

CHAPTER 4

CONCERN

The training in bodhicitta, which is the cooperating condition, can be explained in relation to the six perfections. Although there is no specific chapter on giving, the first perfection, its practice is nevertheless explained throughout the text. [290] The chapter on Clear Comprehension explains the perfection of moral conduct. The following four chapters [‘Patience’ through to ‘Wisdom’] are concerned with their eponymous perfections. The chapter on Concern is taught before these as the general cause of practice. Some other commentators have explained both Concern and Clear Comprehension as the general causes of practice, while the chapter on Patience shows how to practise the antidotes and abandon remaining obstacles [chapter 6]. This is followed by an explanation of reliance on the accompanying training [chapter 7] and then calm abiding and insight meditation [chapters 8 and 9] are the seeing of the true nature of the antidotes themselves.

The general cause of practice, concern, has two parts:

1. Briefly [v1]
2. Extensively [v2-48]

1. Briefly

4.1

**Having firmly grasped bodhicitta
In this way, a conqueror's son
Should never neglect it,
But instead strive never to violate the training.**

This verse indicates that one should maintain bodhicitta, i.e. that one should endeavour to prevent one's initial enthusiasm to keep the vow from dissipating. The second two lines indicate that one should take care to train by endeavouring in the training. How should one train? One should abandon downfalls and resembling non-downfalls and one should adopt the non-downfalls and resembling downfalls.

1. Downfalls and non-downfalls

Downfalls comprise the five root downfalls of kings, the five of ministers and the eight of beginners, etc.¹ Non-downfalls are the abandonment of those.

2. Resembling downfalls and resembling non-downfalls

In respect to inherent misdeeds in the moral conduct of the vow: If a person is harming the teachings of the Buddha and leading beings to the lower realms, etc. and there is a peaceful method to stop them² which does not involve killing them but, despite that, one kills them to stop them, [291] it would be the heavy fault³ of practising a dispensation even though a formal rule applies.⁴ In the case that one could not stop them by any other deed apart from killing them and so one kills them, it is a resembling downfall. If they are not killed, it is a resembling non-downfall.⁵ By contrast, according to the texts of the śrāvakas, such a deed is never permitted even if one sees that it would benefit others.

In respect to attendant misdeeds in the moral conduct of the vow: If some insects living in grass are about to drown and there is some way to save them, one should do it. If there was a way that does not involve the monk destroying the grass but he destroys it anyway, it would be the fault of practising a dispensation even though a formal rule is present.⁶ If there is no other way and the monk destroys the grass, it is

a resembling downfall. But if he does not act [and the insects die], it is a resembling non-downfall.

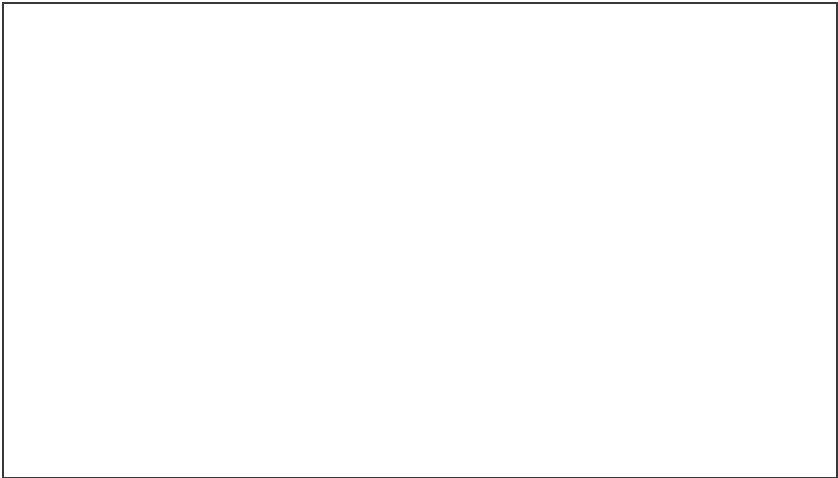
Thus in order to alleviate the terrible sufferings of such sentient beings, one should be happy even to go to the lower realms by becoming stained with such faults. Such is the attitude of thinking only of how to benefit others. However, if one does not have this attitude, since one's motivation is tainted with the mind of the defilements, it would be an actual downfall, though one would have the conceit that it was a resembling downfall.

In respect to gathering virtuous dharmas: When engaged in yoga [i.e. a practice of gathering virtuous dharmas], seeing some external deed that would benefit beings, one accomplishes their benefit by that other means [i.e. abandons the yogic practice to do so]. If their benefit could have been accomplished by any other means without abandoning one's engagement in samādhi, it is the first misdeed [i.e. practising a dispensation even though a formal rule is present]. If there was no other way to accomplish their benefit and so one abandoned the practice of yoga in order to do it, [292] it is a resembling downfall. If one did not accomplish their benefit, it is a resembling non-downfall.⁷

In respect to benefitting sentient beings: When engaged, for example, in accomplishing the benefit of many beings, one sees among them one being harming those who are practising meditation and developing good qualities and one sees that in his future life, that harmful being will himself be harmed by his actions. For the benefit of that one being, one should accomplish the benefit of the many who have good qualities by some other means or, by another means, overcome the harm that one being is doing in this life and to his future lives. If such means are available but one simply abandons accomplishing a benefit, it is the first fault [practising the dispensation though the formal rule applies]. If it was not possible to accomplish the benefit of the many by any other means and nor was it possible to overcome both the harm done by one person to the many and to his own future life, one should abandon the benefit of the one. However, one should still try to help the many and pacify the harms done to them and the harms done to the harm-doer himself. That situation is a resembling downfall. If one does not do so, it is a resembling non-downfall.⁸

2. Extensively

- 1. Concern for bodhicitta
- 2. Concern for the training



1. Concern for bodhicitta

- 1. Reasons for not abandoning bodhicitta
- 2. The faults of abandoning it

1. Reasons for not abandoning bodhicitta

The essential characteristics of non-abandonment, and what must cease in order to achieve that, are respectively indicated in the next two verses:

4.2

**Whatever I have undertaken rashly
Or not properly thought through,
Even if I have promised to do it,
I should reconsider, asking myself, ‘Should I stop?’**

4.3

The Buddhas and their sons

**Examine things with their great wisdom,
And even I can examine them,
So why would I hesitate in doing so?**

‘Rashly’ means without conducting analysis. ‘Not properly thought through’ means doing something misconceived. One should subsequently question whether such activities should be abandoned. [293] Since the Buddhas and their sons examine their activities, one should cease that which has not been properly analysed and since one can also examine it oneself, one should cease that which is rash.⁹

2. The faults of abandoning it

1. One goes to the lower realms
2. The benefit of others is damaged
3. The attainment of the bhūmis is obstructed

1. One goes to the lower realms

1. Deceiving all beings
2. Scriptural establishment
3. Abandoning contradiction with other scriptures

1. Deceiving all beings

4.4

**Having made this commitment,
If I do not act to fulfil it,
Then, since I will have deceived all sentient beings,
What kind of rebirth will I take?**

One deceived them because one promised to liberate all sentient beings but they were not liberated.

2. Scriptural establishment

4.5

**If it is taught that someone who intended to give
Some slight, unremarkable thing,
But then did not do so,**

Will be reborn as a hungry ghost,

4.6

Then, having sincerely intended to bring them

To unsurpassed bliss,

If I then deceive all sentient beings,

To what sort of happy rebirth shall I proceed?

The first verse is the example and the second is the application of the example. If, having had an intention, one does not fulfil it, one will be reborn as a hungry ghost. In the *Foundations of Mindfulness Sutra*, it is taught that even for something slight, one will be reborn as a ghost if, having intended to give it, one does not give it and one will be reborn in hell if, having promised to give it, one does not give it. What can one say then of someone who promises sentient beings the freedom of enlightenment but then does not free them?

3. Abandoning contradiction with other scriptures

In Ārya Śāriputra's former life as King Vinasena,¹⁰ a demon appearing as a Brahmin asked for his right hand. Śāriputra cut off his right hand and offered it with his left but the Brahmin became angry [since it was offered with the 'unclean' hand]. Śāriputra despaired and gave up bodhicitta. Although he returned to the Hīnayāna, he was not reborn in the lower realms. Is this not a contradiction?

4.7

To give up bodhicitta

But still be liberated;

Such a thing is inconceivable.

Only the Omniscient One could comprehend it.

Although he gave up bodhicitta, he was not reborn in the lower realms but attained liberation from saṃsāra. This was due to his application of the antidote to his nonvirtue. What is that antidote? To do such a thing is inconceivable, i.e. it can be comprehended only by the Omniscient One. Others say that giving up bodhicitta does not mean giving up the enlightenment of the śrāvakas.¹¹ [294] However, I will not go into this point here.¹²

2. The benefit of others is damaged

1. It is a heavy downfall for oneself
2. Interrupting the virtue of others is just as bad
3. The reason for these

1. It is a heavy downfall for oneself

4.8

**This is the most serious of downfalls
For a bodhisattva,**

The abandonment of bodhicitta is, among downfalls, the most serious. Is this a serious downfall for śrāvakas? No, only for bodhisattvas. How serious is the abandonment of bodhicitta for them?

Even if they have practised the path of the ten virtues for
millions of aeons,
If the wish to become a pratyekabuddha or arhat develops,
It is a fault for the development of bodhicitta and the
development of bodhicitta is lost.
For one who was generating bodhicitta, this is more serious
even than a monastic defeat.¹³

That is to say, the abandonment of bodhicitta is more serious even than praising oneself and disparaging others out of desire for wealth and honour, etc. Why?

**For, if should it occur,
The benefit of all beings is discarded.**

It is because while one is afflicted by this downfall, it is impossible to accomplish the benefit of others.

2. Interrupting the virtue of others is just as bad

4.9

**Should someone even for a moment
Interrupt or prevent this merit,**

**Since the benefit of beings is diminished,
Nothing can stop him going to the lower realms.**

Those who interrupt another's merit create a karmic obscuration for themselves, and it is impossible to benefit others through such an obscuration. Therefore, nothing will prevent them going to the lower realms.

3. The reason for these

4.10

**If destroying the happiness of even one sentient being
Will harm me,
What need to mention destroying
The happiness of all beings, as vast as space?**

Destroying the happiness of one sentient being is like ending a life. To abandon bodhicitta is to destroy the happiness of all sentient beings without exception because one cuts the continuity of the aspiration and application to achieve the happiness of others.

3. The attainment of the bhūmis is obstructed

One may respond that, once it is broken, the vow can be subsequently be retaken and restored.

4.11

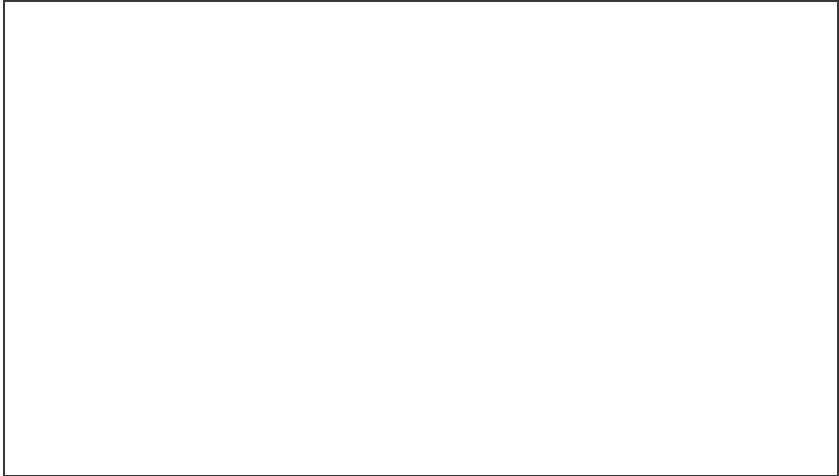
**Thus, when vacillating in saṃsāra,
Sometimes with the power of downfalls,
Sometimes with the power of bodhicitta,
The attainment of the bhūmis will be obstructed for a long
time.**

[295] Because the contamination of bodhicitta with downfalls creates obstacles to the accomplishment of the path, the attainment of the bhūmis will be obstructed for a long time. It is like the bodhisattva is travelling in a chariot drawn by cattle.

2. Concern for training

1. Concern to abandon nonvirtue

2. Concern to cultivate virtue
3. Concern to abandon the defilements
4. Concluding summary



1. Concern to abandon nonvirtue

1. Faults causing rebirth in the lower realms
2. Not attaining freedom
3. The instability of freedom when it is attained
4. No virtuous deeds in the lower realms

1. Faults causing rebirth in the lower realms

1. Again and again taking lower rebirths
2. Not having had the circumstances of their final exhaustion
3. The same again in the future

1. Again and again taking lower rebirths

4.12

Therefore, with dedication I should fulfil

The promise I have made.

If I do not persevere from now on,

I will descend to lower and lower rebirths.

2. Not having had the circumstances of their final exhaustion

4.13

**Although there have been innumerable Buddhas
Who worked for the benefit of all beings,
My own faults excluded me
From their restorative reach.**

3. The same again in the future

4.14

**Moreover, if I continue in this way,
Again and again it will end the same way:
Diseased and fettered in the lower realms,
Shattered and cut apart.**

2. Not attaining freedom

4.15

**The arising of a Tathāgata,
Faith, obtaining a human birth
And the conditions for cultivating virtue
Are very rare. When will they be attained again?**

The arising of a Tathāgata is the attainment of endowment based upon other. Faith in the remaining teachings and obtaining a human birth are explained as endowments of oneself, as well as freedoms. The conditions for cultivating virtue are the mental basis. They are rare, i.e. they are acquired infrequently.

3. The instability of freedom when it is attained

4.16

**Today, at least, I am not sick.
I have food to eat and am not afflicted.
But this life is fleeting and deceptive,
And this body is on loan only for a little while.**

One has obtained circumstances which are today free from contrary conditions, such as being without obstructions like sickness. One possesses harmonious conditions, as expressed in the second line. Nevertheless, this life is fleeting, i.e. unstable and deceptive, i.e. it will cease. It is on loan, i.e. possessed only temporarily. 'Today' means the time when the sun is visible, or else it means the length of a day, i.e. the duration for which one is not sick is like the length of a day. [296]

4. No virtuous deeds in the lower realms

1. No opportunity for virtue
2. The reason for this
3. The inability to return from the lower realms
4. A scriptural reference for that

1. No opportunity for virtue

4.17

**My conduct being the way it is,
I will not attain a human body again
And, if I do not attain a human body,
There will be only nonvirtue and no virtue.**

The first two lines indicate that there are no causes for a happy rebirth and the second two lines indicate that there is no opportunity to practise virtue for those in the lower realms.

2. The reason for this

4.18

**Even when I do have the chance to practise virtue,
If I fail to do so,
What will I do when I am
Completely obscured by the sufferings of the lower realms?**

What does one fail to do despite having the chance? Accomplishing virtue, the basis of the higher realms, even though there is the opportunity to do it. The lower realms in which one is consumed by sufferings are those rebirths as a hell-being, hungry ghost or animal.

3. The inability to return from the lower realms

4.19

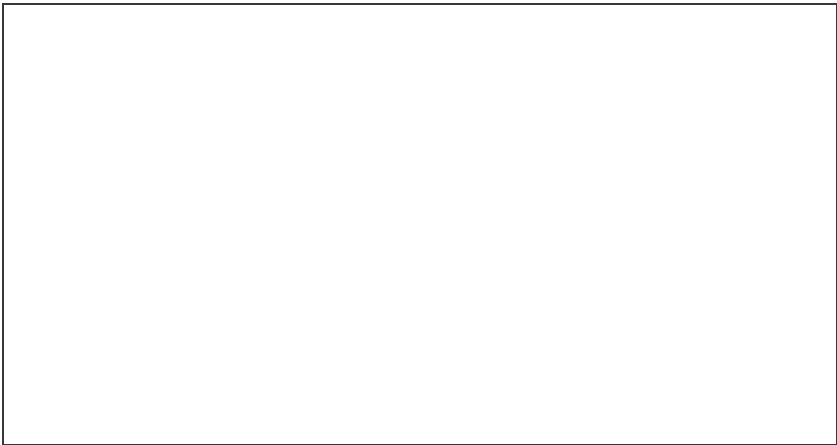
Not practising any virtues,
But gathering many nonvirtues,
For hundreds of millions of aeons
I will not even hear the words ‘happy rebirth’.

4. A scriptural reference for that

4.20

It is because of this the Bhagavān said
That the difficulty of attaining a human birth
Is like a turtle putting its neck through
A wooden yoke adrift on a great ocean.

The analogy comes from the *Ordination of Nanda Sutra*.¹⁴



2. Concern to cultivate virtue

1. Many nonvirtues were previously gathered
2. They are not exhausted by themselves
3. Therefore, one should strive in virtue, the antidote

1. Many nonvirtues were previously gathered

4.21

**If just a moment of nonvirtue
 Can lead to an aeon in the Avīci Hell,
 What need to mention my not proceeding to a happy rebirth,
 With nonvirtues collected since beginningless time in
 saṃsāra?**

A momentary nonvirtue which leads to rebirth in the Avīci Hell is, as previously explained in verse 1.34, a malevolent intention towards a bodhisattva who is generating bodhicitta. Such nonvirtues have been collected in saṃsāra, from time without beginning, through which, while they are not purified, one will not proceed to happy birth.

2. They are not exhausted by themselves

Although there are many nonvirtues, if they have not yet ripened, might they become exhausted? No, they are not exhausted by themselves:

4.22

**Even after having suffered such experiences,
 I still won't be free of them
 For, even while undergoing them,
 I will commit yet more nonvirtue.**

This is because nonvirtues, etc. will ripen as effects in conformity with their causes.

3. Therefore, one should strive in virtue, the antidote

1. General explanation of the fault of not striving
2. The fault in this life
3. The fault in future lives [297]
4. Advice in overcoming that with an admonition

1. General explanation of the fault of not striving

4.23

**Having acquired this kind of freedom,
 If I do not cultivate virtue,**

**There could be no greater deception,
And no greater delusion.**

The deception here is thinking of this life. The delusion is not understanding the harm for future lives.

2. The fault in this life

4.24
**So, having understood this,
If later in confusion I stop trying,
Then the hour of my approaching death
Will stir up extreme distress.**

3. The fault in future lives

4.25
**When my body is burning
For a long time in the torturous fires of hell,
Without doubt, my mind will also be tormented
By the unbearable fire of remorse.**

The first two lines indicate the fires that harm the body while the latter two indicate the fire that harms the mind.

4. Advice in overcoming that with an admonition

1. One has attained freedom, the basis
2. One has clearly distinguished good from bad
3. It is only logical, therefore, to persevere

1. One has attained freedom, the basis

4.26
**Having somehow attained this beneficial state,
Extremely difficult to find,**

Freedom, being extremely difficult to find, is precious and is beneficial, since, being the basis of such things as moral conduct, it brings great benefit. These two lines indicate the attainment of this.

2. One has clearly distinguished good from bad

While I have this understanding,

3. It is only logical, therefore, to persevere

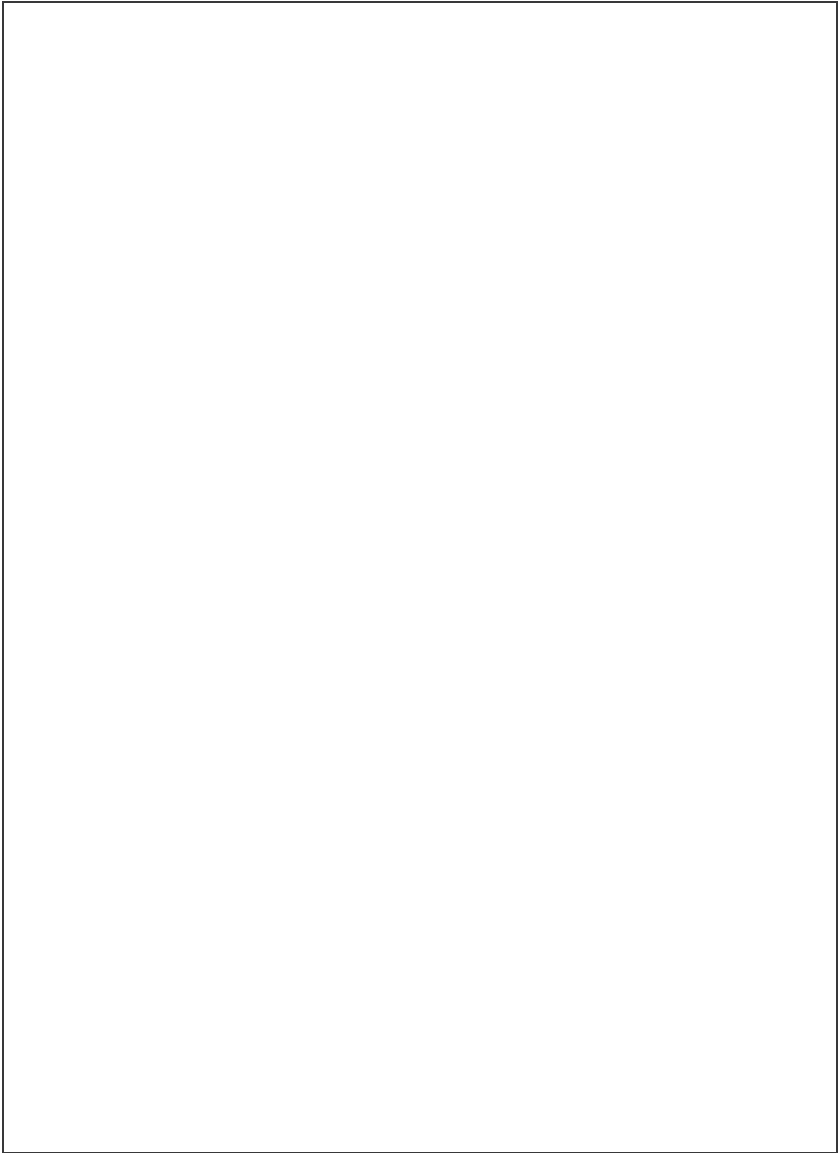
If still I am led back to the hells,

4.27

Like someone manipulated by mantras,

I must have lost my mind.

To behave in this way is to lack autonomy, like being manipulated by an evil mantra which has destroyed one's perseverance. Thus, the benefits of perseverance are implicitly suggested. 'Manipulated by mantras' mean the loss of autonomy by mantras such as wrathful summoning mantras.



3. Concern to abandon the defilements

- 1. Examining the contrasting attitude
- 2. Rejecting the idea that application will create suffering
- 3. Developing enthusiasm in one’s ability to abandon them

1. Examining the contrasting attitude

1. Examination of the harms
2. Examining impatience
3. Developing pride

1. Examination of the harms

1. Loss of autonomy
2. Application to suffering
3. Their perpetual presence
4. They achieve nothing

1. Loss of autonomy

**I don't even know who is manipulating me.
Who is this inside of me?**

The cause of losing autonomy is not knowing by whom one is being manipulated. To ask, 'who is inside of me?' indicates that one's mental activity is not right. [298] Concerning the characteristics of this loss of autonomy:

4.28

**Enemies like hatred and craving
Don't have hands or feet,
Aren't courageous or intelligent,
And yet I act like their slave.**

The first two lines indicate one's loss of autonomy is not caused by a physical body. Lacking courage means weakness. Lacking intelligence means being influenced by ignorance. Although these harmful characteristics are absent, nevertheless, one acts like a slave without any autonomy.

Concerning the characteristics which establish the extent of that:

4.29

While they remain in my mind

**They can harm me whenever they want,
And I patiently accept it without any resentment,
But this is not a situation that warrants patience.**

It is not logical to be patient with this enemy who is causing one harm, so one should not develop patience with it.

2. Application to suffering

There are two kinds of enemies: ordinary enemies, who are unable to create suffering for oneself, and enemy defilements who are able. These two are indicated in the next two verses, respectively:

4.30

**Even if all the gods and demigods
Stood against me as enemies,
They could not lead me into the fires
Of the Avīci Hell, or send me there.**

4.31

**But these enemies, the mighty defilements,
Can put me there in an instant,
Where Mount Meru and even its very ashes
Are consumed on contact.**

3. Their perpetual presence

There is the presence of ordinary enemies and the perpetual presence of the enemy defilements, indicated, respectively, in the first two and second two lines of the next verse:

4.32

**What enemy is so interminable,
Without beginning or end, as my own defilements?
No other enemy
Endures as long as they do.**

4. They achieve nothing

4.33

**When treated well and respected,
 Enemies are cooperative and content
 But, when the defilements are respected,
 They return only pain and suffering.**

The first two lines indicate that ordinary enemies can become friends, while the latter two lines indicate that is not the case for the enemy defilements.

2. Examining impatience

1. Harmful to the mind
2. Harmful to the body

1. Harmful to the mind

4.34

**Accordingly, these being my old, implacable enemies,
 The sole cause of vastly increasing all kinds of harm,
 If I make room for them in my heart,
 How can I be unafraid or enjoy saṃsāra?**

The aspects of harm indicated here are its examination in the first line, the greatness of the harmful effects in the second, their proximity in the third and, in the fourth, the absence of happiness and joy.

2. Harmful to the body

4.35

**They are the prison guards of saṃsāra who,
 In the hells and elsewhere, become my killers and
 executioners.
 So, if they remain in my mind, abiding in the web of
 attachment,
 How can I be happy?**

The four characteristics of harm to the body here are:

1. The perpetual and temporal functions: their perpetual harm is indicated in the first line and their temporal harms are indicated in the second. [299]
2. The proximity: their ‘remaining in my mind’.
3. To be a cause of grasping: their ‘abiding in the web of attachment’, where attachment means the habitual imprints of grasping at substantiality.
4. The type of harm: this is indicated in the last line.

3. Developing pride

1. Meaning
2. Example

1. Meaning

4.36

**Therefore, as long I have not with certainty
Vanquished this enemy, I will never stop persevering.**

For how long should one persevere? For as long as this enemy has not been vanquished, i.e. until the defilements have been abandoned.

2. Example

**Growing angry upon some slight, fleeting injury,
The proud and haughty will not sleep until their enemy has
been vanquished.**

When receiving a slight, fleeting injury, some will not sleep until that ordinary enemy has been defeated. Who does this? Those who become angry, being inflated with pride.

2. Rejecting the idea that application will create suffering

1. The faults of non-application
2. The qualities of application
3. The means of devoting oneself to that application

1. An example of the faults of non-application

4.37

**On the battlefield, they are eager to vanquish
 People with defilements, who would suffer an ordinary death
 anyway.
 Disregarding the pain of being pierced by arrows or swords,
 They will not retreat until their objective is won.**

They may not have been killed, yet those who have defilements should be the objects of compassion, being bound by the suffering of dying naturally. Those who are eager to vanquish their ordinary enemies ‘will not retreat’, i.e. instead of turning to flee, they remain on the battlefield. For how long? For as long as their objective is not achieved, i.e. until they have won. What makes this difficult? They must ‘disregard the pain of being pierced by arrows or swords’.

2. The point of the example

4.38

**So, what need to mention that I should not be discouraged or
 frustrated
 To be caused even one hundred thousand sufferings,
 When striving to finally vanquish my true, natural enemies,
 Who cause all my endless suffering?**

In wishing to vanquish one’s true, natural enemies—the defilements—what need is there to mention that one should not become discouraged or frustrated? What could make one discouraged? One hundred thousand sufferings. [300] Why are the defilements one’s natural enemies? Because they are the cause of all one’s endless suffering.

2. The qualities of application

1. Benefit of self
2. Benefit of other
3. Fulfilment of vows

1. Benefit of self

4.39

**If scars inflicted by meaningless enemies
Can be shown off on the body like trophies,
What trouble is suffering to me,
When I am striving to achieve a great benefit?**

The first two lines indicate that their fighting ordinary enemies is of no benefit to the veterans themselves. The second two lines indicate that sufferings which overcome the defilements benefit oneself.

2. Benefit of other

4.40

**If even fishermen, butchers, farmers, etc.
Thinking only of their livelihoods,
Put up with the discomforts of heat and cold,
Why have I no patience for the sake of beings' happiness?**

The first three lines indicate that patience with ordinary occupations such as fishing is of no benefit for others, while the last line indicates that the bodhisattva conduct is of benefit for others.

3. Fulfilment of vows

4.41

**To liberate from the defilements
Beings of the ten directions, as far as the ends of space,
Was my promise but, when I made it,
I was not free from defilements myself.**

4.42

**Not understanding my own limitations,
I spoke without knowing how insane this was.**

The first two lines indicate the scope of the vow to benefit others. The remaining lines indicate that the vow will not be fulfilled until the defilements have been abandoned.

3. The means of devoting oneself to that application

1. Not stopping until the defilements have been abandoned

2. Dedication in this
3. Relying on antidotes for one's own impatience
4. Abandoning objections to that
5. No obedience to the defilements

1. Not stopping until the defilements have been abandoned

**But now I should never turn back from
Vanquishing the defilements.**

2. Dedication in this

**4.43
I will be fixated on this,**

One should have attachment to applying the antidotes.

3. Relying on antidotes to one's own impatience

And full of resentment, wage war

One should regard the defilements with enmity, i.e. oppose them.

4. Abandoning objections

In that case, does this contradict the teaching that one should abandon resentment?

**Against the defilements, except those
Which destroy the other defilements.**

The resentment of regarding defilements with enmity, though it may be called a 'defilement', is not otherwise distinguishable from antidotes, so it is not included among that which is to be abandoned.

5. No obedience to the defilements

**4.44
It would be better to be burned alive
Or decapitated
Than to be constantly grovelling**

To the enemy defilements.

Even at the cost of one's life, [301] one should not be obedient to the defilements.

'Although one might abandon the defilements once, is this not pointless, since they will only return again?'

3. Developing enthusiasm in one's ability to abandon the defilements

1. They have no other basis
2. They are erroneous perceptions

1. They have no other basis

1. Presenting an example of expulsion
2. The related meaning
3. The nature of the antidotes which bring about abandonment
4. The essential characteristic of their not returning

1. Presenting an example of expulsion

4.45

**Though ordinary enemies may be driven from our
homelands,
They resettle elsewhere,
And return when they have recovered their power,**

After expelling ordinary enemies, they may return again and again.

2. The related meaning

But the nature of the enemy defilements is not like this.

When one abandons the seeds of the defilements, they never arise again.

3. The nature of the antidotes which bring about abandonment

4.46

These pathetic defilements, cast out by the eye of wisdom,

The defilements are pathetic, or miserable, i.e. they have little power against being cast out by their antidote, the eye of wisdom.

4. The essential characteristic of their not returning

And extirpated from my mind, where can they go?

Where can they settle to hurt me again?

And yet, weak-willed, I give up without even trying.

When their complete basis is eliminated, they have no other support.

2. They are erroneous perceptions

4.47

**The defilements are not within objects, nor within the senses,
Nor in anything else, yet, wherever they are, they harm all
beings.**

**They are like illusions. So, giving up this heartfelt fear, I will
cultivate the perseverance to achieve wisdom.**

**Why should I be tormented in places like the hells for no
reason?**

The first two lines indicate their having no external support. The first part of the third line indicates their basis not being real. The second part of the third line indicates the characteristics of striving in the antidotes. The last line indicates the fault of not striving in this.

4. Concluding summary of concern for training

4.48

Having considered this, I will strive

To fulfil the training as it has been explained.

If he doesn't listen to the doctor's instructions,

How can the patient be cured by the medicine?

The first two lines indicate that one should endeavour consistently with the training. The second two lines give an example of the faults of not endeavouring.

