargy, Mental Excitement, Faithlessness, Laziness, Non-Conscientiousness, Forgetfulness, Non-Introspection, Distraction)

They are called *associated afflictions* because they are manifestations of the root afflictions and because they are related to the generation and increasing of strong root afflictions.

Ten of the associated afflictions are conjoined with individual afflicted minds, two are conjoined with all non-virtuous minds, and eight are conjoined with all afflicted minds.

The ten associated afflictions conjoined with individual afflicted minds are sorted into six groups:

1. Wrath and resentment, in the context of being close to the object.
2. Concealment and spite, in the context of being criticised.
3. Jealousy and miserliness, in the context of attachment to gain and praise.
4. Pretension and dissimulation, which degenerate one's livelihood.
5. Conceit, which disrespects others.
6. Harmfulness, source for impatience.

Both sleep and regret also afflict the mind closely. Investigation and analysis cause forgetfulness, physical tiredness and mental degeneration if they excessively investigate and analyse. Hence these four are also included in the associated afflictions in the *ShiDrenTsog*, which teaches twenty-four associated afflictions.

The *Compendium of the Grounds of Investigation and Analysis* adds also wrong aspiration and conviction to the associated afflictions conjoined with individual afflicted minds.

The ten associated afflictions conjoined with individual afflicted minds are mostly contained solely within the desire realm, are abandonments through meditation and are conjoined with mental consciousnesses.

Self-grasping says in return:

They who belong to my retinue,
Which is dominated, among others, by the three poisons,
Jealousy, miserliness, pretension, dishonesty, conceit,

The sixty-two corrupt views,
Pride, laziness, non-conscientiousness and others,
Such as great desire. I send them out continuously.
Just to subdue them is hard, even without severance.

The Ten Associated Afflictions Conjoined with Individual Afflicted Minds

Wrath, Rage, Belligerence, Fury

Definition: The mental factor of wrath is extreme harmful intent that wishes to inflict harm such as striking while in proximity to one of the nine foundations for harmful intent.

The nine foundations of harmful intent are:

- The three thoughts: this has harmed me, is harming me or will harm me.
- The three thoughts: this has harmed, is harming or will harm my friend(s).
- The three thoughts: this has benefitted, is benefitting or will benefit my enemy(s).

Function: It is the basis for resorting to weapons, injuring the other person directly or carrying out actions aimed at harming the object. It precedes the violence and likely will also accompany it.

Resentment, Thought of Vengeance

Definition: Resentment is a consciousness that does not give up the thought of retaliation and anger, wanting to inflict harm and retaliate.

Function: Belonging to the family of anger, resentment acts as the basis for impatience.

Concealment

Definition: Concealment is a consciousness that, due to the power of ignorance, wishes to hide faults when these are pointed out by virtuous teachers and so forth, with a motivation of wanting to benefit.

Function: Concealment acts as the basis for losing regret, and in the long run it causes one to be separated from physical and mental happiness.

Spite

Definition: Spite is harmful intent preceded by wrath and the thought of vengeance. It wants to speak harshly, because of enmity when others point out one's faults, and is without regret and the intention to declare.

Function: Spite acts as the basis for harsh speech and violence and increases non-virtue.

The *Compendium of Knowledge* lists specifically harsh speech and then general violent actions as the outcome of spite. Gyaltsab Rinpoche interprets this as harsh speech and other non-meritorious actions in his *Commentary on the Compendium of Knowledge*. The *Clear Discernment of the Aggregates* also states explicitly harsh speech as the outcome, while Nagarjuna identifies spite as a grasping at negativity in his *Precious Garland*. Vasubandu in the *Commentary on the Abhidharmakosha* does likewise.

Looking at the different definitions, spite is a mental factor belonging to the family of anger, and is preceded by wrath and the thought of vengeance. It holds tightly onto negativity, thus acting as the basis for increasing negativity, and leads in particular to harsh speech and in general to other violent or simply non-meritorious and harmful actions.

Asanga and Gyaltsab Je say that spite arises in the context of being criticized.

Jealousy

Definition: Jealousy is a highly agitated mental factor belonging to the family of anger that is unable to bear the qualities of others because of attachment to gain and praise.

Function: Belonging to the family of anger, jealousy causes one to be unable to be mentally happy.

Miserliness

Definition: Miserliness is a mental factor that holds tightly onto possessions because of attachment to gain and praise, not being able to let go.

Function: Miserliness acts as the basis for not gaining possessions in the future. It belongs to the family of attachment.

Pretension

Definition: Pretension is the showing of qualities one does not possess, because of strong attachment to gain and praise.

Belonging to the family of attachment and ignorance, it is the projecting of qualities one does not possess through the power of attachment to gain and praise. For example, even though the mind is extremely unsubdued, with the motivation to deceive others, one pretends to be subdued.

Function: Pretension acts as the basis for wrong livelihood.

The five wrong livelihoods are:

1. Make believe - as explained before, by acting as if one has qualities that one actually does not possess, one creates an outward appearance of perfection for others.
2. Flattery - saying soft, charming words for gain and praise.
3. Praise for gain - after having generated the wish to attain the possessions of others, one praises these possessions on the basis of having first engaged in flattery.
4. Pressuring - accusing others of greed etc. for the purpose of gain.
5. Hinting - aspiring for gain by, e.g., telling others how somebody else had generously given one such an object.

Dissimulation

Definition: Dissimulation is a mental factor that does not wish to admit faults to others because of being attached to gain and praise.

It belongs to both the families of attachment and ignorance.

Dissimulation has the *function* of preventing one from obtaining perfect teachings.

These days we regard it as being clever if we manage to hide our faults from others, and are able to project an image of perfection that is really untrue. But if we look at it from the point of the dharma, then we deceive ourselves.

Conceit

Definition: Conceit is an arrogant consciousness of mental happiness and joy that arises through focusing on contaminated perfections such as youthfulness, good health, long life, complete enjoyments and so forth.

Conceit belongs to the family of attachment and has the function of acting as the basis for all root and associated afflictions.

Harmfulness, Cruelty

Definition: Harmfulness is the wish to abuse others, being a consciousness of non-compassion, non-sympathy and non-empathy.

- Non-compassion, if one wishes to do the abusing oneself.
- Non-sympathy, if one wishes to order another to abuse.
- Non-empathy, if one rejoices in the abusing of others.

Harmfulness belongs to the family of anger. It has the function of causing abuse.

Lama Zopa Rinpoche:

The purpose of our life is not simply to solve our own problems, to gain happiness for ourselves. The purpose of our life is to be of use to others, to benefit other sentient beings, whether it be one or many. However, the real reason we are alive is to free the numberless other sentient beings from suffering and lead them to the unsurpassed happiness of full enlightenment. That is the meaning of our life. Each of us has this universal responsibility to bring the greatest happiness to all sentient beings.

Pause here for a moment, stop reading, and meditate on the feeling of universal responsibility, that if you have compassion for all living beings, each one receives great peace and happiness from you; each one receives no harm. Think, “All this peace and happiness that they experience and enjoy depends upon me.” Think of the reasons for this and meditate on the thought, “I am responsible for all sentient beings’ peace and happiness.” It would be wonderful if you could practice mindfulness of this in your everyday life.

The Two Associated Afflictions Conjoined with All Non-Virtuous Minds

Shamelessness

Definition: Shamelessness is non-fear of negativity by taking oneself or the Dharma as the reason.

It belongs to the families of anger, attachment and ignorance, and fulfils the function of supporting all root and associated afflictions.

As an example, if a monk is in a situation where he could drink alcohol, but becomes apprehensive about the negativity of such an action, taking himself as the reason, thinking, “This is not an appropriate action for a monk,” then that is called shame. The opposite is called shamelessness.

Non-Embarrassment, Inconsideration

Definition: Non-embarrassment is non-fear of negativity by taking others as the reason.

It belongs to the families of anger, attachment and ignorance, and fulfils the function of supporting all root and associated afflictions.

For example, if one becomes fearful in regard to negativity by taking others, i.e., the gurus, buddhas and bodhisattvas, as the reason through thinking, “The guru, buddhas and deities have clairvoyance and can see what I do,” then that is called embarrassment. The opposite is called non-embarrassment.

Shamelessness and non-embarrassment, or inconsideration, support all mental afflictions and are a cause for all negativities, because if one is not fearful in regard to negativities, then one is not able to prevent them.

Therefore, it is explained in both *the Compendium of Knowledge* and *the Treasury of Knowledge* that all non-virtuous minds are accompanied by shamelessness and inconsideration.

Chandrakirti, Introduction to the Middle Way, 4.1.:

All qualities follow enthusiasm, the cause of
Both accumulations of merit and wisdom.
The ground where enthusiasm starts to blaze
Is the fourth, the one radiating light.

The first Dalai Lama Gyalwa Gedun Drub in his *Mirror*:

Enthusiasm is the cause for both the accumulation of merit as well as the accumulation of wisdom because it is concomitant with all qualities, because in dependence upon it one attains qualities not yet attained and the already attained qualities increase more and more.

Take the subject, “The fourth ground, the one radiating light” - it excels in enthusiasm - because it is the ground where enthusiasm, the cause of the two accumulations, blazes intensely.

The Eight Associated Afflictions Conjoined with All Afflicted Minds

Lethargy

Definition: Lethargy is a consciousness without workability and with heaviness of body and mind. It prevents the realisation of the object correctly.

It belongs to the family of ignorance and fulfils the function of supporting and increasing all root and associated afflictions.

Lethargy degenerates the characteristic of calm abiding.

Excitement

Definition: Excitement is an unpeaceful mental factor. It follows the attractive characteristics of objects and induces the mind to crave and engage external objects through focusing on previous experiences of the sense objects.

Function: Excitement obstructs the attainment of calm abiding, which is free from mental excitement and mental sinking. It belongs to the family of desire.

Excitement degenerates the characteristic of firmly holding the object.

Non-Faith

Definition: Non-faith is non-belief, non-faith in and non-wish for virtue.

It is a mental factor contrary to faith that belongs to the family of ignorance and functions as the basis for laziness.

Non-faith degenerates the faculty of faith.

Divisions:

- Non-faith in the law of karma, opposing the faith of belief.
- Non-faith in the qualities of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha, lacking the characteristics of clarity and liking, and opposing clear faith.
- Non-faith not aspiring to or wishing for liberation, opposing aspiring faith.

Laziness

Definition: Laziness is a stagnant consciousness not attracted to virtue because of being attracted to sleep, socialising and so forth.

It belongs to the family of ignorance and has the function of obstructing the practice of virtue.

From the *Introduction to the Bodhisattva's Actions*:

I shall explain its antithesis:

Laziness, grasping at the negative,

And the discouragement that puts oneself down.

Gyaltsab Je:

I shall explain the antithesis that is laziness. There is the laziness that grasps at the happiness of lazing around, where body and mind are non-pliant, the laziness that grasps at the negative and the laziness that puts oneself down, thinking, "I cannot do this," after having become discouraged.

Laziness degenerates the faculty of enthusiasm.

Recklessness

Definition: Recklessness is a mental factor that, through abiding within attachment, anger and ignorance, together with laziness, does not protect the mind from contaminated phenomena nor from not meditating on virtue.

As such it is an awareness that, by giving up conscientiousness, does not protect the mind from negativities and afflictions.

It has the function of obstructing virtue and increasing non-virtue.

Recklessness leads to being patient with the afflictions, granting the afflictions entry into the mind. At the time one may think that it does not matter as it is only for a short while.

But afflictions, once granted entry into the mind, do not leave again on their own accord. It could well be that the same afflictions will still be in the mind decades later, and will continue to do so until one has applied the antidote.

Forgetfulness

Definition: Forgetfulness is mindfulness concomitant with afflictions which makes the mind unclear in regard to virtue and causes the mind to forget virtue by remembering the objects of the afflictions.

Its function is to distract the mind.

The mind is sidetracked from virtue by the objects of the afflictions and the appearances of the afflictions themselves in the mind. One has the object of attachment or anger often very clear in mind for a long time, which makes it clear that this type of afflicted mindfulness is not beneficial for the mind. What one needs is mindfulness of a positive object.

Forgetfulness degenerates the faculty of mindfulness.

Non-Introspection

Definition: Non-introspection is a discriminating awareness conjoined with afflictions, hence an afflicted wisdom, that engages in the actions of the three doors without being aware whether they are suitable or not.

A wisdom that, while not discerning progress from non-progress, suitable words from unsuitable words, suitable thoughts from unsuitable thoughts, still induces engaging into actions of body, speech and mind.

As such, it is the opposite of introspection and has the function of causing downfalls by causing unaware actions of body, speech and mind.

Non-introspection degenerates the faculty of wisdom.

Distraction

Definition: Mental wandering taking the mind away from virtuous objects, due to the power of afflictions.

Belonging to the families of attachment, anger and ignorance, distraction has the function of obstructing.

It degenerates the faculty of concentration.

The Black Hole

In the black hole of self-cherishing and self-grasping
Dharma movement ceases and comes to a standstill.
Yet the density of the dark matter
Forms the basis for innumerable harmful thoughts and actions.

The Four Changeable Mental Factors

(Sleep, Regret, Investigation, Analysis)

They are called *changeable mental factors* because, in dependence on the accompanying motivational thought, they will be virtuous, non-virtuous or non-predicted.

Sleep

Definition: Sleep is a consciousness that overpowers the sense consciousnesses and withdraws them from their object due to causes such as physical heaviness, weakness, exhaustion, the bringing to mind of darkness and the like.

Sleep belongs to the category of ignorance and its function is to cause one to disengage from actions.

The Appropriate and Inappropriate Times for Sleep

Nagarjuna advises that the whole day and the earlier and later parts of the night are for practice, and only the middle part of the night is for sleep.

Appropriate and Inappropriate Sleep

Appropriate sleep is sleep in the middle of the night based on the wish to restore one's energy so as to be able to practice the dharma well. Inappropriate sleep would be sleep in the middle part of the day based on mental afflictions.

Function:

Sleep can be virtuous or non-virtuous: Non-virtuous, afflictive sleep causes one's virtuous actions to degenerate. That there is virtuous sleep is explained in detail in the *Five Grounds* by Asanga.

Meditation:

Visualize that you are sleeping at the feet of the Buddha, or Tara, and that white light is emanating from his or her chest, forming a protecting tent of wisdom and compassion around you.

Regret

Definition: Regret is a disheartenment with a past action that one has engaged in volitionally or under duress, and which one does not wish to engage in again.

If one regrets a non-virtuous action then the regret is virtuous, but if one regrets a virtuous action, then the regret is non-virtuous. If one regrets an action that neither benefited nor harmed others, then the regret is neutral.

The appropriate time for regret is before the karma has ripened. This is the time when one can still do something about one's karma by purifying it with regret and the other three opponent powers, before the ripening result of a lower rebirth, or the other suffering results, have manifested.

The other three opponent powers are the powers of reliance, thorough application of the antidote and the power of the promise.

The inappropriate time for regret is when one cannot do anything anymore: I.e., when the ripening result of a lower rebirth has manifested, or other suffering results such as being born blind or disabled and so forth, have ripened.

Investigation

Definition: Investigation is an examination of a coarse meaning.

Analysis

Definition: Analysis is an examination of a subtle meaning.

Investigation and analysis have the function to either cause one to come into contact with happiness or to be separated from happiness, depending on whether the examination is virtuous or non-virtuous.

Examples of virtuous investigation and analysis are investigation into the meaning of selflessness and the detailed analysis of selflessness based on a disillusionment with cyclic existence.

Examples of non-virtuous investigation or analysis are the examinations of the pleasant and unpleasant aspects of an object based on attachment or anger.

An example of a neutral investigation or analysis is the examination of a neutral action such as carpentry without any virtuous or non-virtuous intention.

SARVA MANGALAM

By the merits of translating this commentary
May all our teachers such as His Holiness the Dalai Lama,
Lama Zopa Rinpoche, Lama Ösel Rinpoche and so forth
Remain immutable with us like a vajra, brimming with health,
And continually turn the wheel of Dharma of Sutra and Tantra,
Especially Lama Tsong Khapa's teachings.

The qualities of the Buddha are inconceivable
The qualities of the Dharma are inconceivable
The qualities of the Sangha are inconceivable
The ripening result, caused by
Faith in the inconceivable, is also inconceivable.

May all sentient beings immediately
Attain the supreme state of enlightenment.

Lama Thubten Yeshe:

When you study Buddhism you are studying yourself - the nature of your body, speech and mind, with the main emphasis being on the nature of your mind and how it works in everyday life. Why is it so important to know the nature of your own mind?

Since we all want happiness, enjoyment, peace and satisfaction, and since these things do not come from ice cream but from wisdom and the mind, we have to understand what the mind is and how it works.

It is essential to identify the different mental afflictions in one's mind stream and then to counteract them with the appropriate antidotes. The presentation of minds and mental factors is an invaluable aid, because it gives a good overview over the major mental afflictions and the mental states that counteract them.