Chapter 8. Three Types of Persons

2. How to take full advantage of a life with leisures and endowments.

(This 2. matches the 1. that makes up all of the previous chapter. Both fall under the B. begun in Chapter 7 and thus begin all the remaining stages of the path - through to enlightenment.)

a. Producing certainty about the general presentation of the path

(All of Chapter 8. Part b. comprises Chapter 9.). a. has two parts.

1) How all the scriptures are included within the paths of the three types of persons.

The bodhisattva who later became the Buddha initiated the bodhicitta resolve. Subsequently, he accumulated merit and ultimately achieved perfect, complete Buddhahood—all of these endeavours were undertaken solely for the welfare of sentient beings.

Our journey seeking human rebirth (with potential for regression) or definitive liberation from cyclic existence, ie arhatship (where one achieves freedom from samsara and irreversibly ends suffering). This path has essential steps. The quest for Buddhahood goes beyond personal liberation, requiring consideration of the welfare of others. Individuals are at three levels of spiritual aspiration—small, intermediate and great scope. The lamrim structure has different paths to meet the distinct needs of each group.

An earlier level has not begun any of these steps and are primarily concerned with immediate and fleeting pleasure. They have not have any notions regarding life after death, karma, or rebirth. For such individuals, lamrim holds no relevance.

Individuals of **Small Spiritual Scope** focus primarily *on concerns for their next rebirth*. Acknowledging the transitory, impermanent nature of their present life, they focus on preparing for their next life. They seek a favourable rebirth within samsara, aspiring for birth as a human or god with four qualities: a sound physical form, ample wealth, a lengthy life and supportive environment of community, friends and family.

Their apprehension centres on avoiding birth in the lower realms and they wish to adopt the most effective means to ensure a positive rebirth.

It's important to note that this goal is insecure because of the potential to regress. Nonetheless, it qualifies as a spiritual goal. For as long as you continue to live lives under the influence of karma and within the cycle of samsara, it is imperative to be reborn in a context where there is freedom to enhance your circumstances. The preferred rebirth is human, because a lower rebirths no chance of spiritual goals.

Intermediate Scope. After ongoing human rebirths, more cycles become adherent and the next objective for individuals moving beyond the small spiritual scope is liberation from samsara—either arhatship or nirvana, with emancipation from the suffering of cyclic existence. These practitioners distance themselves from any form of happiness and enjoyment it offers. They are driven by a profound yearning to achieve absolute freedom from all dimensions of samsaric life with a comprehensive rejection of the entire spectrum of samsaric existence.

They desire complete liberation from the cycle of suffering inherent in samsara.

The objective pursued by individuals of intermediate spiritual scope is focused solely on personal liberation and does not extend to the well-being of other sentient beings. Although this form of emancipation is definitive, with a guaranteed liberation, it falls short of the highest level of freedom.

> Those who seek peace for themselves alone—
> Turning away from worldly pleasures
> And avoiding destructive actions—
> Are said to be of middling capacity.

Individuals of **great spiritual scope**, **bodhisattvas**, strive for buddhahood through Mahayana practices, motivated by compassion for all sentient beings trapped in samsara's cycles. Their aspiration extends beyond personal liberation and they commit themselves to the welfare of all other sentient beings, aiding them escape from samsara and achieve enlightenment. Their dedication is marked by a long-term commitment to all sentient beings' well-being, emphasising a bodhisattva's dedication to the welfare of all above personal interests.

Persons of supreme capacity are
Those who, through their personal suffering,
Truly want to completely end

All the suffering of others.

To recap the above, in Buddhism, there are three distinct religious goals tailored to individuals of at varying places in their spiritual journeys. The **first goal** involves achieving a temporary, positive rebirth within samsara, free from lower births. The **second goal** is a higher pursuit—seeking one's own complete emancipation from the cycle of samsara. The **third and highest goal** involves seeking the emancipation of others. Specific methods are employed to attain each goal, with different instructions for individuals at various spiritual stages.

In the **small scope** stage, individuals are taught about the unique opportunities and significance of their current human existence (Chapter 7). Emphasis is placed on understanding the impermanence of life, the impact of karma on future rebirths (Chapters 13 and 14) and the importance of ethical behaviour (Chapter 15). Practitioners learn how to refrain from negative actions and cultivate virtuous karma, aiming for a favourable rebirth within samsara.

For the **second goal—liberation from samsara**—meditations are structured around the **Four Noble Truths**. Contemplating the various sufferings inherent in samsaric existence, focusing on the root cause—the **six mental afflictions**[1].

The person of **intermediate spiritual scope** engages in the **three trainings** of: ethical conduct, meditative stabilisation and wisdom. Instructions in the lamrim tradition cater to the śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas[2], guiding them on achieving liberation from samsara.

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[1] In Buddhism, mental afflictions, kleshas, are negative mental states or destructive emotions that contribute to suffering and hinder one's spiritual development. The concept of mental afflictions is central to understanding the causes of suffering and the path to liberation in Buddhist teachings.

1. **Ignorance**: This is considered the root of all other mental afflictions. It refers to a lack of understanding of the nature of reality, including the impermanence of phenomena and the interdependence of all things.
2. **Attachment or desire**: This involves an excessive craving for sensual pleasures, material possessions and attachment to things that are transient. Attachment leads to suffering when those objects or experiences are not attained or are impermanent.
3. **Aversion or hatred**: This is an aversion or hatred towards things that are perceived as unpleasant or undesirable. It can manifest as anger, resentment, or hostility.
4. **Ignorance of the law of karma**: This is different from the general ignorance mentioned earlier. It specifically refers to a lack of understanding of the law of cause and effect, the consequences of one's actions and the cycle of birth and death (samsara).
5. **Pride or ego**: This is an inflated sense of self-importance or superiority. It leads to a distorted view of oneself and others, hindering spiritual growth and understanding.
6. **Doubt**: Doubt refers to a lack of confidence or trust in the teachings of Buddhism, the path, or one's own abilities to follow the path. It can create obstacles on the journey towards enlightenment.

In Buddhist philosophy, the goal is to overcome these mental afflictions through ethical conduct, meditation and wisdom. The process of overcoming them is essential for attaining liberation (nirvana) and reaching a state of freedom from suffering. The practices within Buddhism, such as mindfulness and meditation, aim to cultivate awareness and insight to gradually eliminate these mental afflictions.

[2] The "śrāvakas" and "pratyekabuddhas" are two distinct categories of individuals who follow specific paths to spiritual realisation and liberation.

1. **Śrāvakas (Hearers or Disciples)**: Śrāvakas are disciples of the historical Buddha (Shakyamuni Buddha) or other enlightened beings. They seek personal liberation from the cycle of birth, death and rebirth (samsara) and strive for their own individual enlightenment. The term "śrāvaka" literally means "hearer" or "listener," signifying their role as those who have heard and understood the teachings of the Buddha. Śrāvakas are often associated with the early Buddhist schools, which emphasise the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path as the path to liberation. They are motivated by the aspiration to attain arhatship, the highest level of individual spiritual attainment within their framework.
2. **Pratyekabuddhas (Solitary Realisers or Self-awakened Ones)**: Pratyekabuddhas are another category of individual practitioners who seek personal liberation but do so in a more solitary and self-discovered manner. They are considered to be self-awakened individuals who attain enlightenment by comprehending the nature of reality on their own. Pratyekabuddhas arise during periods when the Dharma is not widely taught or when it has declined. They are seen as individuals who have rediscovered the Dharma but do not actively teach it to others. Their enlightenment is often associated with their ability to understand the principle of dependent origination and the Twelve Links of Dependent Arising.

Although śrāvakas and pratyekabuddhas represent legitimate paths within Buddhism, they are in the Intermediate Scope because they have not added bodhichitta.

They also examine the **twelve links of Dependent Arising**[3], unraveling the origins of samsaric suffering.

The third goal, for individuals of **great spiritual scope**, involves Mahayana sutras, treatises and tantric teachings. Meditations in this stage encompass cultivating compassion, embodying the bodhisattva spirit and practicing the six perfections (charity, ethical conduct, patience, effort, meditative concentration, wisdom). This includes the cultivation of single-pointed concentration and the highest insight[4]. In the

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[3] The Twelve Links of Dependent Arising, Pratītyasamutpāda in Sanskrit, illustrate the process of how ignorance and craving lead to the cycle of birth, death and suffering (samsara). The twelve links are interconnected, forming a chain of causation. Understanding and breaking this chain is crucial for achieving liberation from the cycle of rebirth.

1. **Ignorance**: This is the fundamental ignorance of the true nature of reality, including the Four Noble Truths and the nature of the self. Ignorance is the root cause that sets the cycle of dependent arising in motion.
2. **Formation**: Ignorance leads to the formation of volitional activities or mental formations. These are the karmic activities generated by thoughts, words and deeds.
3. **Consciousness**: Formation leads to the arising of consciousness. This refers to the subjective awareness or cognisance that arises as a result of karmic activities.
4. **Name and Form**: Consciousness conditions the development of name (mind or mental factors) and form (physical body) in a subsequent existence.
5. **Six Sense Bases**: Name and form lead to the arising of the six sense bases, which are the faculties of sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch and mental cognition.
6. **Contact**: The six sense bases give rise to contact, the interaction between the senses and the external world, leading to sensory experiences.
7. **Feeling**: Contact results in feelings or sensations, which can be pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral.
8. **Craving**: Feeling leads to craving, the strong desire or attachment to pleasant experiences and the aversion to unpleasant ones.
9. **Grasping**: Craving, in turn, leads to grasping or clinging, where one holds onto desires and attachments.
10. **Becoming**: Grasping results in becoming, the process of forming karmic actions and the conditions for future existence.
11. **Birth**: Becoming leads to birth, the physical and mental manifestation in a new existence.
12. **Aging and Death**: Birth leads inevitably to aging and death, completing the cycle of dependent arising. The cycle continues as long as ignorance persists.

The understanding and breaking of this chain are fundamental to Buddhist teachings, as doing so leads to liberation from samsara. In Buddhist practice, cultivating wisdom, ethical conduct and mindfulness are essential components of overcoming ignorance and breaking the cycle of dependent arising.

[4] In Buddhism, "single-point concentration" and "the highest insight" are two essential aspects of meditation practice that are often emphasised as part of the path to spiritual realisation and enlightenment.

1. **Single-Point Concentration (samadhi)**: is a state of focused and unwavering attention. It is a mental state achieved through meditation in which the mind becomes exceptionally calm, stable and one-pointed. In samadhi, the practitioner directs their attention to a single object of meditation, such as the breath, a visualised image, or a mantra and maintains an uninterrupted and deep concentration on that object. This focused concentration leads to a heightened state of mental clarity and tranquility. Samadhi is considered a fundamental aspect of Buddhist meditation as it helps to still the mind, reduce distractions and develop greater control over mental fluctuations. It is a precursor to the development of insight (vipassana) and is often practiced in conjunction with insight meditation to facilitate a deeper understanding of the nature of reality.
2. **The Highest Insight**: "vipassana" in Pali, is a form of meditation that focuses on gaining profound insight into the true nature of reality and the workings of the mind. Vipassana meditation involves observing the impermanence (anicca), unsatisfactoriness (duhkha) and selflessness (anatta) of all phenomena, including one's own thoughts, emotions and experiences.
   Through vipassana practice, practitioners aim to develop a clear and direct perception of the Three Marks of Existence (Three Universal Characteristics) mentioned above. This insight leads to a deep understanding of the nature of suffering, the causes of suffering (such as attachment and aversion) and the path to liberation from suffering, as outlined in the Four Noble Truths.
   Vipassana meditation is often practiced in conjunction with samatha (calming) meditation, which cultivates single-point concentration. The combination of these two practices helps individuals develop both the mental stability required for deep insight and the wisdom to penetrate the true nature of reality.

Single-point concentration (samadhi) and the highest insight (vipassana) are two complementary aspects of Buddhist meditation. Single-point concentration focuses on developing mental stability and concentration, while the highest insight delves into the profound understanding of the nature of reality, leading to wisdom and liberation from suffering. Both practices are integral to the path toward enlightenment in various Buddhist traditions.

lamrim tradition, teachings for those with great spiritual scope revolve around these advanced practices.

Even though your body is transient and lacks inherent essence, much like a bubble —having form but no enduring substance, impermanent, aging, with eventual demise —it possesses the potential to perform remarkable deeds that can greatly benefit others. This capacity for actions to help others is an attribute of a superior person with the qualities of a bodhisattva who utilises their body with compassion and wisdom, actively trying to achieve enlightenment for the well-being of others. The decision to pursue enlightenment in order to help others marks beginning the Mahayana path.

To progress on this path, it is imperative to overcome the eight obstacles: sensual desire, ill-will, sloth and laziness, anxiety, restlessness and worry, doubt, attachment to religious rituals and attachment to sensory experiences. These hindrances are akin to challenges associated with non-human births, hell realm etc, described in chapter 7.

Live a purposeful and meaningful life by adopting the practices of a person of great spiritual scope. Engage diligently in bodhisattva activities with bodhichitta associated with the Mahayana path, making every day and night count.

2) Why Students are led in Stages using the Trainings of the Three Types of Persons

a) The Purpose of leading students by means of the paths of the Three Types of Persons

The three paths in Buddhism are consecutive; each path guides you to the next one. The ultimate objective is attaining perfect enlightenment, which is the aim for those who have advanced in their spiritual journey. However, everyone must progress through each of the three paths – the small, intermediate and great – without any shortcuts. It's akin to a road trip where path connects to the next.

Lamrim Chemo gives an explanation of all the Mahayana path - including and beyond small or intermediate scope.

The question arises: Why not introduce people directly to the practices of the great person instead of navigating the paths of small and intermediate scope persons?

In the next section, Tsongkhapa explains that the practices of the small and intermediate paths serve as necessary preparation for the path of superior scope persons. Without traversing these initial paths, one cannot progress to the higher path. The three paths form an interconnected and continuous journey, with the early paths having crucial components leading to the higher path of enlightenment.

Non-harming, telling the truth,
Taking only what is given, living a chaste life,
And giving up all attachment
Are the practices that bring about a happy birth.

Ie, earnestly avoid any kind of action that is harmful to other beings.

Having clearly seen the sufferings of samsara,
To avoid them cultivate the path of the four truths
And abandon the two types of disgraceful conduct.[5]
These are the practices that bring about peace.
All of these are to be taken up; They are limbs of the path of renunciation.[6]

By understanding the emptiness of all phenomena,
A stream of compassion for beings flows forth.
Training in the limitless deeds of the masters of skilful means (ie, bodhisattvas)
Is the practice of the supreme renunciation.

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[5] Actions that are non-virtuous and misdeeds of disobedience to vows. Different vows for each level of practice - the prātimokṣa vows, bodhisattva vows, tantric vows. Any vows taken must be kept. Breaking any is bad karma - non-virtue.

[6] Ie, do whatever it takes to bring about the peace of your emancipation. Practice all aspects of the path of Four Noble Truths and eliminate the two kinds of disgraceful conduct (see footnote 5 above). Taking and keeping vows can help stay on the path.

b) Why one guides students through such stages

i) The actual reason

The gateway to the Mahayana path is **bodhicitta**, translated as the "mind of enlightenment." When bodhicitta arises spontaneously, the individual is termed a **bodhisattva**. The moment you genuinely develop the spontaneous aspiration to attain Buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings, you officially step onto the Mahayana path. **Spontaneous bodhicitta** is a threshold; it opens, delineates and characterises the entire path. Every action of body, speech and mind becomes directed towards benefiting others. The path as altruistic. If this altruistic attitude wavers or diminishes, one departs from the path and is no longer considered a bodhisattva. It is the main portal for entry and exit.

To enter this path, one must actively strive to cultivate and sustain this attitude. It's not an occasional thought but a continuous presence, day and night, with the entirety of one's mind governed by its altruistic power.

Developing bodhicitta is challenging and requires effort. Preliminary practices: meditation; a calm and tamed mind; the accumulation of merit and purification of past negative actions are all necessary prerequisites. Common practices on the small and intermediate paths pave the way for the eventual practice of generating bodhicitta. For instance, practices like taking refuge and the seven-limbed prayer precede the ritual generation of bodhicitta.

Before delving into the actual deeds of a Bodhisattva, it's crucial to understand the significance, necessity and benefits of bodhicitta. Without grasping its benefits, the motivation to strive for it will be weak and the genuine feeling for it won't arise spontaneously. One must contemplate and meditate on the benefits of bodhicitta until a profound recognition of its wonderful and indispensable qualities takes root in the heart. The desire for these benefits should be so compelling that pursuing bodhicitta becomes irresistible. Traversing the two lower paths is a prerequisite for recognising the advantages of bodhicitta and why one must cultivating.

Developing bodhicitta benefits are short and long term. In the short term, cultivating bodhicitta ensures that one avoids unfavourable rebirths and instead takes birth in more favourable conditions. The ultimate benefit is the assured liberation from all hindrances, anguish and suffering. A mind filled with bodhicitta is necessary to achieve highest enlightenment.

A mind imbued with bodhicitta significantly contributes to the creation of virtuous karma, paving the way for a higher rebirth with favourable conditions. This arises because the spontaneous emergence of bodhicitta counters selfish attitudes, orienting one's intentions exclusively towards others' wellbeing. Furthermore, the pervasive influence of bodhicitta can mitigate or neutralise past negative actions and deter the formation of new negative karma. As negative actions are often rooted in selfish motives, bodhicitta serves as an effective antidote by actively diminishing and countering selfish tendencies.

The profound appeal of bodhicitta lies in its boundless aim: to achieve enlightenment and a blissful state for every sentient being. As this goal is infinite and unattainable, the motivation of bodhicitta remains persistent, continuously striving for the well-being of others. This characteristic should capture your attention, as acts as a protection against descending into lower births. However, reaching bodhicitta requires cultivating attitudes and practices individuals at the small and intermediate levels. It is the threshold to the Mahayana path.

At its core, bodhicitta is founded on great love (the wish to actively assist others in achieving positive outcomes, joy, liberation and Buddhahood) and great compassion (the aspiration to free all sentient beings from misery, suffering and afflictions). However, to act on and achieve these objectives, one must first attain the highest goal —enlightenment. In this sense, bodhicitta becomes a crucial and direct tool for achieving personal spiritual goals. It strives for something one desires personally and by benefiting others, one simultaneously benefits oneself. The path involves developing love and compassion through dedicated practice, followed by the aspiration to attain perfect enlightenment to actively improve the welfare of others. Training and meditation are crucial steps this journey. Ultimately, the ability to empathise with the suffering of others is deeply intertwined with the recognition of one's own samsaric distress and the sincere wish to end it. Without a profound awareness of personal suffering, the ability to truly comprehend and alleviate the suffering of others will remain out of reach.

If those beings have never before
Felt such an attitude for their own sake,
Even in their dreams,
How could it ever arise for the sake of others?

To cultivate great compassion and love for others, there's a step-by-step process you must follow. It begins with generating a strong aversion to the suffering you could endure in a lower rebirth, a practice of the **small scope**. Then, in **intermediate practice**, you meditate on how even higher births entail their own forms of suffering. Consider the near impossibility of descending from a current life of comfort to a lower birth and then regaining a life of ease—it would take countless eons of suffering.

After reflecting on your own circumstances, expand your contemplation to include the suffering you witness on television, such as war victims, refugees, animals in distress, victims of various injustices, individuals consumed by negative actions, wrongdoers, those who inflict suffering, terrorists, murderers and predators (and the consequences they face). Through this meditation, you gradually begin to feel empathy and compassion for them, nurturing a sense of love and concern. Extend this concern to encompass all sentient beings who are trapped in cycles of destructive karma, destined for unending suffering. This progression leads to the emergence of great love and compassion. Once these qualities are sincerely cultivated, bodhicitta – the aspiration for enlightenment for the sake of all beings – naturally emerges.

It's essential to understand that the **practices of small and intermediate spiritual scope** serve as essential preliminary steps on the path to spontaneous bodhicitta. Skipping or neglecting any of these foundation steps can be detrimental because each practice builds upon the previous one, equipping you for the next stage. By mastering each step, you become more stable on your spiritual journey, with subsequent steps unfolding naturally. Attempting to leap over these necessary stages is a mistake that may hinder the development of bodhicitta. All the practices of the two lower paths are foundational for the ultimate goal of bodhicitta. It's crucial to have the awareness that they provide the necessary groundwork for your journey.

Skipping steps, creating shortcuts or inventing your own path may prevent achieving bodhicitta causing you to miss out on the profound benefits of this life.

The Mahayana path follows a specific sequence: first practice at small then intermediate scope and only then advance to the level of a great spiritual scope.

Once you have successfully cultivated bodhicitta, the next step involves reciting an aspiration prayer that solidifies your commitment to seeking enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. The prayer goes as follows:

> "Until I attain enlightenment, I go for refuge to the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. May all my acts of charity and so forth result in my becoming a Buddha in order to benefit all sentient beings."

This prayer not only reiterates your dedication but also underscores the importance of taking refuge in the Buddha, Dharma and Sangha while dedicating all virtuous actions to the ultimate goal of becoming a Buddha to aid all sentient beings.

While the generation of bodhicitta is a crucial motivation for aiding others, it's not sufficient on its own. To actualise this altruistic goal, you must develop a deep commitment to adopting the activities of a bodhisattva. These practices includes practicing the six perfections[7] and the

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[7] **Six perfections** are: charity, ethical conduct, patience, effort, meditative concentration, wisdom.

Ethics: all the practices of persons of small and intermediate scope and the great scope practices of bodhicitta and the first four perfections are classified as ethics.

Concentration: the practice of single-point concentration is classified as concentration.

Wisdom: the highest insight, the sixth perfection, is the training of wisdom.

four methods to attract disciples[8]. When you genuinely aspire to undertake these practices, it indicates readiness to take the bodhisattva vows (Appendix 1)—a pivotal step in commencing Mahayana activities. It's vital to adhere strictly to these vows, prioritising them even above your own life and make efforts to observe the minor rules. If violations occur, engage in practices to purify breaches and restore the vows.

In practicing the six perfections, place special emphasis on developing **single-pointed concentration**. This skill is crucial as it enhances your ability to maintain focus on virtuous objects for extended periods, thereby facilitating the attainment of **meditative stabilisation**, which is essential for wisdom.

With the attainment of single-pointed concentration, investigate the true nature of the self and all phenomena. This is vital to break misconceptions surrounding the self of persons and self of phenomena. Our mental afflictions, such as desire and attachment, stem from ignorance of the true nature of these selves. We mistakenly perceive things as existing independently and cling to these false perceptions.

To overcome this deep-seated ignorance, delve into the concept of emptiness or selflessness. Initially, learn about emptiness from the teachings of Buddha and subsequent masters. As your understanding deepens through inference and contemplation, it gradually transforms into a direct and unmistakable realisation. Prolonged meditation on this profound understanding leads to the highest insight, vipaśyanā, which embodies wisdom. This realisation of emptiness, śūnyatā, is the ultimate understanding of the nature of the self and all phenomena. Through this profound wisdom, one can cut through false appearances and eliminate ignorance at its root. This journey toward wisdom and śūnyatā is a fundamental aspect of the path to enlightenment in Buddhism.

All bodhisattvas practice all three trainings.

There are two wings to enable buddhism to fly: method and wisdom. Method is everything up to and including single-pointed concentration. Ie, everything except wisdom. These method practices accumulate merit and are regarded as the 'conventional truth' and included in the 'extensive path'. Wisdom is the 'ultimate truth' and is the 'profound path'.

Everything must be practiced in the correct, specific order or you will not your achieve your goal. You need both method and wisdom to achieve buddhahood. You cannot succeed without all of the three trainings - ethics, concentration and wisdom. You need great certainty about this—or you may be tempted to another path.

> With broad white wings of conventional and ultimate truth,
> The king of swans, accompanied by the flock of sentient beings,
> Flies on the powerful winds of virtue
> To the supreme far shore of the ocean of a buddha's perfect qualities.

The path described above is known as the **'common' path**. Even with the cultivation of bodhicitta, progressing through this path might take considerable time. However, there is a faster method, known as the 'tantric' path, which expedites the accumulation of method and wisdom. While this path might be quicker, it requires a

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[8] These four special to attract disciples are methods that are often emphasised as methods used by teachers and spiritual leaders to attract guide and inspire disciples:

1. **Generosity**: is one of the fundamental and revered virtues. Teachers and spiritual leaders often practice generosity by providing teachings, guidance and support to their disciples without expecting anything in return. By selflessly giving their time, wisdom and resources, they create a sense of gratitude and admiration among their followers, attracting them to the path of Dharma.
2. **Kind Speech**: The use of kind and compassionate speech is essential in attracting and retaining disciples. Teachers and spiritual leaders should communicate with humility, warmth and empathy, creating a nurturing and supportive environment. The power of kind speech fosters trust and respect, making disciples feel valued and understood.
3. **Beneficial Actions**: Teachers and spiritual leaders should demonstrate their commitment to the welfare of their disciples through beneficial actions. These actions include providing practical guidance, offering solutions to life's challenges and serving as role models of virtuous conduct. When disciples see the tangible benefits of following a teacher or spiritual leader, they are more likely to be drawn to their teachings and guidance.
4. **Consistency**: in one's words and actions is vital in gaining the trust and devotion of disciples. Teachers and spiritual leaders should maintain a steadfast commitment to their teachings and principles. When disciples see that their spiritual guides are unwavering in their dedication to the Dharma, it inspires confidence and devotion in their followers.

By incorporating these four special methods—generosity, kind speech, beneficial actions, consistency—teachers and spiritual leaders create an environment that attracts and nurtures disciples on their spiritual journey. These methods help draw people to the path and foster a strong, supportive spiritual community.

more in-depth understanding of the 'common' Sutrayana path, which is learned from the Sutras – the teachings of Buddha Shakyamuni. The **tantric path** is more complex and may necessitate prior knowledge, possibly from extensive practice in past lives.



For both the common and tantric paths, relying on a guru or teacher is crucial. The importance of a guru becomes even more pronounced in the tantric path. Initiating this path begins with a special initiation that opens your mind and prepares it to receive tantric teachings. Also taking powerful and binding vows and accepting all the precepts of the higher tantric vows. These vows are made in the presence of a guru and a mandala[9] and they constitute the foundation of the tantric path. Adhering to these vows is essential; commitment to them must be unwavering.

The vows in the tantric path are notably more complex and challenging to uphold than the prātimokṣa vows taken by monks and nuns, or even the bodhisattva vows. The consequences of breaking any major rule of the tantric vows are severe and they must be maintained even at the cost of one's life; for both major and minor rules.

While the tantric path may seem appealing due to its rapid progress and perceived excitement, it carries risks and challenges, including the difficulty of finding a competent teacher. The Lamrim teachings guide practitioners through to the beginning of tantric teachings.

Tantric teachings are divided into four classes. The first three are action tantra, performance tantra and yoga tantra. Each of these levels has two stages: the initial stage, known as the 'yoga with signs or images' and the more advanced stage, the 'yoga without images or signs'. The fourth class, the highest yoga tantra, also has two stages: the generation stage and the completion stage.

These practices are profoundly deep and offer significant benefits to dedicated practitioners. However, it's essential to train methodically in all steps of the path to ensure proper progress and understanding.

> If you wish to attain unsurpassable enlightenment,
> With its inconceivably great power,
> You should intently practice the essential methods
> Upon which the attainment of enlightenment depends.

Neither should you waste time on meaningless, worldly activities. If they are not essential buddhist practices, dump them. **For small scope persons**.

> Though it is difficult to find, I have obtained
> This wonderful life with its leisure and opportunities.
> Since in the future it will be very difficult to attain,
> I must make it meaningful by striving in practice.

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[9] a **mandala** is a sacred and intricate geometric design that represents the universe, both in its physical form and as a symbol of the spiritual journey towards enlightenment.
Key aspects of a Buddhist mandala include:

1. **Geometric Patterns**: Mandalas are typically composed of intricate geometric patterns, often centred around a core point or a deity. These patterns can be highly detailed and are meant to draw the viewer's attention inward.
2. **Central Deity or Symbol**: At the centre of many Buddhist mandalas, you may find a deity, bodhisattva, or a symbolic representation of enlightenment, such as a lotus flower or a Dharma wheel. The central figure holds spiritual significance and represents the ultimate goal of spiritual realisation.
3. **Surrounding Elements**: Mandalas are surrounded by various elements, such as concentric circles, squares and complex patterns radiating outwards from the centre. These elements can symbolise different aspects of the Buddhist path, the cosmos, or the stages of spiritual development.
4. **Colour Symbolism**: Colours play a crucial role in mandalas. Different colours are associated with specific qualities or emotions. Eg, white may represent purity, red symbolises passion and blue represents wisdom. The use of colour in a mandala is intentional and contributes to its symbolism.
5. **Purpose**: Mandalas serve multiple purposes. They are used as aids in meditation, helping practitioners focus their minds and contemplate the deeper meanings of the symbols within the mandala. Mandalas are also employed in rituals and ceremonies to invoke blessings and protection.
6. **Healing and Transformation**: Mandalas are sometimes used as therapeutic tools for psychological healing and personal transformation. The act of creating or colouring a mandala can be a meditative and introspective process that promotes mindfulness and self-awareness.
7. T**antric Practice**: In Tibetan Buddhism, mandalas are an integral part of tantric practices, representing the sacred palace or pure realm of a deity. Monks create intricate sand mandalas during elaborate rituals and then ritually dismantle them to symbolise the impermanence of all things.

The symbolism and purpose of a Buddhist mandala varies with the specific tradition and context in which it is used. These intricate designs are aids in meditation, visualisation and spiritual contemplation.

The path you have to practice to free yourself entirely from samsara as the motivation of the **person of intermediate scope** - likening samsara to jail.

> When the chance suddenly turns up
> For a prisoner to escape from jail,
> He will consider the chance to flee that place
> As more valuable than any other prize.
>
> Just like that, when opportunities arise
> To pass beyond this great ocean of samsara,
> It is incomparable to any other attraction:
> You should escape from the house of cyclic existence.

The next set of verses focuses on the practice of the **person of great spiritual scope**:

> By abiding in the basis of wishing bodhicitta,
> Taking refuge and superior ethical conduct,
> Undertake the vows of the bodhisattva.
> Engage properly, step by step, to the best of your ability,
> In all the actions of the bodhisattva,
> The six perfections and all the others.

This path is comprised of both method and wisdom. The essence of these two is single-pointed concentration and highest insight. You should meditate on these two practices:

> Cultivate the practices of single-pointed concentration and highest insight,
> Which are the heart of method and wisdom.

Then, introduction to the **tantric practices**:

> Firmly establish complete bodhicitta,
> Which arises from the power of compassion.
> Do not be attached to the material pleasures of cyclic existence.
> Turn your back on grasping at true existence.
> Gather the marvellous wealth: the treasure of faith and so forth.
>
> Honour your guru as equal to the Buddha.
> Make every effort to fully protect
> All the precepts that your guru has given.
> By the kindness of the guru,
> Obtain the vase and secret initiations.
>
> The practitioner's pure body, speech and mind
> Are a vessel for spiritual attainments.
> By completing the two accumulations
> By means of the limb of concentration,
> You will quickly obtain the highest spiritual attainment.
> This is the system of secret mantra.

The tantric method gives you the power to accomplish the accumulations of merit and wisdom and thus attain the highest goal hundreds of times more quickly than sutra practice. However, you must proceed step by step. It is not an easy path. Instructions are complex with many included steps. (An analogy with a pilot is given. A child wants to fly a plane when he sees a pilot.)

To begin this path, you have to want it. To start the process, you need to honour and respect your guru as equal to the Buddha. It has to be face-to-face. Some details are given on commentary page 298 of 485, text page 139 in verse. Much is done by worshiping deities and so accumulating merit very effectively and quickly reach the highest spiritual attainment.

ii) The Purpose

Because practices for small and intermediate are included in the great scope why do they have separate categories? The reason for categorising practices into small, intermediate and great scopes, despite their inclusion within the great scope, is multifaceted. Firstly, individuals with limited understanding may prematurely claim advanced knowledge when they have only begun their journey. This categorisation helps in aligning practices with one's actual level of spiritual development.

Secondly, not all teachings are universally suitable. Some practitioners may find themselves unable to progress beyond the 'intermediate' stage. The journey on the path invariably begins at the 'simplest' level, as it is essential for everyone to first cultivate the aspiration for a higher rebirth. This desire lays the foundation for working towards the 'intermediate' goal of personal liberation from suffering. To develop the attitude of great compassion, characteristic of superior persons, one must complete these two lower stages. The determination to seek Buddhahood for the benefit of all sentient beings emerges from deep-seated compassion. The practices of the small and intermediate paths reinforce virtuous qualities necessary for Mahayana practice.

Fortunate individuals who have practiced the lower paths in previous lives may find these early paths easily attainable. Their recollection of past learnings can spur enthusiasm and ease the transition to subsequent stages.

Beware. Hastily advancing through the stages can impede one's spiritual progress. A step-by-step approach is crucial.

All sentient beings inherently possess the potential to attain Buddhahood, but their minds are often clouded with mental afflictions, suffering, desires, hatred and ignorance. Even the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas began their journeys with minds laden with such afflictions. They found a way to cleanse their minds of this karmic dirt and mental afflictions through gradual practice of these steps. It's only through this systematic practice that one can overcome internal obstacles. As ignorance and other mental afflictions diminish progressively, one eventually achieves the state of a perfect Buddha, fully enlightened and completely free from mental obstacles and afflictions. By eliminating the cause of suffering, the result – suffering itself – is also eradicated, leading to the ultimate goal of Buddhahood.

First you need the quality of a high rebirth.
Then the definite good of emancipation can occur.
Because you have obtained a high rebirth,
The definite good will gradually come.

Your initial objective on the spiritual path is not to attain the highest form of enlightenment right away. Your primary aim is to secure a favourable rebirth in your next life, preventing a fall into the lower realms. This is the essence of the **small scope path**. Once a high rebirth is achieved, you can then focus on the goal of liberating yourself from the cycle of samsara.

Finding a proper Dharma teacher is crucial in this journey. Their teachings should be regarded as medicinal. If these teachings are utilised correctly, they have the power to lead you to the ultimate freedom from samsara and towards the supreme goal of perfect Buddhahood. With the right approach and diligent practice, it's even possible to attain these lofty goals within a single lifetime.

This path is gradual, with three distinct goals that need to be achieved in sequence. It's akin to the approach a good teacher might take in progressively increasing the complexity of lessons, matched to the growing capabilities of the student – similar to how one might learn to ski or play the violin. This progression is like ascending a staircase: you must start on the first step and proceed step by step to reach the top. Each stage on this path builds upon the previous one, ensuring a solid foundation for the next, ultimately guiding you towards the attainment of perfect enlightenment.

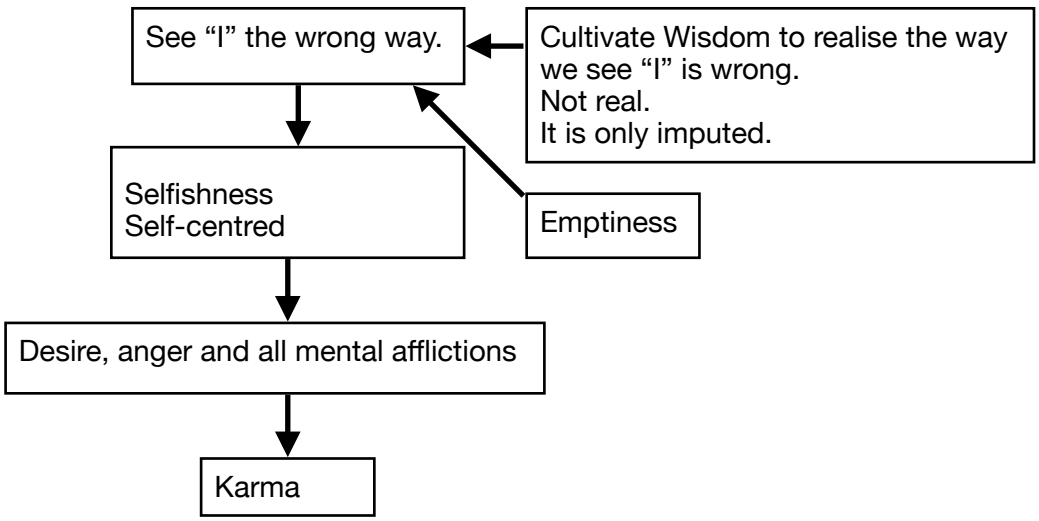
First, prevent non-virtue.
In the middle, dispel ideas of a self.
Finally, dispel wrong views of all kinds.
Whoever knows this is wise.

Non-virtuous actions are believed to result in rebirth in lower realms. Therefore, individuals on the **small scope path** focus on engaging in virtuous deeds to avoid a miserable rebirth. Some adopt specific vows to reinforce this commitment. This

involves consciously refraining from non-virtuous actions in thought, word and deed. Maintaining purity and clarity in one's actions is key to this practice.

For those on the **intermediate scope path**, the aim is to achieve complete liberation from the cycle of samsaric existence. The central strategy here is to address the root cause of samsara which is karma. Karma, in turn, is driven by mental afflictions and these afflictions stem from ignorance, particularly ignorance concerning the nature of the self. Misconceptions about the self, or the "I", lay the groundwork for a complex web of suffering. This flawed perception gives selfishness, leading to desires, anger and other mental afflictions from this egocentric view.

Eradication of this incorrect view of the self is crucial. Once it is dispelled, its resultant afflictions and the suffering they cause will cease. To eliminate this ignorance, it's necessary to cultivate the wisdom that recognises the ordinary perception of the “I” as fundamentally flawed. This wisdom understands that the entity we consider as the “I” is not inherently real, but merely a designated concept. So there is no concrete “I” or “self”. This is the profound concept of selflessness, or emptiness. For individuals on the intermediate scope path, the principal practice is to cultivate the wisdom that realises selflessness. This wisdom is pivotal in overcoming ignorance and progressing towards emancipation from the continuous cycle of samsara.



On the Mahayana Path, a **bodhisattva's journey involves a profound transformation aimed at eliminating all forms of incorrect beliefs**. Central to this is overcoming of two types of obscurations: those associated with personal liberation and those that obstruct complete enlightenment. The profound wisdom cultivated on the **great scope** path is instrumental not only in dispelling misconceptions about the self but also in clarifying erroneous perceptions about all aspects of reality. This leads to the realisation of **two fundamental truths**: the conventional truth and the ultimate truth. Attaining enlightenment requires freeing oneself entirely from all erroneous perceptions. In this unobstructed state, a bodhisattva can engage in actions that benefit all sentient beings.

Progression through these stages is deliberate and sequential. One cannot simply skip the lower stages and leap directly to the higher ones; it is necessary to follow the prescribed steps of the path.

To embrace the teachings of the great Mahayana path toward Buddhahood, a disciple must first become a receptive vessel for these teachings. Many encounter a teacher and hear the teachings but struggle to internalise them fully. A major obstacle to this is the attachment to worldly pleasures and comforts. This attachment to fleeting joys of this life contradicts the essence of the teachings, which transcend the mundane aspects of this life. The pursuit of worldly pleasures is often driven by what are known as the "**eight worldly concerns**": the desire for gain and fear of loss, the pursuit of pleasure and aversion to pain, the thirst for praise and the dread of scorn and the quest for fame and the fear of disgrace.

Actions driven by the eight worldly concerns, even if they appear virtuous, lack genuine virtue. Whether one follows the Hinayana, Mahayana, or Tantric Buddhist path, the authenticity of one's practices is compromised when tainted by these concerns. For instance, engaging in meditation or religious rituals solely to attain worldly pleasures transforms such activities into mundane endeavours, far removed from authentic Dharma practice. Similarly, performing tantric rituals with the sole aim

of achieving worldly objectives or meditating exclusively for temporary peace does not align with genuine Dharma practice. In these instances, the primary focus remains fixed on transient, worldly pursuits.

In Buddhism, the term 'Dharma' (Sanskrit) or 'chö' (Tibetan) signifies virtuous activities motivated by aspirations beyond this life's concerns. Thus, when one says, "I practice the Dharma," it implies engaging in virtuous activities with a spiritual or religious goal, not merely for worldly ends.

For those beginning their journey, it is essential to grasp the true essence of practicing the Dharma—the ultimate objective and the method. Both teacher and disciple must acknowledge that enlightenment is not an instant achievement but a gradual process that demands understanding and the diligent application of various stages. These steps must be earnestly followed by both teacher and student, recognising that there are no shortcuts to attaining enlightenment.

Next chapter, back to the beginning - the path for the person of small scope.