

**FPMT BASIC PROGRAM ONLINE**  
**STAGES OF THE PATH**  
*Middle Length Lam-Rim*

*(Lam rim 'bring ba)*

by

Lama Tsongkhapa

with additional outlines by Trijang Rinpoche

*Translated from the Tibetan*

*by*

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Note: This translation contains both the outlines from Lama Tsongkhapa's *Middle Length Stages of the Path* and the sub-outlines added later by Trijang Rinpoche, in accordance with the Tibetan text published by Sera Je Computer Project, Sera Je Monastic University, Bylakuppe, 1999. The outlines by Trijang Rinpoche are in smaller grey print. The outline numbers were added by Joan Nicell, Istituto Lama Tzong Khapa, Pomaia, Italy. The numbers in brackets { } correspond to the pages of this particular edition of the Tibetan text.

# Middle Length Explanation of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment to be Practiced by the Three Types of Beings

## CHAPTER 1 Introduction

Respectfully I prostrate at the feet of the venerable saints who are full of great compassion.

[This is the middling of three texts—the great, the middling, and the small—on the stages of the path composed by the Gentle Protector, Dharma King, Great Tsongkhapa, although it is also widely known as the “*Small Stages of the Path*”. Its explanation has three sections:]

- 1 Introductory elements
- 2 The actual explanation set forth
- 3 The conclusion of the explanation

### 1 Introductory elements

This has three points:

- A Homage
- B Vow to compose the text
- C Identification of the Dharma to be explained in the context of what the title means

### Homage and vow to compose

#### 1A Homage

Bhagavan<sup>1</sup>, lord of this field of fortitude,  
The Jina’s regent<sup>2</sup>, Jamgön, Lord of the Dharma,  
Mañjughoṣa, sole father of all the sugatas<sup>3</sup>  
Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, foretold by the Jina,  
Bowling to you with respect,...

#### 1B Vow to compose the text

...I shall once more  
Explain here in a summary fashion  
The stages of the path of profound view and vast conduct,  
For the sake of making it easy to access.

### General introduction to the instructions taught here

#### 1C Identification of the Dharma to be explained in the context of what the title means

The teachings to be explained here consist in how the fortunate are led to the level of buddhahood through the stages of the path to enlightenment. They summarize all the points of the Victor’s scriptures, following the tradition of the two great trail-blazers Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga; {2} they constitute the Dharma system of supreme beings who progress to the state of omniscience; and they contain all the stages without omission that the three types of beings need to practice.

#### 2 The actual explanation set forth

This has two points:

<sup>1</sup> Tib. *bcom ldan* ‘das, also sometimes translated as ‘Blessed One’.

<sup>2</sup> Tib. *rgyal ba*’i *rgyal tshab*

<sup>3</sup> Tib. *bde gshegs*, literally “gone to bliss”

A Correspondence with the manner of explanation proposed by the scholars

Scholars of glorious Vikramaśīla Monastery considered it vital to start off with three preliminaries: the greatness of the author of the teachings, the greatness of the teachings, and the way to explain and listen to them.

B The actual explanation in accordance with that manner of explanation

The guide to the stages of the path to enlightenment has four parts:

- 1 Showing the greatness of the author in order to show that the teachings have a reliable source
- 2 Showing the greatness of the teachings in order to generate respect for the instructions
- 3 How teachings that possess those two greatneses should be listened to and explained
- 4 The stages by which a student should be guided through the actual instructions

### **Showing the greatness of the author in order to show that the teachings have a reliable source**

2B1 Showing the greatness of the author in order to show that the teachings have a reliable source

This has two points:

2B1A The root and actual author

Generally speaking, the present instructions are the ones that the venerable protector Maitreya gives in his *Ornament for Clear Realization*. (*Abhisamayālaṅkāra*). As they are based in particular on *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* (*Bodhipathapradīpa*), its author is also the author of the present text. Other than under the name of Great Master Dīpaṃkaraśrījñāna, he is also widely known as the glorious Atiśa.

2B1B Atiśa's greatness

This has three points:

- 1 How Atiśa took birth in an excellent family
- 2 How Atiśa obtained his positive qualities on that basis
- 3 Having obtained them, how Atiśa performed deeds for the sake of the teachings

2B1B-1 How Atiśa took birth in an excellent family {3}

According to the Translator's<sup>4</sup> *Praise*:

Due east in the excellent country of Zahor<sup>5</sup>  
Lies a city of great size,  
Namely Vikramaṇipura.  
In its midst: the royal court,  
An extremely spacious palace  
Called "the one with golden banners."  
Its pleasures, might, and wealth resemble  
Those of Chinese emperors.  
King of that land is Kalyāṇaśrī  
And his queen is called Śrīrabha.  
The royal couple has three sons:  
Padmagarbha, Candragarbha,  
And Śrīgarbha, they are called.  
Again, Prince Padmagarbha has  
Five royal consorts and nine sons.

<sup>4</sup> Nagtso, who was among the envoys who invited Atiśa to Tibet. He acted as his translator and companion for many years.

<sup>5</sup> Bengal.

The oldest one, named Puṇyaśrī,  
Is a mahāpaṇḍita  
Widely known as Dhanaśrī.  
His youngest brother, called Śrīgarbha,  
Is the bhikṣu Vīryacandra.  
The middle one is Candragarbha;  
He is our exalted guru.

## 2B1B-2 How Atiśa obtained his positive qualities

This has two points:

- A How Atiśa obtained the qualities of comprehensive scriptural knowledge <sup>6</sup>
- B How Atiśa obtained the qualities of realization of its correct accomplishment

### 2B1B-2A How Atiśa obtained the positive of comprehensive scriptural knowledge

This has three points:

- 1 How Atiśa learnt the areas of general knowledge

By the age of twenty-one, having studied the four areas of knowledge common to Buddhists and non-Buddhists—language, logic, crafts, and medicine, Candragarbha had become an excellent scholar. In particular, the great Drolungpa relates how, at the age of fifteen, having heard *Drop of Reasoning* (*Nyāyabinduprākaraṇa*) just once, Candragarbha debated with a non-Buddhist intellectual renowned for his erudition and beat him—which spread his fame far and wide.

- 2 How Atiśa learnt Mantra

Then Candragarbha requested a complete empowerment from the master yogi of the main temple on Black Mountain, the glorious Rāhulagupta who had received direct visions of Hevajra and a prophecy from Vajradākinī. {4} Candragarbha was given the secret name Jñānaguhyavajra. Up to the age of twenty-nine, he studied the Vajrayāna under numerous highly realized gurus and thereby became knowledgeable in all texts and instructions. When the thought “Only I am knowledgeable in secret mantra” occurred to him, dākinīs pointed out to him, in a dream, several volumes of mantra he had never seen before, whereby his pride diminished.

- 3 How Atiśa was ordained and learnt the collections of inner knowledge

Both in his dreams and directly, the gurus and protectors then made known to Candragarbha that vast benefit would accrue for the teachings and many migrating beings if he were to take ordination<sup>7</sup> as appropriate. Upon their encouragement he had himself ordained. The great upholder of monastic discipline<sup>8</sup>, Śīlārakṣita, an elder of the Mahāsaṃghika tradition who had attained the meditative stabilization in which one single-pointedly enters ultimate reality on the path of preparation, officiated as abbot. Candragarbha received the name Śrī Dīpaṃkarajñāna.

Afterwards, up to the age of thirty-one, he studied the lower and upper divisions of inner philosophical knowledge<sup>9</sup>; in particular, for twelve years, *Great Detailed Explanation* (*Mahāvibhāṣā*) under Guru Dharmarakṣita in Odantapuri. As he was very well versed in the scriptures of the four original traditions, he had an infallible grasp of the tiniest details of the modes of behavior that should be adopted and discarded according to the various philosophical schools, for instance the monastic rules about accepting gifts.

### 2B1B-2B How Atiśa obtained the qualities of realization of its correct accomplishment

This has two points:

<sup>6</sup> Tib. *mang du mkhyen pa lung gi yon tan*

<sup>7</sup> Tib. *rab tu byung*

<sup>8</sup> Tib. ‘*dul ba*, Sans. *vinaya*

<sup>9</sup> Tib. *mtshan nyid kyi theg pa'i nang rig pa'i sde snod gong og*

- [1 How all qualities of realization are contained in the three trainings
- 2 How Atiśa was accomplished in the three trainings]

2B1B-2B1 How all qualities of realization are contained in the three trainings

As generally speaking all the scriptural teachings<sup>10</sup> by the Victor are contained in the three precious scriptural collections<sup>11</sup>, the realized teachings<sup>12</sup> are also contained in the three precious trainings.

2B1B-2B2 How Atiśa was accomplished in the three trainings

This has three points:

- [A Atiśa's accomplishments in the training of ethics
- B Atiśa's accomplishments in the training of meditative stabilization<sup>13</sup>
- C Atiśa's accomplishments in the training of wisdom]

2B1B-2B2A Atiśa's accomplishments in the training of ethics

This has three points:

- [1 Transition to ethics
- 2 How Atiśa was actually accomplished in ethics
- 3 Proper protection of ethics]

2B1B-2B2A-1 Transition to ethics {5}

In this regard the training in ethics is often praised in the scriptures and in the commentaries as the foundation of all positive qualities, such as the trainings in meditative stabilization and wisdom. Therefore it is necessary, first of all, to possess qualities of realization in terms of the training in ethics.

2B1B-2B2A-2 How Atiśa was actually accomplished in ethics

This has three points:

- A How Atiśa possessed the highest vows of individual liberation

Having received the vows of a fully ordained monk, Atiśa guarded them the way a yak guards its coat. A yak is so attached to its coat that it would rather risk its life trying to save a strand of tail hair caught on a tree, than to part with it, even if it sees its life is being threatened by a hunter. That is how Atiśa guarded every detail of the foundation of trainings, not to speak of the major rules of the foundation of trainings he had undertaken, so that he came to be called “the elder who is a great upholder of monastic discipline.”

- B How Atiśa possessed the bodhisattva vows

Atiśa practiced numerous instructions for training in the mind of enlightenment, which is rooted in love and compassion. Especially, following Serlingpa, he trained for long in the highest instructions passed on by the venerable Maitreya and Mañjuḥśa through Asaṅga and Śāntideva. Thereby the mind of enlightenment, which cherishes others more than oneself, arose in his heart. This aspiring mind of enlightenment<sup>14</sup> gave rise to the engaging mind of enlightenment<sup>15</sup>, and due to his excellent behavior—his engagement in the trainings following the promise to train in the vast conduct of bodhisattvas—he never transgressed the rules of the buddhas' children.

<sup>10</sup> Tib. *lung gi bstan pa*

<sup>11</sup> Tib. *sde snod rin po che gsum*. The three scriptural collections (Sanskrit: Tripiṭaka) often referred to more literally as three baskets are the Vinaya Piṭaka (words of the Buddha on monastic discipline), the Sūtra Piṭaka (his teachings proper), and the Abhidharma Piṭaka (higher knowledge—a systematic, philosophical presentation of his teachings).

<sup>12</sup> Tib. *rtogs pa'i bstan pa*

<sup>13</sup> Tib. *ting nge 'dzin*

<sup>14</sup> Tib. *smon pa'i sems*

<sup>15</sup> Tib. *'jug pa'i sems*

### C How Atiśa possessed vajrayana vows

Owing to the fact that he had the meditative stabilizations of the generation stage, in which one's own body is seen as that of a deity, and of the completion stage, the indestructible vajra mind, {6} he became chief among yogis. In particular he guarded his tantric commitments<sup>16</sup> properly by not transgressing the prescribed rules.<sup>17</sup>

#### 2B1B-2B2A-3 Proper protection of ethics

Not only did he courageously undertake the training in ethics of the three vows, he also upheld them as he had promised. He kept the vows without transgressing the rules associated with them, and even if he transgressed them ever so slightly, he quickly, very quickly purified this by means of a suitable ritual restoring the given vow.

#### 2B1B-2B2B Atiśa's accomplishments in the training of meditative stabilization

This has two points:

##### 1 Common

He had achieved the serviceability of the mind of calm abiding.

##### 2 Uncommon

He had the extreme stability of the generation stage. Moreover, he had performed the modes of conduct of yogic realization disciplines<sup>18</sup> for three or six years.

#### 2B1B-2B2C Atiśa's accomplishments in the training of wisdom

This has two points:

##### 1 Common

He had obtained the meditative stabilization of special insight, which is the union of calm abiding and special insight.

##### 2 Uncommon

He had obtained the special meditative stabilization of the completion stage.

#### 2B1B-3 Having attained those positive qualities, the deeds Atiśa did for the sake of the teachings

This has two points:

- 1 Deeds in India
- 2 Deeds in Tibet

#### 2B1B-3A Deeds in India

At the palace of great enlightenment in Bodhgayā he defeated proponents of base non-Buddhist doctrines by means of the Dharma three times, thus upholding the Buddha's teachings. Eliminating the taints of ignorance, misconception, and doubt also with regard to the teachings of his own upper and lower systems, he spread the teachings, so that he was regarded as a crown jewel beyond partiality by proponents of all factions.

#### 2B1B-3B Deeds in Tibet

This has four points:

- [1 Clearing up misconceptions about the Dharma and restoring the tradition
- 2 Identifying the three causes of excellence in the composition of commentaries
- 3 Due to Atiśa possessing these three causes, his ability to ascertain the Victor's intentions
- 4 The special qualities of his disciples]

<sup>16</sup> Tib. *dam tshig*

<sup>17</sup> Tib. *bcas mtshams*

<sup>18</sup> Tib. *rig pa brtul zhugs kyi spyod pa*

2B1B-3B1 Clearing up misconceptions about the Dharma and restoring the tradition

Lha Lama<sup>19</sup> {7} and his nephew sent the two great translators Gyatsön Seng and Nagtso Tsültrim Gyalwa to India one after the other. Due to their taking pains again and again to invite Atiśa, he came to Upper Ngari during the reign of Jangchub Ö<sup>20</sup> and was requested to purify the Buddha's teachings. Thereupon he spread the teachings by composing *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, a text bringing together all the points of sūtra and tantra and condensing them into applicable stages, as well as other texts. Specifically he spent three years in Ngari, nine years in Nyetang, and five years elsewhere in Central Tibet and Tsang, teaching the fortunate all the scriptures and instructions of sūtra and tantra without exception. Thereby he restored the tradition of teachings that had declined, made those that remained flourish, and corrected those that had been soiled by the errors of misconception, ensuring that the precious teachings were freed from all flaws.

2B1B-3B2 Identifying the three causes of excellence in the composition of commentaries

There are three causes of excellence in the composition of a text clarifying the Sage's intentions:

1. being learned in the five areas of knowledge,
2. having received instructions for the application of their meaning that transmit the instructions of the perfectly complete Buddha in an unbroken line of exalted masters, and
3. having received the permission to teach through the vision of a protector deity.<sup>21</sup>

If a text can be composed with any one of these causes of excellence, it will turn out all the more excellent if all three are complete. This great master, Atiśa, possessed all three.

2B1B-3B3 Due to Atiśa possessing these three causes, his ability to ascertain the Victor's intentions

This has three points:

A Being cared for by protector deities {8}

It says in the *Praise*:

Of the glorious Hevajra,  
Of Samayāvyūharāja,  
Of heroic Lokeśvara,  
Noble, reverend Tārā and others,  
  
You had visions and permissions;  
Therefore, dreaming and directly,  
You perpetually heard teachings:  
Holy teachings, profound and vast.

B How Atiśa's lineage is uninterrupted

Atiśa held numerous lineages of masters such as the two lineages of the common vehicle and of the Mahāyāna, with regard to which there are the two—Pāramitāyāna and Secret Mantrayāna. In regard to the Pāramitāyāna he held the two lineages of the view and the conduct. As the latter has a lineage stemming from Maitreya and a lineage stemming from Mañjuḥṣa, he held three lineages. In the Secret Mantra he had received five types of transmission as well as many other lineages such as the lineage of tenets, the lineage of blessings, and the lineage of various instructions. The gurus from whom he heard instructions directly are mentioned in the *Praise*:

The gurus you always relied on were  
Śāntipa, Serlingpa,  
Bhadrabodhi, Jñānaśrī—  
Many with high accomplishments.

<sup>19</sup> Lha Lama Yeshé Ö, 10<sup>th</sup>/11<sup>th</sup> cent. King of Gugé.

<sup>20</sup> Lha Lama Jangchub Ö, the nephew of Lha Lama Yeshé Ö.

<sup>21</sup> Tib. *yi dam*



In particular you held  
The profound and vast instructions  
That had been passed on from one to another  
All the way from Nāgārjuna.

It is well known that he had twelve gurus who had attained high accomplishments, in addition to many others.

A The fact that Atiśa was learned in the five areas of knowledge

This has already been explained. For all these reasons this master was able to skillfully ascertain the Victor's intentions.

2B1B-3B4 The special qualities of his disciples

This has two points:

A Atiśa's disciples in India, Ngari and Tibet {9}

The master who was like this had an incredible number of students in India, Kashmir, Oḍḍiyāna, Nepal, and Tibet, however, the main ones were four great scholars in India who matched the master himself in their knowledge: Pitopa, Dharmākaramati, Madhyasiṃha, and Kṣitigarbha. Some also add Mitrāgūhya as the fifth. In Ngari, it was the great translators Rinchen Zangpo and Nagtso, as well as the ordained king Jangchub Ö; in the province of Tsang, Gargewa and Gokugpa Lhaytsay; in Lodrag, Chagpa Trichog and Gewa Kyong; in Kham, Naljorpa Chenpo, Gönpawa, Sherab Dorjé, and Chadar Tönpa; and in Central Tibet, the three, Khu, Ngog, and Drom.

B Atiśa's foremost disciple

Among them, however, the great lineage holder who further spread the exalted activities of his guru was Dromtönpa Gyalwa Jungné, who had been prophesied by Tārā.

This was a summary description of the author's greatness. You should come to understand it more extensively by means of the great biographical texts.

### Showing the greatness of the teachings in order to generate respect for the instructions

2B2 Showing the greatness of the teachings in order to generate respect for the instructions

This has three points:

[A Identifying the teachings

B Presenting this text as possessing the three: being fully complete, easily applicable, and a particularly noble system

C Presenting this text as possessing the four greatnesses]

2B2A Identifying the teachings

As for the teachings, the source text of the present instructions is *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*.

2B2B Presenting this text as possessing the three: being fully complete, easily applicable, and a particularly noble system

Although there are numerous texts composed by the Elder, *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* is their perfect completion, being like a root. As it indicates all the points of both sūtra and tantra in summary fashion, it is complete in terms of content. As it makes the gradual taming of the mind its main topic, it is easy to put into practice. As it is ornamented with the instructions of the two masters {10} who were skilled in the systems of the two trail-blazers,<sup>22</sup> it is a particularly noble system compared to others.

2B2C Presenting this text as possessing the four greatnesses

The greatness of the instructions contained in this text has four points:

<sup>22</sup> Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga

- [1 The greatness of recognizing all the teachings as being non-contradictory
- 2 The greatness of all the Buddha's teachings occurring to you as instructions
- 3 The greatness of allowing you to easily discover the Victor's intentions
- 4 The greatness of a great misdeed stopping by itself]

## 2B2C-1 The greatness of recognizing all the teachings as being non-contradictory

This has five points:

- A Identifying the teachings

Everything the Victor said.

- B How all the teachings are recognized to not be contradictory

They all come to be understood as a single person's path to buddhahood. That is to say some are primary points of the path, others are appropriate secondary points.

- C How it is demonstrated through scripture and logic that it would be contradictory not to accept this

In this regard it is the bodhisattva's wish to work for the welfare of the world. For that purpose it is also necessary to care for all three types of disciples<sup>24</sup> and therefore train in their respective paths. This is because Venerable Maitreya explained that a knower of paths of the three vehicles is the method for realizing the bodhisattvas' goals.

- D Establishing that the teachings are not contradictory

In the Mahāyāna path there is the common and the uncommon. The former is that which originates from the Hīnayāna collection of scriptures—except for the uncommon thought of aspiring for one's own peace and happiness alone, the uncommon prohibitions, and the like. Apart from that it is not that faults are partially ceased and qualities are partially completed in perfectly complete buddhahood, but rather all kinds of faults have been eliminated and all types of positive qualities have been completed. Consequently, since the Mahāyāna that achieves this also brings about the cessation of all faults and the development of all positive qualities, the path of the Mahāyāna comprises all the various aspects of qualities of abandonment and realization of all other vehicles. {11} That is why the sections of the Mahāyāna path, which brings about buddhahood, comprise all the Buddha's teachings, for there is no utterance of the Sage that does not cause the cessation of a few faults and the development of a few positive qualities, and because it is not the case that all of this is not brought about by the Mahāyāna.

- E Clearing up doubts

Opinion: That may be true for the Pāramitāyāna,<sup>25</sup> but not for those entering the Vajrayāna.

Response: Although the way one trains in the Pāramitāyāna—in countless clear distinctions that clarify giving and so forth—is different from that in Mantra, the basis of the conduct—the generation of the mind of enlightenment<sup>26</sup>—and the coarse body of the path which trains in the conduct—the six perfections, is nevertheless the same and therefore something shared by them. In the *Vajra Peak (Vajraśikharatantra)* it says:

Not even to sustain your life,  
Should you discard the mind of enlightenment.

And:

The conduct of the six perfections,  
Must not be discarded ever.

<sup>23</sup> Tib. *gsung rab*, often translated as 'scriptures'.

<sup>24</sup> Tib. *rigs can gsum ga*, literally "the three lineage-possessioners."

<sup>25</sup> "Perfection vehicle". The Sanskrit terms Mahāyāna, Hīnayāna, Pāramitāyāna, and Vajrayāna are mostly used.

<sup>26</sup> Tib. *sems skyed*, literally "mind-generate," is a very common ellipsis for *byang chub mchog tu sems skyed* "generation of a mind (aiming) for supreme enlightenment."

This is also taught in numerous other Mantra texts.

In many authentic sources for the mandala rituals of highest yoga tantra it says that a set of two vows must be taken, a common and an uncommon one, and indeed, the former refers to bodhisattva vows.<sup>27</sup> The precious Teacher<sup>28</sup> also said: “My guru who knew how to accommodate all the teachings by means of the path as though in a square...” These words form the basis of a major investigation.

2B2C-2 The greatness of all the Buddha’s teachings occurring to you as instructions

This has three points:

A The distinction of pure and impure manners of comprehension

Anyone construing the great scriptures to be explanatory teachings that do not contain the points of practice and who, thinking that guidance indicating the meaning of the essential points of practice exists separately from them, holds that even in the holy Dharma the explanatory and accomplishing teachings are found in different places {12}, will create an obstacle for the arising of deep respect for the immaculate sūtras and tantras as well as for the treatises clarifying their intention. You should be aware that the karmic obscuration of abandoning the Dharma is accumulated by despising them, saying that they only outline external knowledge without presenting the inner meaning.

Hence, for those who want liberation, the infallible, supreme instructions are indeed the great scriptures. Nevertheless it is possible that, due to poor intelligence and the like, you cannot reach certainty through relying on these scriptures only as supreme advice. Therefore you should seek certainty with respect to them thinking “I will seek certainty with respect to them by relying on the excellent instructions,” but you should not think that the great scriptures do not contain the heart of the matter because they only outline external knowledge while the instructions are supreme because they present the inner meaning.

B How all the Buddha’s teachings come into view as useful instructions

The great yogi Jangchub Rinchen said:

Someone who has reached certainty about a handy little volume, cannot be said to know all the topics of instructions; this is said about someone who understands all of the Buddha’s teachings as instructions.

We need the kind of understanding that Gompa Rinchen Lama, a disciple of the Great Elder, expressed saying he had ground his body, speech, and mind to dust in a single meditation session on Atiśa’s instructions, and that thereby the understanding had now arisen in him that all the scriptures are instructions.

In the words of the precious Dromtönpa:

If after studying the Dharma a lot you feel the need to search elsewhere for a way of applying the Dharma, you are mistaken.

Likewise those who study the Dharma a lot over a long period and, completely ignorant as to how to set about it, develop the wish to practice Dharma, do not understand and therefore err in the manner described above. {13} As it says in *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge (Abhidharmakośa)*:

The Buddha’s teachings have two aspects:  
Their nature is scripture and realization.

<sup>27</sup> The implication is that in the Vajrayāna the rules of conduct binding upon bodhisattvas also apply.

<sup>28</sup> Dromtönpa. This could also be rendered as “the precious Tönpa,” the Tibetan word for “teacher,” *tönpa*, forming part of the name of Atiśa’s foremost disciple.

In accordance with this statement, there is no teaching apart from the scriptural teaching and the realized teaching. The scriptural teaching is how the Dharma should be practiced and establishes the manner of accomplishment, while the realized teaching is what is thus established. Since you practice in accordance with what is to be established, these two act as cause and effect. To give an analogy: it is like when racing a horse, you first show the horse the course, and after showing it the course, it races there. Just as it would be ridiculous to show it a course and then have the race elsewhere, similarly when it comes to attainments, how could it be appropriate to accomplish something after having determined something else through listening and reflecting? That is also expressed in *Stages of Meditation III (Bhāvanākrama)*:

Whatever has been realized by the wisdoms arising from listening and reflecting is precisely what should be cultivated by means of the wisdom arising from meditation, just like a horse runs along the course it has been shown.

C Indication of analytical meditation as a means of making all teachings appear as instructions

Thus, through summarizing all the topics of the paths set forth in the scriptures and their commentaries—starting from how to rely on a spiritual teacher up to calm abiding and special insight—they are all condensed into stages of practical application in terms of performing stabilizing meditation where stabilizing meditation is required and analyzing with the wisdom of individual investigation where analytical meditation is required. Thereby these instructions guide you so that all the scriptures appear to you as instructions. Then the certainty develops that they should be understood as supreme advice, and the misconception that they should be understood as mere background knowledge for the Dharma rather than as actual instructions {14} is completely averted.

2B2C-3 The greatness of allowing you to easily discover the Victor's intentions

This has two points:

A For beginners, the Victor's intention is not easy to find without a guru's oral instructions

Although the great texts, the scriptures along with their commentaries, are the best advice, completely uneducated beginners cannot find their intention—even though they delve into them—without relying on excellent oral instructions, or, even if they find it, they spend a lot of time and enormous effort.

B The Victor's intention is found through a guru's oral instructions

If they rely on a guru's oral instructions and the like, it becomes easy to understand.

2B2C-4 The greatness of a great misdeed stopping by itself

This has three points:

A Showing the abandonment of the Dharma as the biggest misdeed

As explained in the *Lotus Sūtra (Saddharmapuṇḍarikāsūtra)* and the *Chapter of the Truthful One (Satyakaparivarta)*, it amounts to abandoning the Dharma if you hold that some of the Buddha's utterances are means of attaining buddhahood while others are obstacles to buddhahood, dividing them into good and bad, appropriate and inappropriate, or Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, and thereupon holding that a bodhisattva needs to train in some and not in others. This is because you fail to understand that all the Buddha's words, either directly or indirectly, teach the means of attaining buddhahood. In the *Sūtra Gathering All the Threads (Sarvavaidalyasaṃgrahasūtra)* it says that the karmic obscuration due to abandoning the Dharma is so subtle that it is hard to recognize. Concerning the very great disadvantages that ensue if you abandon the Dharma, it says in the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra (Samādhirājasūtra)*:

Someone here in Jambudvīpa  
Tears down all the stūpas found,

Someone abandons a class of sūtras;  
The latter's misdeed is far more serious.

Someone even murders arhats  
As many as sand grains in the Ganges,  
Someone abandons a class of sūtras; { 15 }  
The latter's misdeed is far more serious.

Although there generally appear to be many ways in which the Dharma might be abandoned, the one described previously seems to be the most significant, which is why we should try hard to give it up.

B When there is a realization along the lines of the first two greatnesses, the misdeed stops by itself

That is to say since this is averted simply by gaining certainty about what was shown above, the misdeed stops by itself.

C You should come to realize such certainty from the *White Lotus Sutra* and other texts

This certainty should be sought by studying the *Chapter of the Truthful One* as well as the *Lotus Sūtra*. The other ways of abandoning the Dharma should be learnt from the *Sūtra Gathering All the Threads*.

### **Explanation of how teachings possessing those two greatnesses should be listened to and explained**

2B3 How teachings possessing those two greatnesses should be listened to and explained

This has three points:

- A How to listen
- B How to explain
- C How generally to proceed at the end

2B3A How to listen

This has three points:

- 1 Thinking about the advantages of listening<sup>29</sup> to the Dharma
- 2 Developing respect for the Dharma and those who teach it
- 3 The actual way to listen

2B3A-1 Thinking about the advantages of listening to the Dharma

The *Verses about Listening (Śrutivarga)* says:

Through listening you come to know the dharmas,  
Through listening misdeeds are turned away,  
Through listening all trivia are abandoned,  
Through listening nirvāṇa is achieved.

These four lines say that in dependence on listening an understanding of the points that should be adopted and discarded gradually develops. From this knowledge arises the ethics that counteracts wrongdoing. Then, once you have turned away from meaningless pursuits, meditative stabilization arises and the mind stays on a virtuous object as long as you wish. Then, through training in the wisdom realizing the suchness that is selflessness, the root of saṃsāra's<sup>30</sup> fetters is cut and you attain liberation.

<sup>29</sup> The word *thos pa*, often rendered as "hearing" or "listening," refers to receiving teachings more generally, and encompasses reading as well. Tib. *thos pa mang po*, for instance, literally "having heard a lot," means "well read" or "educated." For this reason, Tib. *thos pa* is sometimes rendered as "study."

<sup>30</sup> Tib. *'khor ba*, usually translated here as "cyclic existence."

In *Garland of Birth Stories (Jātakamālā)* it also says:

He who through listening fills his mind with faith, {16}  
Grows firm rejoicing in that which is excellent.  
Wisdom is born and stupidity vanishes;  
This is well worth paying for with one's own flesh.

Listening is the lamp against stupidity,  
The greatest wealth no robber can carry away,  
The weapon destroying the enemy, mental darkness,  
The best of friends giving guidance with skillful means.

Near and dear, if you are poor or not,  
Inoffensive cure 'gainst sorrow's ills,  
The foremost army destroying an army of faults,  
It is the best fame and treasure and splendor as well.

If you meet noble beings, the best of gifts,  
And in assemblies it is the delight of the wise.

It also says:

After listening, make your attainment<sup>31</sup> the essence;  
You will be released from the stronghold of births with ease.

Keep thinking again and again about these and other advantages of listening and generate resolute appreciation from the bottom of your heart.

2B3A-2 Developing respect for the Dharma and those who teach it

The *Sūtra of Kṣitigarbha (Kṣitigarbhasūtra)* says:

Listen filled with one-sided faith and respect,  
Without any mockery nor disrespect for them,  
Worship the exponents of the Dharma,  
Producing the notion of them as resembling buddhas.

In accordance with this quotation you should view them as resembling buddhas, offer them service with things like lion thrones, worship them with gifts, and give up disrespect. In *Bodhisattva Levels (Bodhisattvabhūmi)* it says that you should be free from arrogance and, toward the teachings and those who expound them, free from contempt, and you should respect both of them. And in *Garland of Birth Stories* it says:

Sit on a seat that is very low,  
Fully develop the glory of discipline<sup>32</sup>,  
See with eyes imbued with joy  
While drinking the nectar of the words.

Bow down in respect single pointedly,  
With a mind that is stainless and pure;  
As patients heed a doctor's words, {17}  
Respectfully listen to the Dharma.

2B3A-3 The actual way to listen

This has three points:

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<sup>31</sup> Tib. 'jug sgrub

<sup>32</sup> Tib. dul ba



- [A Indication of how to listen in general
- B The way in which, having related this to your mind, it is necessary to listen
- C How to keep in mind the purpose of attainments]

2B3A-3A Indication of how to listen in general

This has two points:

- 1 Giving up the three faults of a vessel
- 2 Relying on the six discriminations

2B3A-3A1 Giving up the three faults of a vessel

If a vessel is turned upside down, or held facing upwards but is unclean, or is clean but with the bottom leaking, then even if rain is made to fall on it by the gods, the rain cannot go in, or even if it goes in, it will be polluted by the dirt and therefore will not fulfill the purpose of being drunk and the like, or even if it is not spoiled by dirt, it will not stay but leak out. In the same way there is no great need to hear the Dharma if you sit in a place where it is being explained but do not listen well, or listen, but take it wrong—with a faulty motivation and the like—or if, even in case these faults are not present, the words and the meaning you grasped at the time of hearing are not consolidated and get lost through forgetfulness and so forth. Therefore one should be free from these faults. The antidotes to these three are set forth in three phrases<sup>33</sup> in the sūtras: “Listen well—intently—and keep it in mind!” And in *Bodhisattva Levels* we are told to listen with the desire to know everything, single-pointedness, attention, a humble mind, and the thought of all sentient beings.

2B3A-3A2 Relying on the six discriminations

This has six points:

- A Contemplating the discrimination of oneself as a patient
- B Contemplating the discrimination of the one expounding the Dharma as a doctor
- C Generating the discrimination of the instructions as medicine
- D Generating the discrimination of persistent practice as the cure
- E Contemplating the discrimination of the tathāgatas as exalted beings
- F Generating the wish for the Dharma tradition to last long

2B3A-3A2A Contemplating the discrimination of oneself as a patient

In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct (Bodhicaryāvatāra)* it says:

Even when stricken with ordinary illness, {18}  
 One has to follow the words of a doctor;  
 How much more so if a hundred  
 Ills like lust afflict you perpetually!

As is mentioned here, owing to mental afflictions such as attachment we always suffer from ills causing long-lasting and severe suffering that is difficult to cure. Therefore we first need to diagnose them as such. Kamawa said:

If it is not in accord with the actual situation, our meditation goes off in the wrong direction. We have been stricken with a serious illness due to the three poisons, the illness is very serious, but we do not know we are ill at all.

2B3A-3A2B Contemplating the discrimination of the one expounding the Dharma as a doctor

If we are stricken with a serious illness such as a wind or bile disease, we look for a specialist in medicine, and meeting one we are extremely happy, listen to what he says, treat him with respect, and acknowledge him. In the same way look for a spiritual guide teaching the Dharma, and, having found one, accomplish what he says, taking it not as a burden but as an ornament, acting with respect and reverence toward him.

<sup>33</sup> Tib. *legs par rab tu nyon la yid la zungs shig*—the division into three is not quite clear.

## 2B3A-3A2C Generating the discrimination of the instructions as medicine

Just as a patient greatly appreciates the medicine put together by the doctor, you should regard the instructions and precepts taught by someone expounding the Dharma as the most important thing, and then make an effort to hold them in respect rather than wasting them through forgetfulness and the like.

## 2B3A-3A2D Generating the discrimination of persistent practice as the cure

This has three points:

## 1 The contempt of striving for words without practicing them

An ill person sees that his illness cannot be alleviated unless he takes the medicine the doctor has put together, and takes it. Likewise, once you see that attachment and so forth cannot be eliminated without practicing the advice taught by your Dharma teacher, you should practice with persistence and not strive after the vain terms of numerous classifications without putting them into practice. As a matter of fact, what good would it be to a leper whose hands and legs are coming off to resort to a dose of medicine once or twice? {19} Likewise for us who have been stricken since beginningless time with the wicked basis of illness that is the mental afflictions, it is not sufficient to practice the meaning of the instructions only a couple of times. This is why we should examine all the complete parts of the path with the wisdom of individual investigation and be as diligent as a flowing river. It is like it says in *Praise of Confession (Deśanastava)*:

...That is to say our minds are always obscured,  
For long we have served the causes of our ills.  
How can a leper lacking hands and feet,  
Who sometimes takes his medicine, derive any benefit?

## 2 The importance of the discrimination of oneself as someone ill

That being so, the discrimination of oneself as someone ill is very important. If it is present, the other ones will also arise. However if this remains merely words without the meaning of the instructions being accomplished for the sake of eliminating the mental afflictions, you will only be a listener. In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* it says that you will resemble a patient who, having sought a doctor, only strives after the medicinal composition rather than taking the medicine, and does not get rid of his illness. It also says:

If, after I have explained the excellent Dharma,  
You do not apply it well although you've heard it,  
You'll be like patients whose pouches are full of medicine  
But who still cannot cure their own diseases.

And *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* says:

These should be put into practice physically.  
What would be gained by uttering just the words?  
Would it be beneficial to patients  
If they just read how the medicine is meant to be used?

## 3 The instruction to act accordingly, having identified the meaning of "persistence"

Therefore the discrimination that persistence eliminates the disease should be developed. "Persistence" in this statement signifies putting into practice the topics of adopting and discarding modes of conduct from the spiritual teacher's instructions. {20} Now, to put them into practice you need to know them and for that you need to hear them. Again, after hearing and knowing them, you need to practice them and therefore it is crucial for you to engage in the meaning of what you have heard to the best of your abilities. Otherwise, at the time of death, you will have regrets about what you failed to accomplish. You will resemble an actor imitating others or someone interested in



sugar who eats only the cane. In *Exhortation to the Extraordinary Attitude (Adhyāśayasamcodana-sūtra)* it says:

“I failed in my attainments, now what should I do?”  
That is how the childish wail while dying.  
They have not delved deep and suffer greatly;  
Note that these are the faults of delighting in words.

And:

Like someone amid the crowd observing a play,  
Discussing the virtues of another hero,  
But failing with regard to his own persistence;  
Note that these are the faults of delighting in words.

And:

In the bark of sugarcane there is no essence,  
The delightful flavor is inside.  
Someone eating the bark is unable to find  
The delicious flavor of molasses.  
  
Similarly, words are like the bark;  
Like the taste, the meaning is inside.  
Consequently abandon delighting in words;  
Always be conscientious, reflect on their meaning!

2B3A-3A2E Contemplating the discrimination of the tathāgatas as exalted beings  
Having brought to mind the teacher of the Dharma, the Bhagavan, develop respect.

2B3A-3A2F Generating the wish for the Dharma tradition to last long  
Think: “How nice it would be if, based on listening to such a Dharma, the Victor’s teachings were to remain in the world for a long time.”

2B3A-3B The way in which, having related this to your mind, it is necessary to listen

Apart from that, if you keep your own mind to one side while explaining or listening to the Dharma, the Dharma remaining separate from it, then this will result in whatever is being explained missing the point. Therefore it is necessary to listen in order for your own continuum to reach certainty. To illustrate this: {21} when you want to examine whether or not there is dirt or some other impurity on your face, you look at yourself in a mirror and, understanding that there is, remove it. Likewise, when you hear the Dharma, your faulty behavior appears in the mirror of the Dharma, whereupon you feel anguish thinking: “This is what my mind has come to.” Then, as you engage in eliminating faults and attaining qualities, you necessarily train in accordance with the Dharma. It is like in *Garland of Birth Stories* where the son of Sutasa asks Prince Candra for Dharma teachings in these terms:

Beholding the forms of my bad behavior,  
In the dazzling mirror of Dharma,  
Anguish arises strongly in me,  
And I turn toward the Dharma.

Knowing this to be the thinking of a suitable vessel for hearing the Dharma, the Bodhisattva gave him teachings.

2B3A-3C How to keep in mind the purpose of attainments

In short, thinking “I shall attain buddhahood for the sake of all sentient beings. To attain that, I need to train in its causes. Since, apparently, it is necessary to listen to the Dharma for that, I shall listen to the Dharma,” you should generate the mind of enlightenment, consider the benefits of listening, and listen with joy, abandoning the faults of a vessel.

2B3B How to explain

This has four points:

- 1 Considering the benefits of explaining the Dharma
- 2 Generating respect for the teacher and the teachings
- 3 The attitude and activities to explain with
- 4 The distinction between whom the explanations should and should not be given to

2B3B-1 Considering the benefits of explaining the Dharma

In *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* it says:

Giving Dharma, free of mental afflictions,  
Teach according to sūtra and other true texts.

In its auto-commentary it says:

Therefore those who explain the Dharma incorrectly and with an afflicted mind that craves for material gain, respect, and fame, {22} corrupt their own great merits.

Therefore a pure motivation to teach the Dharma is extremely important, and in accordance with Ngargompa who said: “I have never explained the Dharma without meditating upon impermanence before the session,” it is crucial to review it beforehand.

In *Exhortation to the Extraordinary Attitude* two groups of twenty advantages of giving the gift of Dharma in the absence of material things and concern for gain, respect, and the like are set forth. Also, in the *Questions of Householder Ugra Sūtra* (*Gṛhapatyugraparipṛcchā*) it says that the merit of a householder giving immeasurable material things is exceeded by an ordained person giving a single verse of Dharma.

2B3B-2 Generating respect for the teacher and the teachings

When uttering the *Mother of the Buddhas*<sup>34</sup> the Teacher himself arranged the seat and so on. Accordingly, since the Dharma is a field of veneration even for buddhas, one should bring to mind the positive qualities and kindness of the Dharma and its Teacher, and generate respect.

2B3B-3 The attitude and activities to explain with

This has two points:

- A Attitude
- B Activities

2B3B-3A Attitude

The *Sūtra Requested by Sāgaramati* (*Sāgaramatiparipṛcchā*) puts forward five discriminations:

1. generating the discrimination of oneself as a doctor,
2. of the Dharma as medicine,
3. of the one listening to the Dharma as a patient,
4. of the Tathāgata as a holy being, and
5. of the mode of the Dharma as abiding for a long time—

<sup>34</sup> Common epithet of the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras.

as well as the development of loving kindness toward the people around.

The envy born from anxiety that others are superior, the laziness of putting things off, the discouragement of fatigue due to explaining things over and over again, praising oneself and chit-chatting about other people's faults, the reluctance to lend out texts, as well as concern for material things such as food and clothing should be abandoned, thinking: "Those very merits from teaching for the sake of my own and others' enlightenment are the provisions of my happiness."

#### 2B3B-3B Activities {23}

Having washed and dressed in immaculately clean clothes, in a clean and pleasant place you should sit on a cushion on a Dharma throne. If you then chant a mantra for subjugating demons, the demons and gods of the demonic category will not come closer to you than a perimeter of 100 yojanas<sup>35</sup> and even if they do come, they will not be able to create any obstacles, as it says in the *Sūtra Requested by Sāgaramati*. Therefore you should chant that mantra and, with an extremely radiant facial complexion, give your explanations conjoined with the conditions for ascertaining their meaning—examples, proofs, and quotations.

#### 2B3B-4 The distinction between whom the explanations should and should not be given to

In Guṇaprabha's *Sūtra on the Discipline (Vinayasūtra)* it says: "Do not act without being asked to." Accordingly, you should not teach without having been asked, and even when someone asks, you should examine the vessel. However, knowing someone to be a suitable vessel, it is acceptable to teach even without having been asked, as it says in the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra*. Further modes of conduct are set forth in the *Sūtra on the Discipline*.

#### 2B3C How generally to proceed at the end

This has four points:

- 1 What to do afterwards—the actual things to do

The roots of virtue of teaching and listening in this way should be sealed<sup>36</sup> by means of pure aspirational prayers such as the *Prayer of Good Conduct (Samantabhadracaryāpraṇidhāna)*.

- 2 The benefits of this

There is no doubt that if the Dharma is explained and listened to in this manner, in just one session the advantages stated above will arise. Due to the act of listening and explaining the Dharma hitting home, all the karmic obscurations accumulated previously by not respecting the Dharma and those who expound it and so forth are purified, and all the ones being newly accumulated are nipped in the bud.<sup>37</sup>

- 3 The general mode of behavior of saints

Due to the manner of listening hitting home, the instructions set forth bring about benefit in the mind. Seeing this, all the earlier saints in general {24} were diligent about this, and especially the former gurus of this instruction persevered in it with utmost diligence.

- 4 The advice to cherish them, since it is a great fault to turn away from them

These are evidently great instructions. If you do not reach certainty about this and your attitude does not change, as is often the case, no matter how much the profound and vast Dharma is explained, you will become like a god fallen to the rank of a demon, and that very Dharma will become an aid to the afflictions. Therefore, since it is like the saying: "If you err on the first of the month, you will do so until the fifteenth," the wise strive for this method of transforming what has been heard and

<sup>35</sup> One yojana (Tib. *dpag tshad*) is equivalent to 4.5 miles (7.4 km).

<sup>36</sup> Tib. *rgyas gdab par bya'o*, literally "planted (to) thrive."

<sup>37</sup> Tib. *'phrod 'chad*, literally, "are stopped from increasing."

explained into the path, and make every opportunity to explain and listen into something worthwhile, for this is the best preparation for teaching the instructions.

### **Explanation of the stages by which a student of the actual instructions should be guided**

2B4 The stages by which a student should be guided through the actual instructions

This has two points:

- A The root of the path: relying on a spiritual teacher
- B The stages of training the mind once you have relied

### **RELYING ON A SPIRITUAL TEACHER**

2B4A The root of the path: relying on a spiritual teacher

This has two points:

- 1 The somewhat elaborate explanation for generating certainty
- 2 The condensed presentation of how to sustain meditation

2B4A-1 The somewhat elaborate explanation for generating certainty

This has two points:

- [A The need to rely on a spiritual teacher since all positive qualities depend on him
- B The actual way to rely on a spiritual teacher]

2B4A-1A The need to rely on a spiritual teacher since all positive qualities depend on him

As all goodness, starting from the development of a single positive quality and the decrease of a single fault in the mind of the disciple, has its root in the sublime friend, right from the beginning the way to rely on him is important.

2B4A-1B The actual way to rely on a spiritual teacher

This has six points:

- 1 Characteristics of the one to be relied on, the virtuous spiritual friend
- 2 Characteristics of the one who relies, the student
- 3 The way the student relies on the virtuous spiritual friend
- 4 The benefits of reliance
- 5 The drawbacks of not relying
- 6 A summary of the meaning of these points

2B4A-1B1 Characteristics of the one to be relied on, the virtuous spiritual friend

This has two points:

- A Identification of a guru
- B The characteristics of a guru

2B4A-1B1A Identification of a guru

Although, generally speaking, in terms of the individual vehicles, a lot is said about this in the scriptures along with their commentaries, here only a virtuous spiritual friend who guides students on the path to buddhahood, the Mahāyāna, by gradually guiding them on the path of the three types of beings, will be presented.

2B4A-1B1B The characteristics of a guru

This has three points:

- 1 Highest characteristics
- 2 Middling characteristics
- 3 Minimum characteristics

2B4A-1B1B-1 Highest characteristics

This has two points:

A Positive qualities that the guru himself needs

In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras (Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra)* it says that students need to rely on a spiritual teacher endowed with ten properties:

A spiritual teacher with discipline, calm, complete peace,  
More qualities, with effort, rich in scriptures  
Who has thoroughly realized suchness, is eloquent,  
Loving, and never disheartened—on that one rely!

Furthermore it says that someone who has not disciplined himself is consequently not in a position to discipline someone else. A spiritual master disciplining others has to be someone who has first disciplined his own mind. You may wonder: “Well then, in what way does it require disciplining?” To accomplish whatever occurs to you and then label it a quality of realization because it exists in the mind is of no benefit. This is why a system of mental discipline compatible with the general teachings of the Victors is necessary. That has been ascertained as the three precious trainings, and therefore the three, ethics and so on, have been set forth. In this regard “disciplined” refers to the training in ethics. In the *Sūtra on the Vows of Individual Liberation (Prātimokṣasūtra)* it says:

In accord with the unruly horse of the mind  
Always willfully straying away,  
A bridle strutted with a hundred sharp nails—  
That’s individual liberation.

Someone skilled at breaking wild horses tames them by means of a good bridle. The sense powers pursue wrong objects like wild horses. {26} Ethics subjugates them as one engages in inappropriate activities, and makes one engage with much effort in what ought to be done. Someone trained in it has likewise tamed the horse of the mind.

“Calm” means having developed the training of meditative stabilization in which, based on mindfulness and introspection with regard to engaging in good and counteracting faulty behavior, the mind abides in a state of inner calm. “Complete peace” means that, based on the calm abiding of a serviceable mind, the training of wisdom has been developed through individual analysis of the correct meaning of reality. However, it is not enough merely to have developed, by means of the three trainings in this manner, the qualities of realization that act to tame the mind. As the quality of scriptural knowledge is also needed, the text says “rich in scriptures,” meaning that the three scriptural collections and so forth have been studied extensively. According to Geshe Dromtönpa:

For someone to be called a Mahāyāna guru, he must generate boundless understanding when he explains, and when he practices, he must show what is of benefit and direct significance in the last days of the teachings.

“Having realized suchness” refers to the special training in wisdom—the realization of the selflessness of phenomena. Alternatively, it is mainly held to be manifest suchness. However, even if this is not present, it is said that this criterion is also fulfilled by a realization through scriptures and reasonings.

That being so, even if he has scriptural knowledge and realizations, it is not enough for them to be inferior or equal to those of the disciple. Therefore someone with more qualities is needed because in *Collection of Indicative Verses (Udānavarga)* it says:

People relying on someone inferior wither,  
Those relying on one of their peers stay the same,  
Those relying on leaders attain to sanctity.  
Therefore rely on those ahead of you  
  
Endowed with discipline, complete peace,  
And even more superior wisdom.

If you rely on any such lords, {27}  
You'll even end up ahead of them.

Puchungwa said: “As I listen to the accounts of the saints, I look up to them,” and Tazhi said: “I take the old men of Reting<sup>38</sup> as models.”<sup>39</sup> Accordingly, we need someone with more qualities as a model to look up to. That being so, those six properties are positive qualities you yourself attain.

B Positive qualities necessary for others' welfare

The remaining ones are qualities for taking care of others. As they say:

The Sages do not wash away evil with water,  
They do not remove the suffering of beings by hand,  
They do not graft their realizations onto others;  
They liberate, teaching the truth of reality's nature.

As is expressed here, apart from teaching others the path in an unmistakable manner and taking care of them, nothing can be done such as washing away negativities with water. Among the four characteristics related to this, “eloquent” means experienced with regard to the stages of guidance and skilled at putting the meaning across to the minds of those to be tamed. “Loving” means having a pure motivation to teach the Dharma and teaching motivated by compassion without regard for material gain or respect.

We need someone like Potowa who said to Chenngawa: “Son of Lima, however many explanations of the Dharma I have given, not once have I claimed the applause as my own. There is no migrating being that is not pitiable.”

“With effort” means that he constantly delights in the welfare of others. “Never disheartened” means that he does not become weary due to explaining things over and over again, but rather willingly bears the hardships of explaining.

2B4A-1B1B-2 Middling characteristics

Potowa said:

The three trainings, realization of suchness, and a loving heart—these five are the main thing. My master Zhangtsün is not very {28} learned in everything, and since he cannot bear disenchantment either, he does not impress on his mind the kindness he received. However, since he has the above-mentioned five, whoever is in his presence benefits. Nyentön is by no means eloquent and each time he makes a dedication the only thing he knows is that, again, nobody understands anything, but since he has those five, people near him benefit.

2B4A-1B1B-3 Minimum characteristics

This has two points:

A The actual minimum of characteristics

Even if it is difficult, due to the times, to find someone who has the complete set of characteristics like that, it is said that you should not rely on anyone whose faults are greater or whose faults and positive qualities are equal but on someone whose positive qualities exceed his faults.

B The expediency of association with the characteristics

Such a guru bringing about complete liberation is a perpetual root of aspiration. Therefore those wishing to rely on a guru should be aware of them and make an effort to look for someone who possesses the characteristics. Those wishing to have students rely on them should also strive to acquire these characteristics.

<sup>38</sup> Tib. *ra sbreng ba*

<sup>39</sup> Tib. *mig rten*, literally “eye support”, i.e., something to rest one's eyes on.



2B4A-1B2 Explaining the characteristics of the one who relies, the student

This has four points:

- A The faults of someone who does not have the five characteristics and the benefits of someone who does have them

*Four Hundred Stanzas (Catuhśataka)* says:

Impartial, intelligent, full of endeavor—  
Thus is explained a vessel for teachings.  
Otherwise qualities of the teacher,  
Have no effect—there's no change in the listener.

As it says in the commentaries, someone endowed with the three characteristics is a suitable vessel for listening. If all three are complete, the positive qualities of the one expounding the Dharma appear as positive qualities and do not appear as faults. Not only that, the positive qualities of the listeners also appear as positive qualities to that person and do not appear as faults. If the characteristics of a vessel are not complete, the listener, under the power of his faults, will classify even a great, perfectly pure spiritual teacher who expounds the Dharma among those who have faults and perceive an exponent's faults as qualities.

- B Explaining the specifics of the various characteristics in detail {29}

In this regard “impartial” means without bias. If you have a bias, it will make you obscured, you will not perceive positive qualities, and therefore you will fail to find the meaning of excellent explanations. It is just as it says in *Essence of the Middle Way (Madhyamakahrdaya)*:

With a biased—thus anguished—mind,<sup>40</sup>  
Peace can never be realized.

To be biased means to be attached to one's own approach and to hate others' approach. Having examined something like this in your own continuum, you should discard it. Is that by itself sufficient? If someone does not have the intelligence to distinguish between good ways of explaining and faulty ways of explaining that seem the same, he is not a suitable vessel, even though impartial. Therefore one needs to have the intelligence that understands those two.

Are those two sufficient? Even if one has the two, impartiality and intelligence, someone who is just like the listener to the Dharma in a lifeless picture is not a suitable vessel. Therefore one also needs to have great endeavor. The commentary states that the two, respect for the Dharma and the expounder of the Dharma as well as an attentive mind, are added, so that five characteristics are set forth.

- C Specifics of achieving the conducive conditions and eliminating the adverse conditions to having the four characteristics

That being so there are four: great endeavor with regard to the Dharma, a completely attentive mind while listening, great respect for the Dharma and the expounder of Dharma, and holding to good explanations having rejected faulty ones. Intelligence is a conducive circumstance for those four, and impartiality is what eliminates adverse circumstances.

- D The need to strive for those characteristics

You should examine whether or not all the attributes that would make you suitable to be guided by a guru are complete, and cultivate joy if they are. If they are not complete, you should strive henceforth and in future lives after the causes for making them complete.

2B4A-1B3 The way the student relies on the virtuous spiritual friend

This has two points:

<sup>40</sup> Tib. *phyogs su lung bas sems gdungs pas*, literally: “with a mind in anguish due to bias.”

- [A Explaining the need to rely on someone with the characteristics
- B The actual manner of relying on someone who has the characteristics]

2B4A-1B3A Explaining the need to rely on someone with the characteristics {30}

Thus someone endowed with the characteristics of a vessel should examine in the way explained above whether or not a teacher has the characteristics, and if he does have them, obtain the kindness of the Dharma from him.

2B4A-1B3B The actual manner of relying on someone who has the characteristics

With regard to the manner of relying on a spiritual teacher from whom in general you obtain the kindness of the Dharma and who, in particular, guides your mind well by means of perfectly complete instructions, there are two points:

- 1 The manner of relying in thought
- 2 The manner of relying through actions

2B4A-1B3B-1 The manner of relying in thought

This has two points:

- A The root, training in faith
- B Remembering his kindness so as to generate respect

2B4A-1B3B-1A The root, training in faith

This has five points:

- 1 Explaining faith as the basis of all qualities

In *Jewels' Blaze Dhāraṇī* (*Ratnolkadhāraṇī*) it says:

Faith, a preparatory practice, gives birth, like a mother,  
To all good qualities, guards them, and makes them increase.

This says that faith gives birth to positive qualities that have not yet arisen, and once they have come into existence, it sustains and increases them. In the *Sūtra of the Ten Dharmas* (*Daśadharmakasūtra*) it also says:

That which leads to definite emergence<sup>41</sup>,  
Faith, is the foremost of vehicles.  
For that reason the intelligent  
Rely on the pursuit of faith.

In those who are lacking faith,  
Wholesome qualities do not arise;  
Likewise, in seeds that were burnt by fire,  
No green sprout can germinate.

In terms of the forward and reverse pervasions, faith is said to be the foundation of all positive qualities.

- 2 Identification of faith

Generally speaking there are many types of faith: in the Three Jewels, in actions and their effects, and in the four noble truths, however, here it is faith in the spiritual master.

- 3 The need to discriminate the spiritual master as a buddha

Furthermore, as for the way to see the spiritual master, it says in the *Tantra Bestowing the Initiation of Vajrapāṇi* (*Vajrapāṇyabhiṣekamahātantra*):

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<sup>41</sup> Tib. *nges 'byung*, also often translated as 'renunciation'



Oh Lord of Secrets, how should a student see his master? Just like he would see the Buddha Bhagavan. {31}

Similar statements can be found in the collection of Mahāyāna sūtras and in the Vinaya. Their meaning is this: If you understand that someone is like a buddha, instead of a mind conceiving faults in him, a mind thinking about his positive qualities will arise. Likewise, with regard to a spiritual master, you should purposely abandon any concepts of faults in every respect while training in the mind that conceives positive qualities.

4 The disadvantages of conceiving faults

In addition, the above tantra says:

Apprehend your master's positive qualities,  
Do not ever apprehend his faults,  
Apprehending his qualities you will gain siddhis,<sup>42</sup>  
Apprehending his faults they cannot be gained.

You should act accordingly. Thus if positive qualities predominate in a spiritual master but you think about him in terms of the few faults he has, this will become an obstacle to your own spiritual accomplishments. Even if faults predominate, if you train in faith from the perspective of his positive qualities without thinking about him in terms of his faults, this will become a cause for accomplishments to come about. Therefore, when it comes to your own spiritual master, whether his faults are great or small, contemplate the disadvantages of thinking about him from that perspective, and repeatedly generating a mind abandoning this, put a stop to it.

5 The way of restraining concepts of faults

If concepts of faults arise due to non-conscientiousness<sup>43</sup>, a lot of afflictions, and so forth, you should apply yourself to confession and restraint. If you familiarize yourself with them in this manner, you may still see that there are a few faults, but since your mind holds on to the side of positive qualities, it will not become an obstacle to your faith. For instance, the Great Elder upheld the view of the Madhyamaka, while Serlingpa upheld the view of the True Aspectarian Cittamātra which is why, in terms of view, one was higher than the other. However, as he discovered the general stages of the Mahāyāna path and the mind of enlightenment by relying on him, he regarded Serlingpa as unequalled among spiritual teachers.

2B4A-1B3B-1B Remembering his kindness so as to generate respect {32}

In the *Sūtra of the Ten Dharmas* it says:

He looks for me who has roamed in cyclic existence for a long time; he awakens me from a long time of obscurations and torpor due to ignorance; he pulls me out as I sink in the ocean of existence; he shows good paths to me who has entered bad ones; he frees me who has been bound in the prison of existence; he is a doctor to me who has long been tormented by illness; I should generate the notion of him as rain-clouds, pacifying me who has been ablaze with the fire of attachment and the like.

The *Array of Stalks Sūtra* (*Gaṇḍavyūhasūtra*) also says:

"These are my spiritual friends, expounders of Dharma,  
Exhaustively teaching the qualities of all dharmas,  
Thoroughly teaching the conduct of bodhisattvas,"  
With these thoughts in mind, I have come here.

<sup>42</sup> Tib. *dnogs grub* is usually translated here as "(spiritual) accomplishment", "attainment." *Siddhi* is the Sanskrit equivalent.

<sup>43</sup> Tib. *bag med pa*, this can also be translated as 'carelessness.'

“As they give birth to all that, they are like my mother,  
They give me the milk of virtues, so they are like nurses,  
They cleanse me completely by means of enlightenment’s branches;  
These spiritual friends completely exorcize harm.

They are like doctors releasing from death and old age,  
Showering a rain of nectar they are like Lord Indra,  
Like the full moon they flourish with white qualities,  
They show the direction of peace, just like bright sunlight,

Regarding friends and foes they are like mountains,  
They have minds as undisturbed as the sea,  
They give perfect support, some say: ‘like boatmen’;  
With this in mind, Sudhana, I’ve come here.

“Bodhisattvas bring forth my understanding,  
The buddhas’ children cause enlightenment,  
These beings, these friends of mine, are praised by the Buddha”;  
With such virtuous thoughts, I have come here.

“As they save the world, they are like heroes,  
They have become the captains, protectors, and refuge,  
They are the eye bestowing happiness on me”; {33}  
With thoughts like these, honor your spiritual friends.

The thoughts expressed here should be remembered through a tune to go with the verses, substituting oneself for “Sudhana.”

#### 2B4A-1B3B-2 The manner of relying through actions

This has three points:

- [A The need for reliance through actions
- B A condensed explanation of the three means of pleasing the spiritual teacher
- C The extensive explanation of those three means]

#### 2B4A-1B3B-2A The need for reliance through actions

In *Fifty Verses on the Guru (Gurupañcāśikā)* it says:

What need is there to say a lot of words here?  
Do everything to make your guru happy.  
Give up anything that displeases him.  
Apply yourself to that, examine that!

This was said by Vajradhara himself:  
“Spiritual attainments follow the guru.”  
Aware of this, use anything there is,  
And make your guru absolutely happy.

In brief, try hard to please him and to give up whatever he does not like.

#### 2B4A-1B3B-2B A condensed explanation of the three means of pleasing the spiritual teacher

The three means of pleasing the guru are: offering him material things, serving him and paying him respect with body and speech, and practicing in accordance with his advice.

In this regard it says in *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras*:

Through homage, offerings purely obtained, and service  
And practice you should rely on a spiritual friend.

2B4A-1B3B-2C The extensive explanation of those three means

This has three points:

- 1 Offering the guru material things

It says in *Fifty Verses on the Guru*:

If with things rarely given—your wife and children —  
And with your life, you should always rely on  
The Master who gave you your commitments;<sup>44</sup>  
Needless to say do so with your fickle possessions.

And:

Giving that, amounts to always  
Offering gifts to all the buddhas.  
Offering that, accumulates merit,  
Which turns into the highest attainments.<sup>45</sup>

- 2 Serving and paying respect to him

This involves bathing him, anointing him, massaging him, wrapping him up, cleaning him, nursing him when he is ill, and so forth, and talking about his positive qualities.

- 3 Practicing in accordance with his advice

This consists in practicing {34} without going against the instructions, this being the main means of pleasing the guru. In *Garland of Birth Stories* it says:

The offering to be made in return for his help  
Is to practice according to his instructions.

2B4A-1B4 The benefits of reliance

This has two points:

- A Benefits such as approaching the state of a buddha

It says in the scriptures that you will approach the state of a buddha, that the Victors will rejoice, that you will not be deprived of virtuous spiritual friends, that you will not fall to the lower realms, and that you will not easily succumb to bad karma and afflictions. Since you will not transgress the conduct of bodhisattvas and will remain mindful of it, your accumulation of positive qualities will grow higher and higher and all your temporary and ultimate goals will be accomplished.

- B Bad karma is exhausted and the benefit exceeds even that of making offerings to numerous buddhas

Furthermore, through serving and paying respect to the spiritual teacher, the karma for experiencing the lower realms is exhausted directly in this lifetime through only slight harm to body and mind or else through experiences in dreams. It is said that there are enormous benefits that outshine the roots of virtue of making offerings and the like to innumerable buddhas.

2B4A-1B5 The drawbacks of not relying

This has three points:

- A The way it ruins this life and future ones

If you make someone your spiritual teacher and then back off in your reliance on him, a lot of illnesses and negative forces will harm you in this life, and in future lives you will have to experience the immeasurable sufferings of the lower realms. In *Fifty Verses on the Guru* it says:

<sup>44</sup> Tib *dam tshig*, the Tibetan equivalent of the Sanskrit word *samaya*.

<sup>45</sup> Tib. *tshogs las dngos grub mchog tu 'gyur*, literally “from the accumulation there will be highest attainments.”

Never agitate the minds  
Of your masters—not at all.  
If you do so out of delusions,  
You will surely roast in hell.

It was explained authentically  
That all those who disparage their masters  
Will dwell in the horrific hells  
That were taught—like Without Respite. {35}

In a passage from the *Commentary on the Difficult Points of the “Black Opponent of Yama”* (*Kṛṣṇayamāripañjikā*) it also says:

Whoever hears a single verse,  
But does not perceive him a spiritual teacher,<sup>46</sup>  
A hundred times will be born among dogs  
And then as someone of low caste.

B No positive qualities are attained and earlier ones deteriorate

Apart from that, the positive qualities that have not yet arisen do not arise, and those that have arisen deteriorate and vanish.

C The disadvantages of relying on non-virtuous spiritual friends and bad companions

If you rely on non-virtuous spiritual friends and bad companions, your positive qualities will also diminish, your faults will increase, and there will be undesirable results. Therefore it was taught that this should be avoided in every way.

2B4A-1B6 Summary of the meaning of these points

This has three points:

A The importance of proper reliance as the root of perpetual striving

That being so, the instructions widely known as guru yoga should also be understood according to what has been explained before. However, it is not enough to do the visualization in just one meditation session. When you do one Dharma practice from the bottom of your heart, you should long rely on a spiritual teacher who guides you unmistakably.

As Chekawa also said about that time: “When you rely on a guru, there will be doubtful questions whether to give up.” Accordingly, since there will only be loss without profit if you do not know how to rely on him, it becomes evident that the cycles of teachings about relying on a spiritual teacher are more important than any other ones and the root of perpetual striving.

B The need for confession and a vow because, if that proper reliance does not come about, it is a great fault

With our coarse mental afflictions—not knowing how to rely or knowing how to but not doing so—we have often allowed many misdeeds of reliance on a spiritual teacher to occur in regard to listening to the Dharma. Since it is difficult for an awareness of that to develop through confession and restraint, having understood the advantages and {36} disadvantages as explained earlier, you should sincerely confess any occurrences that are not in accordance with proper reliance and develop many strong resolves.

C How, if you act in that manner, the realization of reliance is not far away

If you act in that manner, before long you will become like the bodhisattva Sadaprarudita and the youthful Sudhana who was insatiable in his quest for a spiritual teacher.

<sup>46</sup> Tib. *gang gis bla mar mi ‘dzin pa*, literally “and does not apprehend as spiritual teacher.”

## 2B4A-2 The condensed presentation of how to sustain meditation

This has two points:

- A The actual way to sustain meditation
- B The reason why meditation needs to be sustained by means of two modes of sustaining

### 2B4A-2A The actual way to sustain meditation

This has two points:

- 1 What to do during the meditation session itself
- 2 What to do during the periods between sessions

#### 2B4A-2A1 What to do during the meditation session itself

This has three points:

- A What to do in preparation
- B What to do during the actual meditation session
- C What to do at the end of the meditation session

##### 2B4A-2A1A What to do in preparation

Perform the six preparatory practices:

- [1 Cleaning your dwelling and arranging representations of the exalted body, speech, and mind
- 2 Laying out offerings
- 3 Sitting posture and mental attitude
- 4 Visualization of the merit field
- 5 Accumulation of merit and purification of negativities
- 6 Mandala offering and request for blessings]

##### 2B4A-2A1A-1 [Cleaning your dwelling and arranging representations of the exalted body, speech, and mind]

Following the life story of Serlingpa, you should clean your dwelling and arrange representations of the exalted body, speech, and mind.

##### 2B4A-2A1A-2 [Laying out offerings]

Beautifully lay out an arrangement of offerings that were honestly acquired.

##### 2B4A-2A1A-3 [Sitting posture and mental attitude]

On a comfortable seat straighten up your body. Assume a suitable position in cross-legged or half cross-legged posture, making sure that your mind is suffused with taking refuge and bodhichitta.

##### 2B4A-2A1A-4 [Visualization of the merit field]

In the space in front of you imagine that there abide the lineage gurus of vast conduct and profound view and countless buddhas, bodhisattvas, arhats, ārya hearers, and solitary realizers along with their attendants. Thus you should visualize the merit field.

##### 2B4A-2A1A-5 [Accumulation of merit and purification of negativities]

This has three points:

- A The reason why it is necessary to accumulate merit and purify negativities
- B Explanation of accumulation and purification in detail
- C Categorization of the individual elements

##### 2B4A-2A1A-5A The reason why it is necessary to accumulate merit and purify negativities

It is exceedingly difficult for paths to arise in your continuum if the favorable conditions for their arising, the collections, have not been accumulated, and their adverse conditions, the obscurations, have not been purified. Therefore you need to purify the mind by means of the seven-limb practice, which brings together the key points of accumulation and purification.

##### 2B4A-2A1A-5B Explanation of accumulation and purification in detail

This has two points:

- 1 The actual detailed explanation
- 2 The need to take the meaning of the words to heart

2B4A-2A1A-5B1 The actual detailed explanation

This has seven points:

- [A Prostration
- B Offerings
- C Confession of negativities
- D Rejoicing
- E Requesting the wheel of Dharma to be turned
- F Supplication
- G Dedication]

2B4A-2A1A-5B1A Prostration

This has two points:

- [1 Prostration combining the three doors
- 2 Prostrations of the three individual doors]

2B4A-2A1A-5B1A-1 Prostration combining the three doors {37}

With regard to the limb of prostration, prostration combining the three doors is set out in the *Prayer of Good Conduct* in the single stanza:

To you lions amongst humans,  
Who come in the three times  
To the worlds of ten directions,  
I prostrate with my body, speech, and mind.

This is not prostration to the world spheres of one direction and to the buddhas of one time, rather, focusing on all the Victors residing in the ten directions and three times, you should prostrate your body, speech, and mind to them with respect and from the bottom of your heart.

2B4A-2A1A-5B1A-2 Prostrations of the three individual doors

This has three points:

- A Physical prostration

Physical prostration is set out in the single stanza:

With the powerful prayer of good conduct,  
Directly perceiving all the Victors with my mind,  
Bowing deeply with as many bodies as the atoms of the worlds,  
To all you Victors, I completely prostrate.

You focus on all the Victors belonging to the directions and times as the objects of your mind, as though you directly perceive them. Emanating your own body in manifestations as numerous as the tiny atoms, you should prostrate yourself. Furthermore, having generated the power of faith in the good conduct of the objects, you should be motivated by that.

- B Mental prostration

Mental prostration is set forth in the single stanza:

On top of each atom are buddhas equaling all the atoms,  
Residing amidst the buddhas' children.  
I visualize the entire sphere of phenomena  
As being completely filled with Victors in this way.

On top of each minute atom, buddhas as innumerable as the tiny atoms reside encircled by bodhisattvas. You should generate the appreciation<sup>47</sup> that recollects their positive qualities.

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<sup>47</sup> Tib. *mos pa*

## C Verbal prostration

Verbal prostration is set forth in the single stanza:

With oceans of inexhaustible eulogies for you,  
A great roar from oceans of melody-emitting organs,  
I express the marvelous qualities of all the Victors,  
And praise all of you gone to bliss.

From each of the bodies innumerable heads emanate, and from each of the heads again innumerable tongues that sing inexhaustible eulogies of the objects' positive qualities to sweet melodies. Here "melody" is praise and their "organs," that is, their causes, are the tongues. The word "oceans" refers to a lot.

2B4A-2A1A-5B1B Offerings

This has two points:

- [1 Surpassable offerings
- 2 Unsurpassable offerings]

2B4A-2A1A-5B1B-1 Surpassable offerings

Surpassable offerings are set forth in the two stanzas:

Delightful flowers and heavenly garlands,  
Musical instruments, scented unguents, and sublime parasols,  
Radiant lights and sublime incense,  
I offer to you, the Victors.

Finest garments and supreme scents,  
Vessels of powder equaling Mount Meru,  
All wondrous offerings in spectacular array,  
I offer to you, the Victors.

"Delightful flowers" {38} are marvelous specimens of divine and human flowers. "Garlands" are many different kinds of flowers mixed and strung together. Together they are all actual and imaginary flowers.

"Musical instruments" are the sounds of traditional instruments and the like. "Scented unguents" are a mixture of fragrant perfumes. "Sublime parasols" are the finest of parasols. "Radiant lights" are fragrant radiant lights from things like incense or butter as well as radiant jewel lights. "Incense" refers to combinations of fragrant substances and to a single one.

"Finest garments" are the best of clothes. "Supreme scents" are water and the like pervaded by scents that fill the billion world systems with fragrance. "Vessels of powder" are packaged powders of fragrant incense suitable for scattering and burning, or the colored sand powder of a mandala, in multiple layers as wide and as high as Mount Meru. "Array," joined at the end to all the above, means a lot, decorated, and variegated.

2B4A-2A1A-5B1B-2 Unsurpassable offerings

This has two points:

- A Actual topic
- B The motivation for prostrations and offerings

2B4A-2A1A-5B1B-2A Actual topic

Unsurpassable offerings are set forth in the single stanza:

Offerings, unsurpassable and vast,  
Visualized for all the Victors,



By the power of my faith in good conduct,  
I prostrate and offer them to all the Victors.

Since the surpassable ones are the offerings of worldly beings, this here is everything good that is emanated by powerful beings such as bodhisattvas.

2B4A-2A1A-5B1B-2B The motivation for prostrations and offerings

The last two lines are to be joined to all the previous sets of two in order to complete them. They indicate the motivation for the prostrations and offerings as well as their objects.

2B4A-2A1A-5B1C Confession of negativities

The confession of negativities is set forth in the single stanza:

Whatever negativity I have done  
With my body, my speech, and likewise my mind  
Overwhelmed by attachment, anger, and ignorance,  
All these I confess one by one before you.

In dependence on the cause, the three poisons, and by means of the three bases, the body and so forth, their nature is that I have done them (that is, that I have actually created them), that I have made others create them, and that I {39} rejoiced in those created by others, all of which are generally subsumed under “whatever ... I have done.” If through recollecting their faults, you regret those done previously and sincerely confess them with a mind intending to refrain from them in the future, the increase of deeds done earlier and the continuity of future occurrences will be severed.

2B4A-2A1A-5B1D Rejoicing

Rejoicing is set forth in the single stanza:

In all the merit of all the Victors of the ten directions,  
The buddhas’ children and the solitary realizers,  
The learners and no-more-learners, and  
Of each and every migrating being, I rejoice.

As you recall the benefits of the virtue of these five types of people, you should cultivate joy.

2B4A-2A1A-5B1E Requesting the wheel of Dharma to be turned

Requesting the wheel of Dharma to be turned is set forth in the single stanza:

You who are lights for the worlds in the ten directions,  
Who, by means of the stages of enlightenment, attained unimpeded buddhahood  
I exhort all of you, my saviors,  
To turn the unsurpassable wheel.

You should exhort those who have awoken to complete buddhahood in the worlds of the ten directions, who attained unimpeded and unobstructed exalted knowledge, to emanate the same number of bodies for a long time and to teach the Dharma.

2B4A-2A1A-5B1F Supplication

Supplication is set forth in the single stanza:

Those who intend to show how to pass beyond sorrow,  
With folded hands I supplicate you to remain  
For eons equaling the particles of the universes,  
For the benefit and happiness of all migrating beings.

You should supplicate those who, in the worlds of the ten directions, are about to show how to pass beyond sorrow to stay, without passing into nirvāṇa for as many eons as there are particles of dust in the universes, in order to bring about the benefit and happiness of migrating beings.



2B4A-2A1A-5B1G Dedication

The limb of dedication is set forth in the single stanza:

Whatever slight virtue I have accumulated  
By prostrating, offering, and confessing,  
Rejoicing, exhorting, and supplicating,  
I dedicate all of it to the great enlightenment.

All the roots of virtue represented by the previous six limbs are made common property of all sentient beings and never come to an end, by dedicating them with strong determination to complete enlightenment.

2B4A-2A1A-5B2 The need to take the meaning of the words to heart

If you thus develop an understanding of the meaning of these words and gently do as was taught without allowing your mind to wander, you will hold immeasurable heaps of merit.

2B4A-2A1A-5C Categorization of the individual elements

Accordingly five limbs, prostrating, offering, requesting, {40} supplicating, and rejoicing, constitute the accumulation of the collection of merit.<sup>48</sup> Confessing purifies obscurations. One aspect of rejoicing, the cultivation of joy in one's own virtue, multiplies the virtue. By means of dedicating, the virtues of accumulating, purifying, and multiplying, however small, are multiplied manifold, and what would come to an end after producing a temporary effect is made inexhaustible. In brief, there are the three: accumulation, purification, as well as multiplication and making inexhaustible.

2B4A-2A1A-6 [Mandala offering and request for blessings]

Then, with a clear visualization of the objects, offer a mandala, and with strong aspiration supplicate many times: "I pray that all mistaken attitudes toward the spiritual teacher such as disrespect may cease and that all the non-mistaken attitudes toward him may come about with ease, and I request blessings for a complete pacification of all outer and inner obstacles."

2B4A-2A1B What to do during the actual meditation session

This has two points:

- 1 How to sustain meditation in general
- 2 How to sustain the meditation of this context

2B4A-2A1B-1 How to sustain meditation in general

This has three points:

- A Identification of and need for meditation

Meditation on the path as it will be explained here serves to make you fit to utilize any virtuous object you wish.

- B The faults of bad meditation

Moreover, if you attend to this and that observed object with the thought to take merely this number of virtuous observed objects in any order you wish, nothing will come of it, and having gone wrong from the beginning, your spiritual practice will continue to be faulty throughout your life.

- C How to sustain good meditation

Therefore you should first of all ascertain the number and order of the observed objects to be sustained. Then you should unleash {41} a strong driving force that does not allow thoughts to arise

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<sup>48</sup> Tib. *tshogs bsag*

other than in accordance with what has been ascertained, and you should sustain with mindfulness and introspection<sup>49</sup> what has been ascertained without addition or omission.

#### 2B4A-2A1B-2 How to sustain the meditation of this context

This has three points:

- A Thinking about the benefits of reliance and about the faults of non-reliance

You should first think about the benefits of reliance and about the faults of non-reliance.

- B How to train in faith by means of thinking about the guru's positive qualities

Then repeatedly resolve never to allow your mind to get lost in conceiving faults in the guru and think of the qualities like ethics and meditative stabilization that you yourself have perceived in him, cultivating the confidence that is a mind having the aspect of faith until it arises.

- C Training in the respect that remembers the kindness

Then you should consider, in accordance with the above quotations from the Sūtra Collection, the instances of beneficial kindness that you received and are still receiving, and sincerely cultivate respect until it arises.

#### 2B4A-2A1C What to do at the end of the meditation session

This has two points:

- [1 What should actually be done at the end
- 2 Time and duration of meditation]

##### 2B4A-2A1C-1 What should actually be done at the end

By means of the *Prayer of Good Conduct and Aspiration in Seventy Verses* (*Pranīdhānasaptatināmagāthā*) the accumulated virtue should be dedicated with strong determination to the temporary and ultimate aspirations.

##### 2B4A-2A1C-2 Time and duration of meditation

This has three points:

- A Indication of the time of meditation

Thus you should meditate in four sessions—at dawn, in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the evening.

- B How to meditate in the beginning

Moreover, if your sessions are long in the beginning, it is easy to fall under the power of laxity and excitement<sup>50</sup>. Since it is difficult to correct this state of mind once you have got used to it, you should do many short sessions. If you cut the session short when there is still a desire to meditate, you will also really want to enter meditation the next time. They say that otherwise you will be overcome by nausea at the sight of your meditation seat.

- C How to sustain the meditation once it has stabilized a bit and advice on how to avoid exhaustion

When it has stabilized a bit, you should prolong the sessions, sustaining them all {42} free from the faults of being either excessively tense or excessively relaxed. Thereby small obstacles, over-exhaustion, and drowsiness will be pacified.

#### 2B4A-2A2 What to do during the periods between sessions

This has two points:

- [A General practices enhancing the object of meditation
- B The causes of calm abiding and special insight]

<sup>49</sup> Tib. *dran shes*

<sup>50</sup> Tib. *bying rgod*

2B4A-2A2A General practices enhancing the object of meditation

Generally speaking there are numerous practices enhancing the object such as prostrations, circumambulation, and recitation. However, the main point is that if you make an effort at the essence of the session, and then during the intervals in which you leave the session you let go carelessly without relying on mindfulness and introspection regarding the observed object and aspect which are the causes of sustaining the meditation, the outcome will be very little. Therefore, in between sessions, you should also be concerned with the Dharma texts teaching that object and recall it again and again. By various means you should accumulate the collection of conditions favorable to the arising of positive qualities, and by various means purify the adverse conditions, the obscurations. Your determination with respect to the ethics you have accepted, the basis of everything, should be reaffirmed a lot.

2B4A-2A2B The causes of calm abiding and special insight

Apart from that, train in the collection of the four causes for an easy arising of the paths of calm abiding and special insight. In this regard, the four causes are:

- [1 Controlling the sense doors
- 2 Introspective behavior
- 3 Knowing the right measure of food
- 4 Exerting yourself in yoga without sleeping, and what to do when lying down to sleep]

2B4A-2A2B-1 Controlling the sense doors

In this regard, when the six consciousnesses arise in dependence upon their objects and sense powers, attachment and aversion end up arising toward the six pleasant and the six unpleasant objects of mental consciousness. Controlling the sense doors guards against their arising.

2B4A-2A2B-2 Introspective behavior

In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

To examine again and again,  
The situation of mind and body,  
That is the sign, exactly that,  
Of protective introspection.

Following this, whenever the body and so forth engage in such and such an action, you come to understand whether or not it should be done and behave accordingly.

2B4A-2A2B-3 Knowing the right measure of food

Knowing the right measure of food means to give up eating too much or too little and to eat only the amount that does not do damage to one's virtuous activities. Furthermore, having meditated upon the drawbacks of craving for food, you should also remember what is said in the scriptures about eating, thinking that it should be without mental afflictions, that it should be of benefit to the giver, {43} that while you now bring together the micro-organisms of your body<sup>52</sup> by means of material things, in the future you will bring them together by means of the Dharma, and that you will bring about the welfare of all sentient beings. In *Friendly Letter (Suhṛllekha)* it also says:

Reasoning that foodstuffs are like medicine,  
Depend on them without attachment or hatred.  
They are not meant for you to be sated or proud  
Or fat, but just to keep your body going.

<sup>51</sup> Tib. *shes bzhin du spyod pa*

<sup>52</sup> Tib. *lus kyi srin bu*

## 2B4A-2A2B-4 Exerting yourself in yoga without sleeping, and what to do when lying down to sleep

This has two points:

- [A What to do when lying down to sleep
- B How to apply this to the intervals between all meditations]

### 2B4A-2A2B-4A What to do when lying down to sleep

This has five points:

- 1 The time to lie down

In *Friendly Letter (Suhṛllekha)* it says:

Lord of reasoning, after all the day's sessions,  
As well as the first and last ones of the night,  
When sleeping, in order not to lose the fruit,  
Also sleep with mindfulness in between sessions.

This explains the essence of the sessions of both the entire day and the first and last part of the night as well as what should be done in between. Therefore, having walked about and sat down, you should completely purify your mind of the five obscurations and thus make whatever you do meaningful.

- 2 The behavior of sleep

The behavior of sleep occurs between sessions and therefore it too should not be wasted meaninglessly. In this regard, during the middle part of the three parts of the night, the conduct of the body consists in lying down on your right side, placing your left leg on top of the right one, and sleeping like a lion.

- 3 Mindfulness

Until you fall asleep you should rely on mindfulness to pursue the predominant virtuous action that you have cultivated during the day. Thereby you will be able to sustain your spiritual practice<sup>53</sup>, such as meditative stabilization, even while asleep, similar to when you are not asleep.

- 4 Introspection

If any mental affliction arises while you cultivate mindfulness, {44} you should become aware of it and eagerly abandon it rather than accepting it.

- 5 The discrimination of getting up

The discrimination of getting up consists in projecting the thought: "I will get up at this and that time."

### 2B4A-2A2B-4B How to apply this to the intervals between all meditations

That being so, apart from the uncommon ways of sustaining meditation during the actual meditation, these indications as to what should be done in preparation, during the actual meditation, at the end, and in between sessions should be applied to all observed objects and aspects sustained from here up to special insight.

## 2B4A-2B The reason why meditation needs to be sustained by means of two modes of sustaining

This has four points:

- [1 The two modes of sustaining
- 2 Refutation of the misconception that although there are both analytical and stabilization meditations, one single person does not practice them

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<sup>53</sup> Tib. *dge sbyor*

- 3 Refutation of the misconception that asserts that all conceptions apprehend signs
- 4 Refutation of the misconception that asserts that if a lot of analytical meditation is done prior to the arising of meditative stabilization it becomes an obstacle]

2B4A-2B1 [The two modes of sustaining]

This has two points:

- A The reason why both analysis and stabilization are necessary for meditation
- B Identification of analysis and stabilization

2B4A-2B1A The reason why both analysis and stabilization are necessary for meditation

In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it says:

Here, first of all, proper mental attention<sup>54</sup> arises in dependence on study,<sup>55</sup> and from proper mental attention, again, the exalted wisdom with the meaning of perfect reality as its object arises.

That is to say that from proper mental attention, through the wisdom arisen from reflecting upon the meaning of what has been studied, the wisdom arisen from meditation that directly realizes the meaning of perfect reality arises. In *Ornament for Clear Realization* it also says:

For definite discrimination, the path  
Of seeing, and that of meditation,  
Repeated reflection, assessment, and certainty  
Are the path of meditation.

That is to say there exists repeated reflection, assessment, and certain understanding that constitute the path of meditation of Mahāyāna āryas. In the *Compendium of Trainings (Śikṣasamuccaya)* it also says:

Thus you should practice meditation, continuously giving away, guarding, purifying, and increasing your bodies, possessions, and merit in all kinds of ways.

With regard to the meditations that, according to this statement, should be done on all four activities—giving away, guarding, purifying, and increasing—with respect to each of the three: body, possessions, and roots of virtue—there are both analytical meditations sustained through analysis by means of the wisdom of individual investigation, and stabilizing meditations in which the mind is placed single-pointedly without analysis.

2B4A-2B1B Identification of analysis and stabilization {45}

Now what are the paths of analytical meditation and what are the paths of stabilizing meditation? For meditations such as the cultivation of faith in the spiritual teacher, the preciousness of the freedoms and endowments and how difficult it is to find them, death and impermanence, actions and their effects, the faults of cyclic existence, and the cultivation of bodhicitta, analytical meditation is necessary. For each of them, minds of great strength and the ability to subdue the mind for a long time are necessary because if they are absent, their counterparts, disrespect and the like, cannot be prevented, and because the generation of these minds depends on nothing but the meditation repeatedly analyzing them through individual investigation. For example, just as intense attachment arises when you meditate on an object of attachment a lot, exaggerating its pleasant features, in the same way intense hatred<sup>56</sup> arises when you think of many unpleasant features with regard to an enemy. Hence, with regard to cultivating these paths, no matter whether or not the aspect of the object appears clearly, the mind's mode of apprehension must be intense and long-

<sup>54</sup> Tib. *yid la byed pa*

<sup>55</sup> Cf. previous note: The word *thos pa*, often rendered as “hearing” or “listening,” refers to receiving teachings more generally, and encompasses reading as well. Tib. *thos pa mang po*, for instance, literally “having heard a lot,” means “well read” or “educated.” For this reason, Tib. *thos pa* is sometimes rendered as “study.”

<sup>56</sup> Tib. *zhe sdang*

lasting, which is why you should do analytical meditation. In the context of practicing calm abiding, which enables you to place the mind on whatever single object you wish, since someone whose mind cannot stay on a single object will not be fit for quiescence<sup>57</sup> if he analyses again and again, it is necessary to practice stabilizing meditation for that.

2B4A-2B2      Refutation of the misconception that although there are both analytical and stabilization meditations, one single person does not practice them

Although some who do not know this approach claim that if you are a scholar, you should only do analytical meditation while sādhus should only do stabilizing meditation, this is not so because it is necessary to do both one by one, given that the learned also need to achieve calm abiding and sādhus also need to achieve strong faith in the spiritual teacher {46} and the like. Therefore the understanding that repeated analysis with the wisdom of individual investigation belongs to the context of hearing and reflecting, rather than the context of practice, is inadmissible.

2B4A-2B3      Refutation of the misconception that asserts that all conceptions apprehend signs

The understanding that all conceptions apprehend signs and therefore create obstacles to enlightenment has the fault of not discriminating between improper mental attention, the conception of true existence, and proper mental attention, the conception of reality.<sup>58</sup>

2B4A-2B4      Refutation of the misconception that asserts that if a lot of analytical meditation is done prior to the arising of meditative stabilization it becomes an obstacle

The idea “It is necessary to achieve a non-conceptual meditative stabilization that allows you to place the mind on a single object in whatever way at will, and if you do a lot of analytical meditation beforehand, it will become an obstacle to the arising of that meditative stabilization,” is not upheld in the present instructions. Thus, by way of analogy, when a smith burns gold or silver in the fire and washes it in water again and again, all the impurities are removed, and it becomes very supple and workable, whereby it can subsequently be made into any jewelry, such as earrings, at will. Likewise, just as at first the mental afflictions, the secondary afflictions, and faulty conduct emerge on the occasion of meditating on unwholesome actions and their effects and the disadvantages of cyclic existence, by meditating on such disadvantages again and again with the wisdom of individual investigation, the mind will become completely tormented or disenchanted; whereby it is like burning gold in a fire. Similarly, just as the mind turning away from the unwholesome side emerges cleansed of defilements<sup>59</sup> on the occasion of meditating on the positive qualities of the spiritual friend, the preciousness of the freedoms and endowments, the positive qualities of the Three Jewels, wholesome actions and their effects, and {47} the benefits of bodhicitta, by meditating on these positive qualities again and again with the wisdom of individual investigation, the mental attention of the mind becomes moistened or sincere, whereby it is like washing gold with water. Through the mind approaching the wholesome side and delighting in it, the mind is moistened by virtuous qualities. When it has been transformed in that way, whatever you wish to achieve, whether calm abiding or special insight, will be achieved without difficulty when the mind is focused on it. That is why such analytical meditation is the best means of achieving a non-conceptual meditative stabilization.

This is how Ārya Asaṅga also put it:

By way of analogy, when a smith or his skillful apprentice burns gold or silver in a fire and washes it with water a couple of times in order to discard all impurities and slag, it becomes supple and workable for this and that ornament. Their method makes it very vivid. In this regard, through their know-how, that of a smith or a skillful apprentice, any manner of ornament desired is then made with their smith’s tools. Likewise, when a

<sup>57</sup> Tib. *sems gnas*, also translated as ‘mental abiding.’

<sup>58</sup> Tib. *yang dag pa’i rtog pa*

<sup>59</sup> Tib. *dri ma*



yogi does not turn toward impurities and slag such as covetousness, he thereby becomes disenchanted, turns away from unhappy afflicted states of mind, and approaches manifest joy on the virtuous side, thereby becoming manifestly joyful. In that case, that yogi definitely trains his mind in either the side of calm abiding or the side of special insight, such that it is thoroughly applied to this and that, rests in its natural state, is immovable and unwavering, and {48} also moves for the sake of perfectly achieving whatever purpose he contemplates.

Furthermore, the main adverse condition to the mind abiding on an object continuously is twofold: laxity and excitement.<sup>60</sup> If you have a strong and constant awareness that sees the positive qualities of the Three Jewels, and so forth, it is quite easy to overcome laxity, for many valid sources say that its antidote is to uplift the mind by looking at positive qualities. If you have a strong and constant awareness that sees the disadvantages of impermanence, suffering, and so forth, it is quite easy to overcome excitement, because, since excitement is a distracted mind belonging to the category of attachment, many texts praise disillusionment as its antidote.

2B4B The stages of training the mind once you have relied on a spiritual teacher

This has two points:

- 1 With regard to the basis of leisure, an exhortation to take its essence
- 2 How to take the essence

## A PRECIOUS HUMAN REBIRTH

2B4B-1 With regard to the basis of leisure, an exhortation to take its essence

This has three points:

- A Identification of the leisure and endowments<sup>61</sup>
- B Considering the great value of the leisure and endowments
- C Considering the difficulty in finding the leisure and endowments

2B4B-1A Identification of the leisure and endowments

This has two points:

- 1 Leisure
- 2 Endowments

2B4B-1A1 Leisure

This has two points:

- A Identification of the leisure

In the *Summary* it says:

Through rules, the essence of the many worlds of animals  
And eight unfree states are abandoned; you win; constant leisure.

Accordingly, the leisure consist in freedom from the eight unfree states.

- B The eight unfree states:

The four unfree states of humans are:

1. living in a rough border land where the four types of followers of the Buddha do not roam,
2. being stupid, being dumb, or having incomplete faculties—missing a limb, an ear and so forth,

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<sup>60</sup> Tib. *bying ba dang rgod pa*

<sup>61</sup> Tib. *dal 'byor*

3. holding wrong views that regard past and future lives, actions and their effects, and the Three Jewels as non-existent,
4. being without the word of a Victor, with no buddha having appeared in the world. {49}

The non-human unfree states are:

- 1-3. the three lower realms and
4. being a long-lived god.

As for the long-lived gods, the *Commentary on the “Friendly Letter”* (*Vyaktapadāsuḥṛllekaṭīkā*) discusses two types:

1. discriminationless ones and
2. formless ones.

The former live in one region of the fourth concentration, Great Result, as if in a solitary place far away from a village. The latter are ordinary beings born in the formless realms. In *Discourse on the Eight Unfree States* (*Aṣṭākṣaṇakathā*), the gods of the desire realm who are constantly distracted by activities of desire are explained to be long-lived gods.

#### 2B4B-1A2 Endowments

This has two points:

- A The five personal endowments

The five personal endowments are said to be:

Human birth in the center, unimpaired senses,  
No perverted deeds and faith in the basis.

Here “birth in the center” is to be born in a place where the four types of followers roam. “Unimpaired senses” consist in not being stupid or dumb and having complete limbs, minor body parts, and eyes, ears, and so forth. “No perverted deeds” implies not having committed or caused to commit an action of immediate retribution. “Faith in the basis” is faith in the foundation from which all the mundane and supramundane wholesome qualities arise—discipline.<sup>62</sup> Here discipline should be applied to all three scriptural collections.

As those five are brought together in one’s own mental continuum and constitute circumstances for the accomplishment of the Dharma, they are called “personal endowments.”

- B The five endowments conditioned by others

The five endowments conditioned by others are said to be:

A buddha arrived and taught the holy Dharma,  
The teachings are abiding and being followed,  
There are hearts with loving concern for others.

Here “A buddha arrived or emerged” means that after accumulating the collections throughout three countless eons, he has manifestly attained complete buddhahood. “Taught the holy Dharma” means that the Buddha or his hearers have taught the Dharma. “The Dharma teachings are abiding” means that—from teaching the Dharma in a buddha field up to not passing into nirvāṇa—the Dharma that is accomplished by means of actualizing the ultimate Dharma has {50} not degenerated. “The Dharma teachings are abiding and being followed” means that through that very realization of the Dharma, there are those who see that beings have the power to directly perceive the holy Dharma, and who then follow the teachings in accordance with that realization. “Hearts with loving concern for others” means that there are alms-givers and benefactors who grant monastic robes and the like.

<sup>62</sup> Tib. *dul ba*



As these five are present in the mental continua of others and constitute circumstances for the accomplishment of the Dharma, they are endowments conditioned by others.

2B4B-1B Considering the great value of the pleasures and endowments

This has four points:

- 1 Considering the inappropriateness of someone with this special base acting like an animal

If no practice of the completely pure Dharma for the sake of lasting happiness comes about at all, you would be like an animal despite your birth in a higher realm, since animals also endeavor merely to attain happiness and eliminate suffering until they die.

- 2 How a body of pleasures and endowments is the best

For the accomplishment of the Mahāyāna path, a basis like the one explained earlier is necessary. In *Letter to a Student (Śiṣyalekha)* it says:

The base of the path of those gone to bliss, the tool for leading beings,  
That very strength of mind, a strength that human beings have gained,  
That path has not been found by gods or nāgas, nor by asuras,  
Not by garuḍas, vidyādhara, kinnaras, or mahoragas.

Furthermore, some gods of the desire realm with strong predispositions<sup>63</sup> from having previously trained in the path on a human basis, are suitable as a basis for seeing the truth for the first time, but it is impossible to attain the ārya path for the first time on an upper realm<sup>64</sup> basis.<sup>65</sup> However, as explained before, the majority of desire realm gods are said to be in an unfree state, and therefore they are not the best basis for attaining the path for the first time. Again, inhabitants of the continent of Uttarakuru are unsuitable as a basis for vows, which is why the bases of the other three continents are praised; and among them, especially the inhabitants of Jambudvīpa.

- 3 How to train in the wish to take the essence, having brought to mind those two objectives

“Consequently, why would I act in such a way that an excellent base like the one that I have gained {51} does not have a result? If I do not make it meaningful, could there be a greater self-betrayal and a bigger stupidity? Having passed through many perilous places of unfreedom such as the lower realms, again and again, if I were to go back to those places, forsaking this one-off liberation as meaningless, it would be like turning mindless as though stupefied by a magic spell.” By way of thoughts like these you should meditate again and again. In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Having found this kind of leisure,  
Not to cultivate what’s virtuous,  
No betrayal could be greater,  
Nothing is more deluded than that.

And:

Having found this place so rare,  
Hard to find and beneficial,  
If I, well aware of it,  
Were to be led to that hell again  
  
As though deluded by magic spells—  
Has my mind here wasted away?

<sup>63</sup> Tib. *bag chags*

<sup>64</sup> Tib. *kham srong*, the realms of form and formlessness as opposed to the happy realms in general (Tib. *bde ‘gro*).

<sup>65</sup> Tib. *rtan*, also translated as ‘support,’ it usually refers to the body of the being, unless otherwise specified.

Through what delusion I do not know either.  
Goodness! What has become of my mind?

- 4 The inappropriateness of returning empty-handed given that not only ultimate but also temporary objectives are easily accomplished

Thus you should also consider the method that allows you to easily accomplish, by means of this basis, the causes—giving, ethics, patience, and so on—of an excellent body of high status, excellent resources, and an excellent retinue, which are greatly meaningful not only from an ultimate but also from a temporary point of view. If you do not apply yourself day and night to the causes of the two objectives, by means of this greatly meaningful basis, it would seem like returning empty-handed from an island of precious jewels.

2B4B-1C Considering the difficulty of finding the pleasures and endowments

This has six points:

- [1 Illustration of the difficulty in finding the pleasures and endowments
- 2 Reasons why it is difficult to find the pleasures and endowments
- 3 The rarity of those obtaining the causes of pleasure and endowments
- 4 The result of sustaining those objectives
- 5 The method of meditation with four special features
- 6 Differentiating the ways of sustaining the meditation]

2B4B-1C1 Illustration of the difficulty of finding the pleasures and endowments

In *Basis of Scriptural Transmission (Āgamavastu)* it says that beings who die and migrate from the lower realms and the happy realms<sup>66</sup> to the lower realms are like the dust of the great earth, and that the beings who are born from there into the happy realms are like the dust taken up with the tip of a fingernail. {52} Therefore precious human rebirths are difficult to find from both the happy and the lower realms.

2B4B-1C2 Reasons why it is difficult to find the pleasures and endowments

If you wonder just why they are so difficult to find, it says in *Four Hundred Stanzas*:

For the most part people fully  
Embrace the side that is unholy.  
Consequently common beings  
Mostly go to the lower realms.

Accordingly, there are many humans and other beings who mostly hold on to the side of the ten non-virtues and that is also why, consequently, they go to the lower realms. Furthermore, if for each moment of anger and the like toward a bodhisattva you have to spend one eon in the hell Without Respite, the negativities accumulated over many lifetimes which have not come to fruition nor been overcome by antidotes, and which are present in your own continuum, will doubtlessly cause you to spend many eons in the lower realms.

2B4B-1C3 The rarity of those obtaining the causes of the pleasures and endowments

If you thus make sure to clear away and purify the causes of the lower realms accumulated earlier and close the door to new engagement in them, the happy realms should not be hard to reach but in fact they are very hard to reach indeed. If you fail to do so, you go to the lower realms, and once you have gone there, you do not create virtue but always commit negativities and therefore do not even hear the name “happy realms” for many eons, as it says in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*.

2B4B-1C4 The result of sustaining those objectives

Potowa said:

<sup>66</sup> Tib. *bde 'gro*

In the region of Pen there was a solid fort by the name of Ma'i Chakar that had been seized by an enemy. For a long time the people had been their poor servants. One old man used to be in anguish about this fort and when, one day, he heard people saying that it had been won back, he grabbed his spear and, not being able to walk, dragged himself along saying: "If only the capture of Ma'i Chakar were not a dream." In the same way, having won the leisures and endowments, you must also derive such joy from it and practice the Dharma. {53}

In accordance with this statement, you should meditate in order to gain this kind of attitude.

2B4B-1C5 The method of meditation with four special features

Thus four thoughts regarding the Dharma are necessary for the generation of a fully qualified wish to take the essence of this basis of leisure:

1. The need to accomplish the Dharma—because all sentient beings only want happiness and do not want suffering, and attaining happiness and eliminating suffering only depends on the holy Dharma.
2. The ability to accomplish the Dharma—because you have the external condition, a spiritual teacher, and the internal condition, the leisures and endowments.
3. The need, also, to accomplish the Dharma in this life—because if you do not accomplish it within this life, it will be difficult to find the leisures and endowments in many future lives.
4. The need to accomplish the Dharma right now—because the time of death is uncertain.

The third counteracts the laziness of setting it aside, thinking "I will practice the Dharma in later lives", and the fourth counteracts the laziness of not engaging in it thinking "It needs to be accomplished in this life, but although it was not accomplished in earlier years, months, and days, it is enough to accomplish it much later on." It is admissible to make them into three, subsuming those two under "The need to accomplish it quickly." Like that, remembering death can also be linked in here. In any case, since this is a lengthy topic, it will be explained below.

2B4B-1C6 Differentiating the ways of sustaining the meditation

This has two points:

- [A How to contemplate the leisures and endowments from various points of view
- B How to contemplate the leisures and endowments in particular]

2B4B-1C6A How to contemplate the leisures and endowments from various points of view

As the mind will be more significantly subdued if you contemplate the leisures and endowments from various points of view, you should contemplate them as explained above. If you cannot do that, you should subsume them under the three<sup>67</sup>:

1. what the essence of the leisures and endowments is,
2. the manner in which they are greatly meaningful from a temporary and ultimate point of view, and
3. how difficult they are to find from the point of view of cause and effect.

You should take up each of the points explained above as they suit you and meditate.

2B4B-1C6B How to contemplate the leisures and endowments in particular

This has two points:

<sup>67</sup> "Three" is an insertion by Trijang Rinpoche.

- 1 The difficulty in finding the pleasures and endowments from the point of view of their cause

Generally speaking, {54} even for the attainment of a mere happy realm it is necessary to perform one of the pure virtues such as ethics. In particular, for the attainment of the complete pleasures and endowments, you need many roots of virtue such as taking hold of a basis through pure ethics, reinforcing it through giving and the like, and making a connection by means of stainless prayers. In that case it becomes apparent that those who accomplish such causes are very few, which is why you should think that, proportionately, the effect—the general and specific basis of the happy realms—is difficult to find.

- 2 The difficulty in finding the pleasures and endowments from the point of view of the result

You meditate on the fact that, from the point of view of the beings in the lower realms, those different in rank from us, even the mere happy realms seem hard to attain, and from the point of view of the beings in happy realms, those of the same rank, also those with the distinguished pleasures<sup>68</sup> are extremely rare. Geshe Dölpa laid great emphasis on this. He said that all other teachings come about brought on by this. As it is like this, you should strive accordingly.

#### 2B4B-2 How to take the essence

This has two points:

- A The way in which the three types of beings practice the path
- B Brief summary of the topics of the general path

#### 2B4B-2A The way in which the three types of beings practice the path

This has two points:

- 1 Generating certainty with regard to the general presentation of the path
- 2 The actual way of taking its essence

#### 2B4B-2A1 Generating certainty with regard to the general presentation of the path

This has two points:

- A How all the Buddha's teachings are contained in the paths of the three types of beings
- B Giving reasons for gradual guidance from the point of view of the three types of beings

#### 2B4B-2A1A How all the Buddha's teachings are contained in the paths of the three types of beings

This has six points:

- 1 How the meaning of all the Buddha's teachings is subsumed under the accomplishment of two objectives

As everything the Buddha did, in the beginning the generation of the mind of enlightenment, in the middle the accumulation of the collections, and at the end the manifestation of complete buddhahood, was done for the welfare of sentient beings only, all his Dharma teachings also only accomplish the welfare of sentient beings. That being so, the goal to be accomplished, the welfare of sentient beings, is twofold: temporarily high status<sup>69</sup> and ultimately certain goodness<sup>70</sup>.

- 2 How lesser beings<sup>71</sup> attain high status {55}

As for the undertaking to attain the former: everything that has been set forth is included in the actual cycle of teachings for lesser beings or in the cycle of teachings common to lesser beings. Special lesser beings do not mostly act for the sake of this life, pursuing instead the excellence of high status in future lives and engaging in achieving the causes for that. In *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*:

<sup>68</sup> That is the pleasures complemented by the endowments.

<sup>69</sup> Tib. *mngon mtho*

<sup>70</sup> Tib. *nges legs*, also translated as 'definite goodness'.

<sup>71</sup> Tib. *bskyes bu chung*, also translated as 'beings of small scope.'

Whoever pursues by any means,  
The happiness of saṃsāra only,  
Just for his own benefit,  
Should be known as the least of beings.

3 How intermediate beings achieve the certain goodness of liberation

There are two kinds of certain goodness:

1. the liberation that is merely release from saṃsāra and
2. omniscience.

In this regard everything that has been set forth starting from the vehicles of hearers and solitary realizers is included in the actual cycle of teachings for intermediate beings or in the cycle of teachings common to intermediate beings. Intermediate beings develop disenchantment with existence as a whole, and having made the liberation that is release from existence for their own welfare their object of attainment, they engage in its method, the three trainings. In *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* it says:

Indifferent<sup>72</sup> to the pleasures of existence  
One desists from evil deeds;  
Whoever pursues only personal peace  
Is called an “intermediate being.”

4 How great beings attain omniscience

There are two means of attaining omniscience: the great vehicles (Mahāyāna) of Secret Mantra and the Perfections. These two are contained in the cycle of teachings of great beings.<sup>73</sup> Since great beings are under the power of great compassion, having made enlightenment their object of attainment in order to bring all the suffering of sentient beings to an end, they train in the six perfections, the two stages, and so forth. In *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* it says:

He whose own mind is affected by suffering,  
Who thus yearns to bring to an end  
All the suffering of others completely, {56}  
Such a one is a superior being.

As for the means by which these beings attain enlightenment, they are set forth under two headings: the Perfections and Mantra.

5 Elucidating the sources of the term “three types of beings”

The term “three types of beings”<sup>74</sup> is mentioned in many texts such as the *Compendium of Determinations (Viniścayasaṃgrahaṇī)* and the *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge Auto-commentary (Abhidharmakośabhāṣya)*.

6 Clearing up doubt

Although with regard to lesser beings, there are both those who devote themselves to this life and those who devote themselves to future lives, this is about the latter. One should consider them as engaging in the unmistakable means to high status.

2B4B-2A1B Giving reasons for gradual guidance from the point of view of the three types of beings

This has two points:

<sup>72</sup> Tib. *srid pa'i bde la rgyab phyogs shing*, literally “having turned one’s back on the happiness of existence.”

<sup>73</sup> Tib. *skyes bu chen po*, also translated as ‘beings of great scope.’

<sup>74</sup> Tib. *skyes bu gsum*

- 1 What the purpose is of guiding someone by way of the paths of the three types of beings
- 2 Giving reasons for such gradual guidance

2B4B-2A1B-1 What the purpose is of guiding someone by means of the paths of the three beings

Thus, although it is explained in terms of the three beings, the path of great beings contains within it the paths of the two other beings, which is why Master Ásvaghoṣa says that these two are branches of the Mahāyāna path. So this here is not guidance on the path of lesser beings who make only the happiness of existence their object of attainment, nor is it guidance on the path of intermediate beings who make only liberation from saṃsāra for their own benefit their object of attainment. Rather, some paths common to those two are considered to be preparatory practices leading to the path of great beings and are taken to be branches for training in the path of great beings.

2B4B-2A1B-2 Giving reasons for such gradual guidance

This has two points:

- A The actual reasons
- B The purpose

2B4B-2A1B-2A The actual reasons

This has fourteen points:

- [1 The entry gate to the Mahāyāna
- 2 The need to consider its benefits and allow one's delight to increase before generating the mind of enlightenment, along with the relevant sources
- 3 The benefits of striving for this mind
- 4 How the lesser and intermediate branches of the path are necessary for laying the basis of those benefits
- 5 How the lesser and intermediate branches of the path are necessary when training in the actual mind
- 6 How the lesser and intermediate branches of the path are also necessary for the ritual accumulation and purification of this mental attitude
- 7 Advice to cherish the way that the teaching cycles of lesser and intermediate beings become branches of great beings
- 8 The order
- 9 All paths are contained in the three trainings
- 10 For the sake of skill in classification, all paths are contained in the two collections
- 11 The need to enter the Mantrayāna
- 12 How to pursue the Perfection path alone
- 13 The stages of engagement in Mantra
- 14 Explanation that the intention of the *Lamp for the Path* and so forth is engagement in both sutra and mantra]

2B4B-2A1B-2A1 The entry gate to the Mahāyāna

The entry gate for entering the Mahāyāna consists in generating the mind set on supreme enlightenment. Once it has arisen in the mind, according to *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*:

When bodhicitta has arisen, at once  
The wretched bound in the prison of cyclic existence  
Are to be called “the children of those gone to bliss.” {57}

For in accordance with this statement, individuals who have obtained the name “bodhisattva” are admitted among Mahāyāna beings. If their mind of enlightenment deteriorates, they leave the midst of Mahāyānists.

2B4B-2A1B-2A2 The need to consider its benefits and allow one's delight to increase before generating the mind of enlightenment, along with the relevant sources

This being the case, those who wish to enter the Mahāyāna need to exert themselves in many ways to arouse that mind. However, in order to arouse it, they first need to meditate on the benefits of arousing that mind and allow delight with regard to those benefits to increase, do the seven-limb practice, and take refuge. That has been set out in the *Compendium of Trainings* and in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*.

2B4B-2A1B-2A3 The benefits of striving for this mind

If we summarize the benefits set forth in this way, there are two: temporary and ultimate benefits. The former, again, are twofold: not falling to the lower realms and being born in the happy realms.



Once this mind has arisen, the causes of miserable existences<sup>75</sup> accumulated previously are purified and the continuity of those accumulated later on is cut. The causes of happy realms accumulated previously, due to being conjoined with it, increase extensively, and the ones newly created, due to being motivated by it, become unlimited. When it comes to attaining the ultimate objectives of liberation and omniscience with ease through relying on this mind, if an uncontrived wish to achieve the temporary or ultimate benefits is not present, one may say “Since those benefits arise from generating that mind, I will endeavor to generate that mind,” but it will only be words. This will become very clear if we examine our own mind.

2B4B-2A1B-2A4 How the lesser and intermediate branches of the path are necessary for laying the basis of those benefits

In order to develop the wish to attain those two benefits, high status and certain goodness, it is necessary to develop the attitudes common to lesser and intermediate beings. {58}

2B4B-2A1B-2A5 How the lesser and intermediate branches of the path are necessary when training in the actual mind

Having thus developed the wish to achieve the two benefits, when you cultivate the beneficial mind, it is necessary to develop the root of that mind, love and compassion. In this regard, if your body hair does not shiver and quiver as you think about the way you yourself wander in cyclic existence, deprived of happiness and oppressed by suffering, there is no way the inability to bear how other sentient beings are deprived of happiness and oppressed by suffering can come about. In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

In beings to whom up to now,  
Such thoughts for even their own sake have not  
Occurred—not even in their dreams—  
How could it arise for others?

For that reason, once you have thought about how, in the context of lesser beings, the harm of the suffering of the lower realms befalls you and how, in the context of intermediate beings, even in rebirths of high status there is suffering and no peace or happiness, meditation—in accord with your own experience—on sentient beings who have become dear to you becomes the cause for love and compassion to arise. Since the mind of enlightenment is born from love and compassion, training in the thoughts shared with lesser and intermediate beings is the means of generating the uncontrived mind of enlightenment.

2B4B-2A1B-2A6 How the lesser and intermediate branches of the path are also necessary for the ritual accumulation and purification of this mental attitude

Efforts to purify and accumulate by many means through contemplating the taking of refuge, actions and their effects, and so forth in the context of the two paths also constitute methods for training the mental continuum, that is, they are preliminary practices for the generation of the mind of enlightenment. Since they are part of the seven-limb practice along with taking refuge, they should also be understood as methods for generating the mind of enlightenment.

2B4B-2A1B-2A7 Advice to cherish the way that the teaching cycles of lesser and intermediate beings become branches of great beings

Here the spiritual master indicates how the teaching cycles of lesser and intermediate beings become branches for the arising of the mind of enlightenment, {59} and the disciple also gains certainty in this regard. Through recalling those points with each practice, you should thoroughly cherish this training. If you fail to do this, the path of great beings and the individual paths will become disconnected. As you would not gain certainty with regard to the mind of enlightenment until you reach the actual path of great beings, this would become an obstacle to the arising of that mind or, meanwhile, the deterioration of that great objective. Therefore you should persevere in this.

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<sup>75</sup> Tib. *ngan song*



2B4B-2A1B-2A8 The order

This has two points:

- A The order of the two minds and so forth and how to train in them
- B The order of the trainings

2B4B-2A1B-2A8A The order of the two minds and so forth and how to train in them

Having trained in this manner, you should make the uncontrived mind of enlightenment arise in your continuum as much as possible. Then, in order to make it stable, first there is the uncommon way of taking refuge and then the performing of the ritual of the aspiring mind of enlightenment. Having taken the aspiring mind of enlightenment by means of the ritual, practice its trainings. Then, time and again develop the wish to train in the conduct—the six perfections, the four ways of gathering disciples, and so forth. Once the wish to train in it has come forth, from the bottom of your heart take the pure vow of the engaging mind of enlightenment.

2B4B-2A1B-2A8B The order of the trainings

Then even risk your life in order not to be tainted by a root downfall. Strive not to be tainted by small and medium contaminations or infractions either. However, if you still get tainted by one, purify it well by means of what has been expounded with regard to countermeasures for downfalls. Then, train in the six perfections in general and especially in concentration,<sup>76</sup> the entity of calm abiding, in order to make the mind serviceable with respect to whatever virtuous object you wish. The statement in *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* that you train in calm abiding in order to develop clairvoyance is only an example. Atiśa himself stated on other occasions that it also serves to develop special insight. Therefore you should develop calm abiding also for that purpose. Then, {60} in order to cut the bonds of apprehending the two selves, decide on the meaning of emptiness by means of the view, sustain this mode of meditation flawlessly, and accomplish the entity of wisdom, special insight.

2B4B-2A1B-2A9 All paths are contained in the three trainings

Accordingly, except for the accomplishment of calm abiding and special insight, everything up to and including the trainings of the vow of the engaging mind of enlightenment constitutes the training in ethics. Calm abiding is the training in the mind, and special insight is the training in wisdom. So it says in the *Commentary on the Difficult Points of the “Lamp for the Path”* (*Bodhimārgapradīpapañjikā*).

2B4B-2A1B-2A10 For the sake of skill in classification, all paths are contained in the two collections

Furthermore, everything up to and including calm abiding is method, the collection of merit, the path based on conventional truths, and the stages of the vast path, while the generation of the three special wisdoms is wisdom, the collection of wisdom, that which is based on ultimate truths, and the stages of the profound path. Therefore you should generate great certainty with respect to their order and definite number, as well as the fact that enlightenment cannot be attained by means of method and wisdom separate from one another.

2B4B-2A1B-2A11 The need to enter the Mantrayana

Having thus trained your continuum by means of the common paths, you must enter the Mantrayāna, for once you have entered it, you will quickly complete the two collections.

2B4B-2A1B-2A12 How to pursue the path of the Perfections alone

If you cannot manage more than the path of the Perfections or if, due to the small power of your lineage, you do not want to, you should just expand on these very stages of the path more and more.

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<sup>76</sup> Tib. *bsam gtan*

2B4B-2A1B-2A13 The stages of engagement in Mantra

As for engagement in Mantra, since proper reliance on a spiritual teacher is generally given great emphasis in all the vehicles and particularly in Mantra, you should make it even more pre-eminent in this context than before. Then, having ripened your continuum by means of an empowerment that comes from a pure tantra class, you should risk your life for, that is, guard, the commitments and vows you obtained at that time. {61}. Especially since, if a root downfall occurs, even though you take the vow again, it will spoil your mind and it will be difficult for positive qualities to develop, do not be tainted by one. You should not become tainted even by a secondary downfall and, if you do, you should not be unconcerned about it but should purify it through confession and restraint.

Then you should be guided as appropriate in the yoga with signs in accordance with the lower tantra classes or in the yoga of the generation stage in accordance with the higher tantra classes. On that basis you should train as appropriate in the yoga without signs in accordance with the lower tantra classes or the yoga of the completion stage according to the higher tantra classes.

2B4B-2A1B-2A14 Explanation that the intention of the *Lamp for the Path* and so forth is engagement in both sutra and mantra

Such is the structure of the presentation of the path set forth in *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*, and the Stages of the Path also guides students in the same way.

2B4B-2A1B-2B The purpose

This has two points:

- 1 The actual purpose
- 2 The sources

2B4B-2A1B-2B1 The actual purpose

This has two points:

- A Question
- B Answer

2B4B-2A1B-2B1A Question

If the teaching cycles of lesser and intermediate beings are the preparatory practices of great beings, it should indeed be all right to consider them the stages of the path of great beings, so what is the use of the phrase “the stages of the path *in* common to lesser and intermediate beings?”

2B4B-2A1B-2B1B Answer

There are two great purposes for classifying and guiding the three types of beings:

1. in this way the conceit of claiming oneself to be a great being, while the mental attitudes common to lesser and intermediate beings have not even arisen, is overcome, and
2. all three—the highest, intermediate, and least mental attitudes—have great benefits.

The way in which these two purposes are great is that since the two more advanced beings also need to strive for high status and liberation, there is no fault in teaching great or intermediate individuals who are to be guided how to train in the thoughts of those two because positive qualities are developed. However, if a lesser person trains beginning with the more advanced ones, the more advanced thoughts will not arise and the lesser ones will be cast away, {62} so nothing at all will develop. Moreover, through being taught the common path and through training in it, those with the good fortune of superior capacity will soon develop positive qualities that had or had not arisen before, whereby they can be guided to higher and higher levels once the lower ones have arisen. Thereby their path will not be prolonged.

2B4B-2A1B-2B2 The sources

The need to develop the mind gradually is proclaimed in the *Sūtra Requested by the King Lord of Dhāraṇīs* (*Dhāraṇīsvararājaparipṛcchā*) through applying the analogy of a skilled jeweler

gradually cleaning precious stones to the meaning. The protector Nāgārjuna also taught to gradually lead beings in the path of high status and certain goodness:

First the teachings of high status,  
Then those of certain goodness come forth.  
Therefore, once you achieve high status,  
Certain goodness will come by stages.

Ārya Asaṅga also said:

Also, in order that the side of virtue be gradually accomplished properly, the bodhisattva initially teaches those who have the wisdom of childish sentient beings easy Dharma and causes them to follow easy directions and instructions. Realizing that they have developed intermediate wisdom, he causes them to follow intermediate Dharma teachings and intermediate directions and instructions. Realizing that they have developed vast wisdom, he teaches them the profound Dharma and causes them to follow subtle directions and instructions. His beneficial activities fall on those sentient beings progressively.

Āryadeva, in his *Lamp of Summarized Conduct (Caryāmelāpakapradīpa)*, establishes that first the training in the contemplations of the Perfection Vehicle and after that the mode of engagement in Mantra {63} needs to be gradual. Summarizing the meaning of this he says:

In order for beings who are like beginners  
To get involved in ultimate truths,  
The means the perfect Buddha expounded  
Resemble the steps of a flight of stairs.

2B4B-2A2 The actual way of taking its essence

This has three points:

- A Training the mind in the stages of the path common to lesser beings
- B Training the mind in the stages of the path common to intermediate beings
- C Training the mind in the stages of the path of great beings

## CHAPTER 2

### The Stages of the Path Common to Lesser Beings

2B4B-2A2A Training the mind in the stages of the path common to lesser beings

This has three points:

- 1 The actual training in the attitude of lesser beings
- 2 The measure of that attitude of lesser beings having arisen
- 3 Clearing up misconceptions about the attitude of lesser beings

2B4B-2A2A-1 The actual training in the attitude of lesser beings {63}

This has two points:

- A Generating a mental attitude of interest in future worlds
- B Relying on the methods for the happiness of future worlds

2B4B-2A2A-1A Developing a mental attitude of interest in future worlds

This has two points:

- 1 Being mindful of death: contemplating that one will not stay in this world for long
- 2 What will become of you in future existences: contemplating the happiness and suffering of the two types of migrating beings

### DEATH-IMPERMANENCE

#### Explanation of how to be mindful of death— that one will not stay in this world for long

2B4B-2A2A-1A1 Being mindful of death: contemplating that one will not stay in this world for long

This has four points:

- A The disadvantages of not cultivating mindfulness of death
- B The advantages of cultivating mindfulness of death
- C What kind of mind that is mindful of death is generated
- D How to cultivate mindfulness of death

2B4B-2A2A-1A1A The disadvantages of not cultivating mindfulness of death

This has five points:

- 1 Demonstration that the mind's bias towards the idea that one is not going to die is the gateway of harm

Although in all of us there is the thought that at the end of our days death will come, every day we think “I will not die today,” “Also today I will not die.” That way, even right until we are about to die, the mind holds on to the idea that we are not going to die.

- 2 How this prevents us from even taking an interest in future lives {64}

If you do not take to heart an antidote to this, if you are stupefied by such an idea and think that you will remain in this life, you will keep thinking about ways of achieving happiness and eliminating suffering in this life only, thinking: “I need this and I need that...” A mind investigating meaningful goals such as future lives, liberation, and omniscience will not arise, whereby no allowances are made for engaging in Dharma.

- 3 How this results in meaningful endeavors also having little power

Even if you engage in hearing, thinking, and meditating for a hundred years, whatever virtue you do will have little power because it is done for the sake of this life alone. Since you will engage in them linked with faulty behavior, negativities, and downfalls, it will be rare for them not to be mixed with causes of the lower realms.

## 4 How this results in long-term goals also being postponed

Even if you aim at future worlds and allow for their attainment, you will not be able to cease the laziness of postponement that thinks: “I will do it later.” A major effort at practicing properly will not come about, as you while away your time with sleepiness, pointless chatter, and distractions of food, drink, and the like.

## 5 How holding to permanence induces attachment, aversion, and so forth and how they induce faulty behavior

Not only that, through putting great effort into the excellences of this life, the mental afflictions and faulty behavior induced by them increase, and then you turn your back on the nectar of Dharma. Since that leads to the lower realms, what could be more inappropriate than that? From *Four Hundred Stanzas*:

When someone sleeps as though at ease,  
As though the ruler of the three worlds,  
The Lord of Death, does not exist,  
What else could be more awful than that?

And in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Everything has to be abandoned,  
But unaware that this is so,  
I did negativities of all sorts,  
For the sake of friends and foes.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1A1B The advantages of cultivating mindfulness of death

This has three points:

## 1 The great value of being mindful of death {65}

Once a genuine awareness mindful of death has developed, for instance if you are convinced you will die tomorrow and have just a little understanding of the Dharma, you will see that henceforth you will be without the company of relatives and friends, and you will stop craving for them. In the majority of people the wish to take the essence of this life by means of giving things away and the like will naturally arise. In that way, seeing that all effort for the sake of worldly goals such as fame and gain are futile, you will turn away from faulty behavior, accumulate the good karma of taking refuge, ethics, and the like. What could be more meaningful than ascending to sublime states oneself by those means and guiding migrating beings there too? That is why being mindful of death is also praised with many analogies. In the *Great Final Nirvāṇa Sūtra (Mahāparinirvāṇasūtra)* it says:

Among all plowing of fields, that in autumn is the best. Among all footprints, that of the elephant is the best. Among all discriminations, those of impermanence and death are the best: they eliminate all the desire, ignorance, and pride of the three realms.

Similarly mindfulness of death is praised, among other things, as a hammer that instantly destroys all mental afflictions and all faulty behaviors, and as a gateway to the simultaneous accomplishment of all that is virtuous and excellent.

## 2 Mindfulness of death is the door to all excellence

In brief, the time for achieving the goals of beings is only this time that we have gained the special basis. We mostly remain in the lower realms and even if we make it to the happy realms just once, they are predominantly places of unfreedom, so that we do not find an opportunity to accomplish the Dharma. If we gain a basis suited to accomplishing the Dharma and still do not accomplish it properly, it is due to the thought “I’m not going to die yet.” Therefore, this mind that holds to the position of not dying {66} is the door to all manner of degeneration, whereas mindfulness of death is the door to all excellence.

- 3 How it is necessary to give up misunderstandings and meditate from the bottom of one's heart

Therefore you should not think: “This is a practice for those who do not have other profound Dharma to meditate on” and “Although it is something to meditate on, it should be meditated on a bit in the beginning but it is not suitable to be practiced continuously.” Rather you should meditate on it until you gain certainty from the bottom of your heart that it is necessary in the beginning, in the middle, and at the end.

2B4B-2A2A-1A1C What kind of mind that is mindful of death is generated

The fear born from worries about separation from relatives and the like is the kind of fear of death of those who are not trained in the path. So here this is not what is to be generated. Well then, what kind of fear is to be generated? All bodies taken under the power of karma and mental afflictions do not pass beyond death, which is why—even though this may give rise to fear—death cannot be prevented for the time being. However, without putting a stop to the causes of the lower realms and without accomplishing the causes for high status and certain goodness, you will fear death. In this regard, if you think about the resulting fear, these two can be accomplished, whereby you will not be afraid when on the verge of dying. If you do not achieve that objective, for fear of not being liberated from the cycle of existence in general and of falling to the lower realms in particular you will be tormented by remorse at the time of death.

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D How to cultivate mindfulness of death

You should meditate on this by way of:

1. the three root thoughts,
2. the nine reasons, and
3. the three decisions.

In this regard, the three root thoughts are:

- 1 It is certain that we will die
- 2 It is uncertain when we will die
- 3 At the time of death nothing except the Dharma will be of benefit

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-1 It is certain that we will die

This has two points:

- A Actual reasons
- B The decision

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-1A Actual reasons

This has three points:

- 1 The Lord of Death will certainly come and there are no conditions for warding him off
- 2 Your lifespan cannot be increased and diminishes incessantly
- 3 You die without having had time to practice the Dharma while alive

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-1A1 The Lord of Death will certainly come and there are no conditions for warding him off {67}

In *Collection of Indicative Verses* it says that whatever body you have taken, whatever country you reside in, and whatever the time, you will be defeated by death. It will come to pass that way and cannot be turned back by fleeing swiftly away or by force, wealth, material substances, mantras, or medicine, as it says in the *Advice to the King Sūtra (Rājāvavādaka)*. Kamawa said: “Now some fear of death is necessary. At the moment of death you must not be apprehensive. But we do it the other way round: now we are not afraid but at the moment of death we dig our fingernails into our chests.”



2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-1A2 Your lifespan cannot be increased and diminishes incessantly

As it says in *Descent into the Womb Sūtra* (*Garbhāvakraṇtisūtra*), attaining a lifespan of a hundred years seems to be the limit of what is possible. However, even if you reach that, meanwhile, the years until then waste away with the passage of month after month, day after day, and day and night. As they too waste away with the passage of morning and so on, it seems that the entire lifespan has already been wasted a lot in the past, and the remainder also diminishes incessantly without anything being added.

In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

This life decreases constantly,  
Day and night, without respite.  
If from nowhere there is increase  
Either, how could I not die?

Furthermore, you should consider this by way of numerous analogies such as a weaver weaving cloth, animals to be slaughtered approaching with each step the place of slaughter, cattle being led without any control to their place by a herder, and so forth. This is also taught in *Sūtra of Extensive Play* (*Lalitavistaraśūtra*) by means of many analogies:

The three existences are impermanent, like autumn clouds;  
The birth and death of migrators<sup>77</sup> resemble a show;  
The passage of life of migrators is like a flash of lightning in the sky;  
It passes fast like water cascading down a steep mountain.

For someone with the resolve of inner contemplation {68} there are no external objects that do not point out impermanence to him. Since this is taught, certainty arises if you consider it often from many angles. There is no benefit in considering it once in a while as certainty will not arise. As Kamawa said: “You say nothing has come about through contemplation, but when did you contemplate? During the day you indulge in distractions, at night you sleep. Don’t lie!”

It is not just at the end of our lives when death overcomes us that we proceed toward another world, for up until then there is not a moment in which our lifespan is not diminishing. Therefore, ever since we entered the womb, we have been going straight toward a future life without remaining still even for a mere instant. This being so, our intervening life also wastes away as we go toward death led by its harbingers, disease and aging. Therefore do not rejoice in the view that you abide during your life without approaching future worlds. It is like the analogy that when falling off a high cliff, the time of falling through the sky before crashing to the ground is not worthy of joy. In *Commentary on the “Four Hundred Stanzas”* (*Catuḥśatakaṭīka*) it says:

Hero of men, in that night, at the very beginning  
When someone comes to dwell in a womb in the world,  
Starting from that point he moves with each day,  
Without the pause of a step, toward the Lord of Death.

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-1A3 You die without having had time to practice the Dharma while alive

Even if you may indeed live for so long, it is inappropriate to think you have time. As stated in the *Descent into the Womb Sūtra*, initially, during the first ten years of childhood, it does not occur to you to practice the Dharma, and at the end, during the twenty years of old age, you do not have the power to practice the Dharma. Of the time in between, sleep snatches away one half, illness and the like also waste much time, and no more than a few opportunities remain to accomplish the Dharma.

<sup>77</sup> Tib. ‘gro ba, usually translated here as “migrating being.”



2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-1B The decision that it is necessary to practice the Dharma {69}

Since it is like this, at the time of death all the excellences of this life will only be an object of recollection—like the recollection of a happy experience in a dream after you have woken up. Why delight in being beguiled by this life, if the enemy who is death will certainly come? With this thought in mind you should make the decision that you must definitely practice the Dharma and reiterate this innermost feeling many times. From *Garland of Birth Stories*:

Alas, afflicted worldly beings,  
Your stay is not stable, there is no joy.  
Even this water lily's splendor  
Will soon be but a memory.

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-2 It is uncertain when we will die

This has three points:

- [A The need to generate a mental state mindful of death every day
- B Explanation of the actual reasons
- C The decision that it is necessary to practice the Dharma from now on]

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-2A The need to generate a mental state mindful of death every day

It is certain that death will come between now and 100 years from now and it is not certain on which day in between it will come. Therefore it is not definite on any day like today whether you will die or not. Nonetheless the mind should lean toward the idea of death, and you should generate the awareness that thinks: “I will die today,” for if the mind leans toward the idea of not dying with the thought: “I will not die today,” you will constantly prepare for staying in this life and will not prepare for future lives. Due to this, if in the meantime you are seized by the Lord of Death, you will have to die in anguish. On the other hand, if you prepare to die every day, you will accomplish much that is meaningful for the future, such that even if you do not die, it will be good to have done it, and if you do die, it will have been all the more necessary.

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-2B Explanation of the actual reasons

This has three points:

- 1 The contemplation that there is no certainty with regard to the lifespan in Jambudvīpa, which is why the time of death is uncertain
- 2 The contemplation that there are many conditions that lead to death and few conditions that promote life
- 3 The contemplation that the body is extremely vulnerable and the time of death therefore uncertain

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-2B1 The contemplation that there is no certainty with regard to the lifespan in Jambudvīpa which is why the time of death is uncertain

In general the lifespan of the beings of Uttarakuru is definite, and for most of the beings of the other continents there is more certainty, even though it may not be sure that the full extent of the lifespan of each individual will be reached. But for the beings of Jambudvīpa the lifespan is extremely uncertain. In the beginning they even reached immeasurable years, {70} whereas later on ten years will be the maximum duration to be reckoned with, and even nowadays it does not seem certain whether they will die in their old age, in their youth, or in between. In *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* it says:

Here it's uncertain: in the end,  
Ten years; initially, infinite.<sup>78</sup>

You should take to heart the fact that your gurus or friends and so forth have died through sudden internal or external conditions for death before reaching the end of their lives, and you should think over and over again: “I too have a similar quality.”

<sup>78</sup> There is a negative particle missing in the Tibetan text which should read: ‘di na *ma* nges tha mar ni / lo bcu dang po dpag tu med.

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-2B2 The contemplation that there are many conditions that lead to death and few conditions that promote life

There are various harmful influences—animate as well as inanimate—on this life, so you should thoroughly consider how it is threatened by human beings and non-human malevolent influences, how there are types of animals that endanger your body and life through manifold harm, and likewise how both internal illnesses and external elements cause harm. Furthermore, since your body is necessarily formed from the four elements and they also harm each other, if their domains expand or diminish out of balance, they will cause illnesses and ravish your life. Since they exist simultaneous with you, even though your body and life appear to be stable, they cannot be relied on. In the *Great Final Nirvāṇa Sūtra* it says:

The discrimination of death is that this life, constantly surrounded by hostile enemies, weakens in each moment and that there is nothing that increases it.

And in *Precious Garland (Ratnāvalī)*:

We live amid conditions for Yama,  
Like a butter lamp in a gale.

Apart from that, life itself is involved in the reality of death so that many conditions for life are unreliable. From *Precious Garland*:

There are many conditions for death;  
Those for living are only few.  
Even they may well be deadly,  
Therefore always practice the Dharma.

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-2B3 The contemplation that the body is extremely vulnerable and the time of death therefore uncertain {71}

The body is as vulnerable as a water bubble, therefore this and that, such as a thorn piercing it, may be to blame and destroy life without the need for major harm. Hence, it is very easily overcome by conditions for death. In *Friendly Letter (Suhṛllekha)* it says:

If physical things—the ground, Mount Meru, and oceans—  
Are burnt up by the seven blazing suns  
And even ashes are not left behind,<sup>79</sup>  
What need to mention exceedingly feeble humans?

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-2C The decision that it is necessary to practice the Dharma from now on

After thoughts like these, you should reiterate many times the innermost decision to practice the Dharma from this very moment on, for it is uncertain when your body and life will be overcome by the Lord of Death, and you should not assume that there is still time. As Śrī Jāgatamitra said:

Earth Lord, as long as this borrowed body  
Abides in pleasure—not ill, not decayed,  
In that time frame, take its essence  
Fearless of illness, death, and decay.  
In times of illness, old age, and decay,  
You may be concerned but what is the use?

Among the three root thoughts, the thought about the uncertainty of the time of death is the most important one, which is why you should put effort into it.

<sup>79</sup> According to the cosmogony alluded to here, everything physical will be destroyed by fire at the end of a cycle of eons.

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-3 At the time of death nothing except the Dharma will be of benefit

This has two points:

- A The actual reasons
- B The decision

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-3A The actual reasons

This has three points:

- 1 [You cannot take your friends and relatives along]

Thus when you see that you have to go to another world, even if at that time you are surrounded by loving and very distressed friends or relatives, you cannot take even one of them along.

- 2 [You cannot take your possessions along]

Whatever heaps of attractive riches you have obtained, you cannot take along even a small particle of them.

- 3 [You cannot take your body along]

If you have to give up even the flesh and bones you were born with, what need is there to talk of anything else?

2B4B-2A2A-1A1D-3B The decision to practice nothing but the Dharma

This has three points:

- 1 The actual decision

Then think: “At that time it will certainly come to pass that all the excellences of this life leave me, just as I leave them, and I will proceed to another world. This will happen today.” {72} You should make the decision many times to practice the Dharma without submitting to conditions of the body, friends, possessions, and so forth.

- 2 The need to try hard since it is the foundation of the path

Although this arises only with difficulty, you should try hard since it is the foundation of the path. In the words of Potowa:

My *elimination of appearances* consists in this very meditation on impermanence. Eliminating all the phenomena of this life—close relationships, possessions, and the like—and aware that I will go here and there to another life alone without anything I think: “There is nothing to do other than to practice the Dharma,” and non-attachment to this life first arises. As long as this attitude has not arisen in my mind, I will sit with the paths to all the Dharma blocked.

And Dölpa said:

Incidentally, if you accumulate the collections and purify obscurations, make request to the deities and your guru, and contemplate insistently with perseverance, even that which you think will not come about for a hundred years, will come about effortlessly, for compounded phenomena do not remain static as they are.

When someone asked Kamawa about moving on to another object of meditation he said: “Repeat the previous one!” When asked about the remaining ones, he said: “There is nothing beyond it.”

- 3 How to carry out the practice of all the excellent scriptures

Thus, if you understand how to practice reliance on a spiritual teacher, the pleasures and endowments, as well as impermanence in this and that context of the scriptures and their commentaries, and if you then sustain that understanding, you will easily find the intention of the Victor. In this way you will also understand it in other contexts.

### Explanation of what will become of you in future worlds: How to contemplate the happiness and suffering of the two types of migrating beings

2B4B-2A2A-1A2 What will become of you in future existences: contemplating the happiness and suffering of the two types of migrating beings

This has two points:

- [A Thinking about what will become of you in future worlds
- B From among the happiness and suffering of the two types of migrating beings, considerations about suffering]

2B4B-2B1A-1A2A Thinking about what will become of you in future worlds

That being so, {73} since it is certain that you will die soon, there is no time to relax in this life and, after death, it is not that you become non-existent; you must take rebirth. Since apart from the two realms there is no other place of birth, you will be born in either the happy realms or the lower realms. In addition, since you are not under your own control but under the control of other—karma, you will be reborn according to the wholesome and unwholesome karma that impels you.

### THE SUFFERINGS OF THE LOWER REALMS

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B From among the happiness and suffering of two types of migrating beings, considerations about suffering

This has three points:

- [1 The need to think about suffering
- 2 How thinking about suffering is a vital point
- 3 Contemplating the sufferings of the lower realms]

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-1 The need to think about suffering

You should think about the suffering of the lower realms considering: “What will become of me if I am reborn in the lower realms?” Nāgārjuna said:

Every day remember the hells  
Which are fiercely hot and cold.  
Also remember the hungry ghosts,  
Emaciated by hunger and thirst.

Look at animals and remember:  
They are beset with the sufferings of dullness.  
Give up their causes, create causes of happiness.  
Once you have gained what is hard to gain,

A human body in Jambudvīpa,  
Endeavor to cut the cause of bad births.<sup>80</sup>

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-2 How thinking about suffering is a vital point

Meditation on the sufferings of cyclic existence in general and of the lower realms in particular is a very vital point, for if you thus consider how you yourself fall into the ocean of suffering, despair will repel pride and arrogance. Having seen that suffering is a result of non-virtue, you will be very careful to avoid negativities and downfalls. Since you do not want suffering but want happiness, once you realize that it is the result of virtue, you will also enjoy accomplishing virtue. In proportion to your own experience, compassion for others will arise, and out of aversion to cyclic existence you will strive for liberation. For fear of suffering you will take refuge forcefully.

These positive qualities of suffering that comprise many important points of practice {74} are stated in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* in terms of suffering already arisen in one’s own continuum, however, they are equally applicable to suffering one is yet to experience.

<sup>80</sup> Tib. *ngan song*, usually translated here as “lower realms,” literally means “gone bad.”

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3 Contemplating the sufferings of the lower realms

This has two points:

- A The actual sufferings of the lower realms
- B How it is necessary to meditate on the sufferings of the lower realms until the experience occurs

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A The actual sufferings of the lower realms

This has three points:

- 1 Contemplating the sufferings of hell beings
- 2 Contemplating the sufferings of animals
- 3 Contemplating the sufferings of hungry ghosts

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A1 Contemplating the sufferings of hell beings

This has two points:

- A The actual sufferings of the hell beings
- B The need for fear at the thought that you have already accumulated numerous causes for being born there

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A1A The actual sufferings of the hell beings

This has four points:

- 1 The great hells of sentient beings
- 2 The neighboring hells
- 3 The cold hells
- 4 The occasional hells

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A1A-1 The great hells of sentient beings

32,000 yojanas<sup>81</sup> below here there is Continual Revival, and below it are seven more hells each separated by 4,000 yojanas.

In the first of those eight, Continual Revival, the sentient beings come together and stab each other with various weapons that arise by the power of their karma. Whenever they faint and collapse on the ground, a voice rings out from the sky, commanding “Come back to life!” Upon that they stand up again and start stabbing as before, experiencing immeasurable suffering as a result.

In Black Line, the hell guardians put black lines in the shape of numerous squares and the like on the bodies of the sentient beings born there, and then the latter experience the pain of being cut into pieces with weapons along those lines.

In Crushing Hell,<sup>82</sup> once the guardians have rounded up the sentient beings, they pack them between two goat-faced or similar iron mountains. Then they are immediately crushed by the two, whereupon rivers of blood spurt out from all their orifices.

In Howling Hell, the sentient beings in search of an abode enter an iron house. {75} As soon as they enter, fires blaze up all around them, and they burn.

Great Howling Hell is like the previous one, the difference being that the iron house has two layers.

In Hot Hell, the hell guardians put the sentient beings into very hot and blazing iron cauldrons of several yojanas and fry them like fish. They are impaled through their buttocks on blazing iron stakes that emerge through the crown of their heads. Fire blazes out of their mouths, their eye sockets, nostrils, and ears as well as all their pores. They are laid out, on their backs or face down, on the blazing iron foundation and pounded and tormented with blazing iron hammers.

In Very Hot Hell, an iron trident is stuck into their buttocks so that the right and left prongs emerge from their two shoulders and the middle one from the crown of their head. Owing to that, tongues of fire blaze from their orifices, such as the mouth. Their bodies are wrapped in blazing hot iron sheets and placed headlong into an iron cauldron full of boiling liquid, whereupon they are tossed up,

<sup>81</sup> Cf. previous note: One yojana (Tib. *dpag tshad*) is equivalent to 4.5 miles (7.4 km).

<sup>82</sup> Tib. *bsdus* ‘*joms*, literally “bringing together (and) destroying.”

down, and about as they boil. Then, once their skin, flesh, and blood have been destroyed and nothing but the skeleton is left, they are pulled out again and spread out on the iron foundation. After that, when the skin, flesh, and blood have developed again, they are put in again. Apart from that it is like Hot Hell.

In Without Respite the foundation is completely ablaze for hundreds of yojanas from the eastern direction. As it spreads, the force of the fire increases, gradually destroying the skin, flesh, sinews, and bones of the sentient beings to the marrow. Like the wick of a butter lamp, their whole bodies are pervaded by blazing tongues of fire. {76} In the other three directions it is similar.

As the fire coming from the four directions mingles there, these beings experience incessant sufferings and only by their pathetic howling are they understood to be sentient beings. In iron baskets they are made to jump about on blazing metal. They are made to fall down on the iron foundation and to climb up huge iron mountains. Their tongues are pulled out from their mouths, then stretched out with a hundred pegs, and made to be without folds or creases, as though preparing cow hides. Then again they are placed on the iron foundation on their backs, their mouths are opened with iron tongs, and blazing lumps of iron are inserted into their mouths. Boiling copper is poured into their mouths and burns their mouths, throats, and entrails before issuing forth from their lower bodies. Apart from that it is like Very Hot Hell.

How long those sufferings are experienced is as stated in *Friendly Letter (Suhṛllekha)*:

Even if, for billions of years, you experience  
Completely unbearable sufferings in that way,  
As long as the non-virtue has not been exhausted,  
Equally long you will not be rid of your life.

Moreover, in *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge and Actuality of the Stages (Bhūmivastu)* it is stated that 50 human years are one day in the god realm of the Four Great Kings, thirty of those are one month, and twelve of those are one year. 500 such years is the lifespan of the beings of the Four Great Kings. All of that is one single day in Continual Revival, 30 of those is a month, twelve of those is a year and 500 of those is the lifespan there. Likewise 100, 200, 400, 800, and 1,600 human years respectively form a day in the other five desire realm gods ranging from the Thirty-Three up to Controlling Others' Emanations, and their lifespans can be 1,000, 2,000, 4,000, {77} 8,000, and 16,000 god years. These respectively form a day in Black Line through Hot Hell, and they can reach from 1,000 to 16,000 of their own years. In Very Hot Hell they can reach half an intermediate eon and in Without Respite, one intermediate eon.

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A1A-2The neighboring hells

Each one of the eight hells has four side walls and four gates. Outside they are surrounded by an iron fence, and that fence also has four gates. By each gate there are the four remaining hells of sentient beings:

1. the Pit of Burning Embers,
2. the Bog of Putrid Corpses or the Bog of Excrement Reeking of Corpses,
3. the Razor Road and the like, and
4. the River Without a Ford.

In the first there are hot embers up to the knees and when sentient beings go to look for a place to stand, as they set their feet down, their skin, flesh, and blood are destroyed, and as they lift them up, they regenerate.

Nearby there is the second one, the Bog of Excrement Reeking of Corpses. As they cross it in search of an abode, sentient beings fall into it and sink up to their heads. In this bog there are worms



called “sharp-beaked” that pierce the skin, flesh, sinews, and bones and dig through them all the way to the marrow.

Near the bog there is the third one, a path fitted with razorblade teeth. When sentient beings walk along it in search of an abode, as they put their feet down, their skin, flesh, and blood are cut, and as they lift them up, they grow back again.

Nearby there is the Forest of Sword-Leaves. As sentient beings walk around in search of an abode, making use of its shade and sitting down, {78} swords emerge from the trees and chop up their limbs and other body parts. When they faint there, reddish-brown dogs come, grab them from behind, and eat them.

Nearby there is the Forest of Iron-Spiked Trees. Sentient beings walking around there in search of an abode set about climbing up the trees. As they climb up, the tips of the thorns point downward, and as they climb down, they point upward chopping up their limbs and other body parts. Since there are birds with iron beaks in that place, they come and alight on their shoulders or heads, peck out their eyeballs, and eat them.

These places should be considered as one because they are similar in that there is harm by weapons.

Near the Forest of Iron-Spiked Trees there is the fourth, the so-called River Without a Ford filled with seething boiling water. Sentient beings in search of an abode fall into it and are cooked as they bob up and down like peas thrown in a cauldron filled with water over a great fire. On either bank of the river there are guardians holding sticks, hooks, and nets in their hands who do not allow anyone to get out. Having pulled them out with the hooks or nets, the guardians place them face upward on the blazing great foundation and ask them what they want. When they say: “I don’t know and cannot see anything, however I am hungry and thirsty,” the guardians put fiercely blazing lumps of iron into their mouths and pour boiling copper into their mouths.

*Actuality of the Stages* explains that the lifespan in the neighboring and occasional hells is uncertain. However, the sufferings will be experienced as long as the potency of the karma for experiencing those sufferings has not been exhausted.

#### 2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A1A-3The cold hells

The cold hells are directly opposite the eight great hells of sentient beings each at a distance of 10,000 yojanas. {79} 32,000 yojanas below here there is Blisters and from there, separated by 2,000 yojanas each, the other seven hells. Among those eight, in the one of Blisters you are hit by strong icy wind and your body shrivels, while blisters appear on it everywhere. In Bursting Blisters, you shrivel as the blisters burst open. Chattering Teeth, Lamentation, and “Brrr” are named after the sounds uttered in them. In Splitting Apart Like an Utpala Flower,<sup>83</sup> as you are hit by strong icy wind, you turn blue in color and split apart into five or six pieces. In Splitting Apart Like a Lotus, you pass beyond blue and turn red, splitting apart into ten or more pieces. In Great Splitting Apart Like a Lotus, your skin turns deep red and you split apart into 100 or even more pieces. All this is explained in *Actuality of the Stages*.

As for the lifespan, it is stated that if you were to fill a storage container up to the brim with fifty bushels<sup>84</sup> of sesame from Magadha and take out one sesame seed every hundred years, the lifespan in the hell of Blisters would last far longer than it would take for the sesame to be completely exhausted, and the lifespan in each hell below it is twenty times that of the previous one.

<sup>83</sup> Blue lotus (*Nymphaea caerulea*). In Tibetan the transliterated Sanskrit name of the flower, *utpala*, which actually means “burst open,” is used.

<sup>84</sup> Tib. *khal brgyad cu pa*, literally “80 *khals*”; *khal* is a standard Tibetan measure of volume equal to about thirty pounds of barley (about 22 liters).



2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A1A-4 The occasional hells

These exist in the vicinity of the hot and cold hells. In *Actuality of the Stages* it says that they also exist in the places of humans, and in *Basis of Vinaya Scriptures* it is stated that they exist near the shores of great lakes, as it appears in *Expression of the Realizations of Samgharakṣita* (*Samgharakṣitavadana*).

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A1B The need for fear at the thought that you have already accumulated numerous causes for being born there

Since it is very easy, as will be explained below, for the causes of birth there to come about, whereby even every day you accumulate many of them, and since those that you accumulated before are also immeasurable, it is inappropriate to sit around happily. {80} Therefore you should think about them and be afraid, for nothing other than this unsteady respiration separates you from them. From *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*:

How can you sit there happily,  
Having created the karma for hell?

And in *Friendly Letter* it also says:

Evildoers separated only  
By the time it takes for their breathing to stop,  
Hearing about the boundless torments of hell  
And not scared in a thousand respects, are like vajras.

If seeing, hearing, remembering, and reading  
Descriptions of hell as well as their depictions,  
Generates fear, no question about the experience  
Of the unbearable fully ripened effects.

The intense suffering is also stated in *Friendly Letter*:

Just as the bliss of extinguishment of craving  
Is supreme among all kinds of bliss,  
Likewise among all kinds of sufferings, those  
Of Without Respite are most unbearable.

Here, even if in one day three hundred spears  
Were to hit you brutally, the suffering  
Would be small compared to the sufferings of hell;  
It would not even be a fraction of them.

You should come to understand that the cause giving rise to such suffering is only your own faulty behavior and strive with all your might not to be tainted even by minor faulty behavior. From the same text:

The seed of these non-virtuous effects  
Is faulty behavior of body, speech, and mind.  
Strive with such resourcefulness that nothing,  
No speck at all, be perpetrated by you.

2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A2 Contemplating the sufferings of animals

The weaker animals are killed by more powerful ones. Having become the chattels of gods and humans, they are under the control of others and lack freedom, which is why they are killed, beaten, and harmed. It is explained in *Actuality of the Stages* that since they accompany {81} humans and gods, they do not have another abode. The auto-commentary to *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* explains that their main abode is the great ocean and that the others spread out from there. Furthermore, they are born in darkness and in water, age there, and die. They are worn out by heavy

burdens, put to the plow, shorn, driven, and killed miserably by means of many different killing methods. They are tormented by hunger, thirst, sun, and wind. They are persecuted by hunters and the like in many ways and are always terrified. Therefore you should feel saddened and disquieted thinking of the many ways in which they suffer.

With respect to their lifespan it says in *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* that “the longest animal lifespan is one eon,” and it is explained that the long-lived ones reach about an eon while the short lived ones are unspecified.

#### 2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A3 Contemplating the sufferings of hungry ghosts

Those who predominantly rely on miserliness will be born as hungry ghosts. They too are hungry and thirsty. Since their skin, flesh, and blood are dried up, they are like burnt logs. Their faces are covered with hair, their mouths are exceedingly dry, and they lick them with their tongues.

There are the three types:

- A Those with external obstructions to food and drink
- B Those with internal obstructions to food and drink
- C Those with obstructions to food and drink itself

#### 2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A3A Those with external obstructions to food and drink

If they wander toward springs, lakes, and ponds, they are hindered externally by sentient beings holding swords, spears, and lances. They also see the water as pus and blood and do not want to drink it.

#### 2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A3B Those with internal obstructions to food and drink

They have mouths like the mere eye of a needle. Their mouths blaze with fire, and they have goiters and big bellies. Even if they end up finding food and drink without others creating obstructions, they themselves are not able to eat and drink them.

#### 2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3A3C Those with obstructions to food and drink itself

Those called “fire-garlanded ones” get burned due to {82} everything they eat and drink catching fire. Those called “filth-eaters” eat excrement and drink urine. They only eat and drink that which is unclean, smelly, harmful, and despicable. Some cut their own flesh and eat it. They cannot make use of clean and good food or drink.

Their abode, as explained in the auto-commentary to *Treasury*, is below the city of Rājagṛha here in Jambudvīpa, separated by a distance of 500 yojanas, and from there the other hungry ghosts spread out. As for their lifespan, it says in *Actuality of the Stages* that one human month is a day for them and that they reach 500 of their years. In *Friendly Letter* it says:

Attending to suffering uninterruptedly,  
Fettered by the incorruptible sling  
Of karma of faulty behavior, some beings with bodies  
Do not die for five or even ten thousand years.

The commentary explains that the lifespan of some hungry ghosts is 5,000 years and some, 10,000 years.

In all three lower realms the body size is indefinite. In *Actuality of the Stages* it says that through the power of non-virtue there are all kinds of sizes.

#### 2B4B-2B1A-1A2B-3B How it is necessary to meditate on the sufferings of the lower realms until the experience occurs

In accordance with that, when you think about the sufferings of the lower realms, reflect: “If it would be difficult for me to sit for one day with my hands stuck in embers, or just stay in a freezing cave during a winter storm without clothes, or to be without food and drink for a few days, or for

my body to be bitten by something like a gadfly, how could I bear the sufferings of the hot hells, the cold hells, the hungry ghosts, and the animals who devour one another alive? You should meditate, evaluating such experiences, until a change in the mind of intense {83} fear and terror occurs.

As you think about this now with your good basis, what has been accumulated previously is purified and what you will engage in later on lessens. By means of intense aspirational prayers direct the virtue that has been accumulated previously and thereby increase it manifold. Since this opens up many avenues for engaging in them afresh, every day you will act to make your leisure meaningful. If you do not think about this now, once you have fallen into the lower realms, you will not find a refuge that protects you from those fears even if you look for it. At that time you will lack the power of mind to adopt what should be done and reject what should not be done. This is mentioned in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*.

### Explanation of how to rely on the methods for the happiness of future worlds

2B4B-2A2A-1B Explanation of how to rely on the methods for the happiness of future worlds

This has two points:

- 1 The holy gateway for entering the teachings: training in taking refuge
- 2 The root of all well-being:<sup>85</sup> generating the faith of conviction in actions and their effects.

### TAKING REFUGE IN THE THREE JEWELS

2B4B-2A2A-1B1 The holy gateway for entering the teachings: training in taking refuge

This has four points:

- A The causes on which taking refuge depends
- B Depending on those causes, the objects in which to take refuge
- C The way in which to take refuge as much as one can
- D The stages of training after having taken refuge

2B4B-2A2A-1B1A The causes on which taking refuge depends

Although, in general, there are many causes for taking refuge, here it is the fact that, as explained above, we do not stay in this life but soon die, and that after death we do not have control over where we will be reborn and are under the control of our karma. Karma is also set forth in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*:

As a flash at night amid the clouds  
Illuminates the darkness for a moment,  
Likewise on the road, through the power of the buddhas,  
A rare understanding of merit comes forth in the worldly.

Therefore, that which is virtuous is always weak,  
While evil is extremely strong and unbearable. {84}

By thinking thus about how you will fall into the lower realms because the power of wholesome karma is small and the power of unwholesome karma is extremely strong, the two arise: fear of the lower realms and the conviction that that which is rare and precious,<sup>86</sup> the Jewels, can protect you from them. Consequently, if these two remain but words, taking refuge will be similar. However, if they are present intense and firm, your taking of refuge will also come to tame the mind. Therefore you should strive in those two causes.

<sup>85</sup> The Tibetan expression, which is consistently translated here as “well-being,” consists of a combination of the two syllables *bde* and *legs*, *bde* referring to the happiness of happy, i.e., higher, realms and *legs* referring to “certain goodness,” i.e., liberation from cyclic existence or enlightenment. Thus “well-being” implies both temporary and ultimate happiness.

<sup>86</sup> Tib. *dkon mchog*, “rare (and) precious” is the word used for *Jewel* in the context of taking refuge.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1B Depending on those causes, the objects in which to take refuge

This has two points:

- 1 Identifying the objects of refuge
- 2 The reasons why they are worthy to be refuges

2B4B-2A2A-1B1B-1 Identifying the objects of refuge

In *Praise in One Hundred and Fifty Verses (Śatapañcaśatakastotra)* it says:

To one in whom perpetually  
All faults are definitely absent,  
To one in whom in every manner,  
All positive qualities abide;

In case someone like that exists,  
It's right to take refuge in him,  
To praise him, to attend on him,  
To abide in what he teaches.

Thus if someone has the intelligence to differentiate between what is a refuge and what is not a refuge, it is appropriate for him to take refuge in the undeceiving protector, the Buddha Bhagavan. This also characterizes the Dharma Jewel and the Saṅgha Jewel. From *Seventy Verses on Taking Refuge (Trīṣaraṇagamana)*:

Buddha, Dharma, Saṅgha are  
The refuge of those who want liberation.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1B-2 The reasons why they are worthy to be refuges

This has two points:

A The actual reasons

Someone who is free from all fear, skilled in the means of liberating others from fear, steeped in great compassion toward everyone without closeness and distance, and who works for the welfare of all those who help him or do not help him, such a one is worthy to be a refuge. As only the Buddha has those qualifications, while Īśvara and the like do not, he is a refuge. For that reason, the Dharma taught by him, as well as the Saṅgha of hearers, are also {85} worthy to be refuges.

B Advice to be persistent in conviction, the principal cause

That being so, once you have derived certainty with regard to the objects of refuge set forth in the *Compendium*, when you are able to rely on them with a single-pointed mind, it is impossible for you not to be protected. Therefore you should generate certainty from the bottom of your heart. Of the two causes for being protected, there is no incompleteness in the external one, since our Teacher has already accomplished it. However, due to the internal cause—taking hold of that refuge trustingly—not having come about, we suffer.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C The way in which to take refuge as much as you can

This has four points:

- 1 Taking refuge understanding their positive qualities
- 2 Taking refuge understanding their distinctions
- 3 An assertion
- 4 Taking refuge without advocating other ones

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1 Taking refuge understanding their positive qualities

The need to be mindful of the positive qualities of the refuges has three points:

- A The positive qualities of the Buddha
- B The positive qualities of the Dharma
- C The positive qualities of the Saṅgha

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A The positive qualities of the Buddha

This has two points:

- 1 The actual qualities
- 2 Supplementary points

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A1 The actual qualities

This has four points:

- A The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted body
- B The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted speech
- C The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted mind
- D The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted activities

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A1A The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted body

Recollect the major marks and minor characteristics<sup>87</sup> of a buddha. In *Praise in Analogies* (*Upamastava*) it says:

Your body is adorned with the marks,  
Beautiful, nectar for the eyes,  
Like a cloudless sky in autumn  
Ornamented with clusters of stars.

O Sage, endowed with the color of gold,  
Beautiful, dressed in monastic robes,  
Like a golden mountain top  
Wrapped in clouds at dusk or dawn.

Protector, your facial circle's splendor,  
Although unadorned by jewelry,  
Is beyond that of the moon disc,  
Although vast and clear of clouds.

If the lotus of your mouth  
And a lotus in bloom in the sun  
Are beheld by a bee, the bee  
Will have its doubts about the lotus.

Your face endowed with the color of gold,  
White teeth make it more beautiful, {86}  
Like immaculate autumn moonbeams  
Filtering through golden mountains.

Venerable one, your right hand  
Embellished by the mark of the wheel  
Gives breath to people terrified  
By the cycle of existence.

O Sage, as you walk, your feet  
Draw what looks like lotuses of  
Glory on the earth you tread;  
With lotuses how could it be lovelier?

Recollect the major marks and minor characteristics in accordance with this statement.

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<sup>87</sup> Tib. *mtshan dang dpe byad*

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A1B The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted speech

You should think about the very marvelous way in which any number of sentient beings in the world realms ask different questions all at once, yet he still apprehends them with the wisdom that possesses a single instant of mind and answers all the questions with a single utterance understood in their respective languages. In *Chapter of the Truthful One* it says:

If thus all beings, in one single moment,  
Ask a question in many definitive words,  
His mind comprehends them in a single moment  
And answers them all with one melodious statement.

Thus know that the melodious Brahma voice  
Of him who gives instructions rings forth in this world.  
He thoroughly set in motion the wheel of Dharma,  
Eradicating the suffering of gods and men.

You should reflect along the lines of this statement.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A1C The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted mind

This has two points:

- 1 The positive qualities of knowledge
- 2 The positive qualities of mercy

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A1C-1 The positive qualities of knowledge

Since all knowable objects—modes and varieties—are engaged by the Sage's unobstructed knowledge like an *amalaki* fruit<sup>88</sup> placed on the palm of his hand, the diverse knowable objects are encompassed by the Sage's knowledge. However, they are not pervaded by others' knowledge since knowable objects are vast whereas their consciousnesses are narrow. In this regard it says in *Praise of the One Worthy of Praise (Varṇāhavarṇestotra)*:

Only your exalted wisdom, {87}  
Encompasses all the knowable objects;  
For all others apart from you  
Some knowable objects remain to be known.

And:

Bhagavan, the phenomena of all times,  
All aspects, all places of origin,  
Are spheres of activity of your mind,  
Like an *amalaki* fruit in your palm.  
  
As regards phenomena, static or mobile,  
Single or various and distinct,  
There's nothing your mind is obstructed from,  
Like wind moving to and fro in space.

You should reflect in accordance with these statements.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A1C-2 The positive qualities of mercy

Just as sentient beings are bound by the afflictions without any control, the Sage is bound by great compassion without control, and therefore great compassion continuously arises in him when he perceives suffering migrating beings. In the *One Hundred and Fifty Verses* it says:

<sup>88</sup> A fruit with a somewhat transparent skin that allows for the veins, seeds, and pulp to shine through.



All of these migrating beings  
Are equally bound by the afflictions.  
In order to untie their afflictions,  
You have long been bound by compassion.

Should I first prostrate to you  
Or to that which causes you  
To stay long in saṃsāra, aware  
Of its faults—great compassion?

In *Chapter of the Truthful One* it also says:

When he sees the many beings perpetually  
Obscured by stupidity, mental darkness, gloom, and  
Imprisoned in the prison of cyclic existence,  
Great compassion is born in the holy sage.

Remember his mercy in accordance with these statements.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A1D The positive qualities of a buddha's exalted activities

By means of both the spontaneous and the uninterrupted exalted activities of his exalted body, exalted speech, and exalted mind, he benefits all sentient beings. In fact insofar as a disciple is fit for guidance, it is impossible for a Sage not to give that trainee what is excellent and pull him out of his degeneration. That is why it is stated that he definitely performs all the appropriate actions. {88}

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1A2 Supplementary points

This has three points:

A Gaining certainty in your conviction: the cause of taking refuge purely

Potowa said this: "If you keep contemplating again and again, the firmer your conviction and the purer your mental continuum becomes, the more blessings will arise. Since you gain certain knowledge in this regard, you will take refuge from the bottom of your heart and then, if you merely train in the trainings, everything you do will become an instance of practicing the Buddha's teachings."

B Not gaining conviction

We do not value the Buddha's exalted knowledge even as much as we would a keen female fortuneteller. If a keen fortuneteller were to tell you, 'I know there will be no bad luck for you this year,' you would walk away happy and comfortable. If she were to say, 'This year there will be great misfortune. Do this. Don't do that!' you would try hard to accomplish it, and if you did not accomplish it, you would think, 'I did not accomplish what she told me to do' and your mind would be anxious. But if the Buddha says, 'Do this and that. Accomplish this and that,' do you take it on? If you do not accomplish it, does your mind become anxious? To say: 'From the point of view of Dharma, those words may be explained as follows: due to place and time that would be inconvenient now. I must do this,' is to ignore the Buddha's statements and proceed on the basis of your own understanding."

If you turn your mind inward and investigate this in detail rather than being unquestioningly happy, befuddled by the mere words, it will strike you as very true.

C Insistent advice to achieve certainty

Therefore think about the Buddha's positive qualities again and again, and strive to achieve as much certainty in them as possible. If it develops, you will have reached the main point of taking refuge because a similar certainty will come concerning the Dharma that you have received from him and the Saṅgha of those who have accomplished that Dharma. Without it, there is no way that taking refuge or taming the mind, let alone other paths, will occur either.



2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1B The positive qualities of the Dharma

On account of your respect for the Buddha, you should be mindful thinking: “The fact that the Buddha has {89} limitless positive qualities arose from his manifesting and meditating on the Dharma of scriptures and realization, true cessations and true paths, the epitome of the abandonment of faults and the achievement of positive qualities.” That is the intention of the *Compendium of the Teachings (Dharmasaṃgīti)*.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-1C The positive qualities of the Sangha

This refers mainly to persons who are āryas. Recalling the positive qualities of the Dharma, you will be mindful of those who accomplish it correctly. That is the intention of the *Compendium of the Teachings*.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-2 Taking refuge understanding their distinctions

As is apparent from *Compendium of Determination (Viniścayasamgraha)*, you should take refuge aware of the distinctions between the Three Jewels.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-3 An assertion

As is apparent from the *Commentary on the “Sūtra on the Discipline” (Vinayasūtraṭīkā)*, you should take refuge in terms of considering the Buddha to be the one who teaches the refuge; the Dharma to be nirvāṇa, which is the actual refuge; and the Saṅgha to be the companions who accomplish refuge.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1C-4 Taking refuge without advocating other ones

Having understood the superiority and inferiority of, respectively, Buddhist and non-Buddhist teachers, teachings, and students, consider the Three Jewels alone to be a refuge and do not consider teachers and so forth who are incompatible with them to be a refuge. With respect to the difference between the two sets, the difference between the teachers is that the Buddha is without faults and has completed the positive qualities while other teachers are the opposite to that. In *Praise of the Exalted One (Viśeṣastava)* it says:

Having abandoned the other teachers,  
Bhagavan, I take refuge in you.  
If you ask me why—because  
You have no faults, only positive qualities.

And:

The more I’ve thought  
About the scriptures<sup>89</sup> of others,  
The tīrthikas,<sup>90</sup> the more  
My faith in you, Protector, has grown.

Those whose minds are wasted through the  
Faulty tenets of non-omniscience,  
Whose thinking is wasted, do not see {90}  
Faultless teachers—not even you.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D The stages of training after having taken refuge

This has two points:

<sup>89</sup> Tib. *gzhung lugs*, literally “scriptural traditions.”

<sup>90</sup> Tib. *mu stegs*, usually translated here as “Forders.” According to one etymology, the proponents of six principal Indian tenet systems at the time of the Buddha were referred to as *Forders* because they claimed to point out fords for crossing the river of suffering—paths to liberation.

- 1 The actual precepts
- 2 Eliminating inaccuracies with respect to the precepts of taking refuge

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1 The actual precepts

This has two points:

- A Specific precepts for the individual objects of refuge
- B Common precepts for all three objects of refuge

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A Specific precepts for the individual objects of refuge

This has two points:

- 1 Precepts of prohibition<sup>91</sup>
- 2 Precepts of accomplishment<sup>92</sup>

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A1 Precepts of prohibition

From the *Great Final Nirvāṇa Sūtra*:

One who takes refuge in the three  
Is a perfect approacher to virtue.<sup>93</sup>  
He will never ever take  
Refuge in some other gods.

One who takes refuge in the Dharma<sup>94</sup>  
Is free from the mind to harm or kill.  
One who takes refuge in the Saṅgha  
Does not mingle with the Forders.

In accordance with this statement there are the three precepts:

1. not to take refuge in other gods,
2. to abandon causing harm or difficulty to sentient beings, and
3. not to associate with the Forders.

A Not to take refuge in other gods

If one does not even regard powerful worldly gods, Rudra, Viṣṇu, and the like as long-term refuges, there is no need to speak of nāgas and local spirits who belong to the hungry ghosts. In this regard, while it is inappropriate to rely on them out of a lack of conviction in the three objects of refuge, it is not inappropriate to seek their assistance for some action of temporary character. By way of example, it is like seeking assistance from a benefactor for one's livelihood or like relying on a doctor in hope of being cured from an illness.

B To give up causing harm or difficulty to sentient beings

You should abandon causing harm or difficulty to humans, animals, and so forth through thought or actions like beating them, binding them, ensnaring them, piercing their noses, and loading them unbearably.

C Not to associate with non-Buddhists

You should not conform to those who are unconvinced by the protection of the Three Jewels and who denigrate them.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A2 Precepts of accomplishment

This has three points:

<sup>91</sup> Tib. *dgag pa'i bslab bya*, precepts regarding what one should stop or cease doing.

<sup>92</sup> Tib. *bsgrub pa'i bslab bya*, precepts regarding what is to be practiced or accomplished.

<sup>93</sup> Tib. *dge bsnyen*, rendered here as "approacher to virtue" is the equivalent of the Sanskrit term *upāsaka*.

<sup>94</sup> Tib. *dam pa'i chos*, literally "the holy Dharma."

- A How to train with respect to representations of the Buddha
- B How to train with respect to representations of the Dharma
- C How to train with respect to representations of the Sangha

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A2A How to train with respect to representations of the Buddha

This has two points:

- 1 The actual way to train with respect to representations of the Buddha {91}

However excellent or flawed painted pictures of the Buddha's body may be, do not disparage them and do not put them on the ground when inconvenienced. Having given up the irreverence of pawning them and so forth and defaming them, regard them as fields of respect like the Teacher himself. In *Friendly Letter* it says:

...The way the learned honor any form  
Of the Sugata, even one made from wood.

- 2 Examples of the fully ripened effects of past irreverence

In *Exegesis of the Discipline (Vinayavibhaṅga)* it is stated that Mānavakapila abused members of the Saṅgha who were learners and non-learners in eighteen different ways, saying things like: "You elephant heads! How do you know what is Dharma and what is not?" Because of that, he was born as a sea monster, a species of fish with eighteen different heads, and remained an animal from the time of the Teacher Kāśyapa to that of the Śākya King.

In *Minor Precepts of the Vinaya (Vinayakṣudrakavastu)* it says that after the teacher Krakucchanda had passed into nirvāṇa, when King Cārumat had a big stūpa built, a hired workman twice scoffed at it saying: "Who knows when such a huge stūpa will ever be finished." Later on when the stūpa had been finished nicely, he felt sorry and so had a golden bell made with his wages and tied it to the stūpa. Due to that he was born as "The Well-Sounding One" with an ugly complexion and a small body but a very pleasant voice. Therefore do not talk about representations saying "This is like that." It is inappropriate to disparage the accomplishment of a great representation from good materials and to dissuade others from it through disruptive remarks.

The Great Yogi Jangchub Rinchen gave Atiśa a statue of Mañjuśrī to look at and asked: "What is the quality like? If it is good, I'll take it and donate the four gold coins Rongpa Gargé has given me." {92} Atiśa said: "There is nothing that is not excellent about the Venerable One's body. As for the sculptor, he is average." Having said this, he placed the statue on the crown of his head.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A2B Precepts associated with the Dharma

This has two points:

- 1 The actual precepts
- 2 How the masters of former times acted

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A2B-1 The actual precepts

Abandon irreverence to as little as four words of Dharma. Abandon pawning volumes of scripture, trading them, putting them on the bare ground or in inconvenient places, carrying them around together with shoes, stepping over them and so forth. Instead treat them with respect as if they were the Dharma Jewel.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A2B-2 How the masters of former times acted

It is said that Geshe Chenngawa used to put his palms together and rise up when he saw scriptures of the Buddha's teachings being brought to him. Later on, when he could not get up any more, he used to simply put his palms together.

It is said that when Atiśa came to Ngari, one tantric practitioner did not listen to Dharma teachings from him. However, when a scribe smeared residue from his teeth on a Dharma text, and Atiśa saw

it and, unable to bear it, said: “Alas! That’s no good. That’s no good!,” the tantrika gained faith and listened to his teachings.

Sharawa said: “We play around with the Dharma in all sorts of ways. Irreverence for the Dharma and the expounders of the Dharma is a cause for distorted wisdom. We are already confused enough now. What will we do if we become even more confused?”

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A2C Precepts with regard to the Sangha

This has two points:

- 1 The actual precepts
- 2 How the masters of former times acted and the benefits of that

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A2C-1 The actual precepts

You should not abuse or despise the Saṅgha or even those who merely bear the signs of ordination. Nor should you look at them as opponents in any way, having made arbitrary divisions in terms of “your group and my group.” Instead you should treat them with respect as if they were the Saṅgha Jewel. In *Exhortation to the Extraordinary Attitude* it says:

Those who, dwelling in forests, wish for qualities,  
Should not look for faults in other people.  
They should not produce the attitude:  
“I’m especially noble, I’m the best.”

All carelessness grows out of this complacency.<sup>95</sup> {93}  
Don’t let contempt for lesser monks arise.  
You won’t reach liberation for one eon.  
This is the succession of this teaching.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1A2C-2 How the masters of former times acted and the benefits of that

Geshe Dromtönpa and the Great Yogi, instead of stepping over a piece of yellow material on the ground, would shake it and carry it to a clean place. You should train in accordance with their practice, for others will respect you as much as you respect the Three Jewels. In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* it says:

What kind of actions you have done,  
That kind of effects you will obtain.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B Common precepts for all three objects of refuge

This has six points:

- 1 Remembering the differences and positive qualities of the Three Jewels and, due to that, taking refuge in them again and again
- 2 Remembering their great kindness and, due to that, exerting yourself at all times to make offerings to them and offering them even the first portion of your food and drink
- 3 Remembering their great compassion and, due to that, establishing other migrating beings in such a mode of behavior
- 4 Whatever you do and whatever you need, worshipping the Three Jewels, supplicating them, and abandoning all other worldly methods
- 5 Aware of the benefits, taking refuge three times a day and three times at night
- 6 Not giving up the Three Jewels even for the sake of your life or a laugh and guarding against this

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B1 Remembering the differences and positive qualities of the Three Jewels and, due to that, taking refuge in them again and again

As explained above, think about the differences between non-Buddhists and Buddhists as well as between the Three Jewels, and think about their positive qualities.

<sup>95</sup> Tib. *rgyags ‘di bag med kun gyi rtsa ba ste*, literally “This complacency is the root of all carelessness.”

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B2 Remembering their great kindness and, due to that, exerting yourself at all times to make offerings to them and offering them even the first portion of your food and drink

This has ten points:

A Constant offerings

You should understand all the well-being you experience as being the kindness of the Three Jewels and make offerings to them by acknowledging that.

B The peculiarity that the collections are completed with little trouble

Since you constantly need to eat and drink, {94} you will complete a great amount of collection of merit with little trouble if you keep on offering the first portion of food and drink each time. Therefore you should offer the first portion of whatever you enjoy, including water, from the bottom of your heart.

C Impure offerings

Moreover Sharawa said: “You shouldn’t make offerings of the blue mold on coagulated milk and yellow leaves. Instead you should make them of something good. Worship comes about each time through offering the first portion of tea but not through something like cleaning out the dust.”

D The manner of respect when offering

In a sūtra it says:

For instance, if at the time of planting seeds in a fertile field something remains unplanted, it cannot just be left. Likewise, may the field of merit, that sublime field from which all future well-being springs and which can be planted with the seed of well-being throughout all four seasons, be tilled with the plow of faith.

If that which needs to be done does not happen, it will be an extremely heavy loss.

E The need to exert yourself in making offerings

Not to have even as much regard for the best of fields as for an ordinary field is not a good attitude, therefore strive at all times to make offerings to the Three Jewels.

F High status, paths, etc. are attained through making offerings in that way

If you do that, through the power of the roots of virtue that grow in the most excellent field, the power of your intelligence with regard to the stages of the path will increase. As long as your intelligence is very feeble, such that you do not retain the words while listening, do not understand the meaning while reflecting, and nothing arises in your mind during meditation, the quintessential instruction is to rely on the power of the field.

G How the size of the offerings and so forth is a distinction to do with the mind

Also the offering is not confined by the thing offered, it is confined by your faith. As is stated in the scriptures, if you have faith, it is enough to offer mandalas, water, and offerings that no one owns, therefore you should act accordingly even if you do not have any material things to offer. {95} Not to be able to give, even though you have something, saying: “I am a wretched pauper without any merits, I do not have any other possessions to offer,” would be, in the words of Potowa, like a blind person putting some cheap aromatic plant into a fragrant conch-shell container and trying to fool someone with eye-sight by calling it “sandalwood and camphor perfume.”

H How to train in uprightness with regard to offering substances, following the masters of former times

Puchungwa said: “At first I used to offer a pungent aromatic plant. Then I had the means to offer sweet incense prepared from four substances. Now I offer the most exquisitely fragrant aloe wood,

<sup>96</sup> This verse from *Bodhicaryāvatāra* (chapter 2, verse 7) is commonly recited during offering ceremonies.

Chinese cypress, and so forth.” In accordance with this statement, if you do not give anything out of contempt for small offerings, you will go on like that throughout your entire life. However, if you develop perseverance from a lesser stage, you will get better and better. Therefore you should train following Puchungwa’s practice. It is said that he once prepared incense worth twenty-two gold coins.

- I Refutation of the manner of speaking to the effect that the way bodhisattvas make offerings, having gained control over material things, is impure

If great bodhisattvas, having gained control over the necessities of life, emanate many hundreds of thousands of bodies and for each body, again, emanate hundreds of thousands of hands and so forth, and if they appear in all the fields making offerings to the Victors for many eons, the statement by those who know only the fallacious appearance of positive qualities that “As for me, I do not hope to reach enlightenment in that way,” is the idle talk of people who have very little familiarity with the Dharma.

- J How to make offerings with other vast things

In the *Cloud of Jewels of Sūtra (Ratnameghasūtra)* it says:

In the sūtra collections you should study what are very vast offerings and honors and from the bottom of your heart dedicate them with the supreme extraordinary attitude to the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

You should do it like that.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B3 Remembering their great compassion and, due to that, establishing other migrating beings in such a mode of behavior

Out of mercy you should establish other sentient beings in taking refuge as much as you can. {96}

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B4 Whatever you do and whatever you need, worshipping the Three Jewels, supplicating them, and abandoning all other worldly methods

Whatever you do and whatever requirements you see, rely on the Three Jewels and do what is in agreement with them, such as making offerings to them. However, it is inappropriate to rely in every way on that which is not in agreement with them such as Bön. Consequently you should trust the Three Jewels at all times.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5 Aware of the benefits, taking refuge three times a day and three times at night

This has eight points:

- A Taking refuge is the measure of being a Buddhist
- B Taking refuge is the basis of all vows
- C The karmic obscurations accumulated previously are reduced and exhausted
- D You accumulate vast merit
- E You will not fall into the lower realms
- F You will not be harmed by human and non-human obstacles
- G You will attain everything you wish
- H You will swiftly attain buddhahood

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5A Taking refuge is the measure of being a Buddhist

Although, generally speaking, there appear to be many ways of positing what constitutes non-Buddhists and Buddhists, it is widely known that the Elder and Śāntipa distinguished them by their taking of refuge. Therefore, Buddhists should be understood to be those who have achieved the taking of refuge and have not given it up. Hence, as for the measure of being a Buddhist, it is necessary to consider the Three Jewels to be one’s teacher and so forth from the bottom of one’s heart. Without that, even though you do virtuous deeds, you will not be included among Buddhists.



2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5B Taking refuge is the basis of all vows

In the auto-commentary to the *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* it says:

Those who take refuge gain access to taking all the vows correctly.

And in *Seventy Verses on Taking Refuge* it also says:

Upāsakas take refuge in the three;  
That is the root of the eight vows.

The intention is that, through taking refuge, the thought of passing beyond sorrow<sup>97</sup> is stabilized and that the vows spring from that.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5C The karmic obscurations accumulated previously are reduced and exhausted

In the *Compendium of Trainings* it says:

Here, in the context of showing that negativities are purified by taking refuge, the story of the pig should be presented as an illustration.

For instance, a son of a god who was going to be reborn as a pig, {97} through taking refuge was not born as one. It is stated that:

Those who have taken refuge in the Buddha,  
Will not go to the lower realms.  
They give up their human body  
And obtain that of a god.

It is stated similarly with respect to the Dharma and Saṅgha.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5D You accumulate vast merit

In the *Compendium of the Perfections (Pāramitāsamāsa)* it says:

If the merit of refuge were to take shape, even  
These three realms would be small as a vessel.  
The great oceans, foremost bodies of water,  
Could not ever measure it.

That is how vast it is.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5E You will not fall into the bad migrations

You should understand this from the above.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5F You will not be harmed by human and non-human obstacles

This is easy to understand.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5G You will attain everything you wish

Whatever Dharma activity you do, if at the beginning you make offerings to the Three Jewels, take refuge in them, and supplicate them, it will easily be accomplished.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B5H You will swiftly attain buddhahood

In the *Sūtra Requested by a Lion (Siṃhapariṣṭhā)* it says:

Through faith unfreedom is abandoned.

<sup>97</sup> Tib. *myang 'das kyi bsam pa*. The literal meaning of *myang 'das*, a contraction of *mya ngan las 'das pa*, is “passing beyond sorrow.” It is the Tibetan rendering of the Sanskrit term *nirvāṇa*.



In accordance with that, you obtain the distinguished leisure and, having found refuge, train in the special path, whereby you will become a buddha without a long delay. Mindful of these kinds of benefits, you should take refuge three times a day and three times at night.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-1B6 Not giving up the Three Jewels even for the sake of your life or a laugh and guarding against this

There is no doubt that we will be separated from this body, life, and possessions. If we give up the Three Jewels for their sake, there will be continuous suffering in all successive lives to come. Therefore we should vow not to abandon our refuge, come what may, and not even utter words about giving up our refuge for a laugh.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-2 Eliminating inaccuracies with respect to the precepts of taking refuge

This has four points:

- A Refutation of that which is not a precept
- B The sources of the specific precepts
- C The difference between degenerating and relinquishing the precepts
- D The advice not to transgress the precepts because of how great the benefits are, such as being the entry gate to the teachings and so forth

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-2A Refutation of that which is not a precept

Former masters stated a precept to the effect that, in whatever direction you are going, you should train in taking refuge in the tathāgata of that direction, but I have not seen a source for that.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-2B The sources of the specific precepts

Thus the six common precepts for all the objects of refuge are just like they appear in the *Commentary on the Difficult Points of the “Lamp for the Path.”* {98} The first three specific precepts are explained in the Sūtra Collection, whereas the latter three appear in *Six Aspects of Taking Refuge (Ṣaḍaṅgaśaraṇa)*.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-2C The difference between degenerating and relinquishing the precepts

As for the way in which a transgression of these precepts becomes a cause for degenerating or relinquishing them, a transgression of the rule not to give up your refuge even for the sake of your life actually constitutes the relinquishing of it. Similarly, even if you do not give up the Three Jewels but dualistically uphold teachers and so forth that are incompatible with them, you will transgress the precept of not advocating another refuge, and, by not having faith in the refuges, you will also relinquish it. I think that if these do not occur, it is a mere transgression of the precepts but not a cause for relinquishing them.

2B4B-2A2A-1B1D-2D The advice not to transgress the precepts because of how great the benefits are, such as being the entry gate to the teachings and so forth

Thus, taking refuge is the great entry gate to the Buddha’s teachings. If your taking of refuge is not just words, you will be relying on a superior power, whereby you will not be thwarted by external or internal obstacles, and the various qualities will come about easily and it will be unlikely that they will deteriorate, whereby they will increase more and more. So it is vital that you uphold your refuge by means of being mindful of the fear and the positive qualities explained above, and that you put effort into not transgressing its precepts.

## KARMA AND ITS EFFECTS

2B4B-2A2A-1B2 Generating the faith of conviction in karma and its effects

This has three points:

- A Considering karma and its effects in general
- B Considering karma and its effects in particular
- C Having considered karma and its effects, how to engage in virtue and counteract non-virtue

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A Considering karma<sup>98</sup> and its effects in general

This has two points:

- 1 The actual way to consider karma and its effects in general
- 2 Considering the specific divisions

### 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-1 The actual way to consider karma and its effects in general

This has four points:

- A How karma is certain
- B The great increase of karma
- C You do not meet with karma you have not created
- D Karma you have created does not dissipate

#### 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-1 How karma is certain

This has two points:

- A The actual way in which karma is certain

All happiness having the aspect of pleasant feeling, whether in ordinary beings or āryas—even as little as that which is generated in a sentient being born in hell in dependence on a cool wind springing up—arises from virtuous karma accumulated previously. {99} There is no way for happiness to arise from non-virtuous karma. All suffering having the aspect of painful feeling—even as little as that which is generated in the mind of an arhat—arises from non-virtuous karma accumulated previously. There is no way for suffering to arise from virtuous karma. In *Precious Garland* it says:

From non-virtue, every suffering;  
Likewise, all the lower realms.  
From virtue, all the happy realms and  
Happiness in all rebirths.

- B Explanations of this as the basis of all wholesome qualities

Therefore, happiness and suffering do not arise without cause or from an incongruous cause such as a primal matter and Īśvara. In general, happiness and suffering arise from virtuous and non-virtuous karma, and the various specifics of happiness and suffering also arise individually from the various specifics of the two types of karma without any inconsistency. To gain certainty with regard to actions and their effects being certain and infallible is said to be the correct view of all Buddhists and is praised as the foundation of all wholesome qualities.

#### 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-1B The great increase of karma

There is nothing among external causes and effects that resembles the increase of internal causes and effects, for even from a small virtuous karma there arises the effect of enormous happiness, while even from a small non-virtuous karma there arises the effect of enormous suffering. In *Collection of Indicative Verses* it says:

Even committing a small negativity,  
Will result in great anxiety  
And great disasters in future worlds,  
Like poison seeping to the core.  
  
Even committing a little merit,  
In future worlds brings great happiness,

<sup>98</sup> In Tibetan, the word for “action” and “karma” is the same (*las*). It will be useful to keep this in mind throughout the following explanations on karma. The word *karma* has been chosen in cases where the word *action* failed to put across the implied relation with an effect, e.g. “karma that is certainly experienced” or “accumulate karma.”

Causing greatly meaningful things,  
Like grains that ripen to perfection.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-1C      You do not meet with karma you have not created {100}

If you have not accumulated karma that will become the cause for experiencing happiness or suffering, you will never experience the happiness or suffering that is its effect. Also, those who enjoy the effects of the Teacher's accumulation of an incalculable collection of merit do not need to accumulate all its causes, however, they do need to accumulate one part of them.<sup>99</sup>

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-1D      Karma you have created does not dissipate

The virtuous and non-virtuous actions that have been done issue forth pleasant and unpleasant effects. In *Praise of the Exalted One* it says:

Brahmins say they can transfer  
Virtues and negativities  
As though giving and taking them.  
You said what is done won't vanish,  
What is not will not be met.

And from the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra*:

Plus you cannot but touch your deeds,  
What others did you will not feel.

And from *Basis of Scriptural Transmission*:

Karmas do not go to waste  
Even in a hundred eons.  
When they find the time and prerequisites,  
They will bring effects for embodied beings.<sup>100</sup>

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2 Considering the specific divisions

This has two points:

- A Indicating that there are mainly ten paths of action
- B Settling actions and their effects

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2A      Indicating that there are mainly ten paths of action

This has three points:

- 1 Explanation that there are ten in the sutras and treatises

Thus, first generate certainty concerning the ways of actions and their effects through realizing that effects, happiness and suffering, are certain to have their individual causes, that karma increases greatly, that you do not meet with anything you have not created, and that karma does not dissipate. Now, what actions should be adopted and rejected? In general, the doors for engaging in good conduct and faulty conduct are determined to be three. Although not all virtues and non-virtues of the three doors are included in the ten paths of action, the Bhagavan, summing up the essential points, has stated the more obvious or coarser virtues and non-virtues, the great foundations of misdeeds, as the ten unwholesome paths of action. Having seen that when they are abandoned, the

<sup>99</sup> Geshe Thubten Ngawang (Tibetan Center Hamburg) offered the following explanation for this passage: Buddha Śākyamuni, apart from accumulating the collections of merit necessary for attaining buddhahood, also spent some time accumulating further merit which he dedicated to the goal that his followers may meet with the necessary living conditions. However, according to the laws of karma, they can only experience the corresponding results if they themselves accumulate part of the causes.

<sup>100</sup> Tib. *lus can rnam*s, "those endowed with bodies."

most significant points are also included in ten, he taught them to be the ten wholesome paths of action. { 101 } In *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* it says:

He subsumed the most obvious among them.  
The various virtues and non-virtues  
Were stated as ten paths of action.

Also, in *Exegesis of the Discipline* it says:

Guarding your speech and completely restraining your mind,  
Refraining from non-virtuous deeds with your body,  
Once you have purified these three paths of action,  
You will attain the path that was taught by the Seer.

2 Explanation of cherishing the adoption and abandonment of the ten paths of action

Therefore the meaning of the praise to the ethics of abandoning the ten non-virtues from the *Sūtra on the Ten Grounds (Daśabhūmikasūtra)* is summarized in the *Supplement to the “Middle Way” (Madhyamakāvatāra)*:

For high status certain goodness<sup>101</sup>  
Of ordinary beings, those born from his speech,<sup>102</sup>  
Those with the nature of self-enlightenment,<sup>103</sup> and  
Victors’ children<sup>104</sup>, the cause is none other than ethics.

3 Giving up hypocrisy

That being so, it would be quite disgraceful if someone who does not rely on the mind of restraint again and again and guard even a bit of ethics, were to say: “As for me, I am a Mahāyānist.” In the *Sūtra of Kṣitigarbha (Kṣitigarbhasūtra)* it says:

By means of these ten virtuous paths of actions you become a buddha. On the other hand, if one who does not guard even a single virtuous path of action throughout his life nevertheless says: “I am a Mahāyānist. I seek unsurpassed, perfectly complete enlightenment,” that person is an utter hypocrite and a great liar, deceiving the world before the eyes of all the buddha bhagavans and propounding nihilism. At the time of death, he will be deluded and go to the wrongly fallen.

“Wrongly fallen” should be understood as a synonym for the miserable lower realms. { 102 }

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B Settling actions and their effects

This has three points:

- 1 Negative actions and their effects
- 2 Positive actions and their effects
- 3 Indication of other divisions of actions

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1 Negative actions and their effects

This has three points:

- A The actual negative paths of action
- B Differences in weight
- C Indication of their effects

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A The actual negative paths of action

This has two points:

<sup>101</sup> Literally “for certain goodness and high status.”

<sup>102</sup> Synonym for hearers.

<sup>103</sup> Synonym for solitary realizers.

<sup>104</sup> Synonym for bodhisattva.

- 1 The actual paths of action
- 2 The distinction between actions and paths of actions

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1 The actual paths of action

This has ten points:

- [A Killing
- B Stealing
- C Sexual misconduct
- D Lying
- E Divisive speech
- F Harsh words
- G Idle talk
- H Covetousness
- I Harmful intent
- J Wrong views]

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1A Killing

This has four points:

- 1 Basis
- 2 Attitude
- 3 Performance
- 4 Completion

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1A1 Basis

The basis<sup>105</sup> of killing is another sentient being.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1A2 Attitude

This has three points:

- A Discrimination

With regard to the basis there are:

1. the discrimination of a sentient being as a sentient being,
2. the discrimination of a sentient being as not a sentient being,
3. the discrimination of what is not a sentient being as not a sentient being, and
4. the discrimination of what is not a sentient being as a sentient being.

The first and third discriminations are unmistakable, while the second and fourth are mistaken. That is, if you have the motivation, for instance, of intending to kill only Devadatta but then, when it comes to the performance, you mistakenly kill Yajñadatta, there is no negativity to do with the actual basis. For that, an unmistakable discrimination would be necessary. However, if at the time of the performance, you have the general motivation to kill whoever is at hand, an unmistakable discrimination is not necessary. You should be aware of this rule also with regard to the remaining nine as appropriate.

- B Mental affliction

The mental affliction is any of the three poisons.

- C Motivation

The motivation consists in the wish to kill.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1A3 Performance

This has two points:

- A The performer

It is the same whether you yourself perform the killing or whether you cause someone else to do it.

<sup>105</sup> In this context the term “basis” (*gzhi*) refers to the object of the action.

## B The entity of the performance

The entity of the performance is doing it by means of a weapon, poison, mantra, or whatever it is.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1A4 Completion

The completion consists in the death of the other being, due to the condition of the performance, at that time or at another time before you yourself die.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1B Stealing

This has four points:

- [1 Basis
- 2 Attitude
- 3 Performance
- 4 Completion]

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1B1 Basis

The basis of stealing is anything that someone else has obtained.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1B2 Attitude

As for the attitude, among the three, the discrimination and the mental affliction are as above<sup>106</sup>. {103} The motivation consists in the wish to take it away from the other person without it having been given.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1B3 Performance

This has two points:

## A The performer

As regards the performance, the performer is as explained above.

## B The entity of the performance

As for the entity of the performance, it is the same whether you take something by force or steal it sneakily. In addition, being deceitful with respect to a debt or a trust and using other fraudulent methods also constitutes stealing. Also, whether it is done for one's own or someone else's sake or to harm someone and the like, it is stealing.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1B4 Completion

The completion consists in the arising of the thought that you have obtained it. Or, if you have caused someone else to rob or steal, it is enough for that thought to arise in him. This is like when someone kills someone else due to an order. When the latter dies, the negativity of the actual path of action befalls the one who gave the order even if he does not know the person is dead.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1C Sexual misconduct

This has four points:

- [1 Basis
- 2 Attitude
- 3 Performance
- 4 Completion]

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1C1 Basis

The basis of sexual misconduct has four points:

## A Those you should not have intercourse with

Those who you should not have intercourse with are your mother and so forth,<sup>107</sup> women under the care of their mothers and so forth,<sup>108</sup> all men<sup>109</sup>, hermaphrodites, and ordained women.

<sup>106</sup> As regards the discrimination, the basis is correctly perceived as what it is. As regards the mental affliction, one or several of the three poisons may be present. This is how the following references ("as above") should also be understood. (Oral explanation by Geshe Soepa)

B Inappropriate body parts

Inappropriate body parts are those other than the entrance to the womb, such as the mouth.

C Inappropriate places

Inappropriate places are in the vicinity of gurus, places with stūpas, and the like.

D Inappropriate times

Inappropriate times are pregnancy, when you abide in one-day vows, and so forth.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1C2 Attitude

This has three points:

A Discrimination

The three positions of scholars are<sup>110</sup>:

1. The *Compendium* states “The discrimination of that as that”—a non-mistaken discrimination is necessary.
2. The Vinaya states that with regard to the defeat of impure conduct, it is the same whether the discrimination is mistaken or non-mistaken.
3. The auto-commentary to the *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* explains that if you approach someone else’s wife<sup>111</sup> discriminating her to be yours, this will not constitute the path of action under discussion, and that there are two ways in which getting involved with someone else’s wife, discriminating her to be the wife of yet someone else, may or may not constitute such a path.

B Mental affliction {104}

The mental affliction can be any of the three poisons.

C Motivation

The motivation is the wish for intercourse in a manner that constitutes impure conduct.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1C3 Performance

The performance consists in endeavoring for the sake of that.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1C4 Completion

The completion consists in the two coming together by the two.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D Lying

This has four points:

- [1 Basis
- 2 Attitude
- 3 Performance
- 4 Completion]

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D1 Basis

The basis of lying has two points:

<sup>107</sup> Your mother or other close relatives.

<sup>108</sup> In the corresponding passage of his *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*, Je Tsongkhapa also mentions women under the care of their families in general as well as the wives of other men.

<sup>109</sup> Following common practice at the time, the text addresses male readers. Contemporary Tibetan scholars point out that to women, the opposites apply.

<sup>110</sup> This phrase has been inserted by Trijang Rinpoche.

<sup>111</sup> Tib. *chung ma*, “wife”, “mate”, “consort”, “partner.”



A The basis of expression

The basis of expression is the four—that which one has seen, heard, distinguished, or become fully aware of—as well as their four opposites.

B An object that comprehends

That the object comprehends is that the other person understands the meaning.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D2 Attitude

This has three points:

A Discrimination

The discrimination consists in making something one has seen into something one has not seen and the like.

B Mental affliction

The mental affliction is any of the three poisons.

C Motivation

The motivation is the wish to express it, changing the discrimination.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D3 Performance

This has two points:

- A The actual performance
- B Clearing up doubts

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D3A The actual performance

The performance consists in indicating something by saying it, by making sure not to say anything, or through body language.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D3B Clearing up doubts

This has two points:

- [1 Clearing up the doubt that it depends on the purpose
- 2 Three approaches concerning the distinction between the actual path of action being incomplete if you enjoin someone else to do it]

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D3B-1 Clearing up the doubt that it depends on the purpose

Moreover, in the scriptures it says that it is the same whether you say it for your own or someone else's sake.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D3B-2 Three approaches concerning the distinction between the actual path of action being incomplete if you enjoin someone else to do it

This has three points:

A The approach of the *Treatise on the Grounds* (*Yogacaryābhūmi*)

Here it is stated that with respect to lying, divisive speech, and harsh words, even through your requiring someone else to perform them, these three will come about.

B Vasubandhu's approach

In *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge*, the root text and its commentary, it is explained that all four associated with speech become paths of action through your requiring someone else to perform them.

C The approach of the Vinaya is to apply them to a downfall

In the Vinaya it is stated that in order to produce a complete downfall, you yourself must speak.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D4 Completion

This has two points:

- A The actual completion
- B Clearing up doubts

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D4A The actual completion

It is understood by the other person.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1D4B Clearing up doubts

The auto-commentary to the *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* explains that if it is not understood, it becomes merely idle talk. It is also the same for divisive speech and harsh words.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1E Divisive speech

This has four points:

- 1 Basis

The basis of divisive speech are sentient beings who are in agreement or in disagreement with each other.

- 2 Attitude

Among the three, the discrimination and affliction are as above, {105} whereas the motivation consists in the wish to divide sentient beings in agreement and the wish for those in disagreement not to be reconciled.

- 3 Performance

The performance consists in expressing either pleasant or unpleasant subject matter with either true or untrue words and saying them for either your own or someone else's sake.

- 4 Completion

The completion consists in the divisive words that were expressed being understood.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1F Harsh words

This has four points:

- 1 Basis

The basis of harsh words is a sentient being who has become the basis for the arising of a hostile attitude.

- 2 Attitude

The discrimination and the mental affliction are as above. The motivation is the wish to speak with harsh speech.

- 3 Performance

The performance consists in speaking unpleasantly, either truthfully or falsely, about the person's faults associated with his lineage, body, ethics, or behavior.

- 4 Completion

The completion consists in the one to whom it was said understanding the meaning.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1G Idle talk

This has four points:

- 1 Basis

The basis of idle talk is a meaningless topic.

2 Attitude

Among the three, although with regard to the discrimination, nothing has been stated other than “It is the discrimination of that as that,” here it is to talk having discriminated the very topic one wishes to express as that, because in the case of idle talk there is no need for someone to understand it.

The mental affliction is any of the poisons.

The motivation is the wish to talk disconnectedly and randomly.

3 Performance

The performance consists in setting about uttering idle talk.

4 Completion

The completion is to finish uttering idle talk.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1H Covetousness

This has four points:

1 Basis

The basis of covetousness is a possession or provision of someone else.

2 Attitude

Among the three, the discrimination consists in the discrimination of that basis as that.

The mental affliction is any of the three poisons.

The motivation is the wish to make it one’s own.

3 Performance

The performance consists in making an effort for the object of that thought.

4 Completion

The completion is the thought: “May this possession and so forth be mine!”

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1I Harmful intent

This has four points:

1/2 Basis and attitude

The basis, the discrimination, and the mental affliction of harmful intent are the same as with harsh words.

The motivation is the wish to hit someone and the like: { 106 } the thought “How nice it would be if this person were to be killed or bound, or if his resources were to decline by themselves or through someone else” and the like.

3 Performance

The performance consists in applying yourself to this thought.

4 Completion

The completion consists in the decision to hit and the like.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1J Wrong views

This has four points:

- [1 Basis
- 2 Attitude
- 3 Performance
- 4 Completion]

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1J1 Basis

The basis of wrong views is an object that exists.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1J2 Attitude

Among the three with regard to the attitude, the discrimination consists in discriminating the object that is denied as true.

The mental affliction is any of the three poisons.

The motivation consists in the wish to deny that object.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1J3 Performance

This has two points:

- [A The actual performance
- B Divisions]

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1J3A The actual performance

The performance consists in setting about applying yourself to such a thought.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1J3B Divisions

This has four points:

- 1 Denying causes

Denying causes consists in the view: “Excellent conduct and faulty conduct do not exist.”

- 2 Denying effects

Denying effects consists in the view: “Fully ripened effects of those two do not exist.”

- 3 Denying activities

Denying activities has three points:

1. Denying the activity of planting and retaining the seed: “There is no planting of a seed by the father and no retaining of a seed by the mother.”<sup>112</sup>
2. Denying the activity of coming and going: “There is no coming from a former existence to this one and no going from this one to a future one.”
3. Denying the activity of being born: “There is no intermediate state into which sentient beings are miraculously born.”

- 4 Denying existing things

This consists in the view: “Arhats and the like do not exist.”

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-1J4 Completion

The completion is certainty with respect to your denial.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1A-2 The distinction between actions and paths of action

Among them, the intentions in the mind are actions but not paths of action. The seven actions of body and speech are actions, yet they are also paths of action since they are also the basis of operation for the intentions. The three, covetousness and so on, are paths of action but not actions.<sup>113</sup>

<sup>112</sup> In this regard, Geshe Thubten Soepa explains that all these aspects of denying existent phenomena are associated with the problem of nihilism, the refusal to accept certain conventional truths. In this context each of them has its special significance.

<sup>113</sup> Despite the precise distinction drawn here, the general term *ten non-virtuous actions* has become common in English. Tibetan texts also frequently refer to *actions* in less specific contexts although, according to the definition proposed here, the last three of the ten non-virtues do not constitute actions. Thus *action* should often be understood more loosely as a term that only requires specification in certain contexts.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B Differences in weight

This has two points:

- 1 The weight of the ten paths of action
- 2 Incidentally, a summarized indication of the gateways of strong karma {107}

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-1 The weight of the ten paths of action

In *Actuality of the Stages* six ways of their being weighty are stated:

## A Strong compounding

Strong compounding is actions motivated by the strong presence or absence of the three poisons.

## B Familiarity

Familiarity is to have resorted to virtuous and non-virtuous actions for a long time and to have familiarized yourself with them many times.

## C Entity

As for their entity, in the case of the seven actions of body and speech, each preceding one is weightier than the subsequent one, whereas in the case of the three actions of mind, a subsequent one is weightier than the preceding one.

## D Basis

The basis is benefit or harm to, for instance, the Buddha, the Dharma, the Saṅgha, and the gurus.

## E One-sided devotion to the discordant side

One-sided devotion to the discordant side consists in spending your whole life adopting non-virtuous actions with one-sided determination and not even doing one single virtue.

## F Elimination of the discordant side

To eliminate the discordant side is to give up the side of non-virtue, to become free from attachment, and to train in virtuous actions. In *Friendly Letter* it also says:

Persistence, strong adherence, no antidote,  
A basis with foremost qualities—actions that spring from them  
Are the five great types of non-virtue and virtue.  
Among them, endeavor in virtuous behavior!

Moreover, there are five because of the division of the basis into two: a basis endowed with positive qualities, such as the Three Jewels, and a basis of benefit, such as one's parents.

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2 Incidentally, a summarized indication of the gateways of strong karma

This has four points:

- A Great strength by way of the field
- B Great strength by way of the support
- C Great strength by way of the thing
- D Great strength by way of the attitude

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2A Great strength by way of the field

This has three points:

- 1 The field of the Three Jewels
- 2 The field of the Saṅgha
- 3 The field of bodhisattvas

## 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2A1 The field of the Three Jewels

The Three Jewels, gurus, those who are like gurus, parents, and so forth are gateways of strong karma because even if the thoughts toward them are not intense and the benefit or harm done to them is small, the merit {108} and misdeed are great. In this regard it says in *Mindfulness of the*

*Excellent Teaching (Saddharmānusmṛtyupasthāna)* that the karma of stealing even a little thing from the Three Jewels is purified—in the case of the Buddha and the Dharma—if it is returned.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2A2 The field of the Saṅgha

However, in the case of the Saṅgha, it is not purified until the feeling is experienced. Moreover it is stated that in case it was a means of providing sustenance for the Saṅgha, one will be born in the great hells and, otherwise, one will be born in the great darkness surrounding Without Respite.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2A3 The field of bodhisattvas

Bodhisattvas are an extremely powerful field of virtue and non-virtue. In the *Seal of Engaging in Developing the Power of Faith Sūtra (Śraddhābalādhānāvātāramūdrasūtra)* it says that compared to someone who, out of anger, puts all the sentient beings of the ten directions into a dark prison, if someone else, out of anger, turns his back on a bodhisattva, saying “I will not look upon this horrible person again,” he generates incalculably greater negativity. Also compared to someone who has destroyed and burnt down stūpas as numerous as the sand grains of the river Ganges, if someone else generates anger and harmful intent toward a bodhisattva and says unpleasant things to him, it is like before. In the *Seal of Engaging in Certain and Uncertain Destinies Sūtra (Niyatāniyatamudrāvatārasūtra)* it says that compared to someone who through a mind of love makes eyes develop again in the sentient beings of the ten directions whose eyes were plucked out, and who after releasing the aforementioned sentient beings from prison, establishes them in the happiness of a universal monarch<sup>114</sup> or Brahma, if someone else with clear faith looks at or wishes to look at a bodhisattva who has appreciation for the Mahāyāna and sings his praises, he generates incalculably greater merit. Also, in the *Sūtra of the Magic of the Complete Certainty of Total Peace (Praśantaviniścayaaprātihāryasūtra)* it says that compared to killing all the sentient beings of Jambudvīpa or seizing all their possessions, someone who obstructs even as little as the virtue of a bodhisattva’s giving a handful of food to an animal generates incalculably greater negativity. {109} Therefore you should be very careful with respect to these objects.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2B Great strength by way of the support

This has three points:

1 The difference between the skillful and the unskillful

Even a small lump of iron sinks to the bottom whereas a container made from it floats on the surface. It has been set out that, similarly, the negativities committed by the unskillful and skillful are heavy and light. In fact, it is said that for the skillful who regret previous negativities, restrain themselves in the future, do not keep them secret, and apply their virtuous antidotes, they are light, whereas for those who arrogantly assume they are skillful and do not do this but out of contempt deliberately engage in them, they are heavy.

2 The actual strength of the support

In the *Heap of Jewels Sūtra (Ratnarāśisūtra)* it also says that if all the sentient beings of the billion universes, having entered the Mahāyāna, were to possess the kingdom of universal monarchs and each of them were to offer butter lamps in vessels the size of an ocean and with wicks the size of Mount Meru to a stūpa of a buddha, this would not match even the hundredth part of the merit of a bodhisattva who has left his home and who holds up a little bit of wick smeared with butter in front of a stūpa. This makes clear the strength of the support even if there is no difference in the attitude and the field and even if the object offered is very different. This reasoning also makes clear that depending on whether or not the support has vows and, if so, whether he has one, two, or three, the cultivation of the path will be the more effective the more he has. There is a great difference in the strength of the roots of virtue whether, for instance, a householder at the time of giving donations

<sup>114</sup> Tib. ‘khor sgyur (‘khor los sgyur ba’i rgyal po), literally “wheel-turning (king);” legendary universal monarchs ruling by means of a wheel made of gold, silver, copper, or iron.

and the like acts on the basis of keeping vows, such as one-day vows, or whether he acts without any vows.

3 The faults of discipline being adulterated

In the *Sūtra on Overcoming Faulty Ethics (Duḥśīlanigrahasūtra)* it says that {110} compared to a human being possessing the ten non-virtues who, for a hundred years, continuously and uninterruptedly accumulates negativity, a fully-ordained monk who has completely rent his ethics and who for one day, dressed in the victory banner of sages,<sup>115</sup> enjoys that which has been offered to him with faith, accumulates far more negativity. Again by way of the support, the negativity has greater strength. In *Exegesis of the Discipline* it also says:

It is better to eat lumps  
Of iron blazing with tongues of fire  
Than for the unrestrained and undisciplined  
To eat the alms-food of the area.

This has been stated with regard to both adulterated discipline and slackness in training. The Teacher's statements that compared to negativities depending on the Dharma, the negativities of the ten non-virtues are small, appear to be true.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2C Great strength by way of the thing

With regard to giving gifts to sentient beings, giving the Dharma is far more excellent, and with regard to making offerings to the buddhas, offering one's realizations is far more excellent than gifts and offerings of material things. From that example you should also understand the differing strength of other things.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2D Great strength by way of the attitude

This has two points:

- 1 Greatness by way of the intensity of the attitude, its duration, etc.
- 2 How anger is particularly strong

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2D1 Greatness by way of the intensity of the attitude, its duration, etc.

In the *Heap of Jewels Sūtra* it says that compared to each one of the sentient beings of the billion universes creating a buddha stūpa as massive as Mount Meru and all those who are objects of respect paying respect to them for ten million eons, a bodhisattva undivorced from the mind of omniscience who throws one single flower generates more merit. That being so, you should understand this in terms of the differences in the attitude—whether the object to be attained is superior or inferior, whether you observe your own benefit or that of others, and so forth—and the effect of intensity and duration. When it comes to faulty conduct, a strong afflicted attitude {111} and long duration also have more strength.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1B-2D2 How anger is particularly strong

Also among the mental afflictions, anger is particularly strong. In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Whatever good conduct has been amassed  
Over a thousand eons by giving to and worshipping  
Those who have gone to bliss and the like,  
All is destroyed by one flash of anger.

In this regard, anger toward those who perfectly observe their rules of ordination weighs very heavily, and anger toward the Victors' children more heavily still.

<sup>115</sup> Synonym for monastic robes.



In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* it says:

If you have harbored harmful intent for another,  
Ethics and study cannot save you,  
Nor can concentration or a retreat place,  
Nor can gifts or worship of the Buddha.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1C Indication of their effects

This has three points:

- 1 The fully ripened effect
- 2 The effect in conformity with the cause
- 3 The conditioning or empowering effect

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1C-1 The fully ripened effect

Since each of the ten paths of action depends on the basis, the three poisons, and whether it is great, intermediate, or small, the fully ripened effect is also threefold. In *Actuality of the Stages* it says that through each of the ten, a great act of killing and so on, you are reborn as a hell being, through each of the ten intermediate ones you are reborn as a hungry ghost, and through each of the ten small ones you are reborn as an animal. In the *Sūtra on the Ten Grounds* the effects of small and intermediate ones are said to be the other way round.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1C-2 The effect in conformity with the cause

The effects in conformity with the cause are that even when you have left the lower realms and taken rebirth as a human being, respectively:

1. your life will be short,
2. you will be lacking in possessions,
3. you will not keep your partner,
4. there will be a lot of slander,
5. you will be separated from loved ones,
6. you will hear unpleasant sounds,
7. others will not listen to your words, and
- 8-10. the three, attachment, hatred, and delusion will predominate.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B1C-3 The conditioning or empowering effect

The conditioning effects:

1. of killing are that in future worlds, food and drink, medicine, harvests, and the like will have little power;
2. of stealing are great droughts, rains, { 112 } poor harvests, and so forth;
3. of sexual misconduct are swamps, much filth, unpleasant experiences, and so forth;
4. of lying are that field work and work to do with boats will not succeed and the like;
5. of divisive speech are that the location where you live will be bumpy and uneven, it will be difficult to travel, and so on;
6. of harsh words are that the location where you live will be full of logs, brambles, rocks, pebbles, potsherds, and so forth;
7. of idle talk are that fruit trees will not bear fruit, will bear fruit out of season, and so forth;

8. of covetousness are that everything excellent will deteriorate year by year, month by month, and day by day, and so forth;
9. of harmful intent are a lot of epidemics, injuries, infections, disputes, wars with enemy troops, and so forth; and
10. of wrong views are that in the world you live in the best resources will decline and so forth.

#### 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B2 Positive actions and their effects

This has two points:

- A Positive actions
- B The effects of positive actions

#### 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B2A Positive actions

This has two points:

- 1 Brief indication by means of scripture

They are the actions of the body of correctly abstaining from killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct due to possessing a virtuous mind having thought about their disadvantages, and of carrying this abstention to its conclusion. Similarly, this is to be applied to the four of speech and the three of mind, the difference being that they are called “actions of speech” and “actions of the mind.” This is how it is stated in *Actuality of the Stages*.

- 2 Extensive explanation

They should therefore be related to the basis, attitude, performance, and completion as appropriate. When applied to the path of action of abandoning killing, the basis is another sentient being. The attitude is the wish to give up killing due to having seen its disadvantages. The performance is to put effort into completely abstaining from killing. {113} The completion is the action of body of correct abstention having been completed. The other paths of action should also be understood in this manner.

#### 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B2B The effects of positive actions

From among the three effects of virtuous paths of action, the fully ripened effect is to be born as a human, a desire realm god, or a god of the two upper realms due to small, intermediate, or great virtuous actions.

As for the effect in conformity with the cause and the conditioning effect, the opposites of the respective effects of non-virtuous actions apply.

#### 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B3 Indication of other classifications of actions

This has two points:

- [A Throwing and completing actions
- B What will definitely be experienced and what will not]

#### 2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B3A Throwing and completing actions

This has five points:

- 1 [The classification of throwing and completing actions]<sup>116</sup>

Throwing actions for rebirth in the happy realms are virtuous actions and throwing actions for rebirth in the lower realms are non-virtuous actions. The completing ones are uncertain, however, even in the happy realms, incomplete limbs, minor body parts or sense powers, hideous looks, a

<sup>116</sup> Trijang Rinpoche proposes an additional classification of Je Tsongkhapa’s first item into five sections some of which, however, overlap with Je Tsongkhapa’s second item. Trijang Rinpoche’s points three to five belong to Je Tsongkhapa’s second item and thus do not form a sub-division of the first one.

short lifespan, many illnesses, poverty, and so forth are caused by non-virtue. Also, perfect prosperity in animals and hungry ghosts is caused by virtue.

2 The four possible alternatives for virtuous and non-virtuous throwing and completing actions

Thus there are four alternatives:

1. projected by a virtuous throwing action and completed by a virtuous completing action,
2. projected by a virtuous throwing action and completed by a non-virtuous completing action,
3. projected by a non-virtuous throwing action and completed by a non-virtuous completing action,
4. projected by a non-virtuous throwing action and completed by a virtuous completing action.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2A-2B3B What will definitely be experienced and what will not

3 [The classification of what will definitely be experienced and what will not]

With respect to what will definitely be experienced and what will not, what will definitely be experienced is what has been done intentionally and accumulated. What will not definitely be experienced is what has not been done intentionally and has not been accumulated.

4 Classification of what has been done and what has been accumulated

The difference between what has been done and what has been accumulated is as follows. What has been done is what has been intended or what has manifested itself through the body or speech after having been intended. What has been accumulated are actions apart from the ten, such as those done in a dream. What has not been accumulated are the ten types such as those done in a dream.<sup>117</sup>

5 [Further classification of that which will definitely be experienced] {114}

That which will definitely be experienced has three categories in terms of the time when the effect will be experienced:

1. That which will be experienced as a visible phenomenon is an action whose effect will be experienced in this life.
2. That which will be experienced after taking rebirth is an action whose effect will be experienced in the following<sup>118</sup> life.
3. That which will be experienced at another time is that which will be experienced from the next but one life onwards.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B Considering karma and its effects in particular

This has two points:

- [1 The way in which it is necessary to achieve a fully qualified basis
- 2 Divisions]

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-1 The way in which it is necessary to achieve a fully qualified basis

Through abandoning the ten non-virtues you do indeed obtain a good basis. However, if you achieve a fully qualified basis for accomplishing omniscience, it will be quite unlike others with respect to covering ground in your meditations on the path. Therefore you should attain that basis.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2 [Divisions]

This has two points:

<sup>117</sup> The ten exceptions are set out in Je Tsongkhapa's *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*: Actions carried out (1) in a dream, (2) unknowingly, (3) unconsciously, (4) without intensity or long duration, (5) mistakenly, (6) forgetfully, (7) unintentionally, (8) actions that are naturally neutral, (9) that have been purified through regret, or (10) through antidotes.

<sup>118</sup> Tib. *tshe gnyis pa*, literally “second” life. The “third life” is rendered as “next but one life” below.

- A The fully ripened positive qualities and their functions
- B The causes of the fully ripened effects

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A The fully ripened positive qualities and their functions

This has eight points:

- 1 Excellent life span
- 2 Excellent complexion
- 3 Excellent extraction
- 4 Excellent power
- 5 Respectable words
- 6 Renown as being very powerful
- 7 Being male
- 8 Possessing strength

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A1 Excellent life span

Due to an earlier throwing action, a long life has been thrown and one lives accordingly. Due to this you undertake actions for the purpose of yourself and others, accumulating a lot of virtue over a long period of time.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A2 Excellent complexion

This refers to a good complexion and shape, complete sense powers, and balanced proportions. Due to this disciples gather, delighted at your very sight, and listen to your words.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A3 Excellent extraction

This is to be born into an exalted and well-known family respected by the world. Due to this your commands are accomplished and not transgressed.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A4 Excellent power

This consists in massive resources, friends, and followers. Due to this you gather a lot of sentient beings and ripen them.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A5 Respectable words

Since you do not deceive others through your body or speech, sentient beings uphold your words. Due to this you gather sentient beings with the four ways of gathering disciples and ripen them.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A6 Renown as being very powerful

Due to possessing positive qualities such as diligence in generosity and so forth, you become an object of veneration of great beings. {115} Due to this they help you with all activities, whereby they acknowledge your deeds and quickly heed your commands.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A7 Being male

This is to possess a male organ. Thereby you become a vessel<sup>119</sup> for all positive qualities and, through aspiration and endeavor, a vessel for expanding wisdom. You are not afraid among people, and nobody prevents you from going together with any and all sentient beings or living in seclusion.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2A8 Possessing strength

By the power of previous actions, there are naturally only few harms and no diseases, whereupon great enthusiasm arises from the conditions of this life. Due to it, you do not get discouraged by whatever goals you or others may have, and in dependence on intense enthusiasm you attain the power of individual investigation whereupon clairvoyance will quickly develop.

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<sup>119</sup> As has been noted above in the context of the teacher disciple relationship, the term vessel (Tib. *snod*) refers to someone fit for receiving instructions and so forth.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2B The causes of the fully ripened effects

This has two points:

- 1 Division of the causes in eight
- 2 Threefold division

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2B1 Division of the causes in eight

This has eight points:

1. To not harm any sentient being and to cultivate an attitude of non-harm.

Furthermore it says:

Through freeing those caught in places of slaughter  
And likewise helping through giving life,  
Through stopping harm to animals  
You will gain longevity.

From a doctor's respect for the ill,  
From the administration of medicine,  
From not harming creatures with sticks  
Or lumps of earth, you will be without illness.

2. To offer light, such as butter lamps, and new clothing.

Moreover:

From the absence of anger as a basis  
And offering jewelry—a good physique.  
From lack of envy you will gain  
Good fortune as fruit, it is explained.

3. To overcome your pride and respect gurus and others like a servant.
4. To give food, clothing, and so forth to those who ask for it and to also benefit others without being asked, giving to the suffering and to those who are fields of positive qualities but lack necessities. {116}
5. The habit of abandoning the four non-virtues of speech.
6. To make aspirational prayers to accomplish all kinds of positive qualities in the future and to make offerings to the Three Jewels, your parents, hearers and solitary realizers, abbots, masters, and gurus.
7. To rejoice in the positive qualities of men and, with regard to women, to see their disadvantages without rejoicing, to oppose the inclinations of those who wish for a female body, and to liberate those whose male organs are to be cut.
8. To carry out yourself what others cannot do at all, to help them with what they can do together with you, and to give food and drink to others.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2B2 Threefold division of causes

If those eight causes are conjoined with three more causes, their fully ripened effects will be outstanding. The three causes are:

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2B2A The first cause: a perfectly pure mind

This has two points:

- 1 In relation to oneself

A perfectly pure mind in relation to oneself is:

1. to dedicate the virtues of accomplishing those causes to unsurpassed enlightenment without hoping for a fully ripened effect, and
2. to accomplish the causes intensely from the bottom of one's heart.

2 In relations to others

A perfectly pure mind in relation to others is:

1. to give up envy, competitiveness, and scorn at the sight of the highest, intermediate, and least practitioners in agreement with the Dharma and to rejoice;
2. even if you are not capable of that, to think of it, many times a day, as the way to act.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2B2B The second cause: pure performance

This has two points:

1 In relation to oneself

Pure performance in relation to oneself implies a long duration, continuity, and intensity.

2 In relation to others

Pure performance in relation to others consists in causing someone who has not correctly adopted the rules of ethics to do so, praising those who have adopted them so that they generate delight, making them do so continuously, and preventing them from abandoning them.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2B-2B2C The third cause: a pure field

Just the two—attitude and performance—produce plenty of good fruit whereby they resemble a field. {117}

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C Having considered karma and its effects, how to engage in virtue and counteract non-virtue

This has two points:

- 1 General presentation
- 2 Specifically how to purify by means of the four powers

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-1 General presentation

This has six points:

A How to bring forth a mind cultivating this perpetually, day and night

In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Suffering springs from what is non-virtuous.

“How to reach certain freedom from it?”

It is appropriate, day and night,

Always to think about nothing but this.

And:

The root of everything that's virtuous

Is aspiration, the Buddha<sup>120</sup> said.

Again, the root of that is always

To meditate on fully ripened effects.

In accordance with this statement you should come to understand positive and negative actions and their effects and then meditate on them over and over again, for the karmic process is a very hidden phenomenon, which is why it is extremely difficult to gain certainty about it.

<sup>120</sup> Tib. *thub pa*, usually translated here as “Sage.”

- B The vital importance of gaining conviction concerning the Buddha's statements about how actions bring about effects

In this regard the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* says:

Even if the moon and stars were to fall down,  
The earth were to collapse with its mountains and towns,  
And if the heaven's aspect were transform—  
Still no word you say would be untrue.

You should thus develop conviction in the words of the Tathāgata and sustain it. Unless you have gained uncontrived certainty with regard to this, you will not gain, with regard to any Dharma, the certainty that gladdens the Victor.

- C Meditation on emptiness becomes helpful for gaining certainty with respect to actions and their effects

Some profess to have gained certainty with respect to emptiness but do not have certainty with respect to actions and their effects nor care about it. They have arrived at a mistaken understanding of emptiness, for if you understand emptiness, you see it to be the meaning of interdependence<sup>121</sup>, and it becomes helpful for gaining certainty with respect to actions and their effects. From the same sūtra:

Like an illusion, a bubble, a mirage, or lightning,  
All phenomena are like the moon in water.  
Humans, descendants of Manu, who after death  
Pass to other worlds do not perceive this: {118}

Actions once they are done do not disappear,  
White or black they precisely cause effects to ripen.  
The logical approach is good but the subtle  
And hard to see is the Victor's object of thought.

- D The uselessness of mere knowledge if you do not think about actions and their results

Therefore you should generate certainty about the two types of karma, as well as causes along with their effects, and continuously, day and night, cut yourself off from the lower realms by means of examining your three doors. Not to be proficient at first in the distinctions of cause and effect and to know a bit but still act carefree with regard to the three doors only opens the gate to the lower realms. In *Questions of the Nāga Kings of the Ocean (Sāgaranāgarājaparipṛcchā)* it says:

Lord of Nāgas, one Dharma of bodhisattvas cuts right through falling back down and being born in the lower realms. What is that one Dharma? It is like this: the individual investigation regarding virtuous phenomena thinking: "How am I doing? Am I straying away from them or abiding in them night and day?"

- E How to turn away from faulty conduct through such considerations

As for how to turn away from faulty conduct, having thought about it in this manner, it says in *Chapter of the Truthful One*:

O king, do not commit the act of killing.  
For every being life is a great loss,  
Therefore we all wish to keep it long.  
Even deep down don't consider killing.

Like this you should make a habit of relying on the mind of restraint a lot without your motivation ever moving toward misdeeds such as the ten non-virtues.

<sup>121</sup> Tib. *rten 'brel*



F The principle of action in accordance with statements of the former Kadampas

Khamlungpa said to Puchungwa: “Geshe Dromtönpa taught that only actions and their effects were of vital importance, however nowadays, explaining this, listening to it, and meditating on it are said to be worthless. I wonder is this just because it is difficult to practice?” and Puchungwa said: {119} “It is just so.”

Dromtönpa said: “Followers of the Elder, audacity is totally inappropriate, interdependence is subtle.” Puchungwa said: “In my old age I am at last getting on with the *Sūtra of the Wise and the Foolish (Damamūkosūtra)*.”<sup>122</sup> And Sharawa said: “The Buddha taught that whatever errors and faults come about, they should not be blamed on an inauspicious direction or a bricklayer’s work; it is simply that ‘This action having been done, this is produced.’”

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2 Specifically how to purify non-virtues by means of the four powers

This has six points:

- [A How negativities and downfalls need to be purified by various means in accordance with the statements of the Teacher Buddha
- B How to redress downfalls
- C How to redress negativities
- D How all the antidotes to negativities are complete within the four powers
- E The manner of purifying
- F How it is necessary to make an effort from the start not to be tainted by faults]

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2A How negativities and downfalls need to be purified by various means in accordance with the statements of the Teacher Buddha

If despite your effort not to be tainted by such faulty conduct, some fault occurs under the influence of non-conscientiousness or the multitude of mental afflictions, it is inappropriate to let the matter rest without giving it any consideration. It is therefore necessary to make an effort at the means for redressing<sup>123</sup> it taught by the compassionate Teacher.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2B How to redress downfalls

More specifically, as regards redressing downfalls, this should be done as explained according to the three individual types of vows.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C How to redress negativities

Negativities should be redressed by means of the four powers:

- 1 The power of remorse
- 2 The power of thorough application of antidotes
- 3 The power of preventing faults in future
- 4 The power of the support

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C1 The power of remorse

The first power is the power of remorse, which is much regret for the non-virtuous deeds one has done since beginningless time. For it to arise, it is necessary to meditate on how the three types of effects, such as the fully ripened ones, are produced. When applying this power, you should make use of two confessions, the confession in the *Sūtra of Golden Light (Suvarṇaprabhāsaśūtra)* and the confession to the thirty-five buddhas.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C2 The power of the thorough application of antidotes

This has six points:

- A Based on the profound sets of sūtras
- B Aspiration for emptiness
- C Based on recitation
- D Based on images

<sup>122</sup> This sūtra consists of numerous life stories illustrating the karmic consequences of actions.

<sup>123</sup> Tib. *phyir bcos*

- E Based on making offerings
- F Based on names

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C2A Based on the profound sets of sūtras

This antidote is to absorb the words of sets of sūtras like the Perfection of Wisdom Sūtras, retain them, read them, and so forth.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C2B Aspiration for emptiness

This antidote is to engage in the reality that is selflessness and clear light {120} and to be convinced about primordial purity.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C2C Based on recitation

This has two points:

- 1 The need to make an effort at recitation until signs appear that the negativities have been purified

This is the recitation of special dharanis like the hundred-syllable one in accordance with the appropriate rituals. In the *Tantra Requested by Subāhu* (*Subāhuparipṛcchātantra*) it says:

Just as the flames of forest fires in spring,  
Uncontained, burn all the underbrush,  
Ethics' wind fans fires of recitation,  
Burning evil<sup>124</sup> with flames of great joyous effort.

Just as the sun strikes snow with rays of light,  
Which, overwhelmed, does not withstand its brilliance,  
When ethics' sun rays, recitation, strike  
The snow of negativities, it is exhausted.

Just as taking out a butter lamp in darkness,  
Dispels the darkness so there's nothing left,  
The darkness of evil collected in a thousand lives  
Is quickly dispelled by the lamp of recitation.

Moreover you should continue this recitation practice until you see signs that negativities have been purified.

- 2 The signs

In *Dhāraṇī of Exhortation* (*Cundadhāraṇī*) the signs are said to be dreaming of vomiting bad food, drinking and vomiting things like yoghurt or milk, seeing the sun and moon, travelling in the sky, burning fire, withstanding buffalo and black people, seeing a saṅgha of fully-ordained monks and nuns, climbing a tree from which milk emerges, an elephant, a bull, a mountain, a lion throne or a fine house, and hearing the Dharma in your dreams.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C2D Based on images

This antidote is to create images of the Buddha, having gained faith in him.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C2E Based on making offerings

This antidote is to make various types of offerings to the Buddha and his stūpas.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C2F Based on names

This antidote is to listen to and retain the names of the buddhas and the great sons of the Victors.

These are the ones {121} that are explicitly mentioned in the *Compendium of Trainings* but there are many others.

<sup>124</sup> Tib. *sdig pa*, usually translated here as “negativities.”

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C3 The power of preventing faults in the future

This has two points:

A The actual power and its benefits

The power of counteracting faults in the future is to completely restrain yourself from the ten non-virtues. In the *Sun Essence Sūtra (Sūryagarbha)* it says that thereby the karma of the three doors accumulated by means of killing and so on, as well as the afflictive obscurations and obscurations to the Dharma<sup>125</sup> are destroyed—everything you have done, caused others to do, or rejoiced in before.

B The importance of sincere restraint

The *Commentary on the “Sūtra on the Discipline”* explains that the intention of the question “Is there restraint henceforth?” asked in the scriptural passage is that a confession without a sincere mind of restraint is nothing but words. Therefore, the mind of restraint of not doing it henceforth is important. Its development also depends on the first power.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2C4 The power of the support

This is to take refuge and cultivate the mind of enlightenment.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2D How all the antidotes to negativities are complete within the four powers

The Victor said that in general there are various ways for beginners to purify negativities, however, the thoroughly complete antidote is the four powers in their entirety.

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2E The manner of purifying

This has three points:

- 1 How karma is not categorically definite in dependence on whether the antidotes are complete or incomplete etc. in the one doing the purification

The manner in which negativities are purified is as follows. Whether the causes for the arising of great suffering in the lower realms become causes for the arising of minor suffering, or whether despite one’s rebirth in the lower realms their sufferings are not experienced or, having been purified, become a mere headache in one’s present form, and likewise whether something that would need to be experienced for a long time becomes something short or does not need to be experienced at all, is not categorically definite because it also depends on the power of the one doing the purification being great or small, as well as the antidote—the four powers—being complete or incomplete, intense or not intense, the duration being long or short, and so on.

- 2 How even karma that is definite to be experienced is purified from the root

The statement in sūtras and the vinaya “Actions are not lost even in a hundred eons” {122} implies without cultivating the antidote of the four powers. However, in the *Commentary on the Sūtra of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Verses (Aṣṭasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtravṛtti)* it says that through the antidote of the four powers, if purified in accordance with the explanations, even karma that is definite to be experienced is purified.

- 3 Even if the one doing the purification does not completely purify karma of little strength, its effect will not come forth due to the full ripening having been weakened

In *Blaze of Reasoning (Tarkajvālā)* it says that once you have thus weakened the potential to bring forth a fully ripened effect by means of confession, the resolve to exercise restraint, and the like, the fully ripened effect will not come about even if other conditions are met. Likewise, the destruction of roots of virtue by wrong views and anger is also similar.

<sup>125</sup> The unusual term *chos kyi sgrib pa* is not clear. According to Geshe Soepa’s oral commentary it is either a synonym for *shes sgrib*, “obscurations to knowledge,” or *chos spong gi sgrib pa*, “obscurations caused by abandoning the Dharma.”

2B4B-2A2A-1B2C-2F How it is necessary to make an effort from the start not to be tainted by faults

Although through confession and the resolve to exercise restraint you may be able to purify karma so that nothing at all remains, there is still a big difference between the purity of not being tainted by faults from the beginning and the purity after confession. For example, in *Bodhisattva Levels* it says that in the case that a root downfall has occurred, it can be restored by taking the bodhisattva vow again, however, it will be impossible to reach the first ground in this life. Also in the *Sūtra Gathering All the Threads* it says that once the negativity of abandoning the Dharma, which is explained in that sūtra, has occurred, if one confesses it three times every day over seven years, the negativity will be purified, but still it will take ten eons even at the quickest to attain the level of tolerance/forbearance on the path of preparation.

Therefore purification *without remainder* means that the production of unpleasant effects is purified without any remainder. However, since the arising of the realizations of the path and so forth will be much delayed, you should endeavor not to be tainted from the beginning. Also for that reason it says that āryas do not knowingly engage even in subtle negativities or downfalls even for the sake of their lives. If there was no difference between purifying them through confession and their not arising from the beginning, there would be no need to act like that. In the world, too, [123] if a wounded arm, leg, and so forth heals again, it still will not be as it would have been if from the start it had never been wounded.

2B4B-2A2A-2 The measure of the attitude of lesser beings having arisen

Previously you had an uncontrived interest in this world only, and your interest in future worlds was just a vague understanding fascinated with the words. When future worlds have become the main interest and this world nothing but a by-product, their ranking having been switched, the attitude of lesser beings has developed. As it nevertheless needs to be made stable, you should strive, that is, train in it, even after it have arisen.

2B4B-2A2A-3 Clearing up misconceptions about the attitude of lesser beings

This has two points:

- A Setting out the assertion
- B Its refutation

2B4B-2A2A-3A Setting out the assertion

In the scriptures it says that it is necessary to turn the mind away from all the excellences of cyclic existence, which can be a basis for confusion: Some people think it is inappropriate to develop interest in the high status of an excellent body, possessions, and so forth because they are part of cyclic existence.

2B4B-2A2A-3B Its refutation

This has two points:

- 1 How a continuous succession of excellent bodies is necessary

With respect to that which is to be striven for, there are both temporary and ultimate goals to strive for. Even those who strive for liberation from the excellences of a body and so forth associated with cyclic existence need to temporarily strive for them since certain goodness is to be gained in the end from a continuous succession of such supports.<sup>126</sup>

- 2 Refutation in relation to ultimate high status

Not all that is the high status of an excellent body, excellent possessions, and an excellent retinue is included in cyclic existence, for the culmination of an excellent body and so forth is the form body of a buddha, the wealth of his field, and his retinue. It is with this intention that *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* says the first four perfections accomplish the high status of an excellent body,

<sup>126</sup> Tib. *rtan*

excellent possessions, an excellent retinue, and excellent undertakings, {124} and many other scriptures state that they accomplish the form body.

This concludes the explanation of training the mind in the stages of the path common to lesser beings.



## CHAPTER 3

### The Stages of the Path Common to Intermediate Beings

2B4B-2A2B Training the mind in the stages of the path common to intermediate beings

This has two points:

- [1 Transition
- 2 The actual training]

2B4B-2A2B-1 Transition

Thus, having become mindful of death and reflected on the way in which you will fall into the lower realms after death, you turn your mind away from this world, and develop a striving for the happy migrations. Then, through the common way of taking refuge and certainty regarding wholesome and unwholesome karma<sup>127</sup> and its effects, you give up negativities, and by putting effort into accomplishing virtue you will indeed attain the state of the happy migrations. However, that is not held to be sufficient here. Rather, once the attitude common to lesser beings has been developed, you need to develop the attitude common to intermediate beings which counteracts adherence to cyclic existence as a whole, and then, based on that, you need to develop the mind of enlightenment and be led into the path of great beings.

Hence it is necessary to train in the attitude common to intermediate beings. Even though you attain the state of a god or a human being in this manner, you will not pass beyond compounding suffering. Therefore, holding to those states as happy by nature is mistaken since in reality they are devoid of happiness, and in the end they are bad because you are certain to fall once again into the lower realms.

2B4B-2A2B-2 The actual [training]

Therefore the training of the mind in the stages of the path common to intermediate beings has four points:

- A The actual training in the attitude common to intermediate beings
- B The measure of the attitude common to intermediate beings having been developed
- C Eliminating misconceptions about the attitude common to intermediate beings
- D Determining the nature of the path leading to liberation {125}

#### Explanation of how to develop the mind striving for liberation

2B4B-2A2B-2A The actual training in the attitude common to intermediate beings

This has two points:

- 1 Identification of the mind striving for liberation
- 2 The methods for generating the mind striving for liberation

2B4B-2A2B-2A1 Identification of the mind striving for liberation

This has two points:

- A Identification of liberation
- B The mind striving for liberation

2B4B-2A2B-2A1A Identification of liberation

Liberation is freedom from bondage. Specifically, there are two things binding one in cyclic existence: karma and mental afflictions. Through the power of these two, the aggregates join. From the point of view of the realms, they do so in the three realms, the desire realm and so forth, when divided by way of migrating beings, as the five or six<sup>128</sup> gods and so forth, and in terms of

<sup>127</sup> JN: Tib. *dkar nag gi las*, also literally translated as ‘white and black actions.’

<sup>128</sup> Depending on whether gods and demigods are listed separately or grouped together.



birthplaces, a womb and so on. This is the entity of bondage, therefore freedom from this is liberation.

2B4B-2A2B-2A1B      The mind striving for liberation

The desire to attain that liberation is the mind striving for liberation.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2      The methods for generating the mind striving for liberation

This has two points:

- A Transition
- B The actual methods

2B4B-2A2B-2A2A      Transition

The development of the desire to obtain the pacification of the suffering of thirst, for instance, depends on seeing the torment of thirst as undesirable. Likewise the development of the desire to attain the liberation that is the thorough pacification of the suffering of the appropriated aggregates also depends on seeing the shortcomings of the appropriated aggregates, their having the nature of suffering. Therefore, if you meditate on the shortcomings of cyclic existence, and the mind that wants to reject them does not arise, the desire to attain the pacification of suffering will not arise either because in *Four Hundred Stanzas* it says:

Who is not disenchanted here,  
How could he have respect for peace?

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B      The actual methods

This has two points:

- 1 Thinking about the shortcomings of cyclic existence—true sufferings
- 2 Thinking about the stages of entering cyclic existence—origins

### SHORTCOMINGS OF CYCLIC EXISTENCE: TRUE SUFFERINGS

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1 Thinking about the shortcomings of cyclic existence—true sufferings

This has two points:

- A Indicating the intention of stating true sufferings as the first of the four truths
- B The actual meditation on suffering

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1A      Indicating the intention of stating true sufferings as the first of the four truths

This has two points:

- 1 Setting out a doubt
- 2 Reply

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1A1      Setting out a doubt

If you ask: “If origins are earlier and sufferings later since the origins are causes and the truth of suffering is {126} their effect, why is that the Bhagavan, contrary to this sequence, taught: ‘Monks, these are the sufferings that are true for aryas. These are the origins that are true for aryas’?”

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1A2      Reply

This has two points:

- A Summarized indication in reply
- B Extensive explanation

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1A2A Summarized indication in reply

There is no fault in that since the fact that the Teacher stated the cause and the effect in reverse order has great significance for practice.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1A2B Extensive explanation

This has three points:

- 1 The need to teach true sufferings, origins, cessations, and paths one after the other in accordance with the scriptures

If you go on to ask: “How so?”, it is like this: If the unerring wish for liberation from cyclic existence has not initially arisen in the disciple himself, how should he be guided to liberation while lacking its root? In fact, initially disciples are shrouded by the darkness of ignorance and deceived by the misconception that apprehends the excellences of cyclic existence—suffering—as happiness. In *Four Hundred Stanzas* it says:

If the ocean of this suffering  
Has no limits in any respect,  
Child, you who are sinking in it,  
Why are you not gripped with fear?

Thus, many aspects of suffering having been taught saying “This, in reality, is not happiness but rather suffering,” it is necessary to develop disenchantment, which is why the truth of suffering was stated first. Then, having seen that you yourself have fallen into the ocean of suffering, if you want to be liberated from it, you see the need to ward off suffering. Having come to understand that unless you ward off its cause, you will not avert it, thinking “What is the cause?” you come to understand the truth of the origins. That is why the truth of the origins was stated next. Then, once an understanding of the truth of the origins has arisen—that the suffering of cyclic existence is produced by contaminated actions, that those actions are produced by mental afflictions, and that the root of the latter is the apprehension of a self—{ 127 } and you see that the apprehension of a self can be opposed, you vow to actualize the cessation that puts a stop to suffering. Therefore the truth of cessation was taught next.

- 2 Giving up objections to presenting the truths in this order

You may wonder: “Well then, as the wish for liberation arises when the truth of suffering is presented, it would make sense to present the truth of cessation after the truth of suffering.” However, there is no fault, for, even though at that point the wish for liberation thinking “If only I achieved the cessation that pacifies suffering” is present, since you have not identified the cause of suffering and do not see that the cause can be averted, you do not apprehend liberation as something to be attained thinking “I should actualize cessation.” In that manner, once you apprehend liberation, thinking “I should actualize cessation,” you will engage in true paths, thinking “What is the path leading there?” That is why the truth of the path was stated at the end.

- 3 Establishing by means of logic that such an order is necessary

The four truths are taught many times in this manner throughout the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna. Since the Buddha condensed in them the crucial points of entry into cyclic existence and reversal from it, they are extremely important for achieving complete liberation. Since it is a major threshold<sup>129</sup> for practice, students need to be guided in this order. If you lack any genuine revulsion at cyclic existence, which is due to reflecting on the truth of suffering, the wish to achieve liberation will become mere words because whatever you do will become an origin of new suffering. If you do not come to a good understanding of the root of cyclic existence—karma and the afflictions—by reflecting on the origins, you will be like someone shooting an arrow who does not see the target, for you will miss the crucial point of the path. You will hold that which is not the path to freedom from existence to be that path, whereupon your hardships will be fruitless. And, if you do not know what should be abandoned, suffering along with its origins, you will not even identify the liberation

<sup>129</sup> Geshe Thubten Ngawang’s explanation of the phrase ‘*gag bsdoms*, literally “stop-bind”: imagine a central station where all the various tracks come together and where they can be connected or disconnected by means of switches.

that is their thorough pacification, whereby your striving for liberation {128} will also end up as nothing but an arrogant presumption.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B The actual meditation on suffering

This has two points:

- 1 Considering the suffering of cyclic existence in general
- 2 Considering the suffering of the individual realms

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1 Considering the suffering of cyclic existence in general

This has two points:

- A Considering the eight types of suffering
- B Considering the six types of suffering

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A Considering the eight types of suffering

This has five points:

- [1 How to meditate by the level of the faculty
- 2 How it is necessary to be free from laxity and excitement
- 3 How all the qualities of the three vehicles are accomplished through such meditation
- 4 The eight types of suffering]
- 5 Advice to cherish this manner of meditating on the essence]

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-1 How to meditate by the level of the faculty

With regard to sustaining the entire cycle of meditations common to intermediate beings, here you should also take up the common points explained in the context of lesser beings. With regard to sustaining the ones that are not common to both, if you have the mental strength, you should sustain them in meditation as explained here, whereas if your mental strength is small, you should discard the scriptural citations and sustain only the essential meaning of whatever it is when the opportunity arises.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-2 How it is necessary to be free from laxity and excitement

Although these are analytical meditations, you should cease all excitement and so forth, focusing the mind on the objects of meditation without allowing it to go to virtuous, non-virtuous, or unspecified objects other than them. Not allowing your mind to fall under the influence of sleepy drowsiness or laxity, you should meditate continuously from a state of extreme clarity and lucidity, for it was taught that the results of all spiritual practice in which the mind is distracted to other things are small. In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Reciting, austerities, and things,  
Even though engaged in long,  
If done with the mind distracted elsewhere  
Are meaningless, the Seer taught.

And in the *Sūtra of Cultivating Faith in the Mahāyāna (Mahāyānaprasāda-prabhāvanāsūtra)* it says:

Child of the lineage, from this enumeration it should be understood that, in this manner, faith in the Mahāyāna of bodhisattvas and anything that springs from the Mahāyāna springs from thinking correctly about the meaning and the Dharma with a mind that is utterly undistracted.

In this regard {129} “a mind that is utterly undistracted” is a mind that does not stray away from a virtuous object to something else; “the meaning and the Dharma” refers to the meaning and the words; and “thinking correctly” is to think having analyzed with an awareness of individual investigation. That shows that for every accomplishment of the Dharma of positive qualities both non-distraction and investigation are necessary.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-3 How all the qualities of the three vehicles are accomplished through such meditation

This being so, it was taught that for every accomplishment of the positive qualities of the three vehicles, two things are necessary:

1. actual calm abiding—a single-pointed mind that abides on a virtuous observed object without being distracted—or a similitude of that, and
2. actual special insight which individually analyzes a virtuous observed object and differentiates modes and varieties, or a similitude of that.

In accordance with that it also says in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning (Saṃdhinirmocanasūtra)*:

Maitreya, you should understand that all virtuous qualities, whether mundane or supramundane, of hearers, bodhisattvas, or tathāgatas are the result of calm abiding and special insight.

If calm abiding and special insight were not divided into the two—the actual and a similitude of it—it would be not be certain that all positive qualities of the three vehicles come forth as effects of actual calm abiding and special insight.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4 The eight types of suffering

This has eight points:

- [A Considering the suffering of birth
- B Considering the suffering of aging
- C Considering the suffering of illness
- D Considering the suffering of death
- E Considering the suffering of meeting with the unpleasant
- F Considering the suffering of separation from the pleasant
- G Considering the suffering of seeking what you desire and not getting it
- H Considering the meaning of the statement “In brief, the five appropriated aggregates are suffering”]

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4A Considering the suffering of birth

This has five points:

1. Birth is suffering because it is associated with suffering. When the four—hell beings, perpetually suffering hungry ghost, beings born from wombs, and beings born from eggs—are born, they are born with a lot of violent sensations of pain.<sup>130</sup>
2. Birth is associated with taking on bad states. Therefore, since it is connected with the seed for the arising, abiding, and increasing of mental afflictions, {130} it is unsuited to action that makes extensive use of virtue and unsuited to being controlled at will.
3. Birth is the basis of suffering. Therefore, in dependence on having taken birth in the three realms, the suffering of aging, illness, death, and so forth increases.
4. Birth is the basis of the mental afflictions. Therefore, once you have been born in cyclic existence, the three poisons of attachment, hatred, and ignorance arise with regard to objects. Again, due to that, body and mind being thoroughly unpacified, they suffer and consequently do not abide in happiness. Thus body and mind are tormented in various ways by the mental afflictions.
5. Birth is suffering because it is the reality of involuntary separation. It does not pass beyond death, the end of everything born, and that is undesirable. It also only makes you experience suffering.

You should think about these points again and again.

<sup>130</sup> Tib. *sdug bsngal gyi tshor ba*, literally “suffering feelings.”

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4B Considering the suffering of aging

This has two points:

- 1 Extensive explanation
- 2 Summary of the essence

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4B1 Extensive explanation

This has five points:

1. The complete deterioration of your fine body is such that your spine becomes curved like a bow, your head becomes white like moss flowers, your forehead becomes covered in wrinkles like a cutting board, and so on, whereby the splendor of youth deteriorates and you turn ugly.
2. The deterioration of power and strength is such that when you sit down you resemble a sack of soil cut off its rope; when you get up, you resemble tree roots being pulled up; when you speak, you babble unintelligibly; when you walk, you are completely bent over and so on.
3. The deterioration of the senses is such that your eyes and so forth do not clearly perceive forms and so forth any more, and your mindfulness and so forth diminish as you grow forgetful and so forth.
4. The enjoyment of sense objects declines. Food and drink become difficult to digest, and you can no longer enjoy other pleasures {131}.
5. The suffering of the lifespan having deteriorated completely is that, due to your lifespan having been largely spent, you face death.

You should think about these points again and again.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4B2 Summary of the essence

Chenngawa said: “The suffering of death is vicious but brief. This aging process is vicious indeed.”  
Kamawa said: “It’s good that old age comes gradually. If it came in a single moment, it would be unbearable.”

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4C Considering the suffering of illness

This has five points:

1. The nature of the body changes in that the flesh becomes loose, the skin dries up, and so forth.
2. Suffering and mental unhappiness increase and you predominantly dwell in them. The bodily constituents, water and so forth, become disturbed in strength as they lose their proportional balance, producing pain in the body. That in turn causes mental unhappiness lasting day and night.
3. You lack the desire to enjoy pleasant things. Having been told that pleasant things are harmful when you are ill, you do not have the power to indulge in them as you wish; thus you cannot do whatever you want.
4. You need to undergo the unpleasant against your will. You have to use unpleasant medicine, food, drink, and so forth. Likewise, you need to rely on rough means of examination such as being burnt with fire, pierced with sharp instruments, and the like.
5. You will be separated from your life. Having seen that the illness is incurable, you suffer.

You should consider these points in detail.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4D Considering the suffering of death {132}

This has five points:

1. You are separated from your excellent possessions,
2. relatives, and
3. companions,
4. as well as your lovely body,<sup>131</sup> and
5. at the time of death you experience suffering and intense mental unhappiness.

As long as you have not become distressed at these types of suffering you should think them over again and again. The way in which the first four become suffering is that, having seen that you will be separated from those four, you suffer.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4E Considering the suffering of meeting with the unpleasant

This has five points:

1. As soon as you meet, for example, an enemy, suffering and mental unhappiness arise,
2. you are beset with fear of being punished by him,
3. fear of bad talk,
4. fear of dying miserably, and
5. you suspect and fear going to a lower realm after death because of transgressing the Dharma.

You should think about these types of suffering.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4F Considering the suffering of separation from the pleasant

This has five points. When you are separated from close ones who are dear to you and so on:

1. sorrow thereby arises in your mind,
2. in your speech there is lamentation,
3. in your body harm is caused,
4. through remembering the positive qualities of the object and longing for it there is mental torment, and
5. you miss the pleasure of it.

You should think about these types of suffering.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4G Considering the suffering of seeking what you desire and not getting it

This has five points similar to those associated with separation from the pleasant. Seeking what you desire but not getting it is the depressing suffering of not getting what you have been hoping for despite your efforts in seeking it, such as doing farm work but not reaping a harvest and doing business but not accruing a profit.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4H Considering the meaning of the statement “In brief, the five appropriated aggregates are suffering”

This has two points:

1. Brief presentation
2. Extensive explanation

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<sup>131</sup> Tib. *longs spyod rtsa 'jing 'khor lus sdug pa phun sum tshogs*. It is not quite clear whether the two qualifiers (“lovely” and “excellent”) at the end of the phrase refer to the noun they follow, “body,” or indeed to all four nouns.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4H1 Brief presentation

This has five points:

1. the five appropriated aggregates are a vessel of suffering that will become manifest,
2. they are a vessel of suffering based on what has already become manifest,
3. they are a vessel for the suffering of suffering,
4. they are a vessel for the suffering of change, and
5. they are in the nature of compounding suffering.

You should think about these points again and again.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-4H2 Extensive explanation {133}

1. In dependence on taking these appropriated aggregates, the sufferings of the next rebirth onward are induced.
2. The aggregates that have already been established become the basis of illness, aging, and so forth which depend on them.
- 3-4. The aggregates give rise to these two types of suffering due to their relationship with the negative tendencies<sup>132</sup> of the two.
5. Due to the mere establishment of the appropriated aggregates, they arise in the nature of compounding suffering, for all compounded phenomena under the control of other—previous karma and mental afflictions—are compounding suffering.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1A-5 Advice to cherish this manner of meditating on the essence

If no genuine disenchantment develops toward cyclic existence, which is of the nature of the appropriated aggregates, there is no way a genuine mind striving for liberation will develop, and great compassion with the sentient beings wandering in cyclic existence cannot develop either. Therefore these considerations are extremely important whichever vehicle you enter, the Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1B Considering the six types of suffering

This has three points:

- 1 Summarized presentation of the six types of suffering
- 2 Presentation of the six types of sufferings condensed in three
- 3 How there is nothing in contaminated feelings that is of the entity of happiness

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1B-1 Summarized presentation of the six [types of] suffering

*Friendly Letter* states the faults of cyclic existence:

1. lack of certainty,
2. insatiability,
3. discarding one's body again and again,
4. being reborn again and again,
5. changing from high to low again and again, and
6. lacking companions.

<sup>132</sup> According to Geshe Thubten Ngawang, the term implies that the elements of one's present existence have arisen under the power of karma and mental afflictions and are therefore tainted by corresponding tendencies (Systematic Study of Buddhism, semester XII, transcript 4/5, p. 8). See also the fourth aspect of the suffering of birth.



2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1B-2 Presentation of the six types of sufferings condensed in three

To reduce them to three:

1. in cyclic existence there is nothing reliable,
2. no matter how much of its happiness you enjoy, there is no final point of satisfaction, and
3. you have been in it since beginningless time.

The first has four points:

1. the inappropriateness of relying on the body you have attained—you will discard your body again and again;
2. the inappropriateness of relying on benefit and harm done to you—there is no certainty as to whether your father will become your son, your mother your wife, an enemy someone very dear to you, and the like;
3. the inappropriateness of relying on the excellences you have achieved—{ 134 } you fall from high places to low ones; and
4. the inappropriateness of relying on companions—you have to go on without them in the end.

The third one is that you are reborn again and again; an end to the continuity of births is not evident.

You should reflect in this manner again and again.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B1B-3 How there is nothing in contaminated feelings that is of the entity of happiness

Furthermore, at present most of the happy feelings that increase our attachment are minds of happiness that arise with respect to a relief of suffering. Yet there is no happiness by way of its own entity that is unrelated to suffering. For instance, if you suffer because you have walked too much, the mind of happiness that arises due to sitting down appears to be happiness that arises gradually while the great previous suffering gradually ceases. However, it is not happiness by way of its own entity, for if you sit too much, again, that will produce suffering as before. If they were causes of happiness by way of their own entity, just as suffering increases to the same extent as you are subject to the causes of suffering, so too should walking, sitting, lying, eating and drinking, as well as sun and shade, and the like increase your happiness to the same extent that you indulge in them. However, it appears that in the long term only more suffering is produced.

These points are also set forth in the *Descent into the Womb Sūtra* and the root text of *Four Hundred Stanzas* and its commentary.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2 Considering the suffering of the individual realms

This has four points:

- A The suffering of the three lower realms
- B The suffering of humans
- C The suffering of demigods
- D The suffering of gods

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2A The suffering of the three lower realms

This has already been explained.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2B The suffering of humans

This consists in the sufferings of hunger and thirst, the unpleasant contact with heat and cold, frantic activity, and fatigue. In addition, you should understand the seven types of suffering, birth, aging,

illness, death, and so forth<sup>133</sup> by means of the previous explanations. Furthermore, in *Discourse of the Collections (Sambhāraparikathā)* it says:

All the sufferings of lower realms  
 Also appear to exist for humans. { 135 }  
 Troubled by suffering like beings in hell,  
 Subjects of Yama by their poverty,  
  
 They also have the suffering of animals:  
 Powerful ones oppress the weak  
 By force, inflicting harm on them.  
 They are rivers as it were.

And in *Four Hundred Stanzas*:

Higher ones have mental suffering,  
 Lower ones have physical pain.  
 This world is overwhelmed by these  
 Two types of suffering every day.

You should reflect in accordance with these statements.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2C The suffering of demigods

It is said that the demigods are mentally tormented by envy that cannot bear the wealth of the gods. When based on that they fight with the gods, they experience many sufferings of having their bodies chopped up, split, and the like. Although they possess intelligence<sup>134</sup>, they have fully-ripened obscurations and consequently cannot see the truth on that basis.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2D The suffering of gods

This has two points:

- 1 The suffering of the desire realm gods
- 2 The suffering of the gods of the uppermost realms

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2D-1 The suffering of the desire realm gods

This has three points:

- A The suffering of dying, transmigrating, and falling
- B The suffering of envy
- C The sufferings of being chopped up, split, killed, and banished

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2D-1A The suffering of dying, transmigrating, and falling

This has two points:

- 1 The suffering of dying and transmigrating
- 2 The suffering of falling to a lower place

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2D-1A1 The suffering of dying and transmigrating

At the time of dying and transmigrating, when a god has seen the five signs of death, the suffering that springs from this is far greater than the happiness that previously arose from indulging in the desirable objects of the gods. The five signs of death are:

1. a hideous body complexion,
2. a dislike for one's seat,

<sup>133</sup> The suffering of meeting with the unpleasant, the separation from what is pleasant, and seeking what you desire and not getting it could be added here.

<sup>134</sup> Tib. *shes rab*, usually translated here as “wisdom” (in the context of the six perfections).

3. the wilting of one's flower garlands,
4. one's clothes becoming smelly, and
5. sweat, which did not exist before, appearing on one's body.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2D-1A2 The suffering of falling to a lower place

This is just like it says in *Friendly Letter*:

As they transmigrate from the world of the gods  
 In case there is no remainder of anything virtuous { 136 }  
 They change without control into situations  
 Of animals, hungry ghosts, and beings of hell.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2D-1B The suffering of envy

For the gods with very extensive heaps of merit the most exquisite sense pleasures arise. When the sons of the gods with small merit see that, they envy them and experience great suffering and mental unhappiness on that basis.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2D-1C The suffering of being chopped up, split, killed, and banished

When the gods fight with the demigods, they experience the suffering of having their limbs and other body parts chopped off, the suffering of their bodies being split, and the suffering of being killed. If their heads are chopped off, they die but limbs and minor body parts that are chopped off or split grow back, and they survive. As for banishment, when there is conflict, the more powerful gods drive the weaker sons of the gods out of their abodes.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-1B2D-2 The suffering of the gods of the uppermost realms

This has two points:

A [Lack of power to avoid future suffering]

Although gods in the two uppermost realms do not have the suffering of suffering, they have mental afflictions, they have obscurations, and they lack control over their death, transmigration, and next state, which is why they suffer through taking on bad states.

B How they have the suffering of falling to lower realms once again

Furthermore it says in *Discourse of the Collections*:

One in the form or formless realms,  
 Having transcended the suffering of suffering,  
 Master of the bliss of samādhi<sup>135</sup>  
 Who stays immovable for eons,  
 Is still not certainly freed at all;  
 He will still fall from there again.  
 If he has emerged somewhere  
 Beyond the whirlpool of pain of bad realms,  
 Even with effort he won't last long there.  
 Like a bird in flight up high,  
 Like an arrow shot by a child,  
 That one also ends up falling—  
 Like butter lamps that blaze for long { 137 }  
 While actually perishing moment by moment,

<sup>135</sup> Tib. *ting nge 'dzin*, usually translated here as “meditative stabilization.”

He is completely oppressed by the suffering  
Called “compounding, thoroughly changing.”

### HOW CYCLIC EXISTENCE IS ENTERED: TRUE ORIGINS

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2 Thinking about the stages of entering cyclic existence—origins

This has three points:

- A How the mental afflictions arise
- B How karma is accumulated by the mental afflictions
- C How you die, transmigrate, and take rebirth

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A How the mental afflictions arise

This has two points:

- 1 How the mental afflictions are chief
- 2 Identifying the mental afflictions

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A1 How the mental afflictions are chief

Although both karma and mental afflictions are necessary as causes that establish cyclic existence, the mental afflictions are chief. This is because if there are no mental afflictions, even though there is karma beyond counting accumulated previously, since the cooperative conditions for karma are absent, the sprout of suffering is not established—just like a sprout is not established from a seed that lacks humidity, soil, and so forth. It is also because if there are mental afflictions, even without any karma accumulated previously, it is immediately accumulated anew, and future aggregates will be taken. That is also how it is set forth in the *Commentary on the “Compendium of Valid Cognition” (Pramāṇavārttika)*:

The karma of those who have fully transcended  
The thirst for existence cannot throw another one,  
For that which cooperates has been exhausted.

And about the thirst:

For if it’s present, they will recur.

Therefore it is of great importance to rely on the antidotes to the mental afflictions, and that again depends on knowing the mental afflictions, which is why you should become skilled in them.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A2 Identifying the mental afflictions

This has three points:

- A The actual identification of the mental afflictions
- B The stages by which the mental afflictions arise
- C The faults of the mental afflictions

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A2A The actual identification of the mental afflictions

This has ten points:

- 1 Attachment

Attachment observes an attractive, pleasant, external or internal object and is subsequently attached to it. To illustrate: just as oil that has penetrated into cloth is hard to remove, desirous attachment, clinging to its object and pervading it, also separates from that object with difficulty.

- 2 Anger

Anger is {138} a hostile attitude upon observing a basis of suffering such as sentient beings, suffering, weapons, thorns, and so forth, a rough mind intending to inflict harm on those objects.

### 3 Pride

Based on the view of the transitory collection, pride is a puffed up mind upon observing one's external or internal level or qualities. It engages in them with an aspect of superiority.

### 4 Ignorance

Ignorance is afflicted un-knowing due to a mind that is unclear with regard to the nature of the four truths, actions and their effects, and the Three Jewels.

### 5 Doubt

Upon observing those three objects, the four truths and so forth, doubt thinks: "Do they exist or do they not exist? Are they... or are they not..."<sup>136</sup>

### 6 The view of the transitory collection

The view of the transitory collection: an afflicted intelligence that observes the appropriated aggregates and views them as a self or belonging to a self thinking "I" or "mine." Here *transitory* means impermanent and *collection* many, so the base that it views is a mere impermanent and manifold phenomenon. In order to indicate "There is no permanent unitary person," it is given the name view of the transitory collection.

### 7 View holding to an extreme

The view holding to extremes: an afflicted intelligence which, observing that self apprehended by the view of the transitory collection, views it as permanent and eternal or views it as something that ceases without transmigrating from this existence to a future one.

### 8 The view holding a bad view to be best

The view holding a bad view to be best is an afflicted intelligence that observes and holds to be best any of the three—the view of the transitory collection, the view holding to extremes, or a wrong view—and the aggregates of the person holding the view that arises in dependence on any of them.

### 9 The view holding a bad ethics and ascetic practice to be best

The view holding a bad ethics and ascetic practice to be best is an afflicted intelligence that observes an ethics of giving up immorality, an ascetic practice that sets a dress code, manners, and bodily and verbal behavior as definite, and {139} the aggregates in dependence on which they arise. It views them as purifying negativities, liberating from the mental afflictions, and definitely releasing one from cyclic existence.

### 10 Wrong view

A wrong view is an afflicted intelligence that deprecates, saying that past and future lives, actions and their effects, and the like do not exist, or superimposes the concept of Īśvara, a primal matter, and the like as the cause of migrating beings.

These are the mental afflictions as identified from the common perspective of the higher and lower tenet systems. The Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika system will be explained below.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A2B The stages by which the mental afflictions arise

This has three points:

- 1 The system of the *Treatise on the Levels* asserts that the view of the transitory collection and ignorance are in opposition to each other

If the view of the transitory collection and ignorance are held to be distinct the stages of how the mental afflictions arise must be understood in the following manner. For instance with regard to a coiled rope, once darkness has fallen to some extent, if the mode of subsistence of the rope is not

<sup>136</sup> Tib. *yod dam med yin nam min snyam pa'o*. The first question uses "to be" in the existential sense, while the second question uses "to be" as a copula.

clear, a mind that apprehends a snake arises. Likewise, through the darkness of ignorance obscuring the clear mode of subsistence of the aggregates, the deception regarding the aggregates as a self arises, and from that the other mental afflictions arise.

- 2 The system of the Madhyamikas and Dharmakirti assert that the view of the transitory collection itself is ignorance

If those two are asserted to be the same, the view of the transitory collection itself is the root of mental afflictions.

- 3 How the remaining root mental afflictions arise according to the two systems

Furthermore, when the view of the transitory collection apprehends a self, an arbitrary distinction is made between self and other. Once that is made, attachment to one's own side and hatred for the other side arise. Also conceit arises upon observing that self; that very self is held to be permanent or annihilated and is viewed as the self and so forth, and the bad activities connected with it are held to be the best. Likewise, wrong views that think "The Teacher who taught selflessness, the actions and effects he taught, the four truths, the Three Jewels, and so forth do not exist" are generated, {140} or, alternatively, the doubt that thinks "Do they exist or not? Are they... or are they not...?" is generated. In the *Commentary on the "Compendium of Valid Cognition"* it says:

When there's a self, there's awareness of other.  
Dividing between them brings grasping and anger.  
Closely connected with those two,  
All the faults come into being.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2A2C The faults of the mental afflictions

This has two points:

- 1 How to see the mental afflictions as enemies due to their great shortcomings

In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it says:

The mental afflictions destroy you, destroy sentient beings, destroy your ethics.  
Once that is debased, you become inferior in gain and guardians and teachers revile you.  
There will be nasty disputes, you'll take rebirth elsewhere in unfree states.  
Through the debasement of what you've attained or not yet attained there is great mental suffering.

And in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*:

Enemies such as hatred and craving,  
Do not have arms, legs, and so on,  
They have no valor either, so why is it  
That they have reduced me to servitude?

While residing in my mind  
They inflict harm on me who am satisfied.  
The patience that does not get angry at them  
Is unsuitable blame-worthy patience.

Even if the gods and demigods  
Were all to rise as enemies against me,  
They could not lead or put me into  
The fires of the Incessant Hell.

The mental afflictions, these powerful foes,  
Throw me in there within one moment,

Where nothing met with, not even Mount Meru,  
Is left behind—not even ashes.

Compared to my foes, the mental afflictions—  
Protracted, without beginning nor end—  
None of all the other enemies  
Would be able to last so long.

While everyone helps you and makes you happy,  
When you act in accord and with reverence,  
If you attend to mental afflictions,  
They inflict suffering and harm in return.

You should reflect on the shortcomings stated here. {141}

2 Applying the cultivation of antidotes to the words of former saints

Gönpawa said:

In order to abandon the mental afflictions it is necessary to know their shortcomings, their characteristics, their antidotes, and the causes for their arising. Once you have understood their shortcomings, you should see them as drawbacks, apprehend them as enemies. If you do not understand their shortcomings, you will not understand them as enemies. Therefore you should consider them along the lines of the statements from *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* and *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*.

And:

In order to know the characteristics of the mental afflictions, you should also study the Abhidharma, at least *Explanation of the Five Aggregates (Pañcaskandhaprakaraṇa)*. Once you have got acquainted with the root and secondary afflictions, you will identify attachment, hatred, and so forth, whatever it is, as soon as they arise in your continuum, thinking “This is that. Oh no! It has arisen,” and you will fight the mental afflictions.

This kind of understanding is necessary.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B How karma is accumulated by the mental afflictions

This has two points:

- 1 Identifying the karma that is accumulated
- 2 How karma is accumulated

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B1 Identifying the karma that is accumulated

This has two points:

- A Action that is intention
- B Intended actions

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B1A Action that is intention

The action that is intention, the mental factor that makes its concomitant mind move and urges it toward objects, is action of mind.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B1B Intended actions

This has three points:

- 1 The actions that have actually been intended
- 2 Their entity
- 3 Identifying three kinds of action

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B1B-1 The actions that have actually been intended

The actions of body and speech that are motivated by that intention.



2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B1B-2 Their entity

The actions of body and speech are divided into the revelatory and non-revelatory and posited as only having form by the Vaibhāṣikas. Master Vasubandhu refutes that and maintains that actions of body and speech are the intentions that operate together with the revelatory physical and verbal actions, whereby he explains both actions to be intention.<sup>137</sup>

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B1B-3 Identifying three kinds of action

In this regard non-virtuous actions are non-meritorious actions. Meritorious actions are virtuous actions included in the level of the desire realm. {142} Immovable actions are contaminated virtuous actions included in the levels of the form and formless realms.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B2 How karma is accumulated

This has two points:

- A Explaining who accumulates the karma to be thrown into cyclic existence
- B How karma is accumulated by that [person]

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B2A Explaining who accumulates the karma to be thrown into cyclic existence

Once you have directly realized selflessness, you can still be reborn in cyclic existence under the power of karma and mental afflictions, however, you do not newly accumulate any throwing karma. Therefore those who accumulate the karma to be thrown into cyclic existence are all ordinary beings up to and including those abiding on the great level of highest mundane qualities on the Mahāyāna path of preparation.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2B2B How karma is accumulated by that [person]

If, with that basis, you create non-virtuous actions by means of the three doors, for instance killing, you will accumulate non-meritorious karma. If you create virtuous actions, such as giving gifts and guarding ethics, you will accumulate meritorious karma. If you cultivate the calm abiding and the like included in the levels of the concentrations and formlessness, you will accumulate immovable karma.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C How you die, transmigrate, and take rebirth

This has five points:

- 1 Conditions for death
- 2 The mind of death
- 3 From where the heat withdraws
- 4 How the intermediate state is accomplished after death
- 5 How you take rebirth in a birth-existence

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C1 Conditions for death

This has three points:

- A Death following the exhaustion of one's lifespan
- B Death following the exhaustion of one's merit
- C Death due to dangers not being avoided

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C1A Death following the exhaustion of one's lifespan

To die due to the exhaustion of one's lifespan is to die when the time has come when one's entire lifespan projected by previous karma is exhausted.

<sup>137</sup> He thereby emphasizes that the karmic action itself which is decisive for its effect consists in the intention. Cf. see previous note for the exceptions of accumulated karma: The ten exceptions are set out in Je Tsongkhapa's *Great Treatise on the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*: Actions carried out (1) in a dream, (2) unknowingly, (3) unconsciously, (4) without intensity or long duration, (5) mistakenly, (6) forgetfully, (7) unintentionally, (8) actions that are naturally neutral, (9) that have been purified through regret, or (10) through antidotes.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C1B      Death following the exhaustion of one's merit

To die following the exhaustion of one's merit is the same as dying from a lack of basic requirements.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C1C      Death due to dangers not being avoided

To die due to dangers not being avoided is the same as the nine causes and conditions for death, such as due to overeating, set forth in the sūtras.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2      The minds of death

This has three points:

- A The minds of death
- B The appearances of those minds of death
- C For all three minds of death there is joining due to craving

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2A The minds of death

This has three points:

1. Both virtuous minds such as faith and
2. non-virtuous minds such as attachment, {143}

arise in the mind in dependence on one's own actions or being made to recall them by others as long as gross compositional factors operate.

3. To die with an unspecified mind implies that one did not recall virtuous or non-virtuous minds by oneself nor was one reminded of them by others.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2B The appearances of those minds of death

This has three points:

- [1 The appearance due to a virtuous mind
- 2 The appearance due to a non-virtuous mind
- 3 The appearance due to an unspecified mind]

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2B-1      The appearance due to a virtuous mind

For those who have created virtue it is like going from thick darkness into light. At the time of death various pleasant dream-like forms appear to them, they die happily, and even the interruption of life is of very minor severity.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2B-2      The appearance due to a non-virtuous mind

This has two points:

- A The actual [appearance]
- B Clearing up doubts concerning the interruption of life

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2B-2A      The actual [appearance]

For those who have created non-virtue it is like going from light into thick darkness. At the time of death various dream-like repulsive forms appear to them, intense feelings of pain arise, and the interruption of life is also very severe.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2B-2B      Clearing up doubts concerning the interruption of life

In all birth-places except for the divine realms and hells there is an interruption of life.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2B-3      The appearance due to an unspecified mind

This has three points:

- A The actual [appearance]

In those who have an unspecified mind, the two, happiness and suffering, that were explained above do not arise.

## B What mind becomes manifest at death

At the time of death, whichever mind, virtuous or non-virtuous, is most familiar becomes manifest, whereas other minds do not subsequently operate. If they are equally familiar, that which is recalled first will become manifest, whereas others do not subsequently operate.

## C All the subtle minds of death are unspecified

At the time when the mind moves into its subtle part, virtuous and non-virtuous minds come to a stop and become unspecified minds.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C2C For all three minds of death there is joining due to craving

At the time of death, as long as the state of unclear discrimination has not been reached, the attachment to a self that they have long been familiar with befalls all three. {144} After that, under the influence of attachment to a self, with the thought “I am becoming non-existent,” delight in a body arises. It is the cause for the intermediate state to come about. While attachment to a self also arises in stream-enterers and once-returners, they investigate it with wisdom and abandon it, rather than acquiescing in it; just like, for instance, a strong person beating someone weak. In non-returners that attachment to a self does not arise.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C3 From where the heat withdraws

In those who have created non-virtue the heat first withdraws from the upper part of the corpse and dissipates down to the heart. In those who have created virtue the heat first withdraws from the lower part of the corpse and dissipates up to the heart. In both cases the consciousness transfers from the heart. That which the consciousness first enters into in the middle of the mixture of semen and blood transforms into the heart, and where it eventually transfers from is that very place it first entered into.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C4 How the intermediate state is accomplished after death

This has nine points:

## A From where the bardo is accomplished

From the place the consciousness transfers from as explained above, death and the intermediate state are accomplished without a break, just like the swing on the armature of a scale.

## B The shape of the intermediate state being and so forth

The intermediate state being also has complete sense powers, such as eyes, and has the aspect of the body of whatever migrating being it will be born as. As long as it does not take rebirth, its eye is unobstructed like the divine eye,<sup>138</sup> and its body is also unobstructed as though possessed of magical powers. It is seen by intermediate state beings of similar type and by the flawless divine eye arisen from meditation. While it is set forth in *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* that once the intermediate state of any migrating being has been accomplished, there is no diverting it into some other rebirth, the *Compendium of Manifest Knowledge (Abhidharmasamuccaya)* also explains reversals.

## C How the appearance of the intermediate existence appears to those who have created virtue and non-virtue

The intermediate existence of those who have created non-virtue appears like black cloth or like a dark night, and the intermediate existence of those who have created virtue appears like a white blanket {145} or a moonlit night.

## D How it sees

It sees intermediate state beings of similar type as well as their and its own birth-places.

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<sup>138</sup> The special ability to see through matter and over long distances without obstruction.

E The color

In the *Descent into the Womb Sūtra* it says that the intermediate state of hell beings is like the color of a burnt log, the intermediate state of animals is like smoke, the intermediate state of hungry ghosts is like water, the intermediate state of desire realm gods and humans is like gold, and the intermediate state of form realm gods is white.<sup>139</sup>

F Distinction of whether there is or is not an intermediate state

If you are reborn from the formless realm into the two lower realms, there is an intermediate state. However, if you are born from those two realms into the formless realm, the aggregates of the formless realm are accomplished wherever you die, and there is no intermediate state

G How it travels

It is taught that the intermediate state being of a god travels upward, that of a human travels straight ahead, and that of someone who has done faulty actions travels downward with the eyes cast downward. For the three lower realms the same meaning is intended.

H The lifespan

As for its lifespan, if it does not find the conditions for rebirth, it abides for as many as seven days. If it finds them, the number of days is uncertain. Yet if it does not find them, it exchanges bodies and abides up to seven times seven days. However, it does not abide any longer than that since it will definitely find the conditions for rebirth by then.

I The manner of changing into another intermediate state

Having died and transferred after seven days in the intermediate state of a god, for example, the intermediate state of a god, or alternatively the intermediate state of a human being and so forth, is accomplished because through the changing activity of other karma, the seed of the intermediate state is changed. It is the same for other intermediate states.

2B4B-2A2B-2A2B-2C5 How you take rebirth in a birth-existence

This has five points:

A How you transfer into an intermediate existence through a mind of attachment and so forth

In *Many Level*<sup>140</sup>s it is taught that, when you are born in a womb, a mistaken perception arises with regard to the semen and blood of your father and mother: in that moment, like an illusion, you see your parents having intercourse even though they are not, and you develop attachment to them. {146} However, the auto-commentary on *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* explains that you see your parents actually having intercourse. Furthermore, if you are born as a female, you want to be rid of the woman, become attached to the man, and want to sleep with him. If you are born as a male you want to be rid of the man, become attached to the woman, and want to sleep with her. Once this kind of desire has arisen, the closer you approach, other body parts of that man and woman no longer appear, and you only see the male and female sexual characteristics. Getting angry at that, the intermediate existence being dies, transfers, and is reborn.<sup>141</sup>

B What object the consciousness connects with and how

Furthermore, when there is a situation of intense attachment between father and mother, at the very end thick fluid emerges. After that, two drops of semen and blood doubtlessly emerge from the two. Once the two have mixed in the birth-place of the mother, they turn into something like, for instance, boiled milk that has cooled down and set. At the same time that the intermediate existence terminates, by the power of the consciousness that transmigrates, the subtle parts of the great

<sup>139</sup> The colors refer to the complexion of beings in a given intermediate state (Oral explanation by Geshe Soepa).

<sup>140</sup> Tib. *sa mang po las*.

<sup>141</sup> According to the Tibetan understanding, *birth* signifies one's entry into the mother's womb rather than one's exit from it.

elements of the sense powers, which are other than that mixture, and the combination of semen and blood that accords with that mixture arise as other along with the sense powers.<sup>142</sup> The consciousness that enters at that time is posited as the basis-of-all by those who accept a basis-of-all. Those who do not accept a basis-of-all assert that it is the mental consciousness that transmigrates.

C You are not born in bad birth-sources unless the bardo being wishes to go there

If it has no desire to go to a birth-place, the intermediate state being will not go there, and if it has not gone there, it will not be born there. Therefore, the intermediate state being of someone possessing non-vows<sup>143</sup> who created and accumulated an action for rebirth in hell, such as killing sheep or trading in poultry or pigs and the like, sees, as if in a dream, sheep and so forth at his birth-place and rushes there with the delight of previous familiarity. { 147 } Then he becomes angry at the form of his birth-place, the intermediate existence ends, and he is born in the birth-existence. Likewise, rebirth as a hell being, a hungry ghost with a goiter, and so forth is similar to this.

D How you are reborn in the bad as an animal etc.

In *Actuality of the Stages* it says that if you are born as an animal, hungry ghost, human being, or as a god in the desire and form realms, you see delightful beings of similar type to yourself at your birth-place. Then, having generated delight in and desire for that, you go there. As you get angry at your birth-place, the intermediate existence ceases and you are born in the birth-existence. The way in which someone who has non-vows who does not trade in poultry, pigs, and the like is born in hell is similar to this.

E From among the four birth-sources, how you are born from heat and moisture and miraculously born

In *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* “Others strongly desire odors and an abode” are mentioned saying that if you are born from heat and moisture, you are born upon desiring odors, and if you are born miraculously, you are born upon desiring an abode. Moreover, the commentary explains that if you are born in the hot hells, you go to the intermediate existence upon desiring heat, whereas if you are born in the cold hells, you go to the intermediate existence upon desiring cooling. The auto-commentary on *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge* explains rebirth from an egg to be similar to birth from a womb.

2B4B-2A2B-2B The measure of the attitude having been developed

This has two points:

1 Indicating the measure of the attitude having arisen purely

When you have come to understand the characteristics of cyclic existence in detail from the point of view of the two, sufferings and their origins, just the desire to abandon them and the desire that arises to attain their complete pacification is indeed the thought to definitely emerge. However, that alone is not sufficient. Therefore you should generate that mind to the same extent as the mind of someone who does not want to be stuck in a house ablaze with fire or stay locked up in prison and to the same extent that it desires liberation from them. Then it will still be necessary to increase it.

2 The development of nothing but an appearance of striving for liberation if nothing but a mediocre thought to definitely emerge has developed {148}

If this thought, as taught by Sharawa, is no more than mediocre, like flour thrown into sour milk, also the view that does not want the causes of cyclic existence—the origins—will not become more than that. Accordingly, one’s striving for liberation, the cessation that is the ceasing of sufferings and origins, will be the same. Because of that, the desire to accomplish the path of liberation will be mere words, and also, there will be no basis for the compassion that cannot bear the suffering of

<sup>142</sup> According to an oral commentary by Geshe Soepa, the consciousness at that point connects with two subtle aggregations contained in the mixture of paternal and maternal substances: one that develops into the sense faculties and another one that becomes the seat of the mental consciousness.

<sup>143</sup> The opposites of the vows (*sdom min*) whereby killing, harming, and so forth are given up.

other beings who wander in cyclic existence. Since the uncontrived mind of unsurpassed enlightenment that has the power to arouse the mind will not arise, you become a Mahāyānist only in your understanding that follows words. For that reason you should cultivate that thought again and again.

## 2B4B-2A2B-2C Eliminating misconceptions about it

This has two points:

- 1 How it is misconceived
- 2 The elimination of misconceptions

### 2B4B-2A2B-2C1 How it is misconceived

You may think: “If you cultivate extreme revulsion and disenchantment with cyclic existence, you will fall into the extreme of peace like the hearers because of your dislike for reentering cyclic existence. Therefore it is becoming for Hīnayānists to cultivate disenchantment but it is inappropriate for bodhisattvas. That is how it is explained in the *Sūtra of Showing the Tathāgata's Inconceivable Secret (Tathāgatācintyaguhyānirdeśasūtra)*.”

### 2B4B-2A2B-2C2 The elimination of misconceptions

This has four points:

- A The meaning of statements in scriptures that bodhisattvas are not terrified by cyclic existence

The meaning of the statement “Thus a bodhisattva should not be terrified by cyclic existence” is not to point out that he should not be repulsed by the sufferings of birth, aging, illness, death, and so on of wandering in existence under the power of karma and the mental afflictions. Rather, it is that, due to his mind of enlightenment, he should not be afraid to take rebirth in existence for the benefit of sentient beings under the power of aspirational prayers and compassion.

- B How it is necessary to enjoy being reborn in cyclic existence due to compassion but to be terrified of rebirth in cyclic existence due to karma and the afflictions

In fact as we wander in existence under the power of karma and the mental afflictions, we are oppressed by many sufferings and cannot even bring about our own welfare, let alone anyone else's. {149} Since that is the door to all degeneration, there is a need to block it, having developed extreme disenchantment, more than the Hīnayānists, while it is necessary to enjoy taking rebirth in existence under the power of aspirational prayers and compassion. In accordance with that it also says in the same sūtra:

Bodhisattvas, having taken care of ripening sentient beings, view cyclic existence to be beneficial—unlike the great passage to peace.

- C For those with vows of engagement who express themselves in this manner without differentiating between rebirths due to karma and mental afflictions and rebirths due to aspirational prayers and so forth infractions occur

In *Bodhisattva Levels* it is set forth that if someone who expresses himself in the above manner without differentiating between them has bodhisattva vows, he commits an afflicted infraction.

- D Cherishing the way of conduct without falling into the extreme of peace despite great revulsion for cyclic existence

Having developed revulsion for cyclic existence, to see those sentient beings as one's relatives and thus generate the mind of enlightenment for their sake is the intention of *Four Hundred Stanzas* and is clearly set forth by the great master Candrakīrti in his commentary on that text.

## Explanation of how the nature of the path leading to liberation is established

### 2B4B-2A2B-2D Establishment of the nature of the path leading to liberation

This has two points:



- [1 Transition
- 2 The actual establishment of the nature of the path]

2B4B-2A2B-2D1 Transition

Through meditation on the shortcomings of existence as explained earlier, an intense desire to definitely emerge from cyclic existence has arisen and due to that there is a need to reverse cyclic existence.

2B4B-2A2B-2D2 The actual establishment of the nature of the path

This has two points:

- A By what kind of basis is cyclic existence averted
- B By cultivating what kind of path is it averted

2B4B-2A2B-2D2A By what kind of basis is cyclic existence averted

This has four points:

- 1 The need to avert it at this time when you have obtained a basis of pleasures and endowments

From *Friendly Letter*:

Having obtained a birth of pleasure that's free  
 From the so-called defective eight unfree states {150}  
 Make an effort to avert rebirth.

As is set forth here, you need to avert it at this time when you have the pleasures and endowments, for it has already been explained that in the unfree states there is no opportunity to avert it.

- 2 The need to make an effort now

The Great Yogi Jangchup Rinchen said: "Now is the time to distinguish ourselves from cattle." Potowa also said: "Since it did not stop by itself when we were roaming about so long previously, it will also not stop by itself now. Therefore we must avert it. Yet the time to avert it is this time when we have obtained the pleasures and endowments."

- 3 How on that basis it is good to take ordination

Even more than that, lay people have many obstacles to the accomplishment of the Dharma and have the drawback of numerous faults. Since those who are ordained turn away from them, the ordained have the best basis for averting cyclic existence. That is why the discerning should delight in ordination. In the *Questions of Householder Ugra Sūtra* it says that lay bodhisattvas should aspire to ordination. This mainly refers to aspiring to full ordination. In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it also says:

Those on the side of the ordained  
 Have limitless positive qualities.  
 Thus those exerting themselves in vows  
 Excel over householder bodhisattvas.

- 4 How it is necessary to respect the vows of individual liberation since ordination is also praised by both sutra and tantra for the accomplishment of omniscience

Thus ordination is not only praised for the attainment of the complete release that is liberation from cyclic existence but also presented as the best basis for the accomplishment of omniscience by the perfection and tantra vehicles. The vows of ordination, among the three vows, are those of individual liberation. That is why you should respect the vows of individual liberation, the root of the teachings.

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B By cultivating what kind of path is cyclic existence averted

This has three points:



- 1 Identification of the path—the transition
- 2 Indication that the other trainings will be explained further on
- 3 In particular how to train in ethics

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B-1 Identification of the path—the transition {151}

In *Friendly Letter* it says:

Even if your head or clothes caught fire  
Give up preventing it; simply make an effort  
To destroy the occurrence of future rebirths  
There is nothing else that would be better.

Through pure discipline,<sup>144</sup> wisdom, and concentration  
Attain the immaculate state of peace and taming—  
Nirvāṇa—that's ageless, deathless, and limitless,  
Free of earth, water, fire, wind, sun, and moon.

You need to practice the three types of precious trainings of the path as set forth in this statement.

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B-2 Indication that the other trainings will be explained further on

If I were commenting on the path of intermediate beings for my own enjoyment, an extensive commentary on the three trainings would be necessary here. However, since this is not the case, the training in wisdom, special insight, and the training of the mind, the way to generate calm abiding, will be explained in the context of great beings. Therefore here I will only briefly state the way to train in ethics.

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B-3 In particular how to train in ethics

This has four points:

- [A The benefits of guarding ethics
- B The shortcomings of not guarding ethics
- C How the benefits of generating ethics are great these days
- D The manner of training in ethics]

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B-3A The benefits of guarding ethics

In this regard you should initially consider the benefits of ethics again and again, and increase your heartfelt enthusiasm for it. In *Friendly Letter* it says:

Rules are the base and foundation of all good qualities<sup>145</sup>,  
So it says—like the earth for what moves and what doesn't.

And in the *Tantra Requested by Subāhu*:

Just as crops grow faultlessly in dependence  
On the ground, depending on ethics,  
Moistened by the water of compassion,  
The most superior wholesome qualities grow.

You should think about it according to these statements.

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B-3B The shortcomings of not guarding ethics

Just as guarding the ethics you have adopted brings enormous benefits, likewise there are great disadvantages to not guarding it. You should consider the shortcomings of not guarding it again and again as taught in the scriptures. {152} In the *Sūtra on Cherishing Monks (Bhikṣuparejusūtra)* it says:

<sup>144</sup> Tib. *tshul khrims*, usually translated here as “ethics.”

<sup>145</sup> Tib. *yon tan*, usually translated here as “positive qualities.”

Ethics is happiness for some;  
For others ethics is suffering.  
For those who have it, it is happiness;  
For those who breach it, it is suffering.

In the *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī* (*Ārya-Mañjuśrimūlatantra*) it says:

If discipline<sup>146</sup> declines in those who recite,  
There will be no highest attainments,  
Nor will there be middling attainments,  
Even the least ones will remain absent.

The King of Sages did not teach  
Mantra attainments for those of loose discipline<sup>147</sup>,  
Nor is that the place or direction  
To go to the city of nirvāṇa.

How could there be in such bad children  
Any attainments of mantra at all?  
For those who disregard ethics  
How could there be happy realms?

If they do not become higher beings,  
Nor beings bound for highest bliss,  
What need to mention their accomplishing  
The mantras that the Victor taught?

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B-3C How there are great benefits of generating ethics nowadays

In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* it says:

The trainings that I taught to those  
Who wear the laity's grey apparel—  
Even monks who are fully ordained  
Will not have those trainings at that time.

At that time when, according to the statement, the altogether complete guarding of the five bases of training taught to lay vow-holders is not present even in fully-ordained monks, striving in the trainings is special and has more effect. Therefore you should make an effort. From the same sūtra:

Those who, at the time when the Dharma decays  
And the Sugata's teachings come to an end,  
Practice a single training day and night,  
Their merit will extraordinarily exceed

That of one who for eons like Ganga's<sup>148</sup> sand grains { 153 }  
And with a mind of faith honors billions of buddhas  
With food, drink, parasols,  
Banners and garlands of light.

2B4B-2A2B-2D2B-3D The manner of training in ethics

This has six points:

<sup>146</sup> JN: Tib. *tshul khrims*, usually translated here as “ethics.”

<sup>147</sup> JN: Tib. *tshul khrims*, usually translated here as “ethics.”

<sup>148</sup> The river Ganges.

1 Instructions on the four antidotes for abandoning downfalls

Among the four causes of the occurrence of downfalls, the antidote to not knowing is to study the trainings and know them.

The antidote to non-conscientiousness is

1. the mindfulness that does not forget the observed objects and aspects of what to adopt and what to abandon;
2. the introspection that individually investigates the three doors at every moment and brings to mind the good or faulty actions you engage in;
3. the shame that shuns faults from the perspective of oneself or the Dharma;
4. the embarrassment that shuns faults, thinking that others will criticize you; and
5. the intimidation that fears the fully ripened effects of faulty conduct. You should train in these and others.

As an antidote to a lack of respect you should be respectful toward the Teacher, his formulated rules, and those who perfectly observe them.

As an antidote to many mental afflictions you should examine your continuum and endeavor to apply the antidote to whatever mental affliction predominates.

2 Relating this to past events: how it is inappropriate to be careless with respect even to small formulated rules

If without putting effort into this you commit even a minor transgression and think: “It is a small mistake,” this engagement in carelessness with respect to the formulated rules will only obtain suffering for you because it says in *Exegesis of the Discipline*:

Those who are unconcerned with regard to the teachings  
Of the compassionate Teacher and slightly transgress them  
Will hence come under the influence of suffering,  
Like mango groves that are spoiled through cutting bamboo groves.

Though some here transgress the royal decrees of the king  
And, if it's not often, do not get punished at all,  
If they transgressed the Buddha's<sup>149</sup> words improperly,  
They would migrate to the beasts<sup>150</sup> like the nāga Elapatra.

3 How there is a need for quick confession if you are stained by faults and downfalls {154}

Therefore you should put effort into not being stained by faults and downfalls. If you are nevertheless stained by them, you should not leave it at that indifferently but put effort into undoing the transgression or negativity as has been taught.

4 The need not just for ordained mantric practitioners but also for lay practitioners of mantra to guard the majority of vows

If such guarding of morality is for those who hold the vows of individual liberation, it is also similar in the case of mantra because it says in the *Tantra Requested by Subāhu*:

Of all pure ethics of pratimokṣa  
That I, the Victor, taught, all vinaya,  
Lay practitioners of mantra should abandon  
The signs and rituals but practice the rest.

<sup>149</sup> Tib. *thub pa*, usually translated here as “Sage.”

<sup>150</sup> Tib. *dud 'gro*, usually translated here as “animal.”

If it is necessary for lay practitioners of mantra to behave as set forth in the vinaya, except for that which pertains to the signs of ordination, the ritual actions, and some parts of the prescribed formulated rules, what need is there to mention ordained practitioners of mantra?

- 5 It is the position of holy former masters to make ethics and all other practices mutually supportive of each other

Khamlungpa also said: “When a famine breaks out, everything depends on barley. Likewise everything hinges on ethics; therefore earnestly apply yourself to it. Pure ethics also does not come about in someone who has not reflected on actions and their effects. Therefore it is an essential instruction to reflect on that.” Sharawa also said: “Generally, whatever happens, good or bad, depends on the Dharma. Out of that, again, if you rely on what is suggested in the vinaya, you need not change anything. You will become sincere, withstand investigation, enjoy practice, and have a good end.” And Geshe Dromtönpa also said: “Many people rely on the vinaya and miss out mantra or rely on mantra and miss out the vinaya. {155} Only in my teacher’s tradition does the vinaya become the companion of mantra and mantra the companion of the vinaya.”

- 6 How the great beings in the Land of Aryas put into the practice the requirement that all activities accord with the three scriptural collections

The Elder said:

With us in India, whenever an important matter or new activity arose, those who upheld the scriptural collections convened and established whether it was not repudiated by the three scriptural collections or in contradiction to them, and upon that it was decided. We from Vikramaśīla then had the task to examine whether it was rejected by bodhisattva behavior or in contradiction to it, and the decision was upheld by the entire ordained community.

That concludes the explanation of training the mind in the stages of the path common to intermediate beings.

## CHAPTER 4

### How to Train the Mind in the Stages of the Path of Great Beings

2B4B-2A2C Training the mind in the path of great beings

This has two points:

- 1 The transition
- 2 The actual path

2B4B-2A2C-1 The transition

This has four points:

- A Even for the achievement of one's own entire welfare it is inappropriate to disregard the welfare of others, therefore it is necessary to enter the Mahāyāna from the start

Through meditating in this manner on the disadvantages of cyclic existence from different perspectives over a long time, you will see all existence as a pit of blazing fire, and your mind will be thoroughly overcome by the wish to attain the liberation that completely pacifies suffering. If, due to that, you train in the three trainings, you will attain liberation from cyclic existence and, moreover, you will not indeed turn back again even to look at the glory of high status. Nonetheless, since extinguishing one's own faults and achieving positive qualities is limited, your own welfare will not be complete. For that very reason, the welfare of others will also be temporarily neglected, and in the end, having been urged to do so by the buddhas, you will have to enter the Mahāyāna. Therefore it is appropriate for the intelligent to enter the Mahāyāna from the start. {156} In the *Compendium of the Perfections* it says:

Having abandoned forever those two vehicles  
Which are without power to bring about all the world's aims,  
Those whose nature tastes of benefiting others<sup>151</sup>  
Enter the Victor's vehicle teaching compassion.

- B Since accomplishing the welfare of others is worthy of great beings, it is to be accomplished

It is the happiness and magnificence of great beings<sup>152</sup> and the capacity of a great being: it is appropriate to take responsibility for the welfare of others because to observe only one's own welfare is something we also share with animals. Therefore the natural disposition of great beings<sup>153</sup> is to categorically strive for the benefit and happiness of others. In *Letter to a Student* it says:

When cattle see a mouthful of grass that is easy to get they eat it themselves;  
When they are greatly tormented by thirst and find some water they drink it with relish.  
Here, the effort they make to bring about the welfare of other beings,  
That is their magnificence and the noble potential of great happy beings.

Travelling, riding across the sky, the powerful sun illuminates all;  
Regardless of the burden, the earth supports the world with everything in it.  
Those without the least self-interest, equal in nature to the great,  
Totally strive for that singular taste of benefit and of joy for the world.

- C It is worthy of beings and the wise to toil and strive for the sake of protecting others from suffering

That being so, those who see how migrating beings everywhere are tormented by suffering and who toil for their welfare are called *great beings* or *the wise*. In the same text it says:

<sup>151</sup> Tib. *gshan phan ro gcig rang bzhin de dag*, literally: "those (with a) nature (that is of) one taste (with) benefiting others."

<sup>152</sup> Tib. *skyes bu rnams*. *skyes bu* is the equivalent of the Sanskrit word *puruṣa*.

<sup>153</sup> Tib. *chen po rnams*.

Those who have seen migrators, confused by dense grey clouds of worldly ignorance,  
As they fall without control into the blazing fire of suffering,  
And who mentally toil and exert themselves for them as if blazing fire  
Was spreading overhead, now they are great beings; they also are the wise. {157}

- D Having generated delight that there exists an entrance to the path that accomplishes all one's own and others' welfare, it is necessary to enter it

There exists an entrance to the Mahāyāna—the source of all your own and others' excellence, the medicine removing all problems, the great path traveled by all wise beings that nurtures and nourishes all beings through seeing, hearing, remembering, and touching—that possesses the great skillful means that by working for the welfare of others, by the way, you accomplish your own welfare without any incompleteness. Thinking “Oh, I have found exactly what I was looking for!” you should engage in this best of vehicles with whatever ability of a great being you have.

2B4B-2A2C-2 The actual path

Training the mind in the stages of the path of great beings has three points:

- A Demonstrating that generating the mind of enlightenment is the only gateway to the Mahāyāna
- B How to generate this mind
- C Having generated the mind of enlightenment how to train in the conduct

**Demonstrating that generating the mind of enlightenment is the only gateway  
to the Mahāyāna including an explanation of its benefits**

2B4B-2A2C-2A Demonstrating that generating the mind of enlightenment is the only gateway  
to the Mahāyāna

This has eight points:

- 1 Ascertaining the Mahāyāna as the two—the sutra and mantra vehicles—and generating the mind of enlightenment is the only gateway to it

Therefore, as it is necessary to enter the Mahāyāna, you come to think about how it is to be entered. There is no Mahāyāna apart from the two—the Perfection and Mantra Vehicles—taught by the Victor. Whichever of the two one may enter, the only gateway is the mind of enlightenment.

- 2 Being posited as a practitioner of the Mahāyāna also depends only on this mind

Whenever it has arisen in the continuum, even though nothing else has arisen, one is posited as a Mahāyānist, whereas whenever one is separated from it, whatever positive qualities one has, such as the realization of emptiness and so forth, one will fall to the level of hearer and the like {158} and fall away from the Mahāyāna. This is taught in numerous texts of the Mahāyāna and is also established by reasonings. Therefore, whether one is a Mahāyānist is determined by whether one has this mind or not.

- 3 Only those who have generated the mind become a son of the conquerors and outshine the hearers and solitary realizers

Thus, in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says that as soon as this mind has arisen, you become a child of the Victors. Likewise, in *Life of Maitreya (Maitreyavimokṣa)* it says:

Child of the lineage, it is like this. For example, a diamond, even broken, outshines all gold jewelry, however refined; it does not lose its name “diamond” and averts all poverty. Child of the lineage, likewise the diamond that is the mind generated in the omniscient, even without effort, outshines all the gold jewelry that is the positive qualities of the hearers and solitary realizers; the name “bodhisattva” is not lost and all the misfortunes of cyclic existence are averted.

If that mind exists even in someone untrained in conduct, he is said to be a bodhisattva.

- 4 It is not sufficient for the Dharma that is entered to be Mahāyāna and it is necessary to generate the mind that is more than mere words

Therefore, it is not sufficient for the Dharma to be Mahāyāna, rather it is important that the person has entered the Mahāyāna. Whether you become a Mahāyānist depends on the mind of enlightenment itself. If that mind is no more than an intellectual understanding, your being a Mahāyānist is the same. On the other hand, if you have a fully qualified mind of enlightenment, you will also become a completely pure Mahāyānist. Therefore you should strive for that.

- 5 [The mind of enlightenment] is like a seed since it only gives birth to a buddha

With respect to this it says in the *Array of Stalks Sūtra*:

Child of the lineage, the mind of enlightenment is like the seed of all the Dharma of the Buddha. {159}

Since you need to gain certainty about this, it will be explained.

- 6 The way in which generating the mind [of enlightenment] is even more fundamental than the view of emptiness, etc. for giving birth to a buddha alone

Since water, manure, heat, soil, and so forth act as causes for a rice sprout when combined with a rice grain and act as causes for sprouts of wheat, pulses, and so forth when combined with their respective seeds, they are common causes. Since a barley seed is not suitable as a cause of a rice sprout and so forth even if the conditions are gathered together, it is the uncommon cause of a barley sprout, while the water, manure, and so forth that cooperate with it are the common causes of the barley sprout. Similarly, among the causes for a buddha sprout, the mind of unsurpassed enlightenment, like the seed, is the uncommon cause, whereas the wisdom realizing emptiness, like the water, manure and so forth, is the common cause of the three enlightenments. That is why the statement in *Sublime Continuum (Uttaratantra)*:

Dedication to the supreme vehicle is the seed; wisdom is the mother that gives birth to the Buddha Dharma.

says that dedication to the supreme vehicle is like the father's seed and the wisdom realizing selflessness is like the mother. For instance, since a Tibetan father cannot have a child who is Indian or Mongolian, the father is the cause that determines the lineage. On the other hand, a Tibetan mother is like the common cause since she can give birth to different children.

- 7 The Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna are also distinguished in terms of conduct, the generation of the mind and the like, and are not distinguished in terms of the view

In his *Praise to the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitāstotra)*, Nāgārjuna also says that hearers and solitary realizers equally rely on it:

Buddhas, pratyekabuddhas,<sup>154</sup> and hearers  
Definitely rely on you,  
Singular path to liberation,  
It's true to say there is no other.

That is why the perfection of wisdom is also said to be the mother. Since it is the mother of the sons of both the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna, it is not the wisdom realizing emptiness that distinguishes the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna. {160} Rather it is the mind of enlightenment and the vast conduct that distinguishes them. In *Precious Garland* they are also taught to be differentiated not by the view but by the conduct:

The Hearers' Vehicle does not explain  
The bodhisattvas' aspiration<sup>155</sup>

<sup>154</sup> Tib. *rang sangs rgyas*, usually translated here as "solitary realizer."

<sup>155</sup> Tib. *smoṇ lam*, usually translated here as "aspirational prayer."



Nor their conduct of full dedication.  
How could bodhisattvas emerge from it?

- 8 The inappropriateness of not familiarizing oneself mainly with the mind of enlightenment, but rather familiarizing oneself with secondary factors other than it

Therefore, if even the wisdom realizing emptiness is not an uncommon path of the Mahāyāna, what need is there to mention other paths? For that reason it is necessary to train in the mind of enlightenment, having made instructions on it one's main concern.

### **The explanation of how to generate the mind of enlightenment**

2B4B-2A2C-2B How to generate this mind

This has three points:

- 1 The stages of training the mind of enlightenment
- 2 The measure of the mind of enlightenment having arisen
- 3 The way to assume the mind of enlightenment by means of a ritual

2B4B-2A2C-2B1 The stages of training the mind of enlightenment

This has two manifestations:

- A The sevenfold instruction on cause and effect transmitted from the Great Elder
- B The training based on that which occurs in the texts by Śāntideva, a son of the Victors

### **Explanation of how to train the mind by means of the sevenfold instruction on cause and effect**

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A The sevenfold instruction on cause and effect transmitted from the Great Elder

This has two points:

- 1 Short presentation
- 2 Extensive explanation

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-1 Short presentation

The sevenfold cause and effect is the seven: a complete buddha is born from the mind of enlightenment; this mind from the extraordinary attitude; this attitude from compassion; compassion from love; love from the wish to repay the kindness; the wish to repay the kindness from remembering the kindness; and remembering the kindness from seeing beings as one's mother.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2 Extensive explanation

This has two points:

- A Generating certainty concerning the stages
- B The actual gradual training {161}

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A Generating certainty concerning the stages

This has two points:

- 1 Demonstrating that compassion is the root of the Mahāyāna
- 2 The way in which the other causes and effects become causes and effects of that compassion

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A1 Demonstrating that compassion is the root of the Mahāyāna

This has three points:

- A The importance of compassion at the beginning
- B The importance of compassion in the middle
- C The importance of compassion at the end

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A1A The importance of compassion at the beginning

This has three points:

- 1 The responsibility for liberating migrating beings depends on compassion

If your mind is moved by great compassion, you will definitely resolve to get all sentient beings out of cyclic existence. However, if your compassion is inferior, deeds that accord with that will not come about. Therefore, whether you take responsibility for liberating all migrating beings without exception depends on that, and if you do not take that responsibility, you do not enter the Mahāyāna. That is why compassion is important at the beginning.

- 2 Compassion is the preliminary of all the paths of the Mahāyāna

In the *Teachings of Akṣayamati Sūtra* (*Akṣayamatīnirdeśa Sūtra*) it says:

Venerable son of Śāradvatī, moreover the great compassion of the bodhisattvas is inexhaustible. Why is that? It is because it is a preliminary. Venerable son of Śāradvatī, it is like this. By way of analogy, just as the inward and outward flow of the breath is a preliminary for our human life force faculty, likewise the great compassion of the bodhisattvas is a preliminary for perfectly accomplishing the Mahāyāna.

- 3 Compassion is the beginning of the conduct of bodhisattvas

In the *Foremost of Gayā Sūtra* (*Gayāśīrṣasūtra*) it says:

“Mañjuśrī, what is the beginning of the conduct of bodhisattvas? What is its locale?”  
Mañjuśrī replied: “Son of the gods, the beginning of the conduct of bodhisattvas is great compassion. Its locale is sentient beings.”

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A1B The importance of compassion in the middle

This has two points:

- 1 If you do not cultivate compassion again and again, you will fall into the Hīnayāna

Although you enter the Mahāyāna when a mind like this has arisen once, if you become discouraged upon seeing the great number of sentient beings and their bad actions, [162] the great difficulty of the trainings, their boundlessness, and also need to do them for a limitless time scale, you will fall into the Hīnayāna.

- 2 One does not despair with respect to others' welfare and easily completes the collections

Due to having familiarized yourself increasingly with great compassion rather than generating it just once, you will not look at your own happiness and suffering and you will not despair with respect to the welfare of others. That way you easily complete all the collections.

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A1C The importance of compassion at the end

This has two points:

- 1 The actual importance at the end
- 2 In particular, the advice to make the mind of enlightenment the focus of the instructions

### 2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A1C-1 The actual importance at the end

This has two points:

- A The difference between buddhas and hearers

The fact that, even when the buddhas have achieved their result, they do not dwell in peace like the Hīnayānists but bring about the welfare of however many sentient beings there are throughout space, is also due to the power of their compassion, for without it, they would become like hearers.

- B All three external analogies symbolize compassion only

Glorious Candrakīrti said: “For a harvest, what is important in the beginning is the seed, in the middle the water, and in the end the maturation. Likewise, for the harvest of buddhahood, what is important in the beginning, the end, and in the middle is compassion.”

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A1C-2 In particular, the advice to make the mind of enlightenment the focus of the instructions

This has two points:

- A The need to make it the essence of one's practice

Zhang Nachung Tönpa said: “Although I asked the Elder for instructions, nothing came of it other than: ‘Abandon worldly thought. Cultivate the mind of enlightenment!’” Geshe Tönpa laughed at him and said: “You got the central point of the Elder's instructions! He knew the key point of the teachings, the Dharma”.

- B Since it is difficult to gain certainty about this, it is necessary to rely on accumulation, purification, and the scriptures

Since it is also difficult to gain certainty about this, you must accumulate and purify again and again, study the scriptures such as the *Array of Stalks Sūtra* as well as their commentaries, and seek firm certainty. It is as Glorious Aśvaghoṣa says referring to the Buddha:

Your mind, Heroic One, is precious,  
The seed of complete enlightenment;  
Only you know it as the essence, [163]  
Other beings do not guess that.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A2 The way in which the other causes and effects become causes and effects of that compassion

This has two points:

- A The way in which from *understanding as mothers through love* are causes  
B The way in which the extraordinary attitude and the generation of the mind of enlightenment are effects

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A2A The way in which from *understanding as mothers through love* are causes

This has five points:

- 1 How to develop the intensive wish for all sentient beings to be free from suffering

If you think again and again about the suffering of a sentient being, this will generally give rise to the mere wish that it be free from suffering. However, for this mind to arise easily and for it to arise very strong and stable, to start with it must be a sentient being who has the aspect of being attractive and valuable. For when someone close to us meets with suffering, we cannot bear it; when our enemies meet with suffering, we enjoy it; and when someone who is neither a friend nor an enemy meets with suffering, mainly an equanimity that neglects him arises.

- 2 The difference of attraction arising or not arising toward friends, enemies, and the in between

In this regard, since the former is attractive to our mind, the more we cherish him, the more his suffering will be unbearable to us, and the more compassion will arise for him. If we cherish him a little or somewhere between a little and a lot<sup>156</sup>, our inability to bear his suffering will also be small. On the other hand, if we cherish someone very much, we cannot bear it at all when he meets with only slight suffering. When we see our enemy suffering, not only does the wish that he be free from it fail to arise, but rather the thought occurs to us “May his suffering increase and may he not be free from it.” That is our reaction to someone we find unattractive. Moreover, our joy at his suffering will also be greater or smaller, depending on how unattractive he is. With respect to the

<sup>156</sup> Tib. *gces pa chung 'bring la*, literally “for (someone) we cherish a little or middle.”

suffering of someone who is neither a friend nor an enemy, it is neither that we cannot bear it nor that we enjoy it. That is our reaction when someone is neither attractive nor unattractive.

- 3 How to generate great love and great compassion by establishing them as greatly attractive by means of the three—recognizing them as our mothers, remembering their kindness, and wishing to repay it

If this is done, meditating on sentient beings as our relatives is for the sake of making them attractive to us. [164] However, since the person we are most closely related to<sup>157</sup> is our mother, the three—meditating on them as having been our mother, remembering their kindness, and wishing to repay this kindness—establishes them as dear and attractive. The love that holds sentient beings to be delightful as an only child is the effect of these three. It produces compassion.

- 4 With respect to mere love and compassion it is not certain which is the cause and which is the effect

With respect to the love that wishes them to meet with happiness and compassion, there does not seem to be any certainty as to which one is the cause and which one is the effect.

- 5 Whose system these instructions are

These meditations on sentient beings as our relatives have been explained by Ācārya Candrakīrti, Venerable Candra, and Ācārya Kamalaśīla as the cause for the mind of enlightenment to arise.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A2B The way in which the extraordinary attitude and the generation of the mind of enlightenment are effects

This has two points:

- 1 Doubt
- 2 Response

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A2B-1 Doubt

It should really be sufficient if, compassion having arisen due to such a gradual training of the mind, the wish arises to attain enlightenment for the welfare of all sentient beings. Why is the extraordinary attitude inserted between them?

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2A2B-2 Response

This has two points:

- A Although there is immeasurable compassion, there may not be the extraordinary attitude of taking the responsibility upon oneself

Although hearers and solitary realizers also have the immeasurable compassion and the love that think, “If only sentient beings were to meet with happiness and if only they were free from suffering!,” still, those who are not Mahāyānists do not take the responsibility to accomplish happiness for all sentient beings and to eliminate their suffering. Therefore it is necessary to generate the extraordinary attitude, the special attitude of those with brave hearts. You understand this from a quotation from the *Sūtra Requested by Sāgaramati* in the commentary on the *Sublime Continuum*.

- B How the extraordinary attitude induces the generation of the mind of enlightenment

Once the mind to free sentient beings has arisen in this manner, owing to your current situation you could not complete even the welfare of one sentient being. Not only that, even if you were to attain the state of the two kinds of arhats, you would only be able to complete the welfare of very few beings, [165] and their welfare would be to merely accomplish liberation. Since they cannot establish them in omniscience, who could complete the temporary and final welfare of limitless beings? If you reflect in this vein, you will come to understand that only a buddha is able to do this, and you will generate the wish to attain buddhahood for the welfare of sentient beings.

<sup>157</sup> Tib. *gnyen gyi mthar thug*, literally “the ultimate of our relatives.”

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B The actual gradual training

This has three points:

- 1 Training in the mind striving for the welfare of others
- 2 Training in the mind striving for enlightenment
- 3 The result of the training: identifying the generation of the mind of enlightenment

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1 Training in the mind striving for the welfare of others

This has two points:

- A Laying the foundation for generating this mind
- B Actual generation of that mind striving for the welfare of others

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A Laying the foundation for generating this mind

This has two points:

- 1 Producing an equanimous mind toward sentient beings
- 2 Accomplishing that all sentient beings have an attractive aspect

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A-1 Producing an equanimous mind toward sentient beings

This has two points:

- A The preparatory steps
- B How to cultivate equanimity

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A-1A The preparatory steps

The preparatory steps and the like as explained before in the context of lesser and intermediate beings should be adopted and sustained here as well.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A-1B How to cultivate equanimity

This has five points:

- 1 The need for an equanimous mind after attachment and hatred have been stopped

To start with, if you do not accomplish an equanimous mind, having stopped the bias of attachment toward some sentient beings and hatred toward others, any love and compassion that arise will arise with partiality. As they do not arise if you observe them without impartiality, you should cultivate equanimity.

- 2 What kind of equanimity needs to be cultivated

Among the two types of equanimous mind that have been taught, one that has the aspect of establishing living beings as lacking mental afflictions, such as attachment, hatred, and so forth, and one in which oneself is free from attachment and hatred toward sentient beings, here it is the latter.

- 3 The order of meditations

Since this is the order of meditation by which it will easily arise, initially you should take as your object of meditation a person who has neither helped nor harmed you [166] and, through eliminating attachment and anger, accomplish an equanimous mind. When an equanimous mind toward that person has been accomplished, you then need to accomplish an equanimous mind with respect to friends and relatives. A non-equanimous mind toward them is to be biased due to attachment and hatred or not to be equanimous due to lesser or greater attachment. When you are equanimous toward them, you should cultivate an equanimous mind toward your enemies. The lack of equanimity toward them is due to hatred that derives from seeing them as totally incompatible with yourself. Having become equanimous toward them, you should cultivate an equanimous mind toward all sentient beings.

- 4 By meditating on what attachment and hatred are stopped.

Moreover, the following two thoughts are taught in Kamalaśīla's *Stages of Meditation II*: "Since from their side all sentient beings are the same in wanting happiness and not wanting suffering, it

would be inappropriate for me to benefit some whom I consider close and harm or fail to benefit others whom I consider distant,” and “Since from my own side there is not any sentient being who in beginningless cyclic existence has not been my relative hundreds of times, who should I have attachment for and who should I have hatred for?” Also with regard to attachment to our relatives, the *Sūtra Requested by the Noble Daughter Chandrottara (Candrottaraḍārikāparipṛcchāsūtra)* says:

In former times I killed each one of you;  
I was also formerly chopped<sup>158</sup> by you.  
We all have been foes and murderers unto each other.  
How can a mind of attachment arise in you?

As was explained above in the context of the fault of uncertainty, you should think about the way in which friends and enemies quickly change. In this manner you will avert both anger and attachment.

5 Ceasing attachment and hatred although the mind of friend and enemy has not been ceased

We need to differentiate between friends and enemies having apprehended them to be the basis of their respective features. [167] Therefore, what is to be ceased is the mind that is biased due to attachment and hatred, taking as a reason that someone alleging someone to be a friend or enemy, whereas the mind of friend and enemy does not need to be averted.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A-2 Accomplishing that all sentient beings have an attractive aspect

This has three points:

- A Meditating on all sentient beings as one's mother
- B Remembering their kindness
- C Meditating on repaying their kindness

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A-2A Meditating on all sentient beings as one's mother

This has two points:

- 1 The thought that they have been one's mothers in the past

In the sūtras it is taught that, since cyclic existence is beginningless, our births are also beginningless. Therefore we have been born and we have died incessantly, so that there is no body in cyclic existence that we have not taken, no place where we have not been born, and also no-one who has not been a relative such as our mother.

- 2 The thought that they are still one's mother

Moreover, this is not only true of the past, they will again be in the future. Therefore, reflecting in that way, you should try to gain strong certainty that they have been your mother, for, once that certainty arises, it will be easy to remember their kindness and so forth. On the other hand, if it does not arise, there will be no foundation for remembering their kindness and so forth.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A-2B Remembering their kindness

This has five points:

- 1 The thought that it is skilful to start with your mother of this life

Geshe Potowa maintained that the thought remembering their kindness will arise quickly if, after meditating on all sentient beings as your mothers, you initially meditate on your mother of this life. You should meditate like that. You should visualize your mother in front of you in a clear aspect and repeatedly reflect: “She has been my mother not only now, but times past counting since beginningless cyclic existence. That way, when she was my mother, she protected me from all harm and accomplished all happiness and benefit for me.”

<sup>158</sup> Tib. *gshags shing gtubs*, literally “slashed and cut into pieces.”



2 The way in which she also protected you in this life

In particular, even in this life she initially carried you in her womb for a long time. Then, when she had given birth to you, she pressed your yellow tousled hair against the heat of her body, she swung you on her fingertips, nursed you with her milk, fed you as an infant from her mouth, wiped away your saliva with her mouth, [168] cleaned your filth with her hands, caring for you untiringly in many different ways. In addition, when you were hungry or thirsty, she gave you food and drink. When you were cold, she gave you clothing. When you were in need, she gave you her possessions that she herself had hardly used. When even the most basic necessities were hard to come by, she bore great hardship and spared herself no negativity, suffering, or bad talk to get them and give them to you.

3 A mother cherishes her child more than herself

Whenever her child suffered from a disease and so forth, she wished from the depths of her heart to die rather than for her child to die, to be ill rather than for her child to be ill, and so forth. With effort, she did whatever she could to eliminate her child's suffering.

4 How to meditate on the essential points separately

To summarize, by whatever level of knowledge and whatever level of ability she had, she thought single-pointedly about ways to accomplish your happiness and benefit, and to remove any harm and suffering from you.

5 How to meditate progressing gradually

If, by meditating in this way, a mind remembering her kindness that is not just words has arisen, you should then meditate on recognizing other friends and relatives, your father and so forth, as also having been your mothers. Then you should also meditate on recognizing neutral persons as having been your mothers. When a similar mind arises toward them as that toward your friends and relatives, you should also meditate on recognizing your enemies as having been your mothers. When a similar mind arises toward them as that toward your mother, you should proceed from the recognition of all beings as having been your mothers, and meditate, gradually extending it more and more.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1A-2C Meditating on repaying their kindness

This has four points:

- 1 Even though you do not recognize them due to birth, death, and transmigration, it would be shameful to neglect them.

There is nothing more shameful than carelessly neglecting your suffering, protectorless, kind mothers, just because you do not recognize them anymore due to birth, death, and transmigration, and being preoccupied with freeing yourself from cyclic existence. In *Letter to a Student* it says:

My relatives have got immersed in the ocean of cyclic existence [169]  
And seem to have fallen into an abyss; if I neglected them,  
Unrecognized due to birth and death and transmigration,  
And sought liberation alone, there would be nothing more shameful.

- 2 To neglect those who have been kind does not accord with the well-mannered

Thus, thinking "If neglecting such kind beings is unacceptable even to the ill-mannered, how can I reconcile it with my own ways?" you should take the responsibility to reciprocate their kindness.

- 3 As it would be inappropriate to repay the benefit with something contaminated, one should liberate them from ignorance

If someone asks: "Well then, how should I repay the benefit?" Whatever pleasures and riches of cyclic existence your mothers obtain, they are deceived by all of them. Thus we should repay the benefit thinking "In the past, by the power of the mental afflictions, evil spirits that possess me, I produced all kinds of additional sufferings in those who were already suffering by nature, like



putting salt and the like on the injured who were already severely wounded. I will establish all those who have benefited me out of love in the happiness of liberation, nirvāṇa.”

4 How to meditate on the essential points separately

In brief, if even your own kind mother who, restless and insane, blind and without anyone to guide her, is evidently stumbling with each step and approaching a fearsome abyss, cannot put her hope in her child, who can she count on? If it is not for her child to free its mother from fear, who else should do it? Likewise the sentient beings who have been our mothers, their minds stirred up rather than in the natural state<sup>159</sup> due to the evil spirits of the mental afflictions, insane and without control over their consciousness, lacking eyes to see the path to high status and certain goodness, without a blind person’s guide of perfect knowledge—in each instant they stumble due to being distracted by faulty behavior [170] and wander toward the abyss of cyclic existence in general and the lower realms in particular. As you see them, you should reflect that these mothers necessarily put their hopes in their child, and that it is also for their child to get his mothers out of there. You should repay their kindness by definitely getting them out of cyclic existence. In the *Compendium of Trainings* it says:

Insane with afflictions, blinded by ignorance,  
On a path with many abysses,  
Stumbling with every step, myself  
And others are always the basis of sorrow.  
Migrators are the same in suffering.

In view of this, although it is indeed said to be inappropriate to look for faults in others, although you should hold the slightest positive quality in amazement when you see it, here it is appropriate to relate to misery.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1B Actual generation of that mind striving for the welfare of others

This has three points:

- 1 Meditating on love
- 2 Meditating on compassion
- 3 Meditating on the extraordinary attitude

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1B-1 Meditating on love

This has seven points:

A The observed object

The observed objects of love are sentient beings who are not endowed with happiness.

B The aspect of love

Its aspect is the thought: “How wonderful it would be if they were to meet with happiness. May they meet with happiness!” And: “I will make them meet with happiness!”

C The merit is even greater than constantly making offerings to the buddhas

As regards the benefit, it says in the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra*:

Many kinds of offerings without measure  
In myriads of neighboring pure fields  
Constantly offered to the most excellent beings,  
Fall short of a fraction of the mind of love.

This is to say that the merit is much greater than that of constantly making offerings of things to the field that is the final object with very vast things.

<sup>159</sup> Tib. *sems rnal du gnas pa dkrugs pas*, literally “their minds that abide in a natural state stirred up.”

D If you cultivate love in this field, the merit will exceed even the former

Also, in *Array of Qualities in Mañjuśrī's Buddha-realm* (*Ārya-Mañjuśribuddhakṣetraguṇavyūha*) it is explained:

In the world sphere called “Thousand Ornaments” of the great king Buddhheśvara, at the northeastern border, [171] sentient beings possess a happiness similar to the happiness of monks who have entered cessation. If a mind of love toward all sentient beings, generated in this field for as little as the duration of a finger snap, produces far more merit than a celibate practicing pure conduct there for a hundred thousand millions of years, what need is there to mention that of abiding in that mind day and night?

E Achievement of the eight benefits such as being loved by gods and human beings

In Nāgārjuna's *Precious Garland* we also find:

Three hundred small pots of food one offers  
Three times every day fall short  
Of the merit of love sustained  
For the duration of just one moment.

You are loved by gods and humans,  
They protect you as well and you have  
Mental happiness and much happiness,  
Poisons and weapons can do no more harm,

You achieve your goals without effort  
And will be born in the world of Brahma.  
Even if you do not reach liberation,  
You will win the eight qualities of love.

If you have love, you are loved by gods and men and they naturally gather around you. Since even the Victors defeat the hosts of Māra by the force of love, it becomes the best of protections and so forth.

F The stages of meditation on love

The stages of meditation on love are to respectively meditate initially on love for your friends and relatives, then for neutral persons, then for your enemies, and then for all sentient beings.

G The way in which to meditate on love

The way in which to meditate on love is as follows. Just as compassion arises when you reflect again and again on how sentient beings have the suffering of suffering, likewise you should reflect again and again on how sentient beings lack contaminated and uncontaminated happiness and on the manners in which they are devoid of happiness. Once you have familiarized yourself with this, the wish for them to meet with happiness will arise naturally. In addition, having directed your mind to the various kinds of happiness, you will then provide sentient beings with them. [172]

2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1B-2      Meditating on compassion

This has six points:

A The observed object of compassion

The observed objects of compassion are sentient beings who suffer due to any of the three kinds of suffering.

B The aspect of compassion

Its aspect is the thought: “If only they were free from these sufferings,” “May they be free from them,” and “I will free them from them.”

## C The sequence of the meditations on compassion

The sequence of the meditations is to meditate on compassion for your friends and relatives first, then for neutral persons, then for your enemies, and then for all the sentient beings of the ten directions.

## D The main point of meditating in that sequence

This gradual meditation on equanimity, love, and compassion in which you divide the objects into specific categories was developed by Ācārya Kamalaśīla following the Abhidharma Sūtra (*Abhidharmasūtra*). This is a very important point because if from the start you train in observing sentient beings in general without dividing them into specific categories, it will seem as if equanimity and so forth had arisen, but when you then think about friends and so forth one by one, it will appear that it does not arise for any of them. On the other hand, if you experience a change in your mind toward them one by one as explained above, and then extend it to many, when at the end you observe them in general and sustain that attitude, it will arise purely regardless of who is observed, whether a group or each singly.

## E The way to meditate

The way to meditate is in terms of the sufferings that were explained when considering how the sentient beings who have been our mothers have fallen into existence and are experiencing the general and specific sufferings.

## F The measure of the arising of compassion

The measure of the arising of compassion is taught in *Stages of Meditation I*:

At the point where the compassion that has the aspect of the constant desire to remove the suffering of all beings—as if your own beloved child was unhappy—operates naturally in you spontaneously and operates in accordance with your own nature, it is complete. Thereby it obtains the name *great compassion*. [173]

Thus if compassion toward all sentient beings naturally arises to the extent that it arises in a mother when the child she loves with all her heart suffers, it is said to be fully-qualified great compassion. Through this the measure for the arising of great love should also be understood.

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B1B-3 Meditating on the extraordinary attitude

This has two points:

## A The actual way to meditate on the extraordinary attitude

Having meditated on love and compassion in this manner, finally, you will think: “Alas! If these sentient beings who are pleasant and attractive to me are thus deprived of happiness and tormented by suffering, how shall I make them meet with happiness and how shall I free them from suffering?” In taking upon yourself, at least in mere words, the responsibility to liberate them, your mind is trained.

## B Clearing up doubt

Although this point has already been made briefly in the context of repaying their kindness, it is shown here that the love and compassion that think “How wonderful it would be if they were to meet with happiness” and “How wonderful it would be if they were free from suffering” are not sufficient. This is because of the need that was taught to generate the love and compassion capable of inducing the thought: “I myself will accomplish the happiness and benefit of sentient beings.” This is not to be done just during meditation sessions but is to be sustained continuously, remembering it during all behaviors after the sessions and so forth as is taught in *Stages of Meditation I*.

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B2 Training in the mind striving for enlightenment

Once you realize, urged by the steps explained so far, that enlightenment is necessary for the welfare of others, you will also develop the wish to attain it. Nonetheless, since that in itself is not sufficient, at the beginning you should increase *your* faith through thinking about the positive qualities of the exalted body, exalted speech, exalted mind, and enlightened activities as they were explained earlier in the context of taking refuge. Then, since that faith is said to act as the basis for your aspiration, you generate the wish to attain those qualities from the bottom of your heart. That will induce certainty that the achievement of an exalted knower of all aspects is indispensable also for your own welfare. [174]

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1A-2B3 The result of the training: identifying the generation of the mind of enlightenment

This has two points:

## A The general definition

The general definition is as taught in *Ornament for Clear Realization*: “The mind generation is the desire for perfectly complete enlightenment for the welfare of others.”

## B Divisions

*Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*, following the *Array of Stalks Sūtra*, teaches the two—the aspiring and engaging mind generations saying:

The wish to go and actually going—  
The way that difference is understood  
Is how the discerning should understand  
The difference between those two respectively.

If there appear to be a lot of inconsistencies in this respect, there is also the statement in *Stages of Meditation I* that the mind that thinks: “May I become a buddha for the welfare of sentient beings” is the aspiring mind and that, after the vow has been taken, that mind is the engaging mind generation.

**Explanation of how to train the mind through equalizing and exchanging oneself and others**

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1B The training based on that which occurs in the texts by Śāntideva

This has three points:

- 1 Thinking about the advantages of exchanging and the disadvantages of not exchanging oneself and others
- 2 Demonstrating that you can generate this mind if you familiarize yourself with it
- 3 The stages of meditation on how to exchange oneself and others

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-1 Thinking about the advantages of exchanging and the disadvantages of not exchanging oneself and others

This has three points:

## A To quickly accomplish the two welfares it is appropriate to exchange oneself and others

In *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Whoever wishes to protect  
Himself and others rapidly  
Should practice the secret instructions which  
Consist in exchanging oneself and others.

## B The advantages of exchanging and the disadvantages of not exchanging oneself and others

All happiness that exists in the world  
Arises from wanting happiness for others.

All suffering that exists in the world  
Arises from wanting one's own happiness.

What need is there to say any more?  
The childish work for their own welfare [175]  
The Munis for the welfare of others.  
Look at the difference between the two!

C Therefore buddhahood and so forth are difficult to attain if one does not exchange oneself and others

One's happiness and the suffering of others—

If one fails to exchange them correctly,

One will not reach buddhahood,

Samsāra will also be without happiness. Just as it is expressed here, you should think of cherishing oneself as the door to all problems and cherishing others as the basis of all excellences.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-2 Demonstrating that you can generate this mind if you familiarize yourself with it

This has two points:

A The actual topic

In the same way that fear used to arise in you even at hearing your enemy's name but later on, having made it up, you became friends and got very sad if he was absent, likewise due to the mind following habits, you can familiarize yourself with seeing yourself like someone else and others like yourself. In the same text it says:

Do not avoid things because they are difficult.  
By the strength of familiarization  
One whose name was frightful to hear  
Will make you sad if he is away.

And:

It is not all that hard to posit  
My body as belonging to others.

B Clearing up doubt

If you think: "Since someone else's body is not my own body, how could it be appropriate to generate the same attitude of 'mine' toward it?" This body was also created from the semen and blood of our parents, and even though it was created from parts of others' bodies, we hold it to be "I" by the power of previous familiarization; likewise if we familiarize ourselves with cherishing others' bodies as if they were our own, this mind will arise. The same text says:

Therefore, with regard to drops  
Of someone else's blood and semen,  
You apprehend yourself; like that  
Get used to<sup>160</sup> it regarding others!

Through thorough reflection on the advantages and disadvantages along these lines, a strong enthusiasm for this meditation will arise from the depths of the heart. [176] Having seen that, if you familiarize yourself with it, you can generate this attitude, you should meditate on it.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-3 The stages of meditation on how to exchange oneself and others

This has two points:

<sup>160</sup> Tib. *goms pa(r gyis)*, usually translated here as "familiarize yourself with."

- A Removing obstacles
- B The actual way to meditate

## 2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-3A Removing obstacles

This has two points:

- 1 Identifying the mind of exchanging oneself and others
- 2 Removing obstacles to it

### 2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-3A1 Identifying the mind of exchanging oneself and others

What is called “exchanging oneself and others” and “making oneself into the other and making others into oneself” does not mean training in the mind that thinks: “The other person is me” and “His eyes and so forth are my eyes and so forth.” Rather, it is to exchange the rank of the two—(1) the mind that cherishes oneself and (2) the mind that neglects others—and to generate the mind that cherishes others like we cherish ourselves and neglects ourselves like we neglect others. That is also why it was taught that one’s own happiness and the suffering of others should be exchanged. Having perceived self-cherishing as our enemy, we will stop making our own happiness our priority. Having perceived cherishing others as a positive quality and having stopped neglecting the suffering of others, we will make it our priority to eliminate it. In short, we will act for the sake of eliminating the suffering of others without concern for our own happiness.

### 2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-3A2 Removing obstacles to it

When training in this mind, there are two obstacles.

- A Removing the obstacle of considering oneself and others as distinct individuals
- B Removing the obstacle of thinking: “Since the suffering of others does not harm me, I need not make an effort to remove it”

### 2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-3A2A Removing the obstacle of considering oneself and others as distinct individuals

This has two points:

- 1 The actual topic

Separating the two, oneself and others—the basis of one’s own and others’ happiness and suffering—into distinct entities, like blue and yellow, you hold them to be established in this way. Then, with respect to the happiness and suffering based on them, you think: “Since it is mine, it should be accomplished or removed. Since it is someone else’s, it is to be neglected.” Therefore, as an antidote to this, think: “Myself and others are not distinct entities by nature. Rather, as we look at one another, the mind “other” arises in me, whereas the mind “I” arises in the other person. Thus it is like “the mountain over here” and “the mountain over there.” For instance, although from this perspective the mind “the mountain over there” arises with respect to the mountain over there, when you go to the mountain over there, the mind “the mountain over here” arises. Therefore [177] this is not the same as the fact that in whoever looks at the color blue, a mind of just blue will arise, whereas a mind of another color will not arise.

- 2 The scriptural sources

In this manner, the *Compendium of Trainings* also teaches that self and other are not established by their own entities but merely posited in dependence on the point of view:

Through familiarity with the equality  
Of other and self bodhicitta grows firm.  
*Self* and *other* are relational;  
As fictitious as *that side* and *this side*.

The slope is not *that side* by itself.  
Depending on the perspective it’s *this side*,  
The *self* in itself is not established.  
Depending on the perspective it’s *other*.



2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-3A2B Removing the obstacle of thinking: “Since the suffering of others does not harm me, I need not make an effort to remove it”

This has four points:

- 1 Refutation in terms of the actions of a youth and an elderly person

If this were the case, there would be no need to accumulate wealth when young out of concern for the sufferings of old age since the sufferings of the elderly person would not harm the youth.

- 2 Refutation in terms of different parts of the body and different times

It is said: “Likewise, the hand would not eliminate the sufferings of the foot because they are other.” This is a mere illustration and should also be applied to the sufferings of the morning and those of the evening, and so forth.

- 3 Abandoning the doubt that these analogies are not the same as “self” and “other” since they refer to the same continuum or collection

If you think: “The two, self and other, are not the same since the elderly person and the youth are the same continuum, while the hand and the foot are the same collection.” A *continuum* and a *collection* are designated on many instants and a combination of many parts; they lack an autonomous entity. Since your own self and the self of others must be posited on a continuum or a collection, they are not established by way of their own entities which would not merely be self and other posited in relation.

- 4 By the power of familiarization the mind cherishing others can also develop [178]

Yet your own suffering is unbearable due to the power of familiarization with self-cherishing from beginningless time. Therefore, if you familiarize yourself with cherishing others, their suffering will also become unbearable.

2B4B-2A2C-2B1B-3B The actual way to meditate

This has five points:

- 1 Thinking about the disadvantages of cherishing oneself and the advantages of cherishing others

By the power of attachment to the self, this self-cherishing has produced much that is undesirable from beginningless time up to now. Despite the fact that you have wanted to create excellence for yourself, you have relied on unsuitable means, considering your own welfare paramount. Due to this, neither your own welfare nor that of others has been accomplished although countless eons have passed. Not only have you failed to accomplish that, you have only been tormented by suffering. If you had shifted the concern for your own welfare to that of others, you would have become a buddha a long time ago and both your own and others’ welfare would have, without doubt, become excellent. But since you did not do that, the time has been spent with meaningless exertion.

- 2 The need to put an end to self-cherishing by regarding it as an enemy

Think: “Now that I have understood this, I will rely on the mindfulness and introspection that this self-cherishing is my worst enemy, and make much effort so that the self-cherishing that has not arisen does not arise and that which has arisen does not last long.” Having made this certainty stable, you should familiarize yourself with it many times.

- 3 Generating the mind cherishing others

Thinking about the advantages of cherishing others again and again in this way, you will generate strong enthusiasm to do so from the bottom of your heart. Then you will not generate the mind neglecting others that has not yet arisen, and that which has arisen will not last long. By means of the thought that others are dear, pleasant, and attractive, as far as it has arisen, you should generate the mind cherishing others, just as you previously cherished yourself.



4 How to meditate remembering the teachings of earlier holy beings [179]

The Elder said: “The Tibetans know bodhisattvas who do not know how to train in love and compassion. Well then, how do you do it? You should do it having trained sequentially from the beginning.”

Langri Tangpa said: “Shawopa and I have eighteen human methods and one horse method, nineteen altogether. The human methods are to generate the mind of supreme enlightenment and train in doing whatever one does for the welfare of sentient beings. The method of horses is the self-cherishing that does not allow the mind of enlightenment that has not arisen to arise and that which has arisen to remain and increase. Therefore, having taught it in passing, we train in whatever harms it. As for sentient beings, we train in whatever benefits them, having taught this as the fundamental point.”

Khamlungpa said: “Since we act deviously toward noble sentient beings, they will also do the same to us.”

5 The appropriateness of putting effort by many approaches into the methods for generating the mind of enlightenment

It is good if a habit develops that constantly checks to what extent this mind has been generated since everything stems from it: whether or not the root of the Mahāyāna has been planted and whether or not one is included among Mahāyānists. Even if it does not arise, do not leave it at that but rely on a virtuous spiritual friend who teaches it, and always keep company with the companion that is mind training. Read the scriptures of the Teacher and their commentaries. As its cause, accumulate the collections and purify your obscurations. Since it is certain that if you train your mind in this way, the seed will be fully planted, these actions are of no little importance and a reason for joy. It is as the Great Elder said:

For those who wish to enter the gate of  
Mahāyāna Dharma it's worth an eon  
Of effort for bodhicitta to grow  
Which like the sun and moon eliminate  
Darkness and pacify scorching heat.

2B4B-2A2C-2B2 The measure of the mind of enlightenment having arisen [180]

That should be understood from what was already explained above.

**Explanation of how to assume the mind generation by means of a ritual**

2B4B-2A2C-2B3 The way to assume the mind of enlightenment by means of a ritual

This has three points:

- A Receiving that which has not yet been received
- B Guarding that which has been received without degenerating it
- C The method for restoring the vow if it has been degenerated

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A Receiving that which has not yet been received

This has three points:

- 1 From whom: the object from whom it is taken
- 2 By whom: the basis that takes it
- 3 How: the ritual by which it is taken

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-1 From whom: the object from whom it is taken

The assertions of the earlier masters accord with Master Jetari that it is not enough for the person from whom the vow is taken to possess the vow of the aspiring mind and to be abiding in the trainings, rather he must possess the engaging vows.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-2 By whom: the basis that takes it

All gods, nāgas, and so forth who are physically and mentally suitable to generate the aspiring mind are also a suitable basis for it. The *Commentary on the Difficult Points of the “Lamp for the Path”* says:

Repulsed by cyclic existence, mindful of death, with wisdom and great compassion.

Thus it should be someone who has gained a little experience of transforming his mind into the mind of enlightenment due to having trained the mind in the stages of the path as explained previously.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3 How: the ritual by which it is taken

This has three points:

- A The preparatory ritual
- B The actual ritual
- C The concluding ritual

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A The preparatory ritual

This has three points:

- 1 Special taking of refuge
- 2 Accumulating the collection of merit
- 3 Training in the attitude

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A1 Special taking of refuge

This has three points:

- A Decorating the place, displaying representations, and setting up offering substances
- B Making a request and taking refuge
- C Stating the trainings of having taken refuge

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A1A Decorating the place, displaying representations, and setting up offering substances

This has three points:

- 1 General indications concerning the place, the representations, offerings, and so forth

Clean an isolated place, smear it with the five cow substances,<sup>161</sup> anoint it with superb perfumed water such as sandalwood, and scatter fragrant flowers. Set out representations of the Three Jewels—[181] metal statues and so forth, texts and so forth, and images of bodhisattvas—on a throne, a table, or a raised platform. Do the preparatory ritual with as valuable offering items such as canopies and flowers as possible, as well as music, food, and so forth. Arrange a throne for the virtuous spiritual friend and also adorn it with flowers. You accumulate the collection of merit by paying respect to the former masters, the Saṅgha, and giving an offering cake<sup>162</sup> to the elemental spirits.

- 2 Clearing up doubts about this

If you do not have any offerings at all, as described in the *Sūtra of the Good Eon (Bhadrakalpikasūtra)* it can be accomplished even with cloth fringes. If you do have offerings, they should have been obtained through great effort without deceit and should be arrayed in such a way that your friends cannot help marveling.

When the Elder was requested for the mind generation by Tibetan teachers in Mangyül and Samyé, he reportedly said that it did not arise through inferior offerings. He said that also as a representation a consecrated statue of the main master of the teachings was imperative, and also as a

<sup>161</sup> These are products of a cow that has lived in remote mountain areas for a certain period of time feeding only on the pure grass and herbs of such places (oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa).

<sup>162</sup> Tib. *gtor ma*.

text at least the *Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* (*Prajñāpāramitāsañcayagāthā*) should be used.

3 The steps to be performed by the guru and student

Then, the assembly of āryas is invoked. The student, washed and well dressed, with his hands joined, is encouraged by the guru to generate clear faith in the positive qualities of the merit field from the bottom of his heart. He should then slowly say the seven-limb prayer, imagining that he is in front of the buddhas and bodhisattvas.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A1B Making a request and taking refuge

This has two points:

- 1 Making a request
- 2 Special taking of refuge

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A1B-1 Making a request

Then the student, having generated the discrimination of his guru as the Teacher, prostrates to him and makes offerings, including a mandala, to him. With his right knee on the floor, palms joined, he makes a request for the purpose of the mind of enlightenment:

Just as the previous tathāgata, arhat, perfectly complete buddhas, [182] as well as the great bodhisattvas abiding on the great grounds, first generated the mind of unsurpassed, perfectly complete enlightenment, likewise I, whose name is (...), request the master to generate the mind of unsurpassed, perfectly complete enlightenment.

Repeat this three times.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A1B-2 Special taking of refuge

This has two points:

A The attitude together with the objects

Then the student takes refuge, with the behavior explained earlier, to the objects—the Buddha, the Dharma (the true paths that mainly bring about the cessations), and the Saṅgha (the irreversible ārya bodhisattvas)—with the general attitude thinking: “From now until I achieve enlightenment, in order to protect all sentient beings, I take refuge in the Buddha, the teacher of refuge; I take refuge in the Dharma, the actual refuge; I take refuge in the Saṅgha, those who I ask for help to achieve refuge”; and with the special attitude of making the strong aspiration: “I will never turn away from this attitude at any time.”

B The words of the ritual

Master, please grant me your attention. I, whose name is (...), from now until I reach the essence of enlightenment, take refuge in the best of men, the blessed buddhas.

Master, please grant me your attention. I, whose name is (...), from now until I reach the essence of enlightenment, take refuge in the best of Dharma, the Dharma that is peace, free from attachment.

Master, please grant me your attention. I, whose name is (...), from now until I reach the essence of enlightenment, take refuge in the best of assemblies, the Saṅgha of irreversible ārya bodhisattvas. [183]

Repeat this three times. The request for attention when taking refuge in each of the Jewels and the unusual words for taking refuge in the Dharma accord with the ritual composed by the Elder.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A1C Stating the trainings of having taken refuge

Here too the master should express the trainings that were explained before in the context of lesser beings.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A2 Accumulating the collection of merit

As before, the seven-limb prayer should be done in the presence of the direct and lineage gurus and the merit field explained previously.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3A3 Training in the attitude

As explained previously, the observed objects and aspects of love and compassion should be visualized.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3B The actual ritual

This has seven points:

1 The behavior

In front of the master, the student should kneel down on his right knee; alternatively sitting in a crouching position is also appropriate. With palms joined, he should generate the mind of enlightenment.

2 The distinction of the mind generation

The mind generation here is not the mere mind generation that thinks “I will attain buddhahood for the welfare of others.” Rather, it is the promise that, observing the mind that has been generated, thinks, “I shall not give it up as long as I have not attained enlightenment.” This is why that attitude should be generated in dependence on a ritual.

3 An exception associated with this

If you are unable to train in the trainings of the aspiring mind, you should not make this promise. On the other hand, if the mere thought “I will become a buddha for the welfare of all sentient beings” is generated by means of a ritual, everyone can do it, regardless of whether or not they are able to train in the trainings of the mind generation.

4 It is inappropriate to posit two systems of guarding and not guarding the trainings with respect to the engaging mind of enlightenment

With respect to the aspiring mind, these two systems may be appropriate, however, with respect to taking the engaging mind by means of a ritual, it is inappropriate to take it without training in the trainings. Therefore it is inadmissible to assert that a difference of appropriateness and inappropriateness should be made with regard to the many rituals for the vow transmitted from Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga. [184]

5 Although it is appropriate for someone not training in the trainings to generate the aspiring mind, the engaging vow is inappropriate

*The Advice to King Prasenajit (Rājāvavadaśāstra)* says that if one cannot train in the trainings of generosity and so forth, a great amount of merit is accomplished from merely generating the mind of enlightenment. Taking this as its source, *Stages of Meditation I* says:

Whoever cannot train in the perfections fully in all their aspects should still generate the mind of enlightenment thoroughly conjoined with method because the results will be great.

Thus it is clear that it is appropriate for someone incapable of training in the trainings of generosity and so forth to generate the mind of enlightenment but inappropriate to take the vow.

6 The ritual for assuming the mind generation

The ritual for assuming the mind generation is:

All buddhas and bodhisattvas residing in the ten directions, please grant me your attention. Master, please grant me your attention. I, whose name is (...), by means of the roots of virtue of the nature of generosity, the nature of morality, and the nature of meditation that I have created, caused to be created, and rejoiced in the creation of in

this life and in previous lives, just as the previous tathāgata, arhat, perfectly complete buddhas and great bodhisattvas thoroughly abiding on the great grounds generated the mind of unsurpassed perfectly complete enlightenment, in the same way also I, whose name is (...), from now until I reach the essence of enlightenment, will generate the mind of unsurpassed, perfectly complete, great enlightenment, [185] I will liberate the beings that are not liberated, free those who are not free, give breath to those unable to breathe, and cause those who have not completely passed beyond sorrow to completely pass beyond sorrow.

Say this three times. Even though it is not clearly mentioned in the refuge ceremony and in this ritual, it is necessary so repeat these words after the master.

7 The method for taking the mind generation by oneself in a ritual

This is the manner of taking the mind generation in the presence of a master. In the Elder's *Mind Generation Ritual* it says what to do if we cannot find a master:

The ritual for generating the mind of enlightenment oneself in the absence of a master is as follows. Having brought to mind the Tathāgata Śākyamuni and all the tathāgatas of the ten directions, prostrate to them and do the rite of offerings and so forth. Then, according to the previous order, make the request, take while leaving out the word "Master," and so forth.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3A-3C The concluding ritual

The master should mention the trainings of the aspiring mind to the student.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B Guarding that which has been received without degenerating it

This has two points:

- 1 Training in the cause of the mind generation not degenerating in this life
- 2 Training in the cause of not being separated from the mind generation again in future lives

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1 Training in the cause of the mind generation not degenerating in this life

This has four points:

- A Training in remembering the advantages, so that the strength of one's delight in the mind generation increases
- B Training in generating it six times, so that the actual mind generation increases
- C Training in not mentally abandoning any sentient being for whose welfare the mind has been generated
- D Training in accumulating the collections of merit and wisdom

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A Training in remembering the advantages, so that the strength of one's delight in the mind generation increases

This has three points:

- 1 The way the advantages are explained in the scriptures
- 2 The way the mind of enlightenment is praised in the writings of the holy beings
- 3 The instruction to exert oneself as it is this very mind that the buddhas and their children have seen to be the supreme method

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A1 The way the advantages are explained in the scriptures

This has two points:

- A The uncommon cause
- B Showing the advantages

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A1A The uncommon cause [186]

You consider the advantages of the mind of enlightenment, studying the sūtras or hearing them from your guru. Since they have been taught extensively in the *Array of Stalks Sūtra*, they should be studied there. The quotation from it above says: "It is the seed of all the Dharma of the Buddha,"

and all the conduct and aspirations of the bodhisattvas are summarized in it. Therefore it is said to be like a brief presentation. Although the extensive explanation of the branches is boundless, since the brief presentation contains everything, the brief presentation, like a synthesis of them, teaches a synthesis that summarizes the essential points of all the paths of bodhisattvas.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A1B Showing the advantages

This has two points:

- 1 The transition
- 2 The actual advantages

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A1B-1 The transition

As the advantages taught in Asaṅga's *Bodhisattva Levels* concern the aspiring mind of enlightenment, from among them, the two advantages of generating a stable mind generation are mentioned first.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A1B-2 The actual advantages

This has two points:

- A You become a holy field
- B You thoroughly hold the merit of non-harm

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A1B-2A You become a holy field

This has four points:

- 1 You become an object of veneration

As stated in the scriptures—"The world with its gods and human beings will bow to you"—as soon as you generate this mind, you become an object of veneration for all sentient beings.

- 2 You become an exalted being

As stated in the scriptures you outshine the arhat great beings by way of your lineage as soon as you generate this mind. You become a guru or an exalted being.

- 3 You become a field of merit

You become a field of merit due to yielding limitless effects even through doing minor meritorious actions.

- 4 You become a support for the whole world

"Due to supporting the whole world, you are like the earth." In accordance with that statement you become like a father of the nine beings.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A1B-2B You thoroughly hold the merit of non-harm

This has six points:

- 1 The way in which you are guarded by protectors

Since you are guarded by twice as many protectors as protect a universal monarchs, [187] yakṣas and non-human primordial local guardians cannot harm you even when you are asleep, intoxicated, or non-conscientious.

- 2 Mantras and the like will succeed more easily

You pacify calamities, harm, and infectious diseases with the words of secret mantra and knowledge mantra. If even things that cannot be accomplished in the hands of sentient beings, will be accomplished when they come into your hands, what need is there to mention that other things will be accomplished? Due to this, the collection of activities, pacification and so forth, are shown to be easily accomplished in dependence on the mind generation. Therefore, if that is present, the common attainments will also quickly be accomplished.



3 Famines and the like will not occur

Fear, famine, and harm from non-human beings will not occur in those places in which they have not occurred, and after transmigrating, you will have little harm, will be without illness, and so forth.

4 You are without anger and patient

Due to being endowed with patience and a gentle disposition, you will bear harm that is done to you and will not return the harm and the like.

5 It will be difficult for you to be reborn in the lower realms, and you will quickly be freed

Also it will be difficult for you to be reborn in the lower realms and, if it happens, you will quickly be freed. While there you will have little suffering and thereby, as a result, become extremely disenchanted with cyclic existence. Also compassion for those sentient beings will arise.

6 How the advantages are immeasurable

If the merit of the mind of enlightenment were to become form, it could not be contained in space itself. Making offerings of material things to the buddhas does not compare to it even partially. In *Questions of the Householder Vīradatta (Viradattaparipṛcchā)* it says:

If the merit of bodhicitta  
Were to have a physical form,  
All the realm of space would be filled;  
It would be surpassed by it.

Buddha fields as numerous as  
The sand grains of the river Ganges, [188]  
Offered by someone, filled with jewels,  
To the protector of the world—

If someone joins his palms and bows  
To bodhicitta this is distinctly  
Superior to that offering made.  
As for this, it has no limit.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A2 The way the mind of enlightenment is praised in the writings of the holy beings

When the Great Elder circumambulated the Vajra Seat and thought about what to do to attain complete enlightenment quickly, the smaller statues stood up and asked the bigger ones: “What should those who want to quickly become a buddha train in?” whereupon the latter replied: “They should train in the mind of enlightenment.” When, in the sky above the Gandhola statue, a young woman questioned an older woman, the latter made a similar reply. It is said that due to hearing this, his mind became very certain with respect to the mind of enlightenment.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1A3 The instruction to exert oneself as it is this very mind that the buddhas and their children have seen to be the supreme method

In that way, you should understand that the mind of enlightenment is the condensed essential point of all the Mahāyāna instructions, the great treasure of all spiritual attainments, the special feature distinguishing the Mahāyāna from the Hīnayāna, the supreme basis that exhorts one to the vast conduct of the Victors’ children. You should increase the strength of your delight in meditating on it and act like someone thirsty hearing of water because when analyzing the paths, the buddhas and their children, having made it more and more subtle by means of their marvelous exalted knowledge over many eons, saw it to be the supreme method for attaining buddhahood. Thus it also says in *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*:



Having reflected thoroughly for many eons  
The buddhas<sup>163</sup> saw this above all as beneficial.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1B Training in generating it six times, so that the actual mind generation increases

This has two points:

- 1 Training in not giving up the aspiring mind generation
- 2 Training in increasing the aspiring mind generation [189]

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1B1 Training in not giving up the aspiring mind generation

This has two points:

- A Giving it up is heavier than a defeat of the vows of individual liberation and as a consequence one must wander in the lower realms for a long time

In the *Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* it was taught that if you take the buddhas, bodhisattvas, and your spiritual friend as your witnesses and, in their presence, vow to liberate the sentient beings that are not liberated and so forth, but then lay down the burden of the mind generation because of discouragement due to seeing

- the enormous number of sentient beings and their bad actions,
- the long time you need to exert yourself—many eons, or
- that it is necessary to train in the limitless two collections and difficult practices,

it will be a greater negativity than a defeat of individual liberation.

In *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct* it says that if you give up the mind you promised, you will have to wander in the lower realms for a long time.

- B Not giving it up due to delight like that of finding a jewel in a rubbish heap

Also that same text says:

As a blind man finds a jewel  
In a heap of dust, like that,  
Effortlessly bodhicitta  
Has arisen within me.

Think “What I found is just as amazing” and “I will not give it up under any circumstances.” Observing this, reinforce your heart’s decision not to give it up even for an instant.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1B2 Training in increasing the aspiring mind generation

This has two points:

- A It is not enough to merely not give it up, it must be reinforced

Since it is not enough to merely not give it up, you should reinforce it three times a day and three times at night with great effort.

- B How the ritual is performed at the six times

If you can accomplish the extensive ritual explained above, you should do it according to that. If you cannot accomplish it, you should train in love and compassion, having visualized the merit field and made offerings. You should do this six times a day. The ritual for that is to say the following three times in the day and three times at night:

I take refuge until I am enlightened  
In the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Supreme Assembly. [190]

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<sup>163</sup> Tib. *thub dbang*.

Through the practice of generosity and the other perfections,  
May I attain buddhahood in order to benefit migrating beings.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1C Training in not mentally abandoning any sentient being for whose welfare the mind has been generated

The measure for mentally abandoning a sentient being is the occurrence of the thought: “I will not work for his welfare now or ever after” in dependence on some condition, for example that he has done something that is unacceptable to you.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-1D Training in accumulating the collections of merit and wisdom

Having assumed the aspiring mind through a ritual, you should strive to accumulate the collections through daily offerings to the Jewels and so forth as the cause for increasing the mind of enlightenment.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2 Training in the cause of not being separated from the mind generation again in future lives

This has two points:

- A Training in abandoning the four black dharmas that cause it to degenerate
- B Training in adopting the four white dharmas that do not allow it to degenerate

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2A Training in abandoning the four black dharmas that cause it to degenerate

This has four points:

- 1 Deceiving one's abbot, master, guru, or those worthy of offerings
- 2 Causing others to regret virtues that they do not regret
- 3 Saying something uncomplimentary and the like about a sentient being who has entered the Mahāyāna
- 4 Acting out of deceit and shiftiness but without the extraordinary attitude

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2A1 Deceiving one's abbot, master, guru, or those worthy of offerings

This has two points:

- A Object and action

Among the four black dharmas, with respect to that of deceiving one's abbot, master, guru, or those worthy of offerings, the objects that are one's abbot and master are easy to understand. The guru is someone who wishes to benefit you, and those worthy of offerings are those endowed with positive qualities, even though they do not belong to the previous two.

If you wonder about what deed becomes a black dharma with respect to them, to knowingly cheat them by any means is a black dharma.

- B Clearing up doubts

However, as the deceit and shiftiness that are not lies are indicated below, here it has to be cheating through lying. This is because in the *Compendium of Trainings* it is taught that abandoning a black dharma constitutes a white dharma and that the antidote of this black dharma is the first of the four white dharmas.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2A2 Causing others to regret virtues that they do not regret

This has two points:

- A Object and action

With respect to causing others to regret virtues that they do not regret, the object is another person without regrets about a virtue that he has done. What one does to him is that, with the intention of making him regret, one generates regret for that which is not an object of regret. [191]

## B Clearing up doubts

As regards these two, it is the same whether or not the person is deceived and whether or not the person has regrets.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2A3 Saying something uncomplimentary and the like about a sentient being who has entered the Mahāyāna

This has five points:

## A Object and action

With respect to saying something uncomplimentary and the like about a sentient being who has entered the Mahāyāna, the object is someone who has generated the mind of enlightenment and now possesses it. What one does to him is to say something unpleasant motivated by hatred.

## B The measure

The object to whom it was said understands the meaning.

## C How it is necessary to abandon this since it easily occurs and is a great fault

It is easy for this to occur and it is also a very great disadvantage. That has already been mentioned previously in brief. Furthermore it is taught in the *Sūtra of the Magic of the Complete Certainty of Total Peace* that if a bodhisattva generates a mind of contempt toward a bodhisattva, he must remain in hell for that many eons, and that apart from deprecating a bodhisattva, nothing can make a bodhisattva fall into the lower realms.

## D How it takes you further away from enlightenment

In the *Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* it also says that if a bodhisattva who has not yet obtained a prophecy argues out of anger with a bodhisattva who has obtained a prophecy, for however long a mind of anger arose, he will have to spend that many eons longer on the path.

## E The need to exert oneself in confession and restraint

Because of that, it is also taught in the same text that you need to put an end to anger in all its aspects and put effort into confessing it and restraining it immediately whenever it arises.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2A4 Acting out of deceit and shiftiness but without the extraordinary attitude

This has two points:

## A Object and action

With respect to an activity done out of deceit and shiftiness but without the extraordinary attitude, the object is any other sentient being. What one does to him is to engage in deceit and shiftiness.

## B Explaining the meaning of the word [192]

In this regard, deceit and shiftiness are explained in terms of deceiving with respect to measures and weights and so forth and something like what Gyelwa Yechung did: In order to send someone off to Ragma, he caused him to be sent to Tölung first so afterwards he would accept Ragma. According to the *Compendium of Trainings*, deceit is to display qualities that actually do not exist, and shiftiness is to take measures for faults not to become evident.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B Training in adopting the four white dharma that do not allow it to degenerate

This has four points:

- 1 Abandoning lying knowingly
- 2 Abiding with the extraordinary attitude without deceit or shiftiness
- 3 Generating the discrimination that bodhisattvas are like the Teacher and praising them
- 4 Ripening sentient beings

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B1 Abandoning lying knowingly

The object of the first white dharma is all sentient beings. The action is to abandon lying to them knowingly even for the sake of one's life or for as little as a joke. If you act in this way, you will be sure not to cheat special objects such as your abbot, master, and so forth through lies.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B2 Abiding with the extraordinary attitude without deceit or shiftiness

The object of the second white dharma is all sentient beings. The action is to abide with the extraordinary attitude toward them without deceit or shiftiness, that is to abide with an honest attitude. It is the antidote to the fourth black dharma.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B3 Generating the discrimination that bodhisattvas are like the Teacher and praising them

This has three points:

A Object and action

The object of the third white dharma is all bodhisattvas. The action is to generate the discrimination of them as resembling the Teacher and to proclaim truthful praise about them in the four directions.

B How there is a need to guard against this

Sharawa said that although we have been creating a little bit of something like virtue, there is no sign of its increase and many signs of its exhaustion. Virtue is exhausted through hatred toward bodhisattvas and our companions, disdain toward them, and through insulting them. Therefore, if we are able to abandon insulting them and bodhisattvas, we will no longer experience what is referred to in the *Compendium of Trainings* as "harm dependent on persons." Since we do not know in whom the mind of enlightenment is present, we act from the perspective of training in pure appearances, generating the discrimination of all sentient beings as the Teacher in accordance with the *Kāśyapa Chapter (Kāśyapaparivarta)*.

C The way to express the qualities [193]

If there is an opportunity to express their positive qualities and an audience, do so. However, if you do not go to all four directions and proclaim them, this is not a fault.

This white dharma is the antidote to the third black dharma.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B4 Ripening sentient beings

This has two points:

A The actual fourth white dharma: object and action

B Statements in other scriptures as well

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B4A The actual fourth white dharma: object and action

The object of the fourth white dharma is the sentient beings who are ripened by you. The action is to make them hold to complete enlightenment without wishing for a temporary vehicle. Moreover, while from your side you should cause your disciple to make a connection with it, if that thought does not arise in the disciple, it does not become a mistake because you were unable to accomplish it.

By means of this white dharma you abandon the second black dharma, for, if you wish, from the bottom of your heart, to establish others in the ultimate happiness of all, you do not accomplish it in order to connect them to the generation of mental unhappiness for the sake of generating mere regret which is still mental unhappiness.

2B4B-2A2C-2B3B-2B4B The explanation in three scriptures, the *Compendium of Trainings* and so forth

This has three points:

1 The advantage of establishing others in the mind generation

In the *Sūtra Requested by a Lion* it says:

“By means of what is bodhicitta  
Not given up in all one’s lives,  
If not even in one’s dreams,  
Much less while one is not asleep?”

He spoke: “In cities or in villages  
In the countries where you live,  
Guide others correctly to enlightenment.  
Through that, bodhicitta will not be abandoned.”

- 2 The statement that by abandoning pride and the like the mind generation will not to be abandoned

Furthermore, in *Array of Qualities in Mañjuśrī's Buddha-realm* it is taught that the aspiring mind<sup>164</sup> is not abandoned if one possesses four qualities: having abandoned pride, having abandoned jealousy, having abandoned miserliness, and being mentally joyful when seeing others’ wealth.

- 3 If all actions and conduct are done conjoined with the mind generation, one will not be separated from the mind of enlightenment in all lives

This is clearly taught in the *Cloud of Jewels of Sūtra*: [194]

If you train in the mind of enlightenment in all behaviors and generate the mind of enlightenment before starting any virtuous activity, you will not be separated from this precious mind in other lives either. If you do not investigate time and time again how...

2B4B-2A2C-2B3C The method for restoring the vow if it has degenerated

If you transgress the trainings, excluding the two transgressions of giving up the aspiring mind and mentally giving up sentient beings, as long as you do not have bodhisattva vows, there is no downfall from the point of view of a bodhisattva. However, since it transgresses the trainings of the promise of intermediate virtue, it becomes faulty conduct and therefore should be confessed by means of the four powers.

### Explanation of how to train in the conduct having generated the mind of enlightenment

2B4B-2A2C-2C Having generated the mind of enlightenment, how to train in the conduct

This has three points:

- 1 The reason why it is necessary to train in the trainings, having generated the mind of enlightenment
- 2 Demonstration that buddhahood is not achieved by training in method or wisdom alone
- 3 Explanation of the actual stages of training in the trainings

2B4B-2A2C-2C1 The reason why it is necessary to train in the trainings, having generated the mind of enlightenment

This has three points:

- A Buddhahood is not achieved without accomplishing the trainings

Even if you do not train in the trainings of generosity and so forth after generating the mind of enlightenment in this manner, it will still be of great benefit according to the above quotation from *Life of Maitreya*. However, if you do not make the bodhisattva trainings your essential practice, it will be impossible to become a buddha. Therefore you should train in the conduct. In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* it says:

“One should make it the essential practice. Why? Because, oh youthful one, for one who makes it his essential practice it will not be difficult to obtain unsurpassed perfectly complete enlightenment.”

<sup>164</sup> Although the Tibetan text actually says *smon lam*, “prayers,” it would seem more correct for it to read *smon sems*, “aspiring mind.”

- B First of all taming oneself because one will not tame others without taming oneself

Also Kamalaśīla says in *Stages of Meditation I* {195}:

A bodhisattva who has generated the mind understands that he cannot tame others without taming himself and thoroughly applies himself to the practice of generosity and so forth. Without them he cannot achieve enlightenment.

- C What must be accomplished

What must be accomplished once the vow has been taken is the training in those very trainings associated with it.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2 Demonstration that buddhahood is not achieved by training in method or wisdom alone

This has three points:

- A How to train in the unmistakable and complete method
- B Refutation of wrong conceptions about this
- C Refutation of the answers to objections about this

2B4B-2A2C-2C2A How to train in the unmistakable and complete method

This has two points:

- 1 The need to be unmistakable about the complete path

In *Stages of Meditation II* it says:

One who engages in the method for accomplishing buddhahood needs an unmistakable method, for, however hard you try, a mistaken path will not bring about the desired result, just like pulling a cow by its horn, if you want milk. If, although faultless, it is incomplete, the result will not come about despite your effort, just as a sprout will not grow if either the seed, water, earth, or the like are incomplete.

- 2 Identifying the complete path

Well then, what are the complete and unmistakable causes and conditions? In *Vairocana's Manifest Enlightenment (Vairocanābhisambodhi)* it says:

Oh Lord of Secrets, the exalted wisdom of omniscience arises from the root that is compassion. It arises from the cause that is the mind of enlightenment. It is culminated by method.

In this regard “compassion” has already been explained. “The mind of enlightenment” is the two: the conventional mind of enlightenment and the ultimate mind of enlightenment. “Method” is thoroughly complete generosity and so forth. This was explained by the great trailblazer Kamalaśīla.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2B Refutation of wrong conceptions about this

This has two points:

- 1 Wrong modes of conception
- 2 Their refutation

2B4B-2A2C-2C2B-1 Wrong modes of conception

This has two points:

- A Wrong modes of apprehension

One such mistaken conception regarding the path is upheld by the Chinese Hashang and others who say: “As long as they are discursive thoughts—no need to talk about it if they are bad conceptions, but even if they are good conceptions—they bind us in cyclic existence. Therefore their effects do not transcend cyclic existence, just as one can be bound with fetters of gold or ropes, and just as both white and black clouds obscure the sky, [196] and just as pain is produced regardless of



whether one is bitten by a white or a black dog. That is why just equipoise without conceptions about anything is the path to buddhahood. Generosity, ethics, and so forth were taught for the sake of foolish beings incapable of meditating on this definitive meaning. Therefore, having found the definitive meaning, to engage in those conducts is like a king becoming a commoner or like, having found the elephant, looking for its footprints.”

B Wrong explanation of their sources

Hashang substantiates his position by quoting eighty passages from sūtras that praise non-conceptuality.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2B-2 Their refutation

This has five points:

- A How scholars refute the worst of wrong views
- B How some unfortunate beings adhere to them despite those refutations
- C How non-abiding nirvāṇa has to be accomplished by a path of both wisdom and method
- D How the emptiness possessing the best of all aspects is necessary for the attainment of buddhahood
- E How the position that only accepts wisdom is refuted in the treatises

2B4B-2A2C-2C2B-2A How scholars refute the worst of wrong views

His statement that all the factors of method are not a genuine path to buddhahood is an enormous deprecation, and by refuting engagement in the essence of the Victor’s teachings—selflessness—with the wisdom of individual investigation, it abandons the mode of the highest meaning, erring far away from it. Although Kamalaśīla has refuted it well with stainless scriptural passages and reasonings, and although he has presented in detail the good path that pleases the Victors,...

2B4B-2A2C-2C2B-2B How some unfortunate beings adhere to them despite those refutations

...there are still some who scorn the side of conduct, such as guarding and restraining, and who discard them while cultivating the paths, acting as has been described above. It appears that some, apart from deprecating the factor of method, discard the way of understanding the view, while others discard the search for the view of suchness by means of the wisdom of individual investigation and then skillfully assert the Chinese meditation of not thinking about anything.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2B-2C How non-abiding nirvāṇa has to be accomplished by a path of both wisdom and method

This has four points:

- 1 That there is no need for method and wisdom to be complete contradicts all scriptures and reasonings

This does not occur on the side of meditation on emptiness either. [197] However, even if it were admitted as meditation on emptiness, the statement “Those who meditate well on the meaning of emptiness should meditate on emptiness alone and need not cultivate consciousnesses of conventionalities, the side of conduct” contradicts all the scriptures of the Buddha, and simply seems to go beyond the path of reasoning. The object to be achieved by Mahāyānists is non-abiding nirvāṇa. With respect to that, non-abiding in cyclic existence is achieved through what is called *the wisdom realizing suchness, the stages of the path relying on the ultimate, the path of the profound*, and what is called *the collection of exalted wisdom and the factor of wisdom*, whereas non-abiding in nirvāṇa or peace is necessarily achieved through what is called *the wisdom cognizing varieties, the stages of the path relying on conventional truth, the path of the vast, the collection of method, and the factor of merit*.

- 2 Establishing by scriptural passages how method and wisdom refute the two extremes

The following words are taken from the *Sūtra of Showing the Tathāgata’s Inconceivable Secret*:

The collection of exalted wisdom is what abandons all mental afflictions. The collection of merit is what fully nurtures all sentient beings. Bhagavan, since this is so, the bodhisattva mahasattvas strive for the collection of merit and exalted wisdom.



- 3 Establishing by scriptural passages how we are bound to the extremes of existence and peace as long as method and wisdom are not complete

Also, in *Teaching of Vimalakīrti (Vimalakīrtinirdeśa)* it says:

In response to the questions “What is the bondage of bodhisattvas?” and “What is their liberation?”:

Wisdom not conjoined with method is bondage.  
 Wisdom conjoined with method is liberation.  
 Method not conjoined with wisdom is bondage. [198]  
 Method conjoined with wisdom is liberation.

- 4 The achievement of buddhahood depends on both wisdom and method

And in the *Foremost of Gayā Sūtra*:

The bodhisattva path, in brief, is made up of two. What are the two? They are the following: method and wisdom.

Their significance is also taught clearly in *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*:

Through wisdom divorced from perfection practice  
 The obscurations will not be exhausted  
 Therefore, in order to abandon  
 All obscurations—afflictive and cognitive,<sup>165</sup>  
 The Yoga of the perfection of wisdom  
 Should always be practiced<sup>166</sup> combined with method.  
 That is why method divorced from wisdom  
 As well as wisdom divorced from method  
 Are referred to as “bondage,” therefore  
 You should not abandon either.

And:

Omitting the perfection of wisdom,  
 The perfections of generosity  
 And so forth—all collections of virtue  
 Are explained by the Victors as method.  
 Great beings who cultivate the wisdom aspect,  
 Through familiarity with the methods,  
 Will thereby quickly achieve enlightenment;  
 Not by meditating on just selflessness.  
 Knowing the emptiness of existence,<sup>167</sup>  
 The realization that aggregates, realms,  
 And sources are without production,  
 Is thoroughly explained as *wisdom*.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2B-2D How the emptiness possessing the best of all aspects is necessary for the attainment of buddhahood

In the *Sūtra Requested by Ratnacūḍa (Ratnacūḍaparipṛcchā)* it is taught that it is necessary to meditate on the emptiness that possesses the supreme of all aspects—which is complete in all the factors of method, such as generosity and so forth.

<sup>165</sup> Tib. *shes bya'i sgrib pa*, usually translated here as “obscurations to knowledge.”

<sup>166</sup> Tib. *bsgom*, usually translated here as “meditated” or “cultivated.”

<sup>167</sup> Tib. *rang bzhin*, usually translated here as “inherent existence.”

2B4B-2A2C-2C2B-2E How the position that only accepts wisdom is refuted in the treatises

In the *Sūtra Gathering All the Threads* it says:

Foolish people intend to repudiate the bodhisattvas' practice of the six perfections for the sake of enlightenment saying: "You should train in the perfection of wisdom alone. [199] What is the use of training in the remaining?"

And:

Foolish people also say: "One becomes enlightened by only one approach, that is through the approach of emptiness." However, they do not have completely pure conduct.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C Refutation of the answers to objections about this

This has three points:

- 1 Refutation of the objection that asserts that method is unnecessary if emptiness has been realized
- 2 Refutation of the objection that asserts that method is unnecessary because in the view of emptiness the six perfections are complete
- 3 Demonstration of contradictions in others' assertions

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-1 Refutation of the objection that asserts that method is unnecessary if emptiness has been realized

This has two points:

- A Stating the assertion
- B Its refutation

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-1A Stating the assertion

One may think: "Training in the conduct of generosity and so forth is necessary if one does not have a stable realization of emptiness, but if one has that, it is sufficient."

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-1B Its refutation

This has four points:

- 1 Refutation because it is in contradiction to the sūtras of definitive meaning

If this were so, the Victors' children who have attained the first ground and so forth, and especially the Victors' children on the eighth ground who have achieved power over non-conceptual wisdom, would not need the conduct. However, this is inappropriate, for in the *Sūtra on the Ten Grounds* it is taught "On each of the ten grounds, one, such as generosity, also becomes paramount. However, it is not that the remaining ones are not practiced." Therefore, on each of the grounds, all six or all ten are said to be practiced.

- 2 How even with the highest realization of emptiness method and wisdom are necessary

In particular on the occasion of the eighth ground, when the bodhisattva abides on the ultimate and all elaborations are pacified owing to the exhaustion of all mental afflictions, the buddhas exhort him saying: "Buddhahood cannot be achieved through this mere realization of emptiness; this realization is achieved even by hearers and solitary realizers."

- 3 How it is therefore inappropriate to think that there is no need for method and wisdom right from the beginning

"My bodies, my exalted wisdom, my buddha fields, and so forth are immeasurable. Look at them! Nor do you have my powers and the like. Therefore set about it with joyous effort! Think of the unpacified sentient beings agitated by various mental afflictions! [200] Do not give up patience either!"

If the buddhas are so emphatic in explaining to eighth ground bodhisattvas the need to train in bodhisattva conduct, this obviously applies even more to others.

- 4 How even on the high paths of mantra, the way to generate the mind and train in the six perfections is the same by and large

Although in the context of the high paths of unsurpassed mantra there are indeed differences in this regard, it was already explained above that, in general, the two—the mantra and perfection vehicles—are the same by and large in sharing the structure of the path of generating the two minds of enlightenment and training in the six perfections.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-2 The objection thinking “Since the six perfections are complete when you do not think about anything, this is sufficient” and its refutation

This has two points:

- A How they are seemingly complete according to that way of reckoning
- B Refuting that with a digression

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-2A How they are seemingly complete according to that way of reckoning

“We do not assert that generosity and so forth are unnecessary, but they are complete when you do not think about anything because by not adhering to the recipient, the act of giving, nor the substance given, non-observing generosity is complete and likewise the remaining perfections are complete. Also because it says in the sūtras that the six perfections are contained in each one of them.”

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-2B Refuting that with a digression

This has three points:

- 1 The absurd consequences that would ensue if this were so

If all the perfections were complete simply through this, they would also be complete in the calm abiding of a tīrthika’s single-pointed mind at the time of meditative equipoise since he does not adhere to them. In particular, as it says in the *Sūtra on the Ten Grounds*, hearers and solitary realizers who have a non-conceptual exalted wisdom with respect to reality would become Mahāyānists during meditative equipoise on it because the entire bodhisattva conduct would be complete.

- 2 If it were sufficient that in each one all six are complete, it would follow that a mandala would be offered with one single substance

If you assert that this alone is sufficient because it is taught that in each perfection all six are included, then, while offering a mandala with the verse “Giving cow dung together with water...” it would also be appropriate to do just that since it is said that all six are present. [201]

- 3 How unseparated wisdom and method influence each other

The following analogy is given in order to illustrate conduct conjoined with the view and wisdom conjoined with method. When a mother tormented by sorrow at the death of her beloved child engages in conversations with other people and the like, due to the power of her sorrow she does not give it up, no matter what minds arise. Yet not all her minds are minds of sorrow. Similarly, if the wisdom realizing emptiness is very powerful, the minds that observe your making gifts, prostrations, circumambulations, and so forth do not realize emptiness, but it is not contradictory that they operate possessing the power of that wisdom. If you start off with the intense power of the mind of enlightenment as you do at the beginning of a meditation session, although the mind of enlightenment is not manifest during the meditative stabilization of emptiness, that does not contradict its being influenced by it. The way in which wisdom and method are not separate is also like that.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3 Demonstration of contradictions in others’ assertions

This has six points:

- A It is incorrect that the causes for high status and certain goodness are contradictory
- B One’s words will be contradictory like the speech of madmen
- C Sources for the absence of observed objects and internal contradictions
- D Contradiction to bringing about any certainty

- E Contradictions with the many sūtras and so forth that teach the absence of an observed object
- F Clarification of the position that applies equally to sūtra and tantra

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3A It is incorrect that the causes for high status and certain goodness are contradictory

You should not be misled with regard to the statement that the results of the collection of merit are your present body, resources, long life, and so forth of cyclic existence. If method is divorced from wisdom, this is indeed the case. However, if it is conjoined with it, it is altogether suitable to be the cause of liberation and omniscience. There are infinite scriptural passages for this, like in Nāgārjuna's *Precious Garland*:

The form body, in brief, Your Highness,  
Is born from the collection of merit.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3B One's words will be contradictory like the speech of madmen

Moreover, sometimes you expound that the faulty conduct and all the mental afflictions that become the causes of the lower realms can also become causes of buddhahood, and sometimes you seem to say that that virtues like generosity, ethics, and so forth that become the causes of high status are causes of cyclic existence rather than the causes of enlightenment. [202] You should set your mind at ease before talking!

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3C Sources for the absence of observed objects and internal contradictions

This has three points:

- 1 The presentation in the sūtras

It also says in the sūtras:

Strong adherence to the six, generosity and so forth, is the action of Māra.

In the *Three Heaps Sūtra (Triskandhaka)* it also explains:

Giving gifts falling into observing, guarding one's ethics considering them supreme ethics, and so forth; these should be confessed individually.

Also from the *Sūtra Requested by Brahmā (Brahmaparipṛcchāsūtra)*:

However much conduct exists, all of it is conceptual. Thorough non-conceptuality is enlightenment.

You should not be mistaken with respect to these statements.

- 2 The contradiction to the way in which the first passage is explained

The meaning of the first is that generosity motivated by mistaken adherence to the two selves is explained as an action of Māra since it is impure. However, generosity and so forth are not presented as the actions of Māra.

- 3 The contradiction to retaining the words of the second passage, because it actually says: "falling into observing"

Otherwise you would have to say "Giving gifts should be confessed in general" without the need to fall into observing saying "Bestowing gifts having fallen into observing." Therefore it follows that it has not been taught in this manner. In *Stages of Meditation III* it becomes a very crucial point for Kamalaśīla to give this kind of answer, for if you misunderstand this, you will apprehend signs of a self of persons or phenomena and assert the entire side of conduct to be connected with signs.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3D Contradiction to bringing about any certainty

This has three points:

- 1 It contradicts the teachings that one should rely on abandoning negativities and so forth
- 2 The fault that this assertion contradicts all reasonings and makes it impossible to gain certainty with regard to anything
- 3 Understanding the statements in the context of the two truths

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3D1 It contradicts the teachings that one should rely on abandoning negativities and so forth

If the mind of giving that thinks “I will give away this substance” and the mind of restraint that thinks “I will restrain myself from this faulty conduct” and all such virtuous conceptions were conceptions of a self of phenomena apprehending the three spheres, it would make sense for those who have found the view of selflessness of phenomena [203] to cease them in every way just like hatred, pride, and so forth, and it would be inappropriate to rely on them for that purpose.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3D2 The fault that this assertion contradicts all reasonings and makes it impossible to gain certainty with regard to anything

If any conception that thinks “This is this” were considered to be a conception of a self of phenomena that conceives the three spheres, then thinking about the positive qualities of a spiritual teacher, the great significance of the leisure and endowments, and so forth, remembering death, thinking about the sufferings of the lower realms, taking refuge, and contemplating that from this action arises that effect, training in love, compassion, and the mind of enlightenment, and training in the trainings of the engaging mind of enlightenment would be thoughts thinking “This is this,” “From this that arises,” “This has these positive qualities and those shortcomings.” Since that would necessarily just induce certainty, the conception of a self of phenomena would increase more and more as certainty with respect to those above-mentioned topics increases. Moreover, the certainty with respect to those paths would decrease as certainty with respect to the selflessness of phenomena is nurtured more and more. Thereby, the side of conduct and the side of view having come to contradict each other like hot and cold, a strong and long-term ascertaining consciousness with respect to both of them could not be generated.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3D3 Understanding the statements in the context of the two truths

This has three points:

A Method and wisdom are not contradictory like hot and cold

At the time of the result both the truth body is posited as the object to be obtained and the form body is considered as the object to be obtained. In accordance with the two not being contradictory, the following two at the time of the path must also not be contradictory: an ascertaining consciousness that is induced with respect to the total freedom from even the merest particle of elaborations of an observed object that is apprehended as having signs of the two selves, and an ascertaining consciousness that is induced with respect to “From this, that arises” and “This has that fault or quality.”

B How the two valid cognitions that posit the two truths assist one another

In fact that depends on how the view of the basis, the two truths, is settled. [204] Through scriptural passages and reasonings, the valid cognition thoroughly positing the ultimate settles the mode of subsistence or the manner of being of all the phenomena of cyclic existence and nirvāṇa as without the merest particle of inherent existence. The valid cognition of conventions thoroughly positing causes and effects individually ascertains phenomena that are causes and effects without the slightest confusion. Once you gain certainty, by way of scriptures and reasonings, that these two do not harm each other in the least but rather assist each other, then you will realize the meaning of the two truths and you will come to count yourself among “those who have found the intention of the Victor.”

C Clarification of the misconception expressed in the third quotation

The meaning of the third quotation is explained in *Stages of Meditation III*. Since the context of this sūtra is the context of an analysis of production and so forth with respect to the teaching that generosity and so forth are not really produced, they are taught to be merely imputed by conception saying “They are conceived.” However, they are not taught to be objects to be discarded and not relied upon.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3E Contradictions with the many sūtras and so forth that teach the lack of an observed object

This has four points:

- 1 It contradicts the *Compendium of All the Sūtras*

As regards the statement that a one-sided path is not enough, it is also clearly set forth in the *Compendium of All the Sūtras (Sūtrasamuccaya)*:

Bodhisattvas who are separated from skillful means should not make strong effort in the profound dharma.

- 2 It contradicts the sūtras since omniscience does not arise when there is no observed object

In the *Sūtra of Showing the Tathāgata's Inconceivable Secret* it says:

Child of the lineage, it is like this. For instance, a fire burns due to a cause; if the cause is absent, it subsides. Likewise, a mind blazes due to an observed object; if the observed object is absent, it subsides.

- 3 How it is necessary to individually investigate the meaning of the presence or absence of observed objects

Therefore the bodhisattva skilled in means knows how to completely extinguish observed objects by means of the thoroughly pure perfection of wisdom but he does not completely extinguish observed objects with respect to the roots of virtue. [205] He does not allow the observed objects for mental afflictions to arise but settles the mind on the observed objects of the perfections. He also individually investigates the observed object that is emptiness but looks upon the observed object *all sentient beings* with great compassion.

The individual statements regarding the way in which there is an observed object and the way in which there is no observed object need to be differentiated.

- 4 Although the bonds of the mental afflictions and apprehending signs have been loosened, it is inappropriate to grow lax in guarding and restraining

Likewise, the bonds of the mental afflictions and apprehending signs need to be loosened, whereas the ropes of the trainings need to be tightened. The two misdeeds need to be destroyed, whereas virtuous actions do not need to be destroyed. Therefore, being restrained by the trainings and being bound by the apprehension of signs are not the same, nor are loosening guarding and restraining and loosening the bonds of the conception of a self the same. Therefore the meaning of destruction and self-liberation and so forth need to be examined well.

2B4B-2A2C-2C2C-3F Clarification of the position that applies equally to sūtra and tantra

This has two points:

- 1 The object refuted by Kamalaśīla

The way in which Master Kamalaśīla refuted mental inattention does not refute the meditation in which the mind is placed within the view that has settled the meaning of the manner of being and placed single-pointedly on that without mentally attending to anything else. However, it does refute that the mere stabilization in which the mind is left without conceiving anything, without placing it on the meaning settled by the view, the manner of being, constitutes meditation on emptiness.

- 2 Pointing out that it will be explained that although the trainings in thoroughly complete method and wisdom are the same in both sūtra and mantra, when individually investigated there are differences

This is the same for the mantra and the perfection vehicles. However, I will explain how there are similarities and differences in the two systems with regard to analyzing by means of the wisdom of individual investigation and sustaining one's meditation.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3 Explanation of the actual stages of training in the trainings

This [206] has two points:



- A How to train in the Mahāyāna in general
- B In particular how to train in the Vajrayāna

### Explanation of how to train in the conduct of the Victors' children in general

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A How to train in the Mahāyāna in general

This has three points:

- 1 Developing the wish to train in the trainings of bodhisattvas
- 2 Having developed the wish, taking the vows of the Victors' children
- 3 Having taken them, the way in which to train in them

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-1 Developing the wish to train in the trainings of bodhisattvas

With respect to the vinaya and tantra it is inappropriate to listen to the trainings without taking the respective vows, however, the present trainings are different from those. First you come to understand the trainings so that your continuum is purified. Then, if you feel enthusiasm for holding them, the vows are imparted on you. If you take them to mind as an object after having understood the trainings, and then take the vows, having developed a heartfelt wish to train in them, they will be very stable. That is why this is a good method.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-2 Having developed the wish, taking the vows of the Victors' children

In the commentary on the Ethics Chapter of Asaṅga's treatise on *Bodhisattva Levels* I already extensively settled how to first take the vows and, following that, how to guard against the root downfalls and downfalls that are infractions, and how to restore the vows if they have been degenerated. Therefore, since the vows definitely need to be looked into before they are taken, you should come to understand these points there.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3 Having taken them, the way in which to train in them

This has three points:

- A What the foundation of the trainings is
- B How the trainings are contained in it
- C The stages by which to train in them

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3A What the foundation of the trainings is

Although there are infinite clear divisions, when grouped together by type, all the trainings of bodhisattvas are contained in the six perfections. Therefore, the six perfections constitute the great synopsis that condenses all the essential points of the bodhisattva path.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B How the trainings are contained in it

This has two points:

- 1 The actual meaning: the definite number of the perfections
- 2 In addition to that, their definite order

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1 The actual meaning: the definite number of the perfections

This has two points:

- A The transition
- B The actual topic

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1A The transition [207]

The Bhagavan merely made a synopsis of six perfections, whereas Maitreya, the holy regent of the Victors, elucidated, as they had been intended, the essential points of the reasons for it having been made in that way and produced certainty. The way in which their number is definite is those very points. Therefore, when you find certainty which captivates the mind with respect to this, hold the instructions regarding the practice of the six perfections as supreme.



2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B The actual topic

With regard to the perfections, the number is definite as six:

- 1 The number is definite from the point of view of high status
- 2 The number is definite from the point of view of the accomplishment of the two welfares
- 3 The number is definite from the point of view of the complete accomplishment of the welfare of others in all aspects
- 4 The number is definite from the point of view of comprising the entire Mahāyāna
- 5 The number is definite from the point of view of influencing all aspects of the path or method
- 6 The number is definite from the point of view of the three trainings

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-1 The number is definite from the point of view of high status

This has three points:

- A How the support has to be excellent in all its parts

In order to bring the vast conduct of a bodhisattva to completion, you need many consecutive lives and, in order to progress along the path in them, you need a support that is totally perfected in all its features. Without it, even if you practice with something that merely has all the parts like our current support, there will be no progress whatsoever. Thus a support that is excellent in all its parts is necessary.

- B Having identified the excellent support, how the causes that are corresponding causes for that are achieved

Furthermore, you need a support that is endowed with the four excellences: (1) resources at your disposal, (2) a body with which to practice, (3) companions with whom to practice, and (4) the ends of actions that are to be undertaken.

However, due merely to their being excellent, many become conditions for the mental afflictions. Thus it is also necessary not to come under the power of the mental afflictions. But that is not enough either, you need to distinguish well the observed objects that are to be unmistakably engaged in and turned away from with respect to the essential point of what should be adopted and what should be discarded because otherwise [208] the excellences will destroy themselves, just like bamboo and plantain trees are destroyed by bearing fruit and like a molly is destroyed by pregnancy. If you have wisdom, you will understand that the excellences are the effects of previous good actions, and you will strive for their causes again so that they will increase. If you do not have wisdom, you will use the effects you previously accumulated and thereby exhaust them. Since you do not newly increase them, they will become the beginning of suffering in future lives. Hence the emergence of those six perfections in future lives does not come about without a cause nor from a cause that does not correspond with them, and the perfections are definite as six like their corresponding sequential causes.

- C Relating what has been said above to the scriptures and distinguishing high status of the time of the path and the result in detail

The resources and so forth at the time of the path are temporary high status. Culminated high status—an excellent body and so forth—exist on the buddha ground. It is also stated like that in *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras*:

Excellent body and resources and excellent  
 Retinue and undertakings are high status,  
 And never to be controlled by mental afflictions,  
 And being mistaken regarding activities.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>168</sup> Those six characteristics of the higher realms constitute results related to the six perfections as their respective causes: excellent commodities as the result of giving, excellent bodies as the result of ethics, excellent companions as the result of patience, conditions for the accomplishment of one's enterprises as the result of joyous effort, and the absence of wrong views concerning actions as the result of wisdom. (cf. Wayman 1992: 106.)

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-2 The number is definite from the point of view of the accomplishment of the two welfares

This has two points:

- A The transition
- B The actual topic

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-2A The transition

When you train in bodhisattva conduct with such a support, the activities of bodhisattvas are exhausted in the two: those that accomplish one's own welfare and those that accomplish the welfare of others.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-2B The actual topic

This has six points:

- 1 How the first three of the six perfections bring about the welfare of others

Specifically, in order to accomplish the welfare of others it is necessary, first of all, to benefit them by means of material gifts. Since generosity accompanied by harm to sentient beings does not lead to anything, it is itself of great profit to others completely to turn away from actions that harm others together with their bases. Therefore, ethics is necessary. However, as that pure ethics cannot come about if you retaliate once or twice, unable to bear being harmed, [209] the patience that in the face of harm thinks "It does not matter" is necessary to culminate ethics. Since you do not retaliate out of patience, others are prevented from accumulating a lot of negativities and, inspired by that, apply themselves to virtue, whereby it is of great benefit to others.

- 2 What brings about one's own welfare

If your own welfare is to attain the happiness of complete liberation through the power of wisdom, you should moreover place your mind in equipoise by means of concentration through not allowing your mind to become distracted. Thus it is necessary to achieve the serviceability of a mind that abides on the observed object as long as you wish.

- 3 How joyous effort becomes the foundation of both welfares

Since this does not arise in the lazy, you need to set about it with the joyous effort that does not relent day and night. Hence this is their foundation.

- 4 A scriptural passage to that effect

Therefore, in order to bring about the two welfares, the perfections are definite as six. In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it says:

Great effort for the welfare of beings  
Is made by giving, not harming, and patience.  
Abiding and freedom<sup>169</sup> with their foundation  
Enact your own welfare in all aspects.

- 5 One does not establish others in complete liberation in dependence on wisdom

This does not comprise the welfare of others in all aspects.

- 6 Identifying the respective sequence of the last two perfections

In the statement "Abiding and freedom," the *mind abiding* on the observed object is said to be the work of meditative concentration and *freedom* from cyclic existence is said to be the work of wisdom. When these two are distinguished, calm abiding will not be mistaken to be special insight.

<sup>169</sup> Tib. *grol ba*, usually translated here as "liberation."

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-3 The number is definite from the point of view of the complete accomplishment of the welfare of others in all aspects

At the outset eliminate the poverty of sentient beings through material things. Following that, do not harm any sentient being whatsoever. Not only that, be patient when harmed. Due to being their companion, act with undaunted joyous effort. Rely on concentration and, with magical emanations and so forth, provide whatever they wish for. When they have become suitable vessels, give them good explanations in dependence on wisdom, so that by clearing up their doubt, [210] you liberate them. Because of this, the perfections are definite as six.

Not holding back and not causing harm at all,  
Patient with harm, unthwarted by what's to be done,  
Joyful, and well-spoken—that being the case  
The welfare of others is also one's own welfare.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-4 The number is definite from the point of view of comprising the entire Mahāyāna

Thus you will not be attached to resources you have acquired, and you will not view resources that you have not acquired with interest. When that is present, you will be able to guard the trainings, whereby you will take up ethics and respect it. Due to patience with sufferings that arise in dependence on sentient beings and non-sentient phenomena, you will not be discouraged. Due to applying yourself to and delighting in any kind of virtuous activities, you will not be discouraged by them. You will cultivate the non-conceptual yoga of calm abiding and special insight. These six encompass the entire Mahāyāna of migrating beings, for that is sequentially accomplished through the six perfections and nothing more than those six is necessary.

No joy in resources, highest respect,  
Not being discouraged regarding the two,  
As well as non-conceptual yoga;  
In this all Mahāyāna is exhausted.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-5 The number is definite from the point of view of influencing all aspects of the path or method: how the six perfections become the method for accomplishing any of the individual aspects

This has five points:

A The way in which generosity is contained in the path

The path or the method of non-attachment to resources that are objects you have already acquired is generosity because by familiarizing yourself with giving them away you become free from attachment to them.

B The way in which ethics acts as a method

The method for restraining the distraction of exerting oneself for the sake of acquiring objects that have not yet been acquired is ethics because in one with the vows of a fully ordained monk all the distractions of ends of actions do not arise.

C The way in which patience acts as a method

The method for not giving up sentient beings is patience because one is not depressed by all the sufferings of being harmed.

D The way in which joyous effort acts as a method [211]

The method for increasing virtue is joyous effort because through undertaking virtue with joyous effort it increases.

E The way in which the last two perfections act as a method

The methods for completely purifying the obscurations are the last two perfections because the mental afflictions are completely purified by concentration and the obscurations to objects of knowledge are completely purified by wisdom.

That is why the perfections are definite as six.

The path of non-attachment to objects  
Is gained and that of restraining distractions.  
Not giving up sentient beings, increasing, and  
Cleansing<sup>170</sup> obscurations are further paths.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B1B-6 The number is definite from the point of view of the three trainings  
This has two points:

A How the perfections are contained in the three trainings

The entity of training in ethics is ethics. Moreover, since it is adopted when there is the generosity that is indifferent to resources, generosity is the collection of ethics. Also when ethics is adopted, since it is protected by the patience that does not return abuse for abuse, patience is in its retinue. Concentration is training of the mind whereas wisdom is training in wisdom. Joyous effort is included in all three trainings. Therefore the perfections are definite as six.

From the perspective of the three trainings,  
The Victor perfectly explained  
The six perfections: the first is the three,  
Two are aspects of the last two,  
And one is included in all three.

B Hence the importance of understanding that the number is definite

Thus, by means of whatever excellent support one thoroughly completes whatever welfare, one's own or that of others, through however many types of methods one possesses after abiding in whichever vehicle—that which thoroughly completes and gathers the support accomplishing any of the trainings, the welfare, the Mahāyāna, the method, and the trainings should be understood to be those very six perfections. You should think about this until you gain great certainty that they are the sum of all the essential points of the bodhisattva practices. [212]

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3B2 In addition to that, their definite order  
This has three points:

A The order in which they arise

If you have generosity that is indifferent and not attached to resources, you will adopt ethics. If you possess ethics that refrains from faulty behavior, you will be patient with regard to harm. If you have patience that does not despair with respect to hardships, you will be able to act with joyous effort since adverse circumstances will be few. As you act with joyous effort day and night, the concentration that is able to establish the mind in virtue will arise. When the mind is in meditative equipoise, you will have the realization of reality just as it is.

B The order in terms of inferior and superior

The earlier are inferior, and the latter are superior.

<sup>170</sup> Tib. (*rnam par*) *sbyong ba*, usually translated here as “(completely) purify(ing).”

C The order in terms of coarser and subtler

Since the earlier are easier to engage in and do than the latter, they are coarser. Since the latter are more difficult to engage in and do than the earlier, they are more subtle. In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it says:

The latter grow due to the earlier ones;  
Since they abide as inferior and superior,  
Since they are coarser and more subtle,  
They were taught in stages like that.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C The stages by which to train in them

This has two points:

- 1 How to train in the conduct in general
- 2 How to train in the last two perfections in particular

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1 How to train in the conduct in general

This has two points:

- A Extensive explanation of how to train in the conduct in general
- B The summarized meaning

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A Extensive explanation of how to train in the conduct in general

This has two points:

- 1 Training in the perfections that ripen one's own buddha qualities
- 2 Training in the four means of gathering disciples that ripen the continua of others

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1 Training in the perfections that ripen one's own buddha qualities

This has six points:

- A How to train in generosity
- B How to train in ethics
- C How to train in patience
- D How to train in joyous effort
- E How to train in concentration
- F How to train in wisdom

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A How to train in generosity

This has three points:

- 1 The entity of generosity
- 2 Subdivisions
- 3 How to generate generosity in one's mental continuum

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A1 The entity of generosity

This has two points:

- A Entity

The entity of generosity is a virtuous intention to give and the actions of body and speech motivated by it. [213] It is the intention at the time the body and speech engage in generosity.

- B The measure for its perfection

The completion of the perfection of generosity does not depend on having eliminated the poverty of migrating beings by giving away to others substances to be given. Rather it becomes the perfection of generosity through destroying the grasping of miserliness and thoroughly completing one's familiarization with the mind of giving to others along with the effects of giving.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A2 Subdivisions

This has two points:

- A Subdivisions from the point of view of individual supports
- B Subdivisions of the entity of generosity itself

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A2A Subdivisions from the point of view of individual supports

This has two points:

- 1 Explanation of the individual generousities for the individual supports

In *Bodhisattva Vows of Liberation (Bodhisattvaprātimokṣa)* it is taught that generosity of material things is generally practiced by lay bodhisattvas, whereas ordained bodhisattvas should practice the generosity of the Dharma rather than generosity of material gifts.

- 2 The acquisition and giving of material things that interrupts the studies and so forth of the ordained is prohibited, whereas if they are obtained without harm to their studies, they should be given

Moreover, in the *Compendium of Trainings*, intending that which interrupts studies and so forth, it says that the giving of gifts by the ordained having worked for the sake of material things is prohibited. However, if they obtain them in plenty through the power of previous merit without harm to their virtuous activities, they should give material things. Sharawa also said: “To you I will not talk about the benefits of giving but I will talk about the disadvantages of grasping.” This is the talk of one who was not pleased that the ordained were giving gifts, having toiled to obtain and accumulate wealth and often damaged their ethics.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A2B Subdivisions of the entity of generosity itself

This has three points:

- 1 The generosity of the Dharma

The generosity of the Dharma is to unmistakably teach the holy Dharma, to teach properly, without misdeeds, the worldly aims of actions such as crafts and so forth, and to make others engage in upholding the basis of the trainings.

- 2 The generosity of fearlessness

The generosity of fearlessness is [214] to thoroughly protect others from fear of humans such as kings, bandits, and so forth, from fear of non-humans such as lions, tigers, and so forth, and fear of the elements such as water, fire, and so forth.

- 3 The generosity of material things

The generosity of material things is to give material things to others.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A3 How to generate generosity in one’s mental continuum.

This has three points:

- A How in order to complete the perfection of generosity, the mind giving away all one’s possessions rather than the mere destruction of miserliness is necessary
- B Thinking about the advantages of giving and the disadvantages of not giving
- C The actual method for engaging in generosity

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A3A How in order to complete the perfection of generosity the mind giving away all one’s possessions rather than the mere destruction of miserliness is necessary

By merely destroying all miserliness without exception regarding one’s body and possessions, it does not become the perfection of generosity because since miserliness is included in the factor of attachment, the two types of arhats of the Hīnayāna have also abandoned it without exception along with all its seeds. Hence it is necessary not only to eliminate the obstacle to giving, the holding on to all things that is miserliness, but to generate the thought, from the bottom of one’s heart, of giving away all one’s possessions to others.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A3B Thinking about the advantages of giving and the disadvantages of not giving

For that it is necessary to meditate both on the disadvantages of thoroughly holding on to things and on the advantages of giving. The former are as taught in the *Moon Lamp Sūtra* (*Candrapradīpasūtra*):

Since the body is unclean, and the life force fluctuates like water gushing down a steep mountain, and both body and life force are controlled by karma thus lacking an independent self, you should see them to be false, like a dream or a mirage, and cease your attachment to them. If you do not reverse it, you will come under the control of attachment, accumulate great faulty conduct, and go to the lower realms.

The second, the advantages of giving, are as taught in the *Compendium of Trainings*:

In this way my body and mind  
Pass away in every instant.  
If I attain, with this body that is  
Tainted and impermanent,  
Permanent, untainted enlightenment,  
Is it not obtained for free?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A3C The actual method for engaging in generosity

This has four points:

- 1 How to actually generate generosity
- 2 Importance of the inner attitude
- 3 Generosity that is a mere thought
- 4 How to associate generosity with the six perfections

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A3C-1 How to actually generate generosity

This has two points:

- A The actual topic [215]

*Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct* describes how generosity should actually be generated:

My body as well as my resources,  
All my virtues of the three times,  
I give away without sense of loss to  
Accomplish the welfare of all sentient beings.

Like that, taking the three—body, resources, and roots of virtue—as your object, you should familiarize yourself again and again with the thought of giving them away to all sentient beings.

- B How beginners should act

Since presently this wish is immature and of little strength, you should not actually give away your flesh and so forth, even though you have already given away your body in thought to sentient beings. Nonetheless, in the *Compendium of Trainings* it says that if we do not train in the thought of giving away our body and life, due to the lack of familiarity with it we will not be able to do so in the future either. Therefore it is necessary to train in that thought from now on.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A3C-2 Importance of the inner attitude

This has two points:

- A The disadvantages of forgetting the welfare of others

Thus, when you use food, clothing, and so forth that you have given away to sentient beings with a sincere thought, if, having forgotten the thought “I will use these for the welfare of others,” you instead use them for your own welfare as a result of craving, it is an afflicted downfall. If, without this craving, you forget the discrimination that observes all sentient beings or if you are attached for the sake of another sentient being, it is a non-afflicted downfall. If you use for your own sake those



things dedicated to others, having discriminated them to be the substances of others, it becomes *taking what has not been given* and if it is something valuable, it becomes a defeat of the pratimokṣa vow. On the other hand, if you use them thinking: “I will use the resources of this sentient being for his own welfare,” there is no fault. This is mentioned in the *Compendium of Trainings*.

B Clearing up doubt concerning a defeat

The way in which it becomes a defeat is when you have dedicated something with a sincere thought to a migrating being who is a human being, and he, having cognized it, also holds it to be his, if you take it for your own welfare with the discrimination that it belongs to someone else and if it is of some value, then the factors for it to become a defeat are present. That is the intention here. [216]

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A3C-3 Generosity that is a mere thought

Apart from that, *Bodhisattva Levels* teaches that the training in the aspiration to emanate immeasurable varieties of phenomena, objects to be offered, and to give them to sentient beings with clear faith from the bottom of one’s heart increases immeasurable merit with little effort and is the generosity of the wise bodhisattva.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1A3C-4 How to make generosity possess the six perfections

If at the time of training in the perfection of generosity it is made to possess the six perfections, the training that occurs will be very powerful. The six are made complete in that, in addition, at that time there is: the ethics that restrains the mental attention of hearers and solitary realizers; the aspiration for and patience with respect to the qualities of a knower of all aspects and patience when abused by others; the joyous effort that generates the aspiration for the sake of increasing them more and more; the concentration that is a single-pointed mind not mixed with the Hīnayāna that dedicates that virtue to complete enlightenment; and the wisdom that understands the object given, the giving, and the recipient to be like illusions.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B How to train in ethics

This has three points:

- 1 The entity of ethics
- 2 Its subdivisions
- 3 How to generate ethics in one’s mental continuum

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B1 The entity of ethics

This has two points:

A The entity of ethics

Ethics is the mind of abandonment that is a mind turned away from harming others together with its basis. This is mainly from the point of view of the ethics of restraint.

B The entity of the perfection of ethics

Through thoroughly completing the familiarity with this mind more and more, it becomes the perfection of ethics. It is not that you externally establish all sentient beings in freedom from all harm without exception. In *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Achieving the mind of abandonment  
Is taught as perfection of ethics.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B2 Its subdivisions

This has three points:

- A The ethics of restraint
- B The ethics of accumulating virtuous qualities
- C The ethics of bringing about the welfare of sentient beings

## 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B2A The ethics of restraint

This has two points:

### 1 General presentation

The ethics of restraint, [217] from the point of view of its being accompanied by a motivation, is the ten abandonments that abandon the ten non-virtues. From the point of view of its entity, it is the seven abandonments of body and speech that abandon the seven non-virtues.

### 2 Precise features

This is the intention of *Bodhisattva Levels* in stating that the ethics of restraint in the continuum of a bodhisattva is the seven types of vows of individual liberation: When those possessing the vows of individual liberation possess the bodhisattva vows, the ethics of restraint is the actual vows of individual liberation of the class of the laity or the ordained and the abandonments and vows that are common to them in their continua. When those who are unsuitable as a support for the vows of individual liberation possess bodhisattva vows, the ethics of restraint is the abandonments and restraints of abandoning either the natural misdeeds or the formulated misdeeds that are common to individual liberation. Although the vows of individual liberation in the continuum of a bodhisattva are vows of ethics in the continuum of a bodhisattva, they are not actual bodhisattva vows, whereas the rest have a common basis with the bodhisattva vows.

## 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B2B The ethics of gathering virtuous qualities

The ethics of gathering virtuous qualities is to observe virtues such as the six perfections and to generate that which has not yet arisen in one's own continuum, to not degenerate that which has arisen, and to increase it more and more.

## 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B2C The ethics of bringing about the welfare of sentient beings

The ethics of bringing about the welfare of sentient beings is to accomplish the welfare of sentient beings in this and future lives through ethics without any misdeeds as appropriate.

## 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B3 How to generate ethics in one's mental continuum

This has three points:

- A Preconditions and advantages of ethics
- B The entity of ethics
- C Making ethics possess the six perfections

### 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B3A Preconditions and advantages of ethics

This has two points:

#### 1 What is the cause of pure ethics and what it depends on

Pure ethics depends on practicing what should be engaged in and counteracted according to the formulated rules of the Buddha. Furthermore, it follows the strong and firm wish to guard ethics. For it to arise, you must meditate for a long time on the disadvantages of not guarding it and the advantages of guarding it. [218] This was explained above in the context of intermediate beings.

#### 2 Considering advantages and disadvantages of guarding and not guarding ethics.

Moreover in the *Compendium of the Perfections* it also says:

You cannot attain your own with degenerate discipline,<sup>171</sup>  
 So where would you get the power for others' welfare?  
 Therefore, it is inappropriate, if you strive well  
 For others' welfare, to loosen your respect for it.

And:

<sup>171</sup> Tib. *tshul khrims*, usually translated here as "ethics."

This ethics, special path of attainment,  
 Accomplish it like the naturally compassionate  
 It is of the excellent nature of pure wisdom<sup>172</sup>  
 Free from errors, it's called "the best of ornaments."

Pleasant fragrance guarded in all three realms,  
 It is a balm not at odds with ordination  
 Those who are ethically disciplined, though conforming  
 Outwardly, will be nobles among humans.

This says that in dependence on ethics, your mental continuum improves more and more; you become similar in training to the great beings who are naturally compassionate; you attain the pure exalted wisdom that has abandoned all seeds of faulty conduct; although other ornaments do not beautify the very young or very old, the ornament of ethics is the supreme ornament for whoever possesses it, whether young, old or in between, since it pleases everyone; although other fine fragrances only spread in the direction of the wind and do not spread in other directions whereby they are limited, the scent of ethics's fame spreads in all directions; although ointments such as sandalwood, which cool the torment of heat, contradict ordination, the ointment that protects from the torment of the heat of the afflictions does not contradict ordination but rather accords with it; and even though you only seem to have the signs of ordination, to be endowed with the jewel of ethics is more excellent than anything else.

Again from the same text:

Without expressing a word, without much effort,  
 Resources and services needed for practice gather. [219]  
 The world bows low without intimidation;  
 Power and wealth are gained without effort and work.

Although his lineage may be unworthy of mention,  
 Although he did not help or benefit them  
 All beings, including the ones he never knew,  
 Bow to a being endowed with ethics.

Even the dust made auspicious by his feet  
 Is raised to the head for its sanctity. Gods and humans  
 Prostrate so it touches their heads and carry it everywhere.  
 Thus, one should think about the advantages as expressed here.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B3B The entity of ethics

This has three points:

- 1 Instruction on the importance of how you train in ethics

Although there are three kinds of ethics, the ethics of restraint—practicing the engagements and avoidances concerning the formulated rules of individual liberation or what is common to them—is itself important for bodhisattvas in the beginning. If it is guarded, the others will also be guarded, whereas if it is not guarded, the others will not be guarded either. Therefore the *Compendium of Determinations* says that if the ethics of the bodhisattva vows degenerates, all the vows are degenerated. Whoever thinks that the vows of individual liberation are for hearers and rejects their formulated rules of engagement and avoidance saying: "I must train in the other bodhisattva trainings" has thus not grasped the essential point of the training in ethics of bodhisattvas, for it is taught many times that the ethics of restraint is the basis and province of the two subsequent ethics.

<sup>172</sup> Tib. *ye shes*, usually translated here as "exalted wisdom."

- 2 The main ethics of restraint: how the mind of restraining from natural misdeeds should be generated again and again

The main ethics of restraint is to abandon the natural misdeeds. The synthesized essential points of the great disadvantages of the natural misdeeds are to abandon the ten non-virtues. Therefore the mind of restraint that does not even move toward their motivations should be generated again and again. [220]

From the *Compendium of the Perfections*:

The path to the bliss of high status and liberation  
Is not to degenerate from the ten paths of action.  
Abiding in them you will have the special effect,  
The thought intending to benefit<sup>173</sup> migrating beings.

“Completely restraining one’s speech, one’s body, one’s mind,  
In brief, is ethics,” said the Victor.  
They are the basis comprising all ethics  
Without exception, so thoroughly train in them.

- 3 Summarized presentation

In brief, to take this as the basis and train again and again in the mind of restraint that trains in the trainings of whatever ethics one has promised is the practice of ethics.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1B3C Making ethics possess the six perfections

Ethics is made to possess the six perfections like this. Abiding in ethics oneself and establishing others in it is generosity. The remaining perfections are as before.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C How to train in patience

This has three points:

- 1 The entity of patience
- 2 Its subdivisions
- 3 How to generate patience in one’s continuum

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C1 The entity of patience

This has two points:

- A Explanation of the entity of patience

The entity of patience is the mind abiding at ease without being overwhelmed by harm and the occurrence of suffering, as well as very abiding dedication to the Dharma. Its opposites are hatred, disheartenment, lack of appreciation, and lack of desire.

- B The completion of the perfection of patience

The completion of the perfection of patience is the mere complete familiarity of the mind with ceasing one’s own belligerence and so forth; it does not depend on freeing other sentient beings from their unruliness.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C2 Its subdivisions

There is the patience of not paying heed to harm by others, the patience of accepting the suffering that arises in one’s own continuum, and the patience of a mind certain with respect to the Dharma.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3 How to generate patience in one’s continuum

This has two points:

- A Meditating on the advantages of patience and the disadvantages of impatience
- B The actual way to cultivate patience

<sup>173</sup> Tib. *phan bsams pa’i bsam pa*

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A Meditating on the advantages of patience and the disadvantages of impatience

This has two points:

- 1 The advantages of patience
- 2 The disadvantages of impatience

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-1 The advantages of patience

You think about the fact that later on you will have [221] few enemies, you will not be separated from dear ones, you will experience much happiness and mental happiness, you will die without regret, and you will be reborn among the gods after this body has perished. In the *Compendium of the Perfections* it says:

For those with the mind that neglects the welfare of others  
It was taught “The best of ways is patience.”  
That which is good and excellent in the world,  
Patience protects it from the faults of anger.

It is the best of ornaments of the strong,  
Peak of power for those embracing austerities,  
Torrent of water for prairie fires of malice.  
All harm is removed by patience in this life and others.

Against the armor of patience of excellent beings  
The arrows of words of unruly beings are wrecked.  
Thereby they turn into excellent flowers of praise  
And become attractive garlands of fame.

And:

Patience is also the workshop where forms are accomplished  
With beautiful qualities and adorned with the signs.<sup>174</sup>

You should meditate on the advantages as taught here until you reach a strong and stable certainty with regard to them.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2 The disadvantages of impatience

This has two points:

- A Invisible disadvantages
- B Visible disadvantages along with supplementary remarks

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A Invisible disadvantages

This has four points:

- 1 How anger destroys the roots of virtue
- 2 How they are destroyed even if the object of anger is an ordained person who is not a bodhisattva
- 3 Clearing up doubts concerning their destruction
- 4 Details regarding the way in which they are destroyed

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A1 How anger destroys the roots of virtue

This has three points:

- A The actual topic

In *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

What has been gathered<sup>175</sup> in thousand eons  
Like giving and offerings to those gone to bliss,  
All those good deeds, whatever there is,  
An instant of anger destroys it all.

<sup>174</sup> Tib. *mtshan rab*, literally “best/highest signs”, that is the signs of a buddha.

<sup>175</sup> Tib. *bsags pa*, usually translated here as “accumulated.”

Apparently this was composed in accordance with Āryaśūra's work *Compendium of the Perfections*. The *Play of Mañjuśrī Sūtra* (*Mañjuśrīvīkrīḍitasūtra*) says that it destroys the virtue accumulated over a hundred eons.

B Differences in the object of anger

With respect to the object, some explain that it must be a bodhisattva, whereas some assert that it is a general object. The former accords with the *Commentary on the "Middle Way"*:

Therefore, through anger toward a child of the Victors  
The virtue from giving and discipline one has [222] amassed  
Over a hundred eons is crushed in an instant.

C The support

As regards the support of the one in whom anger arises, since even if a bodhisattva gets angry it destroys his roots of virtue, there is no need to mention that this is the case for one who is not a bodhisattva who gets angry at a bodhisattva. In the *Explanation of Candrakīrti's "Commentary on the 'Middle Way'"* (*Madhyamakāvatāraṭīkānāma*) it says that whether or not it is certain that the object is a bodhisattva and whether or not the reason for the anger, seeing faults, is true, the destruction of virtue is similar to how it was explained above.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A2 How they are destroyed even if the object of anger is an ordained person who is not a bodhisattva

In general, anger does not need to be directed at a bodhisattva in order for it to destroy roots of virtue. A passage quoted from the Sarvāstivādin scriptures in the *Compendium of Trainings* says:

If a monk prostrates to a stūpa of hair and nail relics with extended limbs and a pure mind, he will come to enjoy as many kingdoms of universal monarchs as there are particles of dust in the ground covered up to the golden foundation.

And:

Even those roots of virtue will be exhausted if he injures or disparages one of pure conduct. Therefore, if one should not even be angry at a charred log, how much less so at a body endowed with consciousness!

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A3 Clearing up doubts concerning their destruction

This has two points:

- A Doubts raised by scholars
- B Their refutation

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A3A Doubts raised by scholars

Some scholars say that the meaning of *the destruction of roots of virtue* is that the potential of earlier virtue to bring about its effect quickly is destroyed, and the emergence of its effect is delayed, so that the effects of hatred and so forth emerge first. However, if they meet with suitable conditions afterward, it is not that their respective effects do not emerge, for if there is no mundane path whatsoever that can eliminate the seeds of the objects of abandonment, it is impossible for seeds to be eliminated by the mental afflictions.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A3B Their refutation

This has two points:

- 1 The seed is uncertain
- 2 How *destruction* does not just mean postponement

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A3B-1 The seed is uncertain

This has two points:



A How the effect does not arise due to conditions even though its seed is still there

The reason that it is uncertain is because even though ordinary beings purify non-virtues by means of the four opponent powers, their seeds are not abandoned. However, although the conditions are met later on, [223] it is impossible for the fully ripened effects to emerge.

B Even if the seed has not been abandoned, its effect is not produced once tolerance is achieved

Once the peak and tolerance levels of the path of preparation have been attained, although wrong views and the seeds of non-virtues that become the causes of the lower realms have not been abandoned, wrong views and rebirths in the lower realms are impossible even if these seeds meet with their conditions.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A3B-2 How *destruction* does not just mean postponement

This has two points:

A The absurd consequence

According to the statement “What’s heaviest in cyclic existence with karma...,” either a virtuous or a non-virtuous karma, by ripening sooner, can temporarily block the occasion for another karma to ripen. However, it cannot be posited nor has it been taught that virtuous or non-virtuous karma is destroyed by merely that. The temporary postponement of its ripening is not suitable to be the meaning of the *destruction of roots of virtue* because otherwise it would have been necessary to teach that all strong non-virtues destroy the roots of virtue.

B Analogy for how the effect is not produced although the seed has not been abandoned

Therefore, with respect to this, Master Bhāvaviveka said:

As explained above, neither non-virtues that have been purified by the four powers nor roots of virtue that have been destroyed by wrong views or harmful intent can bring about their effects even if later on they meet with the conditions; just like a seed that has been damaged cannot produce a sprout even though the conditions are met.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2A4 Details regarding the way in which they are destroyed

This has three points:

A How the fully ripened effect and the effect corresponding to the cause may or may not be destroyed

Moreover, even though negativities that have been accumulated are cleared away by purifying them with the four powers as described above, this does not contradict the fact that they delay the arising of higher paths. Thus in some people the effects of giving gifts and guarding ethics, such as the arising of excellent resources and bodies, are destroyed. However, due to the effect corresponding to the cause, familiarization with giving and the mind of abandonment, the roots of virtue of generosity and ethics arise again easily and cannot be destroyed. In others the arising of the effect corresponding to the cause as a continuum of similar type, inner ethics and so forth, is destroyed, but the arising of an excellent body, resources, and so forth [224] is not destroyed. Again others, as described previously, will have some realizations of the path that enable them to completely traverse it within one eon unless anger toward a bodhisattva who has obtained his prophecy arises in their minds. If one thought of anger arises, their traversal of the path within one eon will be delayed although the path that exists in their continua is not relinquished. In brief, what I mean is that, with respect to purifying non-virtues, not all its efficacy is necessarily purified and likewise, with respect to the destruction of virtue, not all its efficacy is necessarily destroyed.

B How that depends exclusively on the scriptures

Nonetheless this is an important point, and since it seems necessary to analyze it in dependence on the Buddha’s scriptures and the reasonings based on them, you should analyze it looking at the



Buddha's excellent teachings.<sup>176</sup>

C How the two great actions operate

Thus the invisible disadvantages of anger are that it projects very unpleasant fully ripened effects and prevents the emergence of other very pleasant fully ripened effects.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3A-2B Visible disadvantages along with supplementary remarks

This has three points:

1 How peace of mind and so forth are not experienced

The visible disadvantages of anger are taught in *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct*: you do not experience mental peace and certainty, previous joy and happiness are ruined and later on are not achieved, sleep does not come and the mind does not remain at ease, if your hatred is strong, even those you nurtured with kindness forget about your kindness and kill you, even friends and relatives get irritated and abandon you, and even those you gather with gifts do not stay, and so forth.

2 How to gain certainty regarding the faults

In *Engaging in Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

There's no negativity equal to hatred  
There's no austerity equal to patience.  
Therefore patience should be practiced  
Earnestly, in various ways.

Thus you should consider the advantages and disadvantages and make an effort to develop patience in many ways.

3 Supplementary remarks

It should be understood from the *Compendium of Trainings* that hatred is not ascertained to be the only faulty conduct that collects both major fully-ripened effects and the destruction of roots of virtue. [225] There is the wrong view that deprecates the law of cause and effect, the abandonment of the holy Dharma, contempt, generation of pride, and so on toward bodhisattvas, gurus, and so forth.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3B The actual way to cultivate patience

This has three points:

- 1 How to cultivate the patience that is unconcerned with respect to harm
- 2 How to cultivate the patience that accepts suffering
- 3 How to cultivate the patience devoted to a mind of certainty regarding the Dharma

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3B-1 How to cultivate the patience that is unconcerned with respect to harm

This has five points:

A The offender's lack of control

If you investigate whether or not someone who harmed you was free not to harm you, you will find that he did not harm you while being in control, for he generated the wish to harm you out of causes and conditions such as the seeds of mental afflictions from previous familiarity and improper mental attention. Also due to them he engaged in activities that inflicted harm and thereby produced suffering in others, for under the power of other, the mental afflictions, he had become as if their slave.

B The inappropriateness of anger given that he has no control

Even if someone, driven by something else without control, has harmed you, anger is inappropriate. For instance, if someone, possessed by an evil spirit, were to come under its power and wish to

<sup>176</sup> Tib. *gsung rab*, usually translated here as "scriptures."

harm you, his benefactor freeing him from it, and if he were to strike you, you would not get even the slightest bit angry at him but instead think: “He is acting like this now because the evil spirit has deprived him of his freedom.” You would put effort into doing whatever you could to free him from the evil spirit. A bodhisattva should also act like that.

C The scriptural source for this

From *Four Hundred Stanzas*:

Just as a doctor is not disturbed  
By one who is gripped by a spirit and angry,  
The Sage beholds the mental afflictions  
Not the person afflicted by them.

Master Candrakīrti also says:

“This is no fault of sentient beings,  
It is a fault of the mental afflictions.”  
The wise who have analyzed this in detail  
Are not disturbed by sentient beings.

D How anger is inappropriate if one thinks of one's own karma

Moreover, the experience of suffering produced by the one who harms you [226] is the experience of the effect of a negative action accumulated by you yourself in the past and, in dependence on that, the action is exhausted. If you cultivate patience with respect to it, you will not newly accumulate causes for experiencing suffering later on, whereas if you get angry, you will have to experience suffering that is even greater than that.

E Consequently, the appropriateness of being patient as if it were a medical examination

It is therefore quite appropriate to be patient with minor suffering in order to avert greater suffering, such as being patient with bloodletting, burning, and so forth as a method for curing a serious illness.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3B-2      How to cultivate the patience that accepts suffering

This has three points:

A Countering the categorical aversion to suffering that arises

If the suffering that has arisen is curable, aversion is unnecessary. If it is not suitable to be cured, again, aversion to it is useless because it is without benefit, and it is even disadvantageous, for even tiny suffering becomes extremely hard to bear if you are very intolerant, whereas even great suffering is bearable if you are less intolerant.

B Considering the positive qualities of suffering itself

The way to mentally take the side of suffering is to train the mind again and again thinking “If there was no such suffering, the wish to definitely emerge from cyclic existence would not arise, therefore it has the positive quality of exhorting my mind to liberation; it has the positive quality of eliminating my arrogance since, when I am beset with suffering, my conceited superiority is destroyed; it has the positive quality of making me shun negativities because when I experience an intense feeling of suffering, since it arises from non-virtue, I must turn away from its cause if I do not want this effect; it has the positive quality of making me delight in accomplishing virtue since, due to being tormented by suffering, I want happiness and for that purpose I must accomplish virtue; and, having understood that compassion is generated for the beings of cyclic existence as I think “In proportion to my own experience, others also suffer,” this suffering fulfills my wishes.”

C It is not difficult if you familiarize yourself in small steps

Here again it says:

Something that does not [227] get easier  
 If you get used to<sup>177</sup> it, does not exist.  
 Therefore endure even major harm  
 By getting used to minor harm.

Thus, if you put on the armor of the intention to accept suffering and expose yourself to suffering in small steps, your strength to accept suffering will grow.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1C3B-3      How to cultivate the patience that is devoted to a mind of certainty regarding the Dharma

The way to cultivate the patience that is devoted to a mind of certainty regarding the Dharma is to train in devotion to the following without bias: the objects of clear faith, the Three Jewels; the objects to be actualized, the two selflessnesses; the object of desire, the great power of the buddhas and bodhisattvas; the objects to be adopted and discarded, the causes that are excellent conduct and faulty conduct as well as their effects; the object of meditation, enlightenment, the meaning to be achieved; the method for attaining that, the path of the bodhisattva trainings; the objects of hearing and thinking, the holy Dharma of the twelve scriptural branches, and so forth.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D      How to train in joyous effort

This has three points:

- 1 The entity of joyous effort
- 2 Its subdivisions
- 3 How to generate joyous effort in one's continuum

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D1      The entity of joyous effort

In *Bodhisattva Levels* joyous effort is explained as a mind that delights strongly for the sake of gathering virtue and working for the welfare of sentient beings, as well as the actions of the three doors motivated by it.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D2      Its subdivisions

This has three points:

A Armor-like joyous effort

From the three, the first is armor-like joyous effort. When bodhisattvas undertake joyous effort, prior to applying themselves they put on the armor of the thought that first delights the mind. That is they delight, even if they are to attain buddhahood after abiding only in hell for 100,000 times 10 million rounds of three immeasurable eons in order to eliminate the suffering of one single being. Also with respect to putting in effort to attain complete enlightenment, they wear the armor of the thought "If I will not give up engaging in joyous effort for that length of time, what need is there to mention that I will not give it up if the time is less than that and if the suffering is less?"

B The joyous effort of gathering virtuous dharmas

The joyous effort of gathering virtuous dharmas is to apply oneself to them for the sake of accomplishing the six perfections.

C The joyous effort of working for the welfare of sentient beings

The joyous effort of working for the welfare of sentient beings [228] is similar to the above.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3      How to generate joyous effort in one's continuum

This has four points:

- A The benefits of undertaking joyous effort
- B The disadvantages of not undertaking joyous effort

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<sup>177</sup> Tib. *goms*, usually translated here as "familiarize yourself."

- C How to actually generate joyous effort
- D How joyous effort is made to possess the six perfections

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3A The benefits of undertaking joyous effort

This has two points:

- 1 One will not be overcome by distraction and so forth and will achieve the two attainments

From *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras*:

Joyous effort is best within virtue's collection.  
 Thus, relying on it, one attains that which follows.  
 Through joyous effort, immediately, best source of happiness,  
 Including mundane and supramundane attainments.

Through joyous effort one gains worldly wealth one desires.  
 Through joyous effort one becomes totally pure.  
 Through joyous effort one is liberated  
 Passing beyond the transitory collection.

Through joyous effort one wakes to supreme enlightenment.

- 2 How those endowed with joyous effort not only develop these qualities but also non-humans like them

In the *Compendium of the Perfections* it also says:

For him who has great joyous effort and does not dismay,  
 There's nothing that can't be attained, that can't be accomplished.

And:

Also all non-humans like to benefit him.  
 He achieves all manners of samādhi.<sup>178</sup>  
 He passes days and nights having results.  
 He won't decline because of his mass<sup>179</sup> of good qualities,  
 Through aims more noble than concerns of humans  
 He will flourish like an utpala flower.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3B The disadvantages of not undertaking joyous effort

The disadvantages of not undertaking joyous effort are described in the *Sūtra Requested by Sāgarapati*:

For the lazy, enlightenment is very far and far in all ways. In the lazy, generosity through wisdom does not exist. For the lazy, the welfare of others does not exist.

And *Mindfulness of the Excellent Teaching* also says:

The one foundation of mental afflictions  
 Is laziness, no matter in whom.  
 He who has laziness by itself,  
 Does not have qualities whatsoever.

You should think like this.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3C How to actually generate joyous effort

This has three points:

- 1 Adverse conditions for joyous effort
- 2 Relying on favorable conditions for joyous effort
- 3 How the body and the mind become serviceable through joyous effort

<sup>178</sup> Tib. *ting (nge) 'dzin*, usually translated here as "meditative stabilization."

<sup>179</sup> Tib. *tshogs*, usually translated here as "collection."

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3C-1 Adverse conditions for joyous effort

There are two adverse circumstances for joyous effort:

- A Seeing that one is able to accomplish virtuous dharma but not engaging in them
- B The discouragement that thinks: “How could I ever accomplish anything like that?”

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3C-1A Seeing that one is able to accomplish virtuous dharma but not engaging in them [229]

This has two points:

- 1 The actual topic

One postpones things till later thinking “There is still time,” and if not that, one is overcome by attachment to bad activities.

- 2 The antidotes

The antidote to the first, the laziness of procrastination, is to meditate on the three: this body that you have obtained quickly disintegrates, after death you will fall into the lower realms, and it will be difficult to find such a good support once again. This was already taught before.

The following considerations are the antidote to attachment to bad activities: the holy Dharma is the cause for the arising of boundless joy in this and future lives, meaningless idle chatter and the distractions of excitement and so forth degenerate the great aim in this life, and seeing that it is the source that generates manifold suffering in future lives, it should be stopped.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3C-1B The second adverse condition: the discouragement that thinks: “How could I ever accomplish anything like that?”

This has two points:

- 1 The actual topic
- 2 The antidotes

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3C-1B1 The actual topic

Discouragement is also of three types:

1. The discouragement that thinks: “Since the objects to be attained, the positive qualities of a buddha, are limitless, I cannot attain them.”
2. The discouragement that thinks: “Since the method, giving away my arms, legs, and the like is immensely difficult, I cannot accomplish it.”
3. The discouragement that thinks: “As for the place, since it is necessary to take infinite rebirths in cyclic existence, during that time I will be harmed by the sufferings of cyclic existence.”

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3C-1B2 The antidotes

There are also three antidotes:

- A The antidote to discouragement with respect to the object of attainment

The antidote to the first is the thought: “Even the buddhas did not already attain elevated paths right from the start. Rather, they were like me and became buddhas by going on to increasingly higher paths. Since the Bhagavan also said that even those who are greatly inferior to me will attain buddhahood, why should I not attain it too unless I do not make the effort?”

- B The antidote to discouragement with respect to the method

The antidote to the second is to think: “As long as the discrimination arises that it is difficult to give away my body and so forth, I will not give it away. However, when it is time to give it away, it will not be difficult but will be like giving away cooked vegetables.”

C The antidote to discouragement with respect the locale of accomplishment

The antidote to the third [230] is to stop discouragement, thinking: “Due to the abandonment of negativities by a bodhisattva, their effects, suffering feelings, do not arise. Due to his stable realization that cyclic existence lacks inherent existence, like an illusion, there is no suffering in his mind. If he thrives due to physical and mental happiness even though he remains in cyclic existence, despair is useless.”

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3C-2 Relying on favorable conditions for joyous effort

Relying on favorable conditions for joyous effort has four types:

A The power of devotion

The power of devotion is to meditate on causes and effects so as to aspire to discard and adopt.

B The power of stability

The power of stability is not to engage in anything haphazardly without investigating it, and, having investigated it, to engage in it and culminate it.

C The power of joy

The power of joy makes your undertaking of joyous effort uninterrupted and insatiable, like a child engaged in play.

D The power of suspension

The power of suspension is to rest when your body and your mind are worn out due to your joyous effort. As soon as you have recovered, you start again.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3C-3 How the body and the mind become serviceable through joyous effort

In this way, in dependence on stopping adverse conditions and relying on favorable conditions, you should undertake joyous effort until your body and your mind become light like a piece of cotton carried by the wind.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1D3D How joyous effort is made to possess the six perfections

When you train in joyous effort, you should make it possess the six perfections. Abiding in joyous effort yourself and establishing others in it is the generosity of joyous effort. The remaining are as before.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1E How to train in concentration

This has three points:

- 1 The entity of concentration
- 2 Its subdivisions
- 3 How to generate concentration in one's continuum

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1E1 The entity of concentration

The entity of concentration is a mind that abides single-pointedly on any suitable virtuous object.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1E2 Its subdivisions

In terms of its entity, there are the two: mundane and supramundane. In terms of class, there are the three: the class of calm abiding, the class of special insight, and the class that is a union of the two. When it is divided in terms of its functions, there is the concentration that causes one to abide in physical and mental happiness in this life, the concentration that manifestly accomplishes positive qualities, and the concentration that brings about the welfare of sentient beings.

A The concentration that causes one to abide in physical and mental happiness in this life

This is [231] the concentration that generates physical and mental pliancy as one places the mind in meditative equipoise.

B The concentration that manifestly accomplishes positive qualities

This is a concentration that accomplishes the positive qualities shared with the hearers, such as the clairvoyances, complete liberations, totalities, and masteries.<sup>180</sup>

C The concentration that brings about the welfare of sentient beings

This is the concentration that accomplishes the welfares in eleven ways by means of concentration.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1E3 How to generate concentration in one's continuum

The thoughts regarding the advantages of cultivating meditative concentration and the disadvantages of not cultivating it will be explained in the chapter on calm abiding.

The generosity of training in concentration possessing the six perfections is to abide in concentration oneself and establish others in it. The remaining are as before.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F How to train in wisdom

This has three points:

- 1 The entity of wisdom
- 2 Its subdivisions
- 3 How to generate wisdom in one's continuum

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F1 The entity of wisdom

In general wisdom is that which very thoroughly distinguishes the qualities in the thing that is being investigated. Here it is the wisdom that is skilled in the five sciences and so forth.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F2 Its subdivisions

There are three: the wisdom realizing the ultimate, the wisdom realizing conventionalities, and the wisdom realizing the welfare of sentient beings.

A The wisdom realizing the ultimate

This is the wisdom examining the suchness that is selflessness by means of a meaning generality and the wisdom examining the suchness that is selflessness by means of a direct perceiver.

B The wisdom realizing conventionalities

This is the wisdom that is skilled in the five sciences.

C The wisdom realizing the welfare of sentient beings

This consists in knowing how to accomplish, without misdeeds, the welfare of sentient beings in this and future lives.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F3 How to generate wisdom in one's continuum

This has two points:

- A The advantages of generating wisdom
- B The disadvantages of not generating wisdom

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F3A The advantages of generating wisdom

This has five points:

- 1 It is the root of all positive qualities

In *Hundred Verses on Wisdom (Prajñāśataka)* it says:

The root of all the positive qualities,  
The seen and the unseen, is wisdom.

<sup>180</sup> Terms for certain concentrations: "liberations" from attachments of the various realms, control over colors and elements in the "totalities," and over forms and other objects in the "masteries."



Thus, for the sake of accomplishing both,  
Wisdom should be fully embraced.

- 2 The fact that a bodhisattva is not perturbed by good or bad conditions and that he is skilled in methods such as generosity and so forth depends on wisdom

Although a bodhisattva gives his own flesh to someone who asks him for it, [232] like taking a leaf from a medicinal plant it is not done with the discursive thoughts of pride, discouragement, and so forth but is done from a direct perception of suchness by means of wisdom. By means of the wisdom seeing the problems of existence and peace, he practices ethics for the welfare of others, thereby purifying his ethics. By means of the wisdom realizing the faults of impatience and the positive qualities of patience, his mind is subdued due to which he is not captivated by heretical practices and suffering. By means of wisdom, he understands the excellent basis that undertakes joyous effort and exerts himself in that, whereby there is great progress on the path. By means of the wisdom relying on a process of reasoning, he achieves the supreme joyful bliss of the concentration that abides on the meaning of suchness. In this way, the complete purity of the first five perfections, generosity, and so forth, depends on wisdom.

- 3 One endowed with wisdom can accomplish without contradiction even those actions that appear contradictory to common beings

Those endowed with wisdom can accomplish without any contradiction two qualities that appear to be opposed. If a bodhisattva were to become a universal monarch with power over the four continents, the fact that he does not come under the power of desirable objects is due to the force of the minister of wisdom. Likewise, although his love that sees sentient beings as attractive is very strong, it is not even slightly mixed with attachment. Although he has long-term intense compassion that cannot bear the suffering of sentient beings, he is without the laziness that is oppressed by sorrow and does not delight in virtue. Although he possesses immeasurable joy, he is without the restlessness that distracts the mind from the observed object. Although he possesses great and continuous equanimity, he does not neglect the welfare of migrating beings even for an instant. He does those deeds out of wisdom because the equally strong obstacles to accomplishing them are ceased through wisdom.

- 4 That the two truths are considered non-contradictory is also due to wisdom

In *Praise of the Praiseworthy* it says:

Without discarding reality, [233]  
It also accords with conventionalities.

Thus there is no need to discard reality, the great certainty one has gained that not even a mere particle of the reference object whose signs are being apprehended is established. That is non-contradictory and compatible with the fact that conventionalities are found through a profound ascertainment that individual effects arise from their individual inner and outer causes and conditions. Although they are extremely contradictory for those without a sharp mind, for those possessing wisdom they are non-contradictory and are compatible.

- 5 That permissions and prohibitions are non-contradictory also depends on wisdom

In the same text it also says:

Regarding permissions and prohibitions  
Some of your words are definite as one.  
Whereas others are not as definite,  
Still there is no contradiction between them.

Thus there are many different permissions and prohibitions in the higher and lower vehicles and in sūtra and tantra. For those seeking the intention of the infinite scriptures regarding the two being

practiced by a single person, to those who do not have a sharp mind they are contradictory, whereas to the skilled they are not. This too is due to wisdom.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F3B The disadvantages of not generating wisdom

This has three points:

- 1 The fault of being separated from wisdom
- 2 Causes of wisdom and so forth
- 3 How wisdom is made to possess the six perfections

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F3B-1 The fault of being separated from wisdom: the fault that, if wisdom is lacking, generosity and so forth will not become completely pure

If they are separated from wisdom, the five—generosity and so forth—and the view will not be pure. In the *Compendium of the Perfections* it says:

In those who strive for results in the absence of wisdom,  
The nature of giving is not completely pure.  
To give others welfare is taught as “the best of gifts.”  
The rest are applications for increasing wealth.

And:

If wisdom’s light does not dispel the darkness,  
One will not come to possess pure ethics.  
Mostly, that discipline, due to the absence of wisdom,  
Will be disturbed by afflictions through flawed<sup>181</sup> understanding.

And:

Positive qualities of patience won’t stay in one’s mind  
If it’s disturbed by faults of distorted wisdom.  
Nor will fame in a king without positive qualities,  
Who hates to examine the excellent and the faulty.

And [234]:

It is extolled as sublime for the discerning.  
There is nothing more subtle and deep than it.  
Completely unobscured by the fault of attachment,  
The mind won’t take the straight path without wisdom.

And:

Those holding that wisdom’s way does not involve effort,  
Their view will not become completely pure.

Fame in a king implies that for a king who lacks positive qualities fame may occur once, but it will degenerate and pass.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F3B-2 Causes of wisdom and so forth

This has three points:

- A The importance of hearing as a cause of wisdom

Therefore it is necessary to generate wisdom Its cause, hearing the completely pure scriptures in accordance with one’s mental capacity, is set out in the *Compendium of the Perfections*:

Having heard little, blind, unable to meditate;  
What understanding would someone so lacking reflect on?

<sup>181</sup> Tib. *skyon*, usually translated here as “fault(y).”

Therefore, make effort in hearing. From that cause there's thinking,  
While through meditation spacious wisdom arises.

B The wisdom that abandons the two obscurations also depends on hearing

Venerable Maitreya also wrote in his *Sublime Continuum*:

Conceptualization of the three spheres  
We posit as knowledge obscurations,  
Conceptualization like miserliness  
As afflictive obscurations.

Apart from wisdom there's no cause  
That abandons them and therefore  
Wisdom is supreme. Accordingly  
Hearing for its sake is supreme.

And in the *Compendium of Trainings* it says:

You should be patient. You should seek hearing.  
Then you should reside in a forest.  
Strive in equipoise meditation

C The imprints of training in the instructions

The holy beings of the past also said: First you should gather together the Dharma of hearing that exists in your mind. Then again and again you should think about it, appraise it, and investigate it. It does not help to make oneself forget the Dharma and train to simply hold the mind once. The highest teachings are suitable for excellent meditators, intermediate teachings are suitable for intermediate meditators. However much one meditates, to the same extent one's knowledge of the Dharma should grow. [235] Once this certainty has grown firm through such considerations, you will not listen to the words of negative companions who say: "All virtuous and non-virtuous thoughts are to be abandoned because they are conceptions." Rather, you will think: "The Dharma does not teach anything like that and my virtuous spiritual friend also does not assert that," and you will not listen to them. Lacking that, someone who has a little bit of faith but no wisdom will burst into tears when he sees a crying face and will burst into laughter when he sees someone who is laughing. Considering true whatever people say, like a river he will go wherever he is lead.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-1F3B-3

How wisdom is made to possess the six perfections

When you train in wisdom, you should make it possess the six perfections. Abiding in the state of wisdom oneself and establishing others in it is the generosity of wisdom. The remaining ones are as above.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1A-2  
continua of others

Training in the four means of gathering disciples that ripen the

This has three points:

A The entity of the four means of gathering disciples

Generosity is the same as explained in the context of the perfection of generosity. Pleasant speech is to teach the perfections to disciples. Meaningful conduct is to make the disciples engage in the meanings that were taught or to make them engage in adopting them correctly. To act in accordance with the meaning is to abide in whatever meaning one has brought others into contact with and train in accordance with it.

In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it says:

By that same giving, teaching it, making others  
Adopt it, and by engaging in it oneself,

There is asserted to be pleasant speech,  
Meaningful conduct, and accord with the meaning.

B The reason for the presentation of four means of gathering disciples

Why are the means of gathering disciples definite as four? In order to gather a retinue for the sake of bringing them into contact with virtue, they first need to be joyful. In this regard, give them gifts of material things and attend to their bodies. Once they have become joyful in that way, in order for them to engage in the path, they first need to know how to do that. For that, moreover, explain the Dharma to them by speaking pleasantly, so that they give up unknowing and entertaining doubts, and make them engage in apprehending the meaning unmistakably. When they understand that, you make them engage in accomplishing virtue through meaningful conduct. [236] Furthermore, if you do not accomplish that yourself but explain to others “You should engage like this. You should avoid like that,” they will say “Why do you tell others to accomplish it, if you do not accomplish it yourself? You too still need to be corrected by others” and they will not listen to what is to be accomplished. However, if you accomplish that yourself, they will also think: “Since he himself abides in the virtue in which he guides me, there will definitely be benefit and happiness for me if I accomplish it,” and they will newly engage in the path. Also, those who are already engaging in the path will not turn away from it and will grow firm. Therefore you should act in accordance with the meaning.

C The need to rely on the four means of gathering disciples

Since the buddhas taught that the four means of gathering accomplish all the welfare of all disciples and that they are a good method, those who gather a retinue should rely on them:

Those who gather a retinue  
Should perfectly rely in this way  
Accomplishing all the welfare of everyone  
They are extolled as a good method.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C1B      The summarized meaning

The Great Elder taught how to accomplish them during meditative equipoise and subsequent attainment:

As for bodhisattva conduct  
It is the vast six perfections and so forth.  
The yogi arising from meditative equipoise  
Steadfast accomplishes the path of accumulation.

In this way, the beginner bodhisattva who has taken the vows of the Victor’s children and abides on the path of accumulation never passes beyond the six perfections, whether in meditative equipoise or subsequent attainment. Therefore some of the six perfections are sustained in meditative equipoise and some in subsequent attainment. Some of the entity of concentration, calm abiding, and the entity of the perfection of wisdom, special insight, are cultivated in meditative equipoise. The first three perfections and some parts of concentration and wisdom are sustained in subsequent attainment. Joyous effort occurs in both meditative equipoise and subsequent attainment. One class of patience—some minds ascertaining the profound Dharma—also occur during meditative equipoise.

The Great Elder said:

Whenever you rise from meditative equipoise [237]  
Familiarize yourself with the view of all phenomena  
As equal to the eight illustrations of illusions.  
Subsequently purify conceptions and give

Priority to the training in method.  
 At the time of meditative equipoise,  
 Balance calm abiding with special insight;  
 Familiarize yourself with this continuously.

If you hear about such wonderful conduct, so hard to do due to the mind being untrained, it produces anguish in the mind. Although even bodhisattvas are unable to practice it right from the start, if you come to understand it and acquaint yourself with it down to it being an object to be aspired for, later on you will come to naturally engage in it without depending on effort. That is why familiarization is important, for if you see it as impossible to actually engage in them and discard even familiarizing yourself with training in them, you will be extremely far from the completely pure paths.

In *Praise of Infinite Qualities* (*Guṇāparyantastotra*) it says:

What causes harm in worldly beings if they only hear about it,  
 What even you have never practiced over an extended time,  
 Those practices will become natural through familiarization over time.  
 Henceforth it is hard without familiarity to increase positive qualities.

Therefore it is inevitable for those who have taken bodhisattva vows to train in the conduct, and also those who have not taken the vow by means of a ritual should put effort into developing the wish to train in it. Then, if they take the vows, having increased the strength of their delight in the training, the vows will be very stable. Therefore you should put effort into this.

This concludes the explanation of training in the aspiring mind through the stages of the path of great beings and the stages of the path of training in the conduct of the Victors' children in general.

## CHAPTER 5

### Calm Abiding and Special Insight

#### Explanation of how to train in the last two perfections in particular

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2 How to train in the last two perfections in particular

This has two points:

- A Transition
- B The actual explanation

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2A Transition

The training in the last two perfections in particular [238] consists in methods for cultivating calm abiding and special insight because those two are included in the perfections of concentration and wisdom respectively.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B The actual explanation

This has six points:

- 1 The benefits of cultivating calm abiding and special insight
- 2 Demonstration that the two—calm abiding and special insight—include all meditative stabilizations
- 3 The entities of calm abiding and special insight
- 4 The reason why both calm abiding and special insight need to be cultivated
- 5 How the order of calm abiding and special insight is definite
- 6 How to train in calm abiding and special insight individually

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-1 The benefits of cultivating calm abiding and special insight

This has five points:

- A Demonstration that all the positive qualities of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna are results of calm abiding and special insight

In the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning* it is set forth that all the mundane and supramundane positive qualities of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna are results of calm abiding and special insight.

- B Setting out a doubt about that

You may wonder: “Aren’t calm abiding and special insight positive qualities of the mind<sup>182</sup> that are gained from meditation? How can all those positive qualities be admissible as results of those two?”

- C The response to it

Actual calm abiding and special insight are indeed positive qualities of the mind gained from meditation, as explained below. Therefore not all the positive qualities of the Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna are results of the two. Nevertheless, all the meditative stabilizations starting from a single-pointed mind placed on a virtuous object are included in the class of calm abiding, and all the virtuous wisdom minds individually analyzing the meaning of the mode or varieties are included in the class of special insight. It is with that intended meaning that all the positive qualities of the three vehicles are said to be results of calm abiding and special insight. Hence there is no contradiction.

- D How the benefits of abandoning what should be abandoned are tied to a scriptural passage from the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning*

In the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning* it also says:

Having familiarized themselves  
With calm abiding and special insight,  
Beings will gain complete liberation  
From the bondage of bad states<sup>183</sup> and signs.

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<sup>182</sup> Tib. *rgyud*

This is what is meant: “bad states” are latencies that remain in the mind, capable of generating more and more mistaken consciousnesses, while “signs” revive those latencies for the adherence to wrong objects arising time and time again. [239] *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāpāramitopadeśa)* explains that the former are abandoned through special insight and the latter through calm abiding. Those are the benefits of what are designated as *calm abiding* and *special insight*.

E The benefits thereby pointed out should also be understood as the benefits of the other two

However, even if they are not designated as *calm abiding* and *special insight*, the meaning is the same. Statements on the benefits of concentration and wisdom should be understood as the benefits of these two.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-2 Demonstration that the two—calm abiding and special insight—include all meditative stabilizations

In the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning* it says that all the limitless meditative stabilizations proclaimed in the Mahāyāna and the Hīnayāna are nevertheless subsumed under calm abiding and special insight. Therefore, since those who strive for meditative stabilization cannot investigate all its limitless manifestations, they should thoroughly investigate how to sustain the epitome of all meditative stabilizations—calm abiding and special insight.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-3 The entities of calm abiding and special insight

This has two points:

- A The entity of calm abiding
- B Explaining the entity special insight

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-3A The entity of calm abiding

This has two points:

- 1 Stating a source

The entity of calm abiding is set forth in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning*:

Dwelling alone in solitude, he directs the mind inward and attends to those very phenomena, just as he has thoroughly reflected on them. He attends to them with the mind directed inward continuously and attentively. The states he thus enters and abides in many times in which physical and mental pliancy arise are called *calm abiding*.

- 2 The meaning of this statement

The meaning of this is that if the mind, having attended to it continuously without distraction, stays on the object by itself so that the joyful bliss of physical and mental pliancy arises, that meditative stabilization becomes calm abiding. This will arise from merely keeping the mind inward undistracted; it does not depend on internalizing the suchness of things.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-3B Explaining the entity of special insight

This has six points:

- 1 Stating a source

The entity of special insight is set forth in the same sūtra:

Having achieved physical pliancy and mental pliancy, he abides in them, abandons the aspects of the mind, and [240] devotes himself to the individual investigation of the images within, the objects of meditative stabilization, the very phenomena he has likewise reflected on. Thus, with regard to the images that are the objects of meditative stabilization, any thorough differentiation of the meaning of those objects of knowledge,

<sup>183</sup> Tib. *gnas ngan len gyi ‘ching ba*, literally “from the bonds of taking on bad states.”



any exceedingly thorough differentiation, full investigation, full analysis, tolerance, acceptance, classification, viewing, and conceptualization, is called *special insight*. In that way the bodhisattva is skilled in special insight.

2 Elucidating the meaning of the sūtra passage

Here, “thorough differentiation” is a differentiation of the varieties and “exceedingly thorough differentiation” is a differentiation of the mode. “Investigation” is a coarse investigation and “analysis” is a subtle analysis.

3 How statements from other sūtras and commentaries accord with the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning*

In the *Cloud of Jewels of Sūtra* it says:

Calm abiding is one-pointed mind,  
Special insight is investigation.<sup>184</sup>

Venerable Maitreya also says:

Restraint to the concepts of dharmas should also be  
Known as the path of calm abiding;  
Full analysis of their meanings  
As the path of special insight.

And:

Depending on correct abiding,  
What serves to place the mind on mind  
And to differentiate dharmas  
Are calm abiding and special insight.

In dependence on correct meditative stabilization, placing the mind is said to be calm abiding, and the wisdom differentiating dharmas exceedingly thoroughly is said to be special insight. In *Bodhisattva Levels* it is set forth just like that and in *Stages of Meditation II* it also says:

The abidance within the mind itself,<sup>185</sup> in which distraction toward external objects has calmed down, and the mind gets continuously and naturally involved in its internal object with joy and pliancy, is called “calm abiding.” That which thoroughly analyzes suchness at the time of abiding in that very state of calm abiding is special insight.

*Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom* explains this in the same way.

4 Therefore calm abiding and special insight are not distinguished by way of the observed object [241]

So according to *Bodhisattva Levels* and *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom*, each of them, calm abiding and special insight, can have both the mode and the varieties as its object. Therefore calm abiding and special insight are not differentiated by way of their objects. There is calm abiding that realizes emptiness, and there is also special insight that does not realize emptiness. In fact it is because the rush to external objects has calmed down and the mind is abiding on internal objects that something is called *calm abiding*, and it is because of a special, that is, distinguished, insight that something is called *special insight*.

5 How it is inappropriate to distinguish calm abiding and special insight based on whether or not the clarity factor of the consciousness is intense

The assertion by some that the mind abiding non-conceptually without an intense clarity factor is calm abiding, whereas that with an intense clarity factor is special insight, is inappropriate because it contradicts everything explained earlier, and because this distinction is merely a distinction

<sup>184</sup> Tib. *so sor rtog pa*, usually translated here as “individual investigation.”

<sup>185</sup> The term *sems nyid*, “mind itself” is often used synonymously with “nature of the mind.”

between a meditative stabilization with and without laxity. This is also because, to be sure, every meditative stabilization of calm abiding also needs to be purified of laxity, and in every meditative stabilization that is free from laxity, the clarity factor of the mind will definitely arise.<sup>186</sup>

6 The need to differentiate between the realization of emptiness and blissful lucid non-conceptuality

Thus it is necessary to identify whether or not a mind is a meditative stabilization that observes emptiness, a wisdom consciousness, on the basis of whether or not that mind realizes either of the two selflessnesses because there are countless non-conceptual meditative stabilizations of bliss and clarity in which the mind is not directed at the suchness<sup>187</sup> of an object. Since direct perception establishes that the mind can be held like that in a non-conceptual state even though the view realizing the mode of being has not been found, there is not even the slightest contradiction in the arising of non-conceptual meditative stabilizations that do not understand emptiness. From that point of view, if the mind is held for a long time, through the power of the mind being held, a workability of vital energies will arise. [242] Since it is natural for joyful bliss to arise in the body and the mind when that has arisen, it is not contradictory for bliss to arise. Once that has arisen, through the power of one's vivid sensation of joyful bliss, the factor of clarity arises. Therefore it cannot be posited that all blissful, clear, non-conceptual meditative stabilizations realize suchness. Consequently, since bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality arise in meditative stabilizations that realize emptiness, and since there are also many meditative stabilizations in which the mind is not directed at emptiness yet bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality still occur, it is necessary to distinguish between the two.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-4 The reason why both calm abiding and special insight need to be cultivated

This has four points:

A Illustration

Why is it not enough to cultivate either calm abiding or special insight? Why is it necessary to cultivate both?

To illustrate this: when you light a butter lamp at night in order to look at murals, if the butter lamp is both very bright and does not flicker due to wind, you will see the painted figures very clearly. However, if the butter lamp is not bright or if—even though bright—it flickers in the wind, you will not see the forms clearly.

B Explaining the meaning

Likewise, with respect to viewing the profound meaning, if you have both the wisdom unmistakably ascertaining the meaning of suchness and the imperturbability of a mind that stays on its object at will, you will see suchness clearly. However, if you do not have the wisdom realizing the mode of being, despite your non-conceptual meditative stabilization in which your mind remains unscattered, you will not be able to realize the mode of being, however much you familiarize yourself with meditative stabilization. On the other hand, if you have the view that understands selflessness but lack the firm meditative stabilization in which the mind remains single-pointed, you will not be able to clearly see the meaning of the mode of being. Therefore both calm abiding and special insight are necessary.

C Relating this to scriptural passages

In *Stages of Meditation II* it says:

With special insight alone, divorced from calm abiding, the yogi's mind is distracted to other objects, and [243] like a butter lamp in the wind it will not become stable. This

<sup>186</sup> Tib. 'ong ba

<sup>187</sup> Synonym for emptiness.

being so, the light of wisdom will not shine forth very bright, which is why you should rely on both alike.

And:

Through the power of calm abiding the mind will not be moved by the winds of conceptualization—like a butter lamp placed away from the wind. Through special insight you abandon the snares of all inferior views so that others<sup>188</sup> do not affect you anymore. It is like it has been set forth in the *Moon Lamp Sūtra*:

“Through calm abiding’s power you’ll be immovable;  
Through special insight you’ll be like a mountain.”

If you investigate with wisdom that is thus conjoined with the meditative equipoise of calm abiding, without unevenness due to laxity and excitement of the mind, you will know the meaning of reality. With that intention it says in the *Compendium of the Teachings*:

When your mind is in meditative equipoise, you will know reality as it is.

From *Stages of Meditation I*:

Since the mind is unsteady like water, there is no abiding without the basis of calm abiding. A mind that is not in meditative equipoise cannot know reality as it is. The Bhagavan also said: “Reality is fully known as it is by a mind in meditative equipoise.”

D How doing something virtuous has great power once calm abiding has been accomplished

When you accomplish calm abiding, not only does it counteract the fault of your wisdom consciousness wandering off while correctly investigating selflessness. The fault of distraction to other objects stops for all analytical meditations that you do with the wisdom of individual investigation: on impermanence, actions and their effects, the disadvantages of cyclic existence, love, compassion, training in the mind of enlightenment, and so forth. Then, since you get involved in each individual object, whatever it may be, without being distracted to something else, everything virtuous you do is very powerful. As long as you have not obtained calm abiding, due to predominant distraction to other objects [244] any virtuous practice you do will be weak. It is as it says in *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*:

A person whose mind is being distracted  
Is in the fangs of mental afflictions.

And:

The Seer taught that recitation,  
Ascetic practices, and so forth,  
Even if engaged in long, are  
Pointless with a distracted mind.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-5      How the order of calm abiding and special insight is definite  
This has three points:

- A The actual order
- B Explanation of how calm abiding is a precondition for special insight
- C Setting out and responding to an objection

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-5A      The actual order

In *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* it says:

Having understood that special insight  
Conjoined with calm abiding destroys the afflictions,

<sup>188</sup> Tib. *gzhan dag*, this could also be rendered as “other things.”

First seek calm abiding ...

Thus you first accomplish calm abiding and then cultivate special insight based on it.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-5B Explanation of how calm abiding is a precondition for special insight

This has two points:

- 1 Setting out an objection
- 2 The response to it

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-5B1 Setting out an objection: If you meditate observing emptiness from the beginning, since you have reality as the observed object of calm abiding, calm abiding and special insight will arise simultaneously so that the two do not need to be sequential

With regard to that you may wonder: In *Stages of Meditation I*, “Its object of observation is indefinite” the observed object of calm abiding is said to be indefinite, and as explained previously, both phenomena and reality are among the objects of calm abiding. Therefore it should actually be all right to understand the meaning of selflessness and then simultaneously generate both calm abiding, a meditation observing that understanding due to which the mind does not get distracted, and special insight observing emptiness. Why first seek calm abiding and then cultivate special insight?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-5B2 The response to it

This has three points:

- A For an understanding of emptiness and a mere experience of mental transformation to arise, prior calm abiding is not necessary

Now, this is the manner in which calm abiding precedes special insight: For an understanding of the view realizing selflessness to arise, prior calm abiding is not necessary because the view is also seen to arise in the absence of calm abiding. For an experience of mental transformation concerning that view to arise, prior calm abiding is not necessary either because even without calm abiding there is nothing contradictory in an experience of mental transformation arising through familiarization with repeated analysis by means of individual investigation. [245] If it were contradictory, it would absurdly follow from the same reason that the experience of mental transformation arising with respect to impermanence, the faults of cyclic existence, or the training in the mind of enlightenment also depends on calm abiding.

- B The manner in which calm abiding needs to precede special insight

The manner in which calm abiding needs to precede special insight: What, then, is the manner in which calm abiding precedes special insight? Here the context for the generation of special insight is that of ordinary beings without a previous realization arisen from meditation who newly generate it. In this regard, there is a method of meditation on selflessness with a special consciousness that realizes emptiness. Its peculiarities will be explained below. Apart from that, in the context of the Pāramitāyāna and the three lower classes of tantra, analytical meditation is necessary because special insight, which is a realization born from meditation, does not arise unless you have examined the meaning of selflessness by means of individual investigation and then engaged in analytical meditation sustaining it. If you seek an understanding of selflessness and repeatedly analyze its meaning before accomplishing calm abiding, it will be impossible to accomplish calm abiding in dependence on that because calm abiding has not been accomplished. If you perform non-analytical stabilizing meditation, even though you accomplish calm abiding in dependence on it, this will only be a method for sustaining calm abiding, and you will not have a method for sustaining special insight apart from that. Therefore you must seek special insight afterwards. That is why you do not deviate from the order of seeking calm abiding first and then cultivating special insight in dependence on it. So if this system did not understand the method for generating special insight to be the generation of pliancy by means of the analytical meditation of individual

investigation, there would be no good reason to seek calm abiding first and then meditate on special insight in dependence on it<sup>189</sup>.

C How it contradicts the texts of the great trailblazers to assert an order other than this

It is completely inadmissible not to meditate in accordance with that order. As mentioned earlier it says in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning* that you cultivate special insight in dependence on the attainment of calm abiding. [246] This is because the order of the concentration and wisdom forming part of the six perfections—“In dependence on the former the latter arises”—and the order of the higher training in meditative stabilization in dependence on which the higher training in wisdom arises is an order in which you first cultivate calm abiding before special insight is cultivated. In *Bodhisattva Levels* and *Śrāvaka Levels* (*Śravakabhūmi*) it also says that special insight is cultivated in dependence on calm abiding. *Essence of the Middle Way, Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct*, and the three volume *Stages of Meditation*, as well as *Jñānakīrti* and *Sāntipa*, set forth that you seek calm abiding and then cultivate special insight. Therefore the assertions of some Indian masters that without seeking calm abiding separately, you generate special insight from the beginning out of an analysis with the wisdom of individual investigation, are in contradiction to the texts of the great trailblazers. Therefore it is inappropriate for the intelligent to rely on them.

The order of calm abiding and special insight is like that when you newly generate them. Later on the order is undefined, for having cultivated special insight, you still cultivate calm abiding.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-5C      Setting out and responding to an objection

This has two points:

1 The objection that there is a contradiction to scripture in this

But then, how is it that the *Compendium of Knowledge* says:

Some have attained special insight but have not attained calm abiding. They strive for calm abiding in dependence on special insight.

2 The response that abandons the fault pointing out the need to distinguish between the actual level and the calm abiding included in the preparatory stage

This does not refer to those who have failed to attain the calm abiding included in the preparatory stage of the first concentration but to those who have failed to attain the calm abiding of the actual level of the first concentration and above. Upon direct realization of the four truths, calm abiding of the first concentration and above are in fact attained in dependence on that because in *Actuality of the Stages* it says:

Furthermore, someone who has fully understood suffering and so on up to the path as they really are and who has not attained the first concentration and so forth [247] places the mind and does not perform any thorough differentiation as soon as he attains it. In dependence on just that superior wisdom he applies himself to a superior state of mind.

In general, to put it simply, nine minds may be called calm abiding and four investigations,<sup>190</sup> thorough investigation and so forth, may be called special insight. However, actual calm abiding and special insight, as explained here, must be posited after pliancy has arisen.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6      How to train in calm abiding and special insight individually

This has three points:

<sup>189</sup> The implication here is that analytical meditation generates a level of pliancy exceeding that of calm abiding, which, however, does not come about without the latter. Cf. Wallace 1998: 125 as well as Thurman 1993: 114 and 235.

<sup>190</sup> Investigation of phenomena from the point of view of their nature, their performance of functions, dependence, and logical establishment.

- A How to train in calm abiding
- B How to train in special insight
- C How the two, calm abiding and special insight, unite

### Explanation of how to train in calm abiding, the entity of concentration

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A How to train in calm abiding

This has three points:

- 1 Attending to the prerequisites of calm abiding
- 2 How to cultivate calm abiding in dependence on the prerequisites
- 3 The measure for the accomplishment of calm abiding through meditation

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A1 Attending to the prerequisites of calm abiding

This has six points:

A To stay in a favorable place

As regards staying in a favorable place, the five positive qualities of a place are: easy access<sup>191</sup> to food, clothing, and so forth, in that they can be obtained without trouble; a good location in that predators and other wild beasts as well as enemies and the like do not live there; good ground in that it does not produce diseases; good company in that one has companions of equal ethics and views; and being well endowed in that during the day there are few people around and at night there is little noise. In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it says:

A place for intelligent people's attainments  
Has good access, a good location,  
Good ground as well as good companions,  
And conveniences<sup>192</sup> for yoga.

B Few desires

Few desires is to not be excessively attached to good or numerous robes and so forth.

C Contentment

Contentment is to always be content with merely adequate robes and the like.

D To completely abandon many activities [248]

To completely abandon many activities is to completely abandon inferior activities such as business, excessive association with lay or ordained people, as well as one's medical practice, astrological calculations, and so forth.

E Pure ethics

Pure ethics with regard to pratimokṣa and bodhisattva vows is to not tear down the basis of the trainings through natural or formulated misdeeds, and even if it is torn due to non-conscientiousness, to restore it quickly through regret in accordance with the teachings.

F To completely abandon discursive thoughts of desire

To completely abandon discursive thoughts of desire and the like: you should abandon all discursive thoughts of desire by meditating on their disadvantages for this life, such as being killed or arrested, and for future lives such as going to the lower realms. Or you should meditate thinking "All the pleasant and unpleasant things of cyclic existence are impermanent and subject to destruction. If I will certainly be separated from all of them before long, why do I get overly attached and so on?" In *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* it says:

<sup>191</sup> Tib. *nyed pa*, usually translated here as "find" or "obtain."

<sup>192</sup> Tib. *bde ba'i yo byad*



Even if you exert yourself greatly,  
 Even for a thousand years, if  
 Calm abiding's limbs<sup>193</sup> are impaired,  
 Stabilization<sup>194</sup> will not be accomplished.

For those with the heartfelt wish to accomplish the meditative stabilization of calm abiding and special insight, it is therefore essential to put effort into the thirteen prerequisites and the like set forth in *Śrāvaka Levels*.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2 How to cultivate calm abiding in dependence on the prerequisites

This has two points:

- A The preparation
- B The actual practice

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2A The preparation

You should long cultivate the six preparatory practices explained earlier as well as the mind of enlightenment and, as part of that, also train in the core meditation topics shared with lesser and intermediate beings.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B The actual practice

This has two points:

- 1 What body posture to meditate in
- 2 Explanation of the stages of meditation themselves

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-1 What body posture to meditate in

As it says in *Stages of Meditation*, you should sit on a very soft and comfortable seat and adopt [249] a body posture with eight characteristics: The legs may be fully crossed or half-crossed, so you should do that. The eyes are directed over the tip of the nose, neither too open nor too closed. You should sit with your body straightened up and erect rather than too bent or crooked, and with your mindfulness placed inward. Your shoulders should be straight and even. The head is held not too high nor too low and without tilting to one side; you should keep yourself erect from the nose down to the navel. The teeth and lips should remain natural, just as they are. The tongue should be placed near the upper teeth. As for the breath, your exhalations and inhalations should not be audible, forceful, or uncontrolled. Rather, their coming and going should by all means proceed imperceptibly, leisurely, and effortlessly. That is the way to do it. Thus you should first accomplish the body posture with the eight and especially gentle breathing as explained.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2 Explanation of the stages of meditation themselves

This has two points:

- A Transition
- B The actual explanation

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2A Transition

In most expositions of the stages of the path it says that calm abiding is accomplished by way of the eight factors<sup>195</sup> set forth in *Separation of the Middle from the Extremes (Madhyāntavibhāga)* that abandon the five faults. The instructions from Geshe Lagsorwa's lineage explain that on top of that, the six powers, the four attentions, and the nine minds explained in *Śrāvaka Levels* need to be accomplished. In his *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* and *Separation of the Middle from the Extremes* the venerable Maitreya also sets forth the nine methods for mental abiding and the eight

<sup>193</sup> Tib. *yan lag* is usually translated as here as "limb," but it can also be translated as "prerequisite," like the word Tib. *tshogs* in the following sentence.

<sup>194</sup> Tib. *ting nge 'dzin*, usually translated here as "meditative stabilization."

<sup>195</sup> Tib. *'du byed brgyad*, i.e. "the eight antidotes."



factors for abandoning the faults. Following them, Indian scholars such as Haribhadra, Kamalaśīla, and Śāntipa also set forth many stages of accomplishing meditative stabilization. In the Mantrayāna you also need to know them. In particular, faults<sup>196</sup> of meditative stabilization such as the five faults<sup>197</sup> and the way to eliminate them are presented extensively in scriptures from the collection of sūtras.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B The actual explanation

This has two points [250]:

- 1 How to generate flawless meditative stabilization
- 2 The stages of quiescence that arise in dependence on it

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1 How to generate flawless meditative stabilization

This has three points:

- A What to do before focusing the mind on the object
- B What to do while focusing the mind on the object
- C What to do after focusing the mind on the object

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1A What to do before focusing the mind on the object

This has four points:

- 1 The need to rely on antidotes to laziness at the outset

If you cannot put an end to laziness which does not delight in cultivating meditative stabilization but rather enjoys the opposite, it will prevent you from engaging in meditative stabilization all along, and even if you achieve it once, it will not possibly be persistent and therefore deteriorate quickly. For this reason it is of great importance to put an end to laziness at the outset.

- 2 Individual explanation of the four antidotes

Now if you achieve the pliancy in which your body and mind expand with bliss, you will not become weary, day or night, in applying yourself to virtue, whereby laziness will be stopped. To generate it, you must be able continuously to maintain joyous effort for meditative stabilization, the cause for generating pliancy. To generate that, you need the intense, sustained aspiration of striving for meditative stabilization. As a cause of that, the firm faith of strong fascination due to seeing the positive qualities of meditative stabilization is necessary. Therefore you should repeatedly cultivate the faith of reflecting on the positive qualities of meditative stabilization.

- 3 The scriptural source for this

In *Separation of the Middle from the Extremes* it says:

The basis and that which is based on it,  
The cause and the effect itself.

Here the *basis* is aspiration, the basis of endeavor. *That which is based on it* is endeavor or joyous effort. The *cause* of aspiration is the faith of conviction with regard to the positive qualities. The *effect* of endeavor is pliancy.

- 4 How to reflect on the positive qualities of meditative stabilization

The positive qualities of the meditative stabilization to be cultivated here are as follows. Once meditative stabilization has been accomplished, mental happiness and physical comfort greatly increase, so that you stay happy in this lifetime. Due to the acquisition of physical and mental pliancy, the mind is fit to make use of any virtuous object at will. Since uncontrolled distraction [251] toward mistaken objects has subsided, faulty conduct does not occur much while whatever virtue you do has great strength. In dependence on calm abiding, positive qualities such as

<sup>196</sup> Tib. *skyon*

<sup>197</sup> Tib. *nyes*

clairvoyance and miraculous powers can also be achieved, and in particular, the realization of special insight that realizes emptiness arises in dependence on it so that the root of cyclic existence can be cut quickly. If you consider any of these and other positive qualities, the power of your enthusiasm for cultivating meditative stabilization will increase. You should get to know them and meditate on them. Once this has arisen, it will constantly urge you, from within, to cultivate meditative stabilization so that you will easily attain it, and, upon its attainment, since you engage in the meditation again and again, it will be very difficult for it to degenerate.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B What to do while focusing the mind on the object

This has two points:

- 1 Identifying the basis which the mind is placed on, the object
- 2 How to direct the mind toward it

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-1 Identifying the basis which the mind is placed on, the object

This has two points:

- A General presentation of objects
- B Identification of objects for given situations

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-1A General presentation of objects

This has two points:

- 1 Indication of the actual objects
- 2 Indication of what person should make what his object

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-1A1 Indication of the actual objects

This has two points:

- A Identifying the divisions of objects

As regards the four objects for yogis taught by the Bhagavan, the pervasive objects are four in number: the ones on which you place the mind without analyzing and objects of analysis, which makes two, the limits of phenomena—the mode and the varieties—and the accomplishment of a purpose—achieving transformation through meditation by means of the previous two meditation methods that observe the meaning of the mode and the varieties.

As regards objects for purifying one's conduct, there are five meditation objects that serve as antidotes to one's predominant conduct in previous lives—attachment, hatred, delusion, pride, and discursive thought: respectively, the repulsive, love, interdependence, the divisions of the elements, as well as one's respiration.

The objects for the skillful are also five in number: objects of skill with regard to the aggregates, elements, sense fields, the twelve links of interdependence, [252] as well as the established and the unestablished.

The objects for purifying mental afflictions are two: the peaceful and coarse states of the higher and lower levels and the sixteen aspects of the four truths, impermanence and so forth.

- B How these individually serve a special purpose

In this regard, the objects for purifying one's conduct are special in that the attachment and so forth of those who act with attachment and so forth more than usual is easily stopped and meditative stabilization is easily achieved in dependence on them.

The objects for the skillful are good objects for calm abiding because they negate a self of persons apart from those phenomena and therefore correspond with the arising of special insight which realizes selflessness.

Meditation objects for purifying mental afflictions are of great significance in that they become general antidotes to mental afflictions.

There are no pervasive objects apart from the preceding objects.

Therefore meditative stabilization should be accomplished in dependence on the meditation objects of calm abiding with their special purposes. Those who practice meditative stabilization in dependence on pebbles, pieces of wood, and the like clearly do not know the presentation of objects of meditative stabilization.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-1A2 Indication of what person should make what his object

This has two points:

A How what person should make what his mediation object

In accordance with what is set forth in the *Sūtra Requested by Revata*, it is taught that persons ranging from those in whom attachment predominates to those in whom discursive thought predominates should rely on the individual objects specified, ranging from the repulsive to one's respiration, respectively. Those with balanced conduct and those with slight mental afflictions may concentrate on any one object they are happy with; they do not need a certain one.

B Differences between predominant and slight attachment and so forth

In this regard, predominance of one of the five mental afflictions, attachment and so forth, means that through habituation to attachment and so forth in previous lives, long-term attachment and so forth arise for a long time toward small objects of attachment and so forth. [253] Those with balanced conduct have not got habituated to attachment and so forth in previous lives but they do not see them as disadvantageous. Therefore, even though predominant, long-term attachment and so forth do not arise toward their respective objects, it is not that they do not occur at all. Those with slight mental afflictions have not got habituated to attachment and so forth in previous lives, and due to the fact that, among other things, they see them as disadvantageous, attachment and so forth only arise slowly toward many major objects of attachment and so forth. Toward medium and small objects they do not arise. Moreover, those with predominant attachment or another one of the five take long to accomplish quiescence, those with balanced behavior not that long, and those with slight mental afflictions accomplish it quickly.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-1B Identification of objects for given situations

This has eight points:

1 General explanation

In dependence on which object is calm abiding accomplished here? In general, the meditation objects for individuals<sup>198</sup> are just as explained above. In particular, it is important that those with predominant discursive thought meditate on the breath.

2 Numerous texts set forth how to accomplish meditative stabilization observing the Tathāgata's body

Furthermore *Stages of Meditation II* and *III* follow the *Sūtra on the Concentration Which Perceives the Buddha of the Present Face to Face* (*Pratyutpannabuddhasaṃmukhāvasthitasamādhisūtra*) and the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* in teaching the accomplishment of meditative stabilization observing the Tathāgata's body. The *Commentary on the Difficult Points of the "Lamp for the Path"* also quotes statements by Master Bodhibhadra that meditative stabilization is achieved observing the Tathāgata's body.

<sup>198</sup> Tib. *gang zag so so*, literally "individual persons."

3 How it has a great purpose to make it the basis of one's observation accordingly

As for concentration on the Buddha's body, limitless merit arises through remembering the Buddha. If your image of that body is clear and stable, it makes a great difference to your visualization of the field for accumulating merit through prostrations, offerings, prayers, and so forth, as well as the field for purifying obscurations through confession, restraint, and so forth. [254] The positive quality that your recollection of the Buddha does not deteriorate at the time of death, the great difference it makes to deity yoga when you cultivate the path of mantra, and so forth show that it has a great purpose.

4 How to make what bodily form one's object

In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* it says:

With his body just like the color of gold  
The Lord of the World is excessively beautiful.  
The bodhisattva whose mind is involved in this object  
Is said to be in equipoise meditation.

You should make something like that your basis of observation. Moreover, between the two types of visualization, one in which the object is freshly created by the mind and one in which the object is naturally present, the latter has the great distinction of generating faith<sup>199</sup> and accords with teachings<sup>200</sup> shared among the vehicles. Therefore you should proceed in the latter way.

5 How to research the basis of observation

As you research the basis<sup>201</sup> of observation, the basis<sup>202</sup> for the mind to focus on, you should first find a good painted image, statue, or the like of the Teacher's body, look at it again and again and, having captured the features, familiarize yourself with its appearance as an object of the mind. Or else you should reflect on the meaning of a description by some spiritual master that you have heard, make it appear to your mind, and pursue your basis of observation. However, rather than making the basis of observation appear like a painted image, statue, or something like that, you should train for it to appear in the aspect of the actual Buddha.

6 It is inadmissible to practice meditative stabilization, looking at the basis of observation with one's eyes

It makes perfect sense that Master Yeshé Dé refutes the practice of some people who set up an image in front of them, look at it with the eyes, and meditate by staring at it. This is because meditative stabilization is not accomplished in a sense consciousness but rather in the mental consciousness, so the actual object of meditative stabilization is a direct object of the mental consciousness, which is why you must focus on that. Also, in accordance with what was explained earlier, it is taught that you must observe the meaning generality of the actual observed object or its image that appears.

7 The need to determine just one object in the beginning

Elsewhere it says that although part of the image is detailed and part of it is rough, you should first observe the rough part and afterwards, when your meditation on that has stabilized, observe the details. [255] According to experience, the rough features appear very easily, so you should work on the basis of observation from the rough outline of its image. In particular, when you practice, as long as you have not accomplished fully qualified meditative stabilization, it is inappropriate to move between many different types of objects. This is because, if you practice meditative stabilization while moving between many dissimilar objects, it will become a great obstacle to your accomplishment of calm abiding. Āryaśūra says:

<sup>199</sup> Tib. *dad pa skye ba*, literally "faith arising."

<sup>200</sup> Tib. *skabs*

<sup>201</sup> Tib. *rten*

<sup>202</sup> Tib. *gzhi*

By stabilizing on one object  
 Stabilize the thoughts of the mind.  
 By going through a lot of objects  
 The mind is disturbed by mental afflictions.

And *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment* also says it with the determiner “on any one:”

On any one object that is suitable—  
 Place the mind on something virtuous.

8 The measure for getting the basis of observation and, having got it, the need to focus on that very object  
 That being so, the measure for first getting the basis of observation that the mind focuses on is this:  
 When you visualize the head, two arms, torso, and two legs successively a couple of times and attend to the whole body at the end of that, then, if you are able to see merely half the limbs and parts appear to the mind, you should be satisfied with that and focus on it even if there is no brilliant clarity. That is because if you are not satisfied with that alone and do not focus on it but rather want more clarity and repeatedly visualize, the object will become clearer, however, not only will you fail to acquire stable meditative stabilization, this will become an obstacle to its acquisition. But even though the object is not very clear, if you focus on just that mere partial object, you will acquire meditative stabilization quickly. Then, due to its benefit for clarity, the clarity aspect will also be accomplished easily. This appears in Master Yeshé Dé’s advice and is essential.

Now [256] you should focus on the whole body to the best of your abilities, and if some parts of the body appear clearly, you should focus on those. If they become unclear again, you should focus on the whole again.

At that time, if a color, shape, number, or size appears that was not ascertained earlier—for example<sup>203</sup> you want to meditate on something yellow and something red appears, you want to meditate on a sitting figure and a standing one appears, you want to meditate on one and two appear, or you want to meditate on something big and something small appears—it is inappropriate to pursue them; so you should only make your original object, whatever it is, the basis of observation.

In the context of practicing the deity yoga of secret mantra, you must achieve a clear appearance of the deity, so until that appears, you should try to generate it by various means. However, here, if it is difficult and the deity’s aspect does not appear, you may also accomplish meditative stabilization by placing the mind and focusing on any one of the objects presented above that is suitable or within the view ascertaining suchness; for the main purpose is to accomplish calm abiding.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2      How to direct the mind toward it

This has three points:

- A Presentation of the faultless approach
- B Eliminating faulty approaches<sup>204</sup>
- C Indicating the length of sessions

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A      Presentation of the faultless approach

This has nine points:

- 1 Indication that faultless meditative stabilization has two features
- 2 How it is unreasonable that some people add bliss and the like, making it three or four distinctions
- 3 Identification of laxity and excitement and the importance of skill in the method for sustaining meditative stabilization that stops to the two
- 4 How both mindfulness and introspection are necessary as means for the mind not to wander off from its object
- 5 How the mind is directed toward the meditation object through mindfulness

<sup>203</sup> Tib. *sogs*, the examples for color, shape, number, and size are each concluded by this word.

<sup>204</sup> Tib. *tshad*, usually translated here as “measure.”

- 6 Identification of mindfulness
- 7 How it is shown through an analogy that mindfulness continuously ties the mind to the object
- 8 How meditative stabilization becomes faulty without a firm mode of apprehension of the ascertaining consciousness
- 9 Even someone wishing to achieve calm abiding by placing the mind without thinking of anything must generate the power of mindfulness

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A1 Indication that faultless meditative stabilization has two features

The meditative stabilization to be accomplished here has two features; it has the factor of intense clarity of an extremely clear mind, and it has the factor of non-conceptual stability of a mind abiding single-pointedly on its object.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A2 How it is unreasonable that some people add bliss and the like, making it three or four distinctions

Here some add bliss and make it three features, others add limpidity and make it four. However, the limpidity has two aspects: the limpidity of one's consciousness feels more limpid than even an immaculate crystal bowl full of immaculate water being hit by sunlight in the absence of clouds. And [257] when the aspects of objects such as pillars appear, a limpidity arises that feels as if one could count even their finest particles. These two nevertheless arise from the intensity of the clarity factor being generated and sustained after subtle laxity has been eliminated. Therefore it is unnecessary to mention them separately in the beginning.

Although joy and bliss in the form of pleasurable sensations arise as an effect of the meditative stabilization to be accomplished here, they do not arise in association with the meditative stabilization included in the preparatory stage of the first concentration and therefore are not counted here.

The emergence of such an intensity in the clarity factor is impeded by laxity, and single-pointed non-conceptuality is impeded by excitement. Precisely that is the reason why these two, laxity and excitement, become the main obstacles to the accomplishment of pure meditative stabilization.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A3 Identification of laxity and excitement and the importance of skill in the method for sustaining meditative stabilization that stops the two

That is why, if you do not know how to identify subtle and gross laxity and excitement, and if you do not know an impeccable method for sustaining meditative stabilization that stops both of them, even calm abiding—not to mention special insight—cannot arise. Therefore the intelligent who strive for meditative stabilization should become skilled in this way.

That is to say laxity and excitement are adverse conditions to the accomplishment of calm abiding, and the identification of adverse conditions as well as the actual methods for stopping them are taught below. So here I will describe how to generate meditative stabilization as a favorable condition for calm abiding.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A4 How both mindfulness and introspection are necessary as means for the mind not to be distracted away from its object

In this regard, meditative stabilization is the factor of the mind single-pointedly abiding on its object, that is to say it must stay on the object continuously. For that there are two requirements: a means of not letting the mind get distracted from its original object and awareness of whether or not it actually is distracted. The first is mindfulness, the second is introspection. In the *Commentary on "Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras"* it says:

Mindfulness and introspection [258] direct it, for one prevents the mind from scattering away from its object, and the second is fully aware of the mind scattering away.

When mindfulness deteriorates and you forget the meditation object, there is distraction and you lose the object immediately. Therefore mindfulness that does not forget the object is the root.



2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A5      How the mind is directed toward the meditation object through mindfulness

This is how to direct the mind toward its object: You visualize the basis of observation as explained above. Then, once it just about appears, you should generate a forceful mode of apprehending the object with your consciousness, uplift the mind, and place it without newly analyzing anything.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A6      Identification of mindfulness

This has two points:

- A A source identifying the entity of mindfulness
- B The features of mindfulness

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A6A      A source identifying the entity of mindfulness

In the *Compendium of Knowledge* mindfulness is said to have three features:

What is mindfulness? Non-forgetfulness of the mind with respect to a thing it is familiar with; so its function is utter non-distraction.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A6B      The features of mindfulness

This has three points:

- 1 The object feature

The feature of the object: Since mindfulness does not arise with respect to a hitherto unfamiliar object, it says “a thing it is familiar with.” In this context, it is the appearance of the basis of observation having been ascertained before.

- 2 The feature of the mode of apprehension

The feature of the mode of apprehension, “Non-forgetfulness of the mind” is the factor that the mind does not forget that object; in this context it does not forget the basis of observation. The manner in which the mind does not forget it is not said to be the mere ability to remember your master teaching “The basis of observation is like this...” when others ask, and you are made to think about it. Rather, the mind tied to the object is directly mindful of it and does not get distracted even in the slightest. When there is distraction, mindfulness is lost through its mere occurrence.

Hence, after you have placed the mind on the basis of observation, you should generate the thought: “That is how it is tied to the object” and then, without renewed conceptual [259] thought, without interrupting the force of this very mind, sustain it continuously. That is the essential point about how mindfulness is applied.<sup>205</sup>

- 3 The feature of function

Its functional feature is not to let the mind get distracted from its object.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A7      How it is shown through an analogy that mindfulness continuously ties the mind to the object

That being so, tying the mind to an object so as to tame it is taught through the analogy of taming an elephant. In this analogy, a wild elephant is tied to a very firm tree trunk or pillar with many thick ropes, and if it follows the instructions of the elephant-tamer, that is all the better. If it does not, it is repeatedly prodded into submission with a sharp hook and thus tamed. Likewise the mind which resembles an untamed elephant is tied to a firm pillar, the object explained earlier, with the rope of mindfulness, and if it cannot stay there, it is pricked with the hook of introspection and gradually brought under control. In *Essence of the Middle Way* it says:

The erring elephant of the mind  
Is firmly tied with the rope of mindfulness

<sup>205</sup> Tib. *bsten*, usually translated here as “rely on” or “attend to.”



To a stable pillar, the object, and  
Gradually ruled with the hook of intelligence.

And in *Stages of Meditation II*:

With the rope of mindfulness and introspection, the elephant of the mind should be tied  
to that very tree trunk of the object.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A8 How meditative stabilization becomes faulty without a firm mode of apprehension of the ascertaining consciousness

It is said that meditative stabilization is accomplished in dependence on mindfulness and that, like a rope, mindfulness continuously ties the mind to the object. Therefore the principal method for fostering<sup>206</sup> the accomplishment of meditative stabilization is that of sustaining mindfulness. Yet mindfulness has a mode of apprehension with an aspect of ascertainment. So when you foster meditative stabilization and place the mind without a firm mode of apprehension of the ascertaining consciousness, you gain the clarity factor of mental limpidity, but the clarity factor of stark intensity of the ascertaining consciousness does not emerge. As a result, powerful mindfulness does not arise, and since subtle laxity is not stopped either, the meditative stabilization becomes faulty.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2A9 Even someone wishing to achieve calm abiding by placing the mind without thinking of anything must generate the power of mindfulness [260]

Even someone who sustains mere non-conceptuality of the mind without placing it on any other basis of observation such as a deity's body, should remind himself "I will place the mind without thinking of any object whatsoever" and then prevent the mind from scattering and being distracted. Since *non-distraction* is also synonymous with *mindfulness that does not forget the object*, he does not deviate from the above method of sustaining mindfulness. Therefore, someone who meditates in this manner also applies the mindfulness that reveals the power of the ascertaining consciousness.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2B Eliminating faulty approaches

This has eight points:

1 Identifying a misconception that should be eliminated

There is the following kind of misconception: "When the mind is roused as explained above, held tight, and placed on the object non-conceptually, there is no laxity, but excitement predominates. I can see that I will not thereby gain the capacity<sup>207</sup> for a continuous stability factor. However, with my lofty awareness lowered, by loosening my tight grip on it a lot, I see the stability factor rise quickly. This is an excellent method." A lot of people think so and expound: "Best meditation during best relaxation."

2 Its elimination

However, this position fails to distinguish between the occurrence of laxity and the occurrence of meditation. As explained earlier, faultless meditative stabilization requires two features, and the stability factor of the non-conceptual mind by itself is not enough. If you think that "In such a case, when the mind has become confused and there is darkness, this is laxity, whereas otherwise it is faultless meditative stabilization because there is the clarity factor of mental limpidity," apparently, you fail to distinguish between lethargy and laxity. These will be explained below.

3 How it is difficult for faultless meditative stabilization with the two features to arise

Therefore, whenever your awareness, held overly tight, is intensified, the clarity factor is present but excitement predominates so that it is difficult for the stability factor to arise. On the other hand, whenever you relax it a lot while sustaining your meditation, the stability aspect is there but laxity

<sup>206</sup> Tib. *skyong tshul*, usually translated here as "way to sustain."

<sup>207</sup> Tib. *thub pa*

predominates so that intense clarity is absent. Yet it is difficult to maintain<sup>208</sup> just the right level of tightness and relaxation, and therefore it is [261] difficult for meditative stabilization free from laxity and excitement to arise. Thinking of that, Candragomin says:

When I make an effort, excitement arises,  
Sinking occurs when I abandon it.  
If by this it is hard to get even engagement,  
What shall I do with my agitated mind?

And:

When I practice with effort, excitement arises;  
Whenever I relax it, sinking occurs.  
If it is hard to find the middle between them,  
What shall I do with my agitated mind?

He is saying that when you hold your mind tight thus making an effort, there is excitement. On the other hand, when you notice this, relax your mind that tries hard to get involved in its object, and abandon the endeavor, the laxity of sinking arises within the mind. Therefore it is difficult to find the middle ground free from the two extremes of laxity and excitement, an even engagement in which the mind abides evenly balanced. If he was thereby presenting relaxation as best, there would be no reason whatsoever for difficulties, and since he is saying that laxity arises from it, it is inappropriate to practice meditative stabilization that way.

#### 4 How to meditate balancing tightness and relaxation

As for the point where tightness and relaxation are balanced, having investigated this for yourself you should be more relaxed than that level of awareness where you think “If I heighten it this much, excitement will surely arise,” and you should also place it above that level where you think “If I leave<sup>209</sup> it just here, laxity will easily arise”.

#### 5 Presentation of sources for this

In the context of the first and second mind,<sup>210</sup> Noble Asaṅga also says:

That is to say when placement and correct placement are performed, there is a mental attention that holds the object tight<sup>211</sup> as it gets involved in it.<sup>212</sup>

In *Stages of Meditation I* it is also explained that:

You should eliminate laxity and hold the object tight.<sup>213</sup>

#### 6 The fault of not knowing how to apply mindfulness

If you sustain your meditation without knowing the above method for applying mindfulness, however much you meditate, only lots of faults will come out of it: great forgetfulness, dulling of your intelligence that discriminates among phenomena, and so forth.

#### 7 The need to watch with introspection while holding the object with mindfulness [262]

You may wonder: “Well then, while the mind is tied to the object with mindfulness, is it appropriate to generate conceptual thought that watches whether or not the object is being held well?” In *Stages of Meditation II* it says that this is what needs to be done. Specifically, it is not that you first

<sup>208</sup> Tib. *zin pa*

<sup>209</sup> Tib. *bzhag*, usually translated here as “place.”

<sup>210</sup> Cf. below under ‘The actual stages of mental abiding that arise’.

<sup>211</sup> Tib. *bsgrims*

<sup>212</sup> The process of developing calm abiding is divided up into nine stages associated with four types of attention. The first two stages, known as “placement” and “thorough placement” (often referred to as “continuous placement”), are associated with the concentrated attention mentioned here.

<sup>213</sup> Tib. *dam du gzung*

abandon meditative stabilization and then watch<sup>214</sup> in this way. Rather, from within your state of abidance in meditative stabilization, you merely watch whether or not the mind is still remaining on the original object it was placed on earlier, and if not, whether it has become excited or lax. Once your mind is placed in meditative stabilization, you should watch it now and then, neither at too short nor at too long intervals. If you do this before the force of the previous mind is exhausted, this has the value that the mind will become intense again, that its intensity will last for a long time, and that laxity and excitement will be recognized quickly.

8 The need to sustain this meditation again and again with mindfulness, without forgetting the object

Sustaining the meditation like that, occasionally recalling the first object, is also necessary as a cause for powerful mindfulness that operates continuously. That is why this method for sustaining mindfulness is set forth in *Śrāvaka Levels* and why it says in *Explanation of the “Separation of the Middle from the Extremes”* (*Madhyāntavibhāṅgāṭkā*):

In the statement “Mindfulness consists in not forgetting the object” the instruction on making the mind abide on it is to express it with the mind.

The application of mindfulness is for the purpose of stopping being distracted from the object and forgetting it. Therefore, not forgetting the object consists in mentally expressing the object, attending to it again and again. By way of analogy, it is like when you are afraid that you might forget something you know. If you recall it again and again, you will hardly forget it.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1B-2C Indicating the length of sessions

This has three points:

1 How it is taught in *Stages of Meditation*

Now then, is there an established length of meditation sessions, specified in terms of “The mind is tied to the object and placed for just this long?” The major texts such as *Śrāvaka Levels* do not seem to clearly uphold an established length. However, [263] in *Stages of Meditation III* it says:

Like that, gradually, you should sit for twenty-four minutes,<sup>215</sup> one and a half hours,<sup>216</sup> three hours,<sup>217</sup> or as long as you can.

Apparently this was set forth in the context of the established length of meditation sessions for special insight meditation after calm abiding has already been accomplished, but in the context of initially practicing calm abiding it is evidently similar.

2 How it is difficult for beginners to cut through laxity and excitement if the sessions are long

In fact, if you recall the object every so often and watch every so often, the method for sustaining mindfulness and introspection as explained earlier is indeed faultless even for long sessions. However, in most beginners forgetfulness arises if the sessions are long. They get distracted and wander off, and although laxity and excitement occur in the meantime, they do not identify them quickly but only recognize them after a long time. Alternatively, even if they do not forget their mindfulness, they easily fall under the power of laxity and excitement and do not identify them quickly. Since the former of these two impedes the arising of strong mindfulness whereas the latter impedes the arising of strong introspection, it is difficult to cut through laxity and excitement. Specifically, it is a lot worse to forget the meditation object, get distracted, and then fail to identify the occurrence of laxity and excitement than not to identify the occurrence of laxity and excitement quickly while still remembering the meditation object. Therefore, as the antidote that counteracts

<sup>214</sup> Tib. *lta ba*, usually translated here as “view.”

<sup>215</sup> One *chu tshod*, a unit based on traditional Indian time measurement and used in the Abhidharma. It is equivalent to one out of 60 parts of a day i.e., 24 minutes.

<sup>216</sup> Tib. *thun phyed*, literally “half a night watch.”

<sup>217</sup> Tib. *thun gcig*, literally “one night watch”—common measure for a full meditation session.

distraction and the deterioration of mindfulness, the method of sustaining mindfulness explained above is very important.

- 3 The need to act in accordance with one's mental abilities and so forth

In case of great forgetfulness, the mind getting distracted and wandering off a lot, and if the introspection that quickly identifies laxity and excitement is weak, short sessions are needed. On the other hand, if forgetfulness hardly arises and it seems that laxity and excitement can be recognized quickly, there is nothing wrong with slightly longer sessions either. With this intention it is said that the duration, twenty-four minutes and so on, is not specified. In brief, since it needs to be in accord with one's mental abilities, it says "as long as you can."

Apart from that, [264] rest in meditative equipoise unless you suffer some temporary physical or mental harm. If you do, you should not persist in your meditation but rather eliminate the constitutional obstacles and then meditate. That is the meaning<sup>218</sup> of experts, so you should understand acting like that to be another factor for the length of sessions.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C What to do after focusing the mind on the object

This has two points:

- 1 What to do when excitement or laxity occur
- 2 What to do while free from laxity and excitement

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1 What to do when excitement or laxity occur

This has two points:

- A Applying the antidote to non-identification of laxity and excitement
- B Applying the antidote to not endeavoring to abandon laxity and excitement even though they have been identified

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1A Applying the antidote to non-identification of laxity and excitement

This has two points:

- 1 Settling the characteristics of laxity and excitement
- 2 The method for generating introspection that realizes them during meditation

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1A1 Settling the characteristics of laxity and excitement

This has two points:

- A Settling the characteristics of excitement
- B Settling the characteristics of laxity

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1A1A Settling the characteristics of excitement

This has three points:

- 1 Presenting a source

Excitement is just as it is stated in the *Compendium of Knowledge*:

What is excitement? It is a very unpacified mind that pursues pleasant signs and belongs to attachment. It has the function of disrupting calm abiding.

- 2 Its three features, object, aspect, and function

It has three features. Its object is something attractive and pleasant. Its aspect is the mind being unpeaceful and scattered outward. Since it is part of attachment, it gets involved in its object through the aspect of craving. Its function is to disrupt the mind abiding on its object.

<sup>218</sup> Tib. *dgongs pa*, usually translated here as "thought" or "intention."

- 3 The manner in which excitement disrupts the mind abiding on its object

While the mind is tied to an object within, through the excitement of attachment to forms such as sounds the mind is drawn without control toward those objects and becomes distracted. It is just as stated in *Praise of Confession*:

However much you focus<sup>219</sup> on calm abiding,  
Your mind, directed at something again and again,  
Is drawn away by the noose of the mental afflictions  
Without control, with the rope of attachment to objects.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1A1B Settling the characteristics of laxity

This has five points:

- 1 Some people lump together laxity and dullness, which goes against the scriptures [265]

In many translations laxity is also rendered as *sinking*. Some people assert a lethargy in which the mind lacks clarity and limpidity and abides without scattering to other objects to be laxity, which is incorrect, for it says in *Stages of Meditation II* and in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning* that laxity arises from lethargy. In the *Compendium of Knowledge* laxity is indeed explained in the context of the secondary affliction distraction. However, when there is distraction as explained there, virtue may also arise, so it is not necessarily afflicted.<sup>220</sup>

- 2 How the identification of these two differs and a source for that

Consequently, in the *Compendium of Knowledge* and in the auto-commentary on *Treasury of Manifest Knowledge*, lethargy is said to be a heaviness, an unserviceability of the body and the mind that forms part of delusion. With laxity, the mode of apprehension of the mind holding its object is slack, and the object is not held clearly or tightly. Therefore, even if there is the factor of limpidity, when the mode of apprehending the object lacks clarity, there is laxity. From *Stages of Meditation II*:

You should understand that at times when the mind does not see the object clearly—like someone blind or someone entering darkness or someone closing his eyes—at those times there is laxity.

In the other great texts I have not seen a clear take on the characteristics of laxity.

- 3 Moreover, the two are not the same because in laxity there is also virtue

With regard to laxity there is either virtue or neutrality, whereas lethargy is only a non-virtue or a neutral obscuration<sup>221</sup> and part of delusion.

- 4 The need for two factors, the factors of mental clarity and tightness, to eliminate laxity

In the great texts it says that in order to eliminate laxity, you should uplift the mind, meditating on a joyful object such as a buddha image or light. Thereby you prevent the object's lack of clarity, which is like darkness having fallen on the mind, and the decline in the mind's mode of apprehension. Then you need both a clear object and tightness in your mode of apprehension.

<sup>219</sup> Tib. *dmigs pa*, usually translated here as "observe."

<sup>220</sup> That does not mean distraction is a totally pure state without any mental affliction but rather that it does not necessarily come under the 20 secondary afflictions because there are also wholesome varieties. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

<sup>221</sup> Although in the latter case it is not non-virtuous, it is nevertheless a mental affliction. Another example of such a *neutral* mental affliction is the attachment of beings in higher realms. It also belongs to the afflictive obscurations, but it is not classified as unwholesome. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

- 5 The need to ascertain laxity in accordance with *Stages of Meditation* because it is a major area of mistake [266]

Excitement is easy to recognize but laxity is not clearly identified in the great texts, which is why it is difficult to understand. Yet it is essential because this is a major ground for mistaking one's meditative stabilization to be faultless. Therefore you should investigate and identify it well with mental subtlety based on your experience and in accordance with the statements in *Stages of Meditation*.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1A2 The method for generating introspection that realizes these during meditation

This has five points:

- A The need to generate introspection that realizes whether or not laxity or excitement have arisen

It is not enough merely to have an understanding of laxity and excitement. Rather, you need the ability to generate introspection that knows exactly whether or not laxity or excitement have arisen during your meditation. In fact, not only do you need the ability to generate introspection that identifies laxity and excitement as soon as they arise due to the gradual generation of powerful introspection. You also need the introspection that recognizes them when they are just about to arise but have not actually arisen, for in *Stages of Meditation II* and *III* it says:

If you notice<sup>222</sup> laxity of the mind or a suspicion that it is lax...

And:

If you notice excitement of the mind or a suspicion that it is excited...

- B If you do not rely on introspection, your meditation will come under the influence of laxity and excitement

As long as this kind of introspection has not arisen, although you decide that from this point till that point there was flawless meditation without laxity or excitement, this is baseless, for even if laxity or excitement were to arise, you would not be able to ascertain them given that powerful introspection has not arisen. In accordance with that, it also says in *Separation of the Middle from the Extremes*:

Once laxity and excitement are realized...

In order to realize laxity and excitement you need introspection.

Therefore, if the introspection that cannot fail to recognize laxity and excitement has not arisen, you may meditate for long and even while away years with subtle laxity and excitement without sensing them as they occur.

- C The method for sustaining mindfulness is essential as a cause of introspection

Well then, how do you generate introspection? A most essential cause is the method for sustaining mindfulness presented earlier. [267] If you can generate continuous mindfulness in that manner, you will be able to stop forgetting the object and wandering off. Thereby you will stop long-term insensitivity to the occurrence of laxity and excitement. Hence, you will recognize laxity and excitement easily. This is very clear when you look at it from the perspective of your own experience, the amount of time it takes you to recognize laxity and excitement when mindfulness has deteriorated, and the amount of time it takes you when it has not. With this understanding *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* says:

Once mindfulness is there to stay at the  
Gate of the mind in order to guard it,  
At that point introspection will come...

<sup>222</sup> Tib. *mthong*, usually translated here as "see."



*Explanation of the “Separation of the Middle from the Extremes”* also speaks of mindfulness as the cause of introspection.

D Watching continuously whether or not the mind scatters is the essential point for sustaining introspection

This one cause is to observe the aspect of the deity’s body and the like, that which is being apprehended, or the aspect of the apprehender, such as the experience, mere awareness, or mere clarity, and then, while applying mindfulness as explained earlier, hold the mind, watching continuously whether or not there is scattering. This should be understood as the essential point for sustaining introspection. In accordance with that, *Engaging in the Bodhisattva Conduct* also says:

Investigating again and again  
The state of body and mind, in brief,  
Just that alone is the characteristic  
Of the guarding of introspection.

E The need to differentiate well between the methods for sustaining mindfulness and introspection

By doing this, you therefore generate introspection that recognizes any laxity and excitement as soon as they are about to arise. By means of applying mindfulness on the other hand, the forgetfulness of your mind being distracted and wandering off is stopped so that you observe well. You need to distinguish between them.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B Applying the antidote to not endeavoring to abandon laxity and excitement even though they have been identified

This has two points:

- 1 The need to intend the application of the antidote
- 2 The actual manner of application

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B1 The need to intend the application of the antidote

Through doing well at the method for sustaining mindfulness and introspection as explained earlier, strong mindfulness will arise so that even subtle laxity and excitement can be recognized by means of introspection. Hence there will be no fault of not identifying laxity and excitement. However, non-application or the accepting lack of endeavor, a failure to cultivate the endeavor to stop the two as soon as they arise, [268] is a great fault of meditative stabilization. That is why you should cultivate the intention referred to as *application* or *endeavor* as its antidote.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B2 The actual manner of application

This has two points:

- A Identifying the intention and how to stop laxity and excitement
- B Identifying the causes in dependence on which laxity and excitement arise

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B2A Identifying the intention and how to stop laxity and excitement

This has two points:

- 1 Identifying the intention
- 2 How to stop laxity and excitement

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B2A-1 Identifying the intention

In the *Compendium of Knowledge* it says:

What is intention? It is the mind creating compositional factors, action of the mind that has the function of causing the mind to get involved in virtue, non-virtue, or something neutral.

That means the mental factor that moves the mind and impels it to something virtuous, non-virtuous or neutral, any of those three, like iron moving without control under the power of a magnet, is



intention. Here you should therefore understand it as the intention that motivates the mind to abandon either laxity or excitement when they occur.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B2A-2 How to stop laxity and excitement

This has two points:

- A How to stop laxity
- B How to stop excitement

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B2A-2A How to stop laxity

This has four points:

- 1 Counteracting it by attending to something joyful or the features of light and the like

Now how do you stop laxity and excitement? A mind that is lax has withdrawn inward too much and lost its mode of apprehending the object. For that reason it says in *Stages of Meditation I* that you should attend to a cause for the mind to move outward again, something joyful. In fact it should be something like the Buddha's body rather than something joyful giving rise to mental afflictions. Alternatively, if you attend to a sign of light, such as sunshine, and clear away the laxity, you should immediately tighten your mode of apprehending the object and sustain it. At this point, do not meditate on a disenchanting object, because disillusionment is a cause for the mind to withdraw inward. However, if you examine any object you wish to examine with the wisdom of individual investigation and feel enthusiasm, this will counteract laxity. From the *Compendium of the Perfections*:

When there is sinking uplift the mind through the  
Power of striving for special insight.

- 2 How to counteract laxity by heightening the mind's mode of apprehension

Now, this laxity or sinking [269] is lax because the mode of apprehending the object has gone down, and it is sinking because it has withdrawn inward too much. Therefore it is counteracted by the enthusiasm upon uplifting the mode of apprehension and expanding the object. In *Essence of the Middle Way* it says:

When it sinks, expand the mind through  
Meditation on spacious objects.

And:

When it sinks, uplift it also  
By seeing the value<sup>223</sup> of joyous effort.

The most important antidote for stopping laxity is this: When you consider the benefit of the Three Jewels and the mind of enlightenment as well as the positive qualities of the precious leisure you have gained and the like, it should be as effective for refreshing your awareness as cold water when it is splashed into the face of someone asleep. This depends on the experience you have gained through your analytical meditation of individual investigation on beneficial topics.

- 3 The discrimination of light, purifying meditation objects, and the like specifically against the object being unclear as if darkness had fallen upon the mind

When you apply the antidote, meditation on light, to the causes that reinforce the development of laxity—lethargy, sleepiness, and mental states with an aspect of darkness that induce those two—laxity which depends on them does not arise, and that which has already arisen is counteracted.

*Śrāvaka Levels* also talks about having a break from this activity, taking to mind the characteristics of light and familiarizing oneself with them again and again, uplifting the mind with any of the six recollections—of the Three Jewels, ethics, giving, and deities—or other purifying objects, as well

<sup>223</sup> Tib. *phan yon*, usually translated here as “benefit.”

as reciting teachings that point out the disadvantages of lethargy and sleepiness, looking to the side or at the moon and the stars, washing one's face with water, and so forth.

4 How to apply special remedies against subtle and gross laxity separately

Furthermore, if the mental laxity is very slight and does not occur more than once in a while, you should tighten the mode of apprehension of the mind as you meditate. However, when dense laxity recurs again and again, [270] suspend the meditation, apply the antidotes as appropriate and continue to meditate as soon as the laxity has been cleared away. If the object the mind is holding becomes unclear and an aspect, slight or dense, of something like darkness falling upon the mind occurs, as an antidote to that take up the characteristics of lights such as a butter lamp, fire, and sunshine. If you familiarize yourself with them again and again, a great limpidity of mind will arise.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B2A-2B How to stop excitement

This has two points:

1 The need generally to attend to something depressing as an antidote to excitement

When it comes to excitement, the mind runs after forms, sounds, and other objects due to attachment, so for that you should attend to something depressing, a cause for the mind to withdraw inward. However, as soon as the excitement has subsided because of that, you rest in equipoise. In *Essence of the Middle Way* it says:

Pacify excitement by  
Attending, for instance, to impermanence

And:

You should collect the distracted mind  
By seeing the faults of the signs of distraction.

2 How to apply special remedies against subtle and gross laxity separately

When intense or long-lasting excitement occurs, it is effective to loosen the meditation for a while and meditate on something disillusioning, whereas collecting the mind inward and placing it every time it scatters is not. Whenever the excitement is not that strong, you should collect the distracted mind inward and tie it to the object. In the *Compendium of the Perfections* it says:

Whenever your mind has got excited  
Avert this by means of calm abiding.

With an excited mind, you should not attend to inspiring or delightful objects, for they cause the mind to be distracted outward.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-1B2B Identifying the causes in dependence upon which  
laxity and excitement arise

This has five points:

1 Common causes of laxity and excitement

The common causes of the two, laxity and excitement, are not guarding one's sense doors, not eating the right amount, not putting effort into one's practice without sleeping during the first and last parts of the night, and remaining without introspection.

2 Causes of laxity

The causes of laxity are great sleepiness, [271] the mind being excessively loose in its hold on its object, not balancing calm abiding and special insight but relying on calm abiding too much, the mind remaining as though in darkness, and not taking joy in directing the mind toward the object.

### 3 Causes of excitement

The causes of excitement are said to be little disillusionment, the mind being excessively tense with respect to its object, not being used to making an effort, and the mind being distracted by thoughts of relatives and the like.

- 4 If you do not put effort into abandoning even subtle laxity and excitement, you do not know how to accomplish pure meditative stabilization

Therefore you need to recognize, through introspection, even subtle aspects of laxity and excitement and stop them all entirely. If you give up, thinking “Although in the beginning I cut through subtle excitement, distraction, and the like, they were never cut off, so I will not cut through them any longer” or if you think “Unless they are intense and come in excessively long chains, there is no need to cut through them because they are brief and weak so that no karma will be accumulated,” you do not know how to accomplish pure meditative stabilization. That is because you depart from the conclusions by venerable Maitreya and others on how to accomplish meditative stabilization.

- 5 When you merely have the factors of stability and limpidity, with that of clarity lacking intensity, there is no hope for meditative stabilization

Therefore summon your mind from its wandering and excitement so that it is tied to the object within, and seek the stability factor. Whenever the stability factor has arisen, beware of laxity and bring forth intense clarity. You should accomplish faultless meditative stabilization by alternating between those two. Do not trust mere limpidity that lacks the factor of clarity together with intensity of the mode of apprehension.

### 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B1C-2 What to do while free from laxity and excitement

This has six points:

- A Since it is a mistake to apply antidotes although laxity and excitement have been cut off, you need to apply the antidote to that, the equanimity of natural composure

When even subtle laxity and excitement have been cut off as explained earlier and the mind enters into equanimity without the imbalances of becoming either lax or excited through the meditation, at that time it would be a mistake for your meditative stabilization if you applied antidotes or endeavored, so you should cultivate equanimity as the antidote to that. [272] This is how your meditation becomes faulty through application and endeavor: by bringing the mind back inward and uplifting it whenever it is lax, you grow confident that laxity and excitement do not arise in every session. At that stage, it would be a mistake to beware of laxity and excitement very much as in the beginning. If you did, your mind would become distracted, so you need to know how to loosen up. That is to say loosen the endeavor rather than letting go of the intensity of your mode of apprehension.

- B That is what you do from the time you are past the peak of laxity and excitement

Therefore this cultivation of equanimity is not performed whenever laxity and excitement do not occur but from the time you are past the peak of laxity and excitement because as long as you have not passed the peak for laxity and excitement, there is no equanimity.

- C How to identify that very equanimity

Well then, what is this equanimity? Among the three types of equanimity—equanimity feeling, immeasurable equanimity, and equanimity of application—it is the last one. Its entity is just as explained in *Śrāvaka Levels*: it is the mind resting even and at ease<sup>224</sup> upon its object from the class of calm abiding or special insight, operating naturally, and achieving serviceability. When you have achieved such equanimity, you should actualize it while cultivating meditative stabilization, without strong endeavor as long as laxity and excitement do not arise.

<sup>224</sup> Tib. *rnal du*, usually translated here as “in its natural state” or “naturally.”

D Presenting a source for these explanations on how to generate faultless meditative stabilization

This is in accordance with what is set forth in *Separation of the Middle from the Extremes*:

On that basis, the serviceability  
Of one's mind achieves all goals.  
It springs from the causes relied upon:  
The eight factors removing five faults—

Laziness, forgetfulness  
Of the instructions, excitement and laxity, Non-  
application, and application.  
These are asserted to be the five faults.

The basis and what is based on it,  
The cause and the effect of it,<sup>225</sup>  
Not forgetting the object observed,  
Realizing excitement and laxity,

Application to remove them, [273]  
Resting naturally when they are calmed.

E Explaining the meaning of the scriptural passage in detail

Here “On that basis” is on the basis of undertaking joyous effort in order to eliminate unfavorable conditions. From that the meditative stabilization of mental serviceability arises. Furthermore, since it is the footing or basis of miraculous powers that bring about all goals such as clairvoyance, it achieves those goals. Such meditative stabilization arises from the cause of abandoning the five faults and relying on the eight factors. The five faults are as follows. At the time of preparation, laziness is a fault because you will not apply yourself to meditative stabilization. When you put effort into meditative stabilization, forgetting the instructions is a fault, for if you forget the object, there will be no meditative equipoise of the mind on the object. When it is in meditative equipoise, laxity and excitement are faults because they prevent mental serviceability. When laxity and excitement occur, it is a fault not to endeavor, for thereby the two will not be pacified. When there is no more<sup>226</sup> laxity and excitement, the intention to apply remedies is a fault. In *Stages of Meditation*<sup>227</sup> it says that if you count laxity and excitement as one, they are five, whereas if you divide them up, they are six.

Among the eight factors for abandoning them, their remedies, laziness has four. They are faith, aspiration, endeavor, and pliancy. Then, the remedies of forgetfulness, laxity and excitement, non-application, and application are mindfulness, introspection, the intention to apply antidotes, and the equanimity of resting naturally, respectively. They have already been explained above.

F How this manner of sustaining meditative stabilization is common to all sūtra and mantra instructions

This freeing of the single-pointed meditative stabilization of the mind from laxity and excitement by means of mindfulness and introspection is common to all the instructions on how to practice. Therefore you should not hold it to be a specific detail of the Lakṣanayāna<sup>228</sup> which, however, is unnecessary in mantra. [274] It is also taught in many Highest Yoga Tantras.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2 The stages of quiescence that arise in dependence on it  
This has three points:

<sup>225</sup> cf. ‘Individual explanations on the four antidotes to laziness’.

<sup>226</sup> Tib. *bral ba*, usually translated here as “free from.”

<sup>227</sup> Tib. *sgom rim rnams las*. Tsongkhapa usually indicates whether he is referring to the first, the middle, or the last volume of Kamalaśīla’s work, but here it merely says “in the *Bhāvanākramas*.”

<sup>228</sup> Tib. *mtshan nyid theg*, “vehicle of characteristics” or “vehicle of metaphysical dialectics.”

- A The actual stages of quiescence that arise
- B The method for accomplishing them by means of the six powers
- C How they involve the four types of attention

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2A The actual stages of quiescence that arise

This has nine points:

- 1 Placement
- 2 Continuous placement
- 3 Patchy placement
- 4 Close placement
- 5 Taming
- 6 Pacification
- 7 Complete pacification
- 8 Making single-pointed
- 9 Even placement

1. Placing the mind on such and such consists in collecting the mind from all external objects and directing it toward the object within. In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it says:

Having directed the mind toward the object,<sup>229</sup>

2. Continuous placement: The directed mind is continuously placed on the object over a period of time without it being distracted to anything else.

Continuously don't let it get distracted.

3. Patchy placement: If you get distracted due to forgetfulness so that you are distracted to external things, you realize it and tie your mind to its object again.

Realizing distraction quickly,  
You should patch it up again.

4. Close placement is explained as follows in *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom*: The mind, while extensive by nature, is collected again and again and thus refined, so that placement gets better and better. This accords with the statement:

Intelligent people should more and more  
Collect their minds internally.

5. Taming: Having reflected on the positive qualities of meditative stabilization, you rejoice in it.

Then, since you see the positive qualities,  
The mind is tamed in stabilization.<sup>230</sup>

6. Pacification: You view distraction as a fault and pacify dislike for meditative stabilization.

Seeing distraction as a fault  
Pacify dislike for it.

7. Complete pacification: completely pacifying occurrences of attachment, unhappiness, lethargy, sleepiness, and so forth.

Attachment, unhappiness, and the like  
Should be pacified as they arise.

8. Making single-pointed: making an effort for the sake of effortless engagement.

Then, by means of restraint and effort, [275]  
Along with actual application,  
You get it to come about naturally.

<sup>229</sup> Unless identified otherwise, all the following quotations are taken from the same text.

<sup>230</sup> Tib. *ting nge 'dzin*, usually translated here as "meditative stabilization."

9. Even placement: in *Stages of Meditation* this is said to be the equanimity when the mind has become even. In *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom* it is said to be spontaneous, natural engagement and the attainment of control<sup>231</sup> due to the habit<sup>232</sup> of unifying the mind. In accordance with that it also says in *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras*:

Since it's habitual, there's non-application.

The names of these nine minds are as quoted in *Stages of Meditation I* and elsewhere:

This path of calm abiding is explained in scriptures such as the Perfection of Wisdom.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2B The method for accomplishing them by means of the six powers

This has five points:

- 1 Identifying the six powers
- 2 What minds are accomplished by them in what manner
- 3 How during the ninth stage of quiescence you effortlessly enter meditative stabilization
- 4 How the nine stages of quiescence have to be preceded by the earlier ones in turn
- 5 The summarized meaning of those points

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2B-1 Identifying the six powers

The six powers are those of hearing, thinking, mindfulness, introspection, joyous effort, and thorough acquaintance.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2B-2 What minds are accomplished by them in what manner

This has six points:

A The power of hearing

Through the power of hearing the mind of placement is accomplished, for it merely consists in first tying the mind to the object, following just the instructions you have heard from someone on how to place the mind on an object. It is not something that you have become familiar with through your own repeated reflections.

B The power of thinking

Through the power of thinking the mind of continuous placement is accomplished, for you keep thinking about the continuation of that first tie to the object and sustain it. From that you will initially achieve the capacity for a somewhat connected continuity.

C The power of mindfulness

Through the power of mindfulness the two minds of patchy placement and close placement are accomplished, for when the mind gets distracted from the object, you are mindful of the earlier object and collect the mind inward. Generating the power of mindfulness from the start, you do not let your mind get distracted from the object.

D The power of introspection

Through the power of introspection the two minds of taming and pacification are accomplished, [276] for through recognizing, with introspection, the disadvantages of scattering toward discursive thought and toward the signs of the secondary afflictions, and through viewing them as faults, you do not allow your mind to scatter toward those two.

E The power of joyous effort

Through the power of joyous effort you accomplish the two minds of complete pacification and making single-pointed, for you abandon even subtle occurrences of discursive thought and secondary afflictions with endeavor, thereby not responding to them. Since you do so, laxity,

<sup>231</sup> Tib. *rang dbang*, usually translated here as “independence.”

<sup>232</sup> Tib. *goms pa*, usually translated here as “familiarization.”



excitement, and so forth cannot obstruct your meditative stabilization, and meditative stabilization that arises continuously is accomplished.

F The power of thorough acquaintance

Through the power of thorough acquaintance you accomplish the mind of even placement, for through the power of intense familiarization with the previous one, meditative stabilization that operates naturally without effort arises.

These points accord with the intended meaning of *Śrāvaka Levels*, so you should not rely on any other explanations.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2B-3  
stabilization

How during the ninth mental abiding you effortlessly enter meditative

Now, when you have attained the ninth mind, it is like in the following analogy. If you are very used to reciting a text or something like that, then whenever the motivation to recite it first arises and you recite it, even though your mind is distracted by something else in the meantime, the recitation itself continues uninterruptedly without endeavor. Likewise, when you have placed your mind in equipoise once through the mindfulness of having initially directed it toward the object, then even though mindfulness and introspection are not applied continuously, you become capable of entering meditative stabilization continuously over a long period without being interrupted by scattering. When mindfulness and introspection are continuous, there is no need for the endeavor of application, and that is called *without application or endeavor*.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2B-4  
one in turn

How the nine stages of quiescences have to be preceded by an earlier

For that to arise, first a long-lasting meditative stabilization that cannot be obstructed by unfavorable conditions such as laxity and excitement has to arise whenever mindfulness and introspection are each applied with endeavor. That is the eighth mind. [277] That and the ninth one are the same in that conditions unfavorable to meditative stabilization such as laxity and excitement cannot disrupt them. Yet since it is necessary here to apply mindfulness and introspection uninterruptedly, it is said to be connected with application or endeavor.

For that to arise, it is necessary to stop even subtle laxity, excitement, and so forth as soon as they arise, without responding to them. Therefore the seventh mind is necessary. For that to arise there is the need for powerful introspection watching that there is no scattering toward conceptual thought and secondary afflictions, distraction by them having been understood to be a disadvantage. Therefore you need the fifth and sixth minds because those two are accomplished with introspection that has become powerful. For something like that to arise, however, there is the need for both the mindfulness that immediately remembers the object even if the mind has been distracted from it, and the mindfulness that does not allow any distraction from the object in the first place. Therefore the third and fourth minds are necessary because these two are accomplished by those two types of mindfulness. For these to arise, however, first of all the mind must be tied to the object, and the continuity of that bond must be undistracted. Therefore the first and second minds arise first.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2B-5

The summarized meaning of those points

Thus, to summarize, you should first follow the instructions you have heard and correctly perform the method for placing the mind in equipoise. Then repeatedly think about that manner of placement and sustain its continuity by way of the ability to piece short periods together. Then, if mindfulness deteriorates and you get distracted, you should collect your mind quickly and quickly be mindful of the object you have forgotten. Then you should generate even stronger mindfulness and generate a power of mindfulness such that you do not get distracted from the meditation object in the first place. By accomplishing powerful mindfulness and by seeing the faults of laxity, excitement, and so forth—that your mind gets distracted from the object to something else, you should generate intense introspection to watch over it. Then you should generate strong endeavor so that even when there is



distraction due to subtle forgetfulness, it is recognized immediately and eliminated, and once it has been eliminated the periods without obstruction by unfavorable conditions are lengthened. [278] Once that has arisen, you put in effort, you perfect your familiarization through meditation, and you accomplish the ninth mind that enters meditative stabilization without endeavor. In fact before, when the ninth mind has not yet been achieved, the yogi needs endeavor to place the mind in meditative stabilization. But when the ninth mind has been attained, even though you do not endeavor to place the mind in meditative equipoise deliberately, it totally goes into meditative stabilization.

If despite your achievement of the ninth mind, which is like that, you have not achieved pliancy, you still cannot posit it as the achievement of calm abiding either, let alone the achievement of special insight. This is explained below.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A2B-2B2C How they involve the four types of attention

This has four points:

1 The actual types

*Śrāvaka Levels* explains that the nine stages of quiescence involve four types of attention. Explained in accordance with that, there is tight engagement at the time of the first and second minds because the mind needs to be tightened with effort. Then, during five minds, laxity and excitement interrupt you, and you cannot sustain long meditation sessions, so at that time there is interrupted engagement. Then, as regards the eighth mind, laxity and excitement cannot cause interruptions so that you can sustain meditation sessions for long. Therefore, at that time, there is uninterrupted engagement. Then, for the ninth mind, there is no interruption, and it is not necessary to rely on constant endeavor, so you settle into the attention of effortless engagement.

2 Setting out a doubt about that

Well, there is interrupted engagement at the time of the first and second minds, and there is also a need to tighten the mind at the time of the five intermediate minds. Why is it that the first and second are not said to have the attention of interrupted engagement and that the five in between are not said to have the attention of tight engagement?

3 The response to that

With the first and second minds, the mind is in and out of meditative stabilization,<sup>233</sup> however, the latter for much longer. With the five intermediate ones, the mind abides in meditative stabilization far longer. Therefore the term *interruption of meditative stabilization* has been applied to the latter and not to the former. [279] That is why although the two sets are indeed the same in having tight engagement, the presence and absence of interruptions and engagement over time is not the same. Therefore the five intermediate minds are not posited as attentions that have tight engagement.

4 The need continuously to rely on joyous effort in accordance with that

In the *Compendium of the Perfections* it says:

Through uninterrupted yoga strive<sup>234</sup>  
To accomplish concentration.  
If you rest again and again,  
You will not get fire through friction.

The method of yoga is like that:  
Don't give up till you gain the distinction.

You should accomplish it in accordance with that statement.

<sup>233</sup> Tib. *sems ting nge 'dzin du 'gro ba dang der mi 'gro ba gnyis*, literally “the mind both goes into meditative stabilization and does not go there.”

<sup>234</sup> Tib. *brtson*, the first component in Tib. *brtson 'grus*, translated here as “joyous effort.”

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3 The measure for the accomplishment of calm abiding through meditation

This has three points:

- A Indication of the dividing line between having accomplished it or not
- B General indication of how to traverse the path in reliance on calm abiding
- C Indication of how to traverse a mundane path in particular

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A Indication of the dividing line between having accomplished it or not

This has two points:

- 1 Presenting the actual point
- 2 The signs of possessing attention along with a clarification of doubts

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A-1 Presenting the actual point

This has two points:

- A Indicating whether or not calm abiding has been achieved from the point of view of whether or not pliancy has been completely achieved
- B Indicating the way in which calm abiding is accomplished once pliancy has been achieved

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A-1A Indicating whether or not calm abiding has been achieved from the point of view of whether or not pliancy has been completely achieved

This has five points:

- 1 Setting out a doubt

When you can sustain the ninth mind free from subtle laxity and excitement throughout long meditation sessions as has been explained earlier, and when you attain meditative stabilization that operates spontaneously, independent of the endeavor to apply mindfulness and introspection continuously, has calm abiding been achieved or not?

- 2 The response to that

When meditative stabilization has been achieved, there is a twofold division: pliancy having been achieved or not. If pliancy has not been achieved, it is a similitude of calm abiding rather than actual calm abiding.

- 3 The source

In the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning* it says:

“Bhagavan, when the bodhisattva directs his mental attention inward, his mind observing the mind, as long as physical and mental pliancy have not been achieved, what is that mental attention called?” [280]

“Maitreya, it is not calm abiding. It should be described as an inclination that corresponds with calm abiding, as something associated with it.”

In *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it also says:

Since it’s familiar, there’s non-application.  
Then his body and mind attain,  
Extreme overwhelming pliancy; afterwards  
He is said to have mental attention.

In this context “mental attention” is calm abiding.

In *Stages of Meditation II* it also clearly says:

When the body and the mind of the one who has thus familiarized himself with calm abiding become extremely pliable, and when his mind becomes fully controlled with

regard to objects observed at will, at that time he should know that calm abiding has been accomplished.

And from *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom*:

Here the bodhisattva dwelling alone in seclusion should mentally attend to his intended object. Having abandoned his mental conversation, he should attend many times to the mind itself as it appears. As long as physical and mental pliancy have not arisen, it is a mental attention that corresponds with calm abiding, whereas once they have arisen, it is calm abiding.

- 4 Although the meditative stabilization before the attainment of pliancy belongs to the desire realm level, it is not a level of meditative equipoise in the desire realm

Now, what level is meditative stabilization before the attainment of pliancy included in? It is included in the level of the desire realm. Although it has such single-pointedness of mind, it is a level of non-equipoise, and it is not posited as a *level of equipoise*. The reason explained in *Actuality of the Stages* is that it is not accomplished through non-regret, supreme joyful bliss, and pliancy.

- 5 That meditative stabilization is the meditative stabilization of a single-pointed mind of the desire realm

Thus, when pliancy has not been attained, the meditative stabilization that does not rely on constant mindfulness, in which the mind goes into non-conceptuality of its own accord, and which [281] seems as though it could be combined with any physical activity—moving, walking, lying, and sitting—is called single-pointed mind of the desire realm. It is not actual calm abiding.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A-1B     Indicating the way in which calm abiding is accomplished once pliancy has been fully achieved

This has two points:

- 1 Explanation of how pliancy is identified and how it arises
- 2 Indicating the actual way in which calm abiding is accomplished once pliancy has been fully achieved

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A-1B1     Explanation of how pliancy is identified and how it arises

This has seven points:

- A Identification

Well then, what is the manner in which pliancy is achieved? Once it has been achieved, what is the method for proceeding to calm abiding? This is what the *Compendium of Knowledge* says with respect to pliancy:

What is pliancy? It is the serviceability of the body and the mind due to cutting the continuity of taking on bad physical and mental states. Its function is to eliminate all obscurations.

- B The meaning of the scriptural passage from the *Compendium of Knowledge*

Their taking on bad physical and mental states consists in that the body and the mind are unfit to be employed for any virtuous activity at will. The antidote to that, physical and mental pliancy, is an extreme serviceability with respect to the body and the mind being employed for virtuous activities. It is due to freedom from taking on bad states, both physical and mental. Specifically, if you endeavor to give up mental afflictions and bad physical states you take on that are within the class of mental afflictions and obstruct the joy of abandoning mental afflictions, you will get rid of such unserviceability as heaviness of the body, and then its lightness is the serviceability of the body.

Likewise, if you endeavor to abandon mental afflictions and taking on bad mental states that are within the class of mental afflictions and obstruct the joy of abandoning mental afflictions, you will

pass beyond<sup>235</sup> the unfitness of the mind for being directed toward the object and engaging in it with delight. Then the mind engaging in its object unobstructedly is a serviceable mind.

C Sources for that

In accordance with that Ācārya Sthiramati says:

In this regard, serviceability of the body is that from which whatever lightness arises for the activities of the body itself. Serviceability of the mind is another phenomenon arisen from mind that is the cause of the mind becoming fresh and happy after entering into pure mental attention. [282] When you are endowed with it, you engage in objects unobstructedly, which is why it is called serviceability of the mind.

In brief, although you want to try hard and abandon the mental afflictions, the unserviceability of your seemingly diffident body and mind makes this as difficult to do as if you were engaging in some unpleasant duty of yours. Once the unserviceability of the body and the mind has been reversed, the body and the mind become extremely easy to use. In *Śrāvaka Levels* it says that such perfectly complete serviceability of the body and the mind arises in small portions right from the beginning when you obtain meditative stabilization. So it increases, eventually turning into pliant, single-pointed calm abiding. In fact at first it is subtle and therefore hard to recognize, but later on it becomes easy to recognize.

D How, among the two types of pliancy, mental pliancy is the first to arise

An early sign of such pliancy about to arise complete with all its characteristics and easy to discern<sup>236</sup> is a feeling of heaviness at the top of the head experienced by the person striving to cultivate meditative stabilization. It is not an uncomfortable heaviness. As soon as it arises, you are freed from taking on bad mental states that obstruct the joy of abandoning mental afflictions, and its antidote, pliancy, arises first.<sup>237</sup> In *Śrāvaka Levels* it says:

As an early sign that gross single-pointedness of mind which is easy to discern as well as pliancy of mind and body will arise before long, the top of the head will seem heavy. In fact this symptom is not harmful. As soon as it arises, any bad mental states taken on within the class of the mental afflictions that obstruct the joy of abandonment are abandoned, and their antidotes, serviceability of mind and mental pliancy, arise.

E How physical pliancy arises from that

Then, in dependence on the force of that pliancy of mental serviceability having arisen, [283] the energies that cause physical pliancy to arise circulate within the body. When those energies circulate in your body parts and pervade them, you are freed from taking on bad physical states, and the antidote to taking on bad states, physical pliancy, arises. Moreover, after they have spread throughout the body, the latter seems as though filled with the power of serviceable energy. In *Śrāvaka Levels* it says:

Through its occurrence, the energies of the great elements that are conducive to the arising of physical pliancy circulate within the body. As they circulate, one is freed from taking on any bad physical states within the class of the mental afflictions that obstruct the joy of abandonment. Their antidote, physical pliancy, spreads throughout the body and the latter seems as though filled with it.

<sup>235</sup> Tib. *bral ba*, usually translated here as “free from.”

<sup>236</sup> Tib. *brtag pa*, usually translated here as “investigate.”

<sup>237</sup> Getting rid of negative mental tendencies and the development of the antidote are in direct opposition to each other: the more you have of one, the less the other one will be present. Otherwise the obvious question would be why the antidote develops if you are already rid of negative states. The relationship should rather be understood in these terms: at the point where the negative states have come to an end, the antidote is fully developed. According to Geshe Thubten Soepa they are “Like hot and cold. One comes as the other one goes away.”

F The difference between those two kinds of pliancy

In this regard, physical pliancy is an extremely pleasant sensation within the body; it is not a mental factor. Master Sthiramati says:

If a distinctive physical sensation is conjoined with joy, you should recognize it as physical pliancy because in the sūtras it says that when the mind is joyful, the body becomes pliant.

G How among the two kinds of bliss, that of physical and that of mental pliancy, the bliss of physical pliancy arises first

Thus, when physical pliancy first arises, through the force of the energies, a great experience of bliss arises within the body in dependence on which a very exquisite experience of joyful bliss is also produced in the mind.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A-1B2      Indicating the actual way in which calm abiding is accomplished once pliancy has been fully achieved

This has two points:

A The actual manner

Then the force of that pliancy having arisen for the first time gradually diminishes. In fact, it is not that pliancy has been exhausted and goes away. However, that gross pliancy has moved the mind excessively, so when it neutralizes, unshakable pliancy that is delicate like a shadow and in accord with meditative stabilization arises. When the joy<sup>238</sup> has disappeared, the mind [284] remains firmly on its object, and calm abiding free from the restlessness of agitation through great joy is achieved.

B The source for that

In *Śrāvaka Levels* it says:

When that first arises, you are endowed with mental joy, a feeling of mental ease, and supreme mental happiness, and even the object appears manifestly endowed with joy. Then, little by little, all the force of pliancy that first arises turns extremely subtle and the body becomes endowed with shadow-like pliancy. The mind abandons all the joy again, and through calm abiding gets involved in the object completely firm and utterly peaceful in aspect.

When that happens, through the attainment of the attention and the calm abiding included in the preparatory stage of the first concentration, the lesser attention of meditative equipoise is attained. This is explained in *Śrāvaka Levels*.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A-2      The signs of possessing attention along with a clarification of doubts

This has two points:

A The actual signs of possessing attention

B Clarification of doubts

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A-2A      The actual signs of possessing attention

This has eight points:

1 How this is set forth in *Śrāvaka Levels*

The signs by which to recognize that you yourself or others have achieved attention are set forth in *Śrāvaka Levels*. Through attaining that, a set of four is achieved in small measure: a mind included in the form realm, physical pliancy, mental pliancy, and single-pointedness. Also, you are enabled to purify mental afflictions by means of calm and coarse<sup>239</sup> paths or paths associated with aspects of the four noble truths; physical and mental pliancy arise very quickly when the mind is equipoised

<sup>238</sup> Tib. *sems dga'*, “joy of the mind.”

<sup>239</sup> A so-called mundane special insight that consists in looking at lower levels as coarse and higher levels as peaceful.

inwardly; for the most part, the five hindrances, desire for sensual pleasure, sleepiness, and so forth do not occur, and when you rise from equipoise, you are still imbued with some physical and mental pliancy.

2 Once this attention has been achieved, it is easy for calm abiding to become pure

Once attention with these signs is achieved, [285] it is easy for the path of calm abiding to become pure.<sup>240</sup> After meditative equipoise of the mind in single-pointed calm abiding, physical and mental pliancy can quickly be induced so that pliancy increases. *Śrāvaka Levels* explains that the more pliancy increases the more calm abiding also increases, whereby they mutually increase each other. In brief, when the mind is serviceable, the energies become serviceable. At that time extraordinary physical pliancy occurs, and upon its occurrence special meditative stabilization arises. Through that, again, an extraordinary serviceability of energies is accomplished whereby physical and mental pliancy is induced.

3 Statements from *Śrāvaka Levels* about how other positive qualities also arise

Apart from that, *Śrāvaka Levels* explains that at the time the mind is first placed single-pointedly, it is placed without mindfulness of or attention to anything else whatsoever:

In order not to turn to all the signs and prevent distraction, you prevent mindfulness and attention to them, from the beginning, by focusing completely.

When you have familiarized yourself with that, according to *Śrāvaka Levels*:

By the stages of focusing on single-pointedness itself and focusing on calm abiding within, be sure to place your mind in just this way on the mental continuum and on the entire continuity of the mind becoming free from signs, free from discursive thought, and absolutely calm. When you have achieved the mind of calm abiding in that manner, if signs and conceptions arise due to the faults of forgetfulness and unfamiliarity, and if appearances arise due to secondary mental afflictions, if holes start showing, if they become your object, from the point of view of having seeing their disadvantages earlier you should not be mindful of such occurrences nor attend to them. Through your not minding them and not attending to them in this manner, those objects completely disintegrate, and [286] when they have been completely eliminated, the mind is placed on the very absence of appearances. Sir, this object is subtle and hard to comprehend, therefore aspire and try hard in order to comprehend it.

That is how meditative stabilization is said to arise.

4 Explaining the meaning of that

The section up to “absolutely calm”<sup>241</sup> shows how the three, freedom from signs and so forth, arise gradually from sustaining the meditation as before.

Then, the section up to “you should not be mindful of such occurrences” explains that whenever signs and so forth appear in the mind even though calm abiding has been accomplished—because there is no great familiarity with it and so forth—you should remember the disadvantages of the mind coming under their influence, not pursue them, and place the mind without thinking of anything.

Then, the section up to “absence of appearances”<sup>242</sup> explains that through your familiarizing yourself in this manner, whichever of the three, marks and so forth, arises, through the force of familiarity with not thinking about it in any way, it will subside by itself independently of deliberately focusing the mind. The section explains that thereafter you abide in the non-appearance of the three, and you

<sup>240</sup> In this context *become pure* means *become a higher level path*. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa).

<sup>241</sup> Up to the equivalent of “place your mind” in the Tibetan text.

<sup>242</sup> Up to the equivalent of “is placed on” in the Tibetan text.



are not carried away by them. The remainder of the passage points out that this calm abiding is subtle and that it is difficult to comprehend the explanation of it.

5 How the mind is not directed at signs

In this regard, the signs are explained as 10 signs: of the five objects, forms and so forth, of the three poisons, and of male and female. As for the manner in which they vanish, first a multiplicity of signs of forms and so forth appear, and as soon as they appear, they subside by themselves and are purified. Finally, when you settle in meditative equipoise, the signs of forms, sounds, and so forth do not appear, only the mind—knowing and clarity—and vibrant happiness do.

6 How all discursive thoughts also subside by themselves

Then, this is how discursive thoughts disappear: Since you have placed your mind as before without being mindful of them and without attending to them, discursive thoughts that have arisen, like bubbles emerging from water, cannot proliferate greatly or conjoin [287] and subside by themselves. Then, through your sustaining the meditation as explained earlier, your knowledge of the experience and the appearance of bliss, without being stopped deliberately, unable to withstand the focus, subside again by themselves, like bark peeling off, and get purified by themselves as soon as they arise. Bliss and knowledge of the experience become more subtle.

7 Differences between that and the time after meditative equipoise

At that time, when you are in meditative equipoise, there are no appearances such as that of your own body, and there is a sense as if your mind had become indivisible from space. As you rise from meditation, it feels as if your body had suddenly appeared. Afterwards, even afflicted discursive thoughts of hatred and the like that arise are also different from before or originally: weak and unable to conjoin over long periods of time.

8 Experiences of great mental clarity and the like also occur

These periods are periods of what is called *complete pacification*. The experience of clarity is great and you feel you can count the minute particles of pillars and walls of a house. Due to the intense stability factor, sleep like before when you had not yet achieved meditative stabilization does not even come during the hours of sleep; it seems mixed with meditative stabilization and you have many pure dream appearances and the like.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3A-2B Clarification of doubts

This has four points:

1 A doubt

When the kind of meditative stabilization explained above is achieved, which of the five paths is the context to place it in?

2 Its clarification

If it is the meditative stabilization explained above that is cultivated after the view of selflessness has been unmistakably ascertained and the mind has been placed within that view,<sup>243</sup> it can be placed in the context of the path of liberation of ordinary beings. However, if it is a meditation sustained otherwise, *Śrāvaka Levels* says that even mundane paths of the view with the coarse and subtle aspects that accomplish the actual level of the first concentration, are accomplished in dependence on this meditative stabilization. Therefore non-Buddhist sages [288] who free themselves from attachment by means of mundane paths up to that of Nothingness and those below, also need to progress to higher paths in dependence on it. So it is a meditative stabilization common to both non-Buddhists and Buddhists.

<sup>243</sup> A given meditation does not need to have this view as its main object. Still, it remains linked with it in so far as it derives its particular taste from the view. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)



- 3 If it is also conjoined with any of the three principal aspects of the path, it becomes a path of liberation and so on

Otherwise, if it is conjoined with detachment from cyclic existence due to the view that correctly realizes selflessness and a realization of the faults of existence, and if it is conjoined with the thought to definitely emerge that strives for liberation, it becomes a path of liberation. If it is conjoined with the mind of enlightenment, it even becomes a Mahāyāna path. Likewise, for example, if the generosity of giving a pinch of food to an animal and the guarding of one kind of ethics is conjoined with those intentions, they become collections of the paths of liberation and omniscience, respectively.

However, here, what is being analyzed is not whether or not it becomes a path of liberation and omniscience by way of conjunction with other paths. Rather, what is being analyzed is what the path becomes through the own entity of this meditative stabilization.

- 4 Hence the need to differentiate with regard to bliss, clarity, and non-conceptuality whether or not a given meditation is an emptiness meditation

That is why, in meditations without mindfulness and mental activity, the blissful, clear non-conceptuality termed *unfabricated by the mind* and *without grasping* is of two types: that which is and that which is not an emptiness meditation with the mind in equipoise on the meaning of suchness. Therefore it is extremely important to differentiate them well, for there is much ground for mistaking that which is not a realization of suchness for its realization. If you do not differentiate them as explained earlier, you will even take meditative stabilization, which is common to this Dharma and that of others, to be the main point of completion stage Highest Yoga Tantra. So you should investigate this in detail.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3B General indication of how to traverse the path in dependence on calm abiding

This has six points:

- 1 How it is of great importance to cultivate special insight in dependence on it

Should someone who has thus [289] achieved attention, the non-conceptual meditative stabilization explained above, sustain just that non-conceptuality characterized by clarity, non-conceptuality, and so forth?

Such meditative stabilization having been generated in the mental continuum is for the sake of generating special insight that destroys the mental afflictions. Therefore, if special insight does not arise in dependence on it, however much you familiarize yourself with meditative stabilization, you will not even be able to abandon the mental afflictions of the desire realm, not to mention the mental afflictions as a whole. For that reason it is necessary to cultivate special insight.

- 2 How there are two special insights to be cultivated

In fact there are two, the special insight that progresses along mundane paths abandoning manifest afflictions, and the special insight that progresses along supramundane paths abandoning the seeds of afflictions from the root. The former is a meditation with the coarse and peaceful aspects of viewing lower levels as coarser and higher ones as more peaceful; the latter is a meditation of the view with the sixteen aspects, impermanence and so forth, regarding the four truths. Both are set forth in *Śrāvaka Levels*, the principal one being the view that realizes the selflessness of persons.<sup>244</sup>

- 3 How calm abiding constitutes the basis for the progress of all non-Buddhist and Buddhist yogis on the path

That being so, anyone, non-Buddhists who abandon manifest afflictions by cultivating the path with coarse and peaceful aspects, and Buddhists who abandon afflictions from the root by meditating on the meaning of selflessness, require the calm abiding explained above as the basis for abandoning afflictions of both non-Buddhist and Buddhist yogis. Not only that, but any Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna

<sup>244</sup> Selflessness forms part of the 16 aspects of the four noble truths. It is the most important one in this context.

yogi must accomplish that meditative stabilization, and as for Mahāyānists, again, all Mantrayāna and Pāramitāyāna yogis must accomplish that calm abiding. Therefore this calm abiding is crucial as the basis of progress on the paths of all yogis.

4 How it is unacceptable for us Buddhists not to have the special insight that realizes selflessness

For Buddhists [290] it is not unacceptable to lack the former of those two special insights, but the latter special insight that realizes selflessness is an element<sup>245</sup> whose lack is unacceptable. In fact, if you attain the calm abiding explained above, which is included in the preparatory stage of the first concentration, you can attain the liberation that is freedom from all bonds of cyclic existence by cultivating special insight in dependence on it, even without achieving the calm abiding of higher concentrations or formlessness. On the other hand, if you do not realize the nature of selflessness and fail to meditate on it, you will not free yourself from cyclic existence even if you abandon all manifest afflictions up to complete Nothingness and thus attain the Peak of Existence by means of the calm abiding explained above and the mundane special insight dependent on it.

5 A source for that

From *Praise of the One Worthy of Praise*:

Beings who fail to turn to your teachings,  
Who are blinded by delusion,  
Having gone to the Peak of Existence  
Attain an existence and suffer again.

Those who follow your teachings, without  
Attaining the basis of concentration  
Still avert existences,  
While being looked over by Māra.

6 Yogis of Highest Yoga Tantra also need to traverse the path based on calm abiding

For that reason, yogis of Highest Yoga Tantra also need to develop one kind of calm abiding even though they do not generate the special insight that observes the varieties of peaceful and coarse aspects and the calm abiding accomplished by means of it. In fact the point where it first arises is during the generation stage.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6A3C Indication of how to traverse mundane paths in particular

This has four points:

1 How features of two kinds of beginners are explained in *Śrāvaka Levels*

Here *Śrāvaka Levels* explains that from the ninth mind you are a beginner in attention as long as you have not achieved attention, whereas one who has achieved attention and, out of a desire to purify mental afflictions, cultivates the attention that individually knows the characteristics<sup>246</sup> is a beginner in purifying afflictions.

2 The need to differentiate those two properly [291]

If this point explained in *Śrāvaka Levels* is not ascertained properly, the false impression will arise that the lowest of the paths of concentration and formlessness is the preparatory stage of the first concentration, and that the first mind that arises included in the preparatory stage is the individual recognition of characteristics because the individual recognition of characteristics is the first of six attentions<sup>247</sup> that are discussed in that regard.

<sup>245</sup> Tib. *yan lag*

<sup>246</sup> One out of six attentions taught in the context of the preparatory stage to the first concentration.

<sup>247</sup> Those six attentions are not equivalent to the four attentions described above. Rather, they are another set of attentions associated with special contemplations that Jé Tsongkhapa does not elaborate on here.

3 Establishing the validity of this distinction

It is inadmissible to hold this because there is no way for the preparatory stage of the first concentration to arise like that without calm abiding having been achieved, and if that preparatory stage has not been achieved, calm abiding is not achieved.<sup>248</sup> Also, since the individual recognition of characteristics is an analytical meditation, calm abiding that has not been achieved before cannot be newly accomplished by means of that meditation.

- 4 The need for beginners to achieve calm abiding from the attention included in the preparatory stage of the first concentration before achieving the attention that individually recognizes characteristics included in the preparatory stage of the first concentration

Therefore the first of the six attentions of the first preparatory stage is the beginning of cultivating the special insight included in the preparatory stage. However, it is not immediately at the beginning of the first preparatory stage, for the calm abiding included in the preparatory stage must precede it. All the meditative stabilizations prior to the achievement of the meditative stabilization included in the first preparatory stage are single-pointed minds of the desire realm. That is why, according to the great texts, there seem to be very few who achieve even calm abiding.

For fear of wordiness I have not written here about how to free oneself from attachment to the desire realm by means of the six attentions of the preparatory stage.

**Explanation of how to train in special insight, the entity of wisdom**

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B How to train in special insight

This has four points:

- 1 Relying on the prerequisites of special insight
- 2 Divisions of special insight
- 3 How to cultivate special insight
- 4 The measure of having achieved special insight through meditation

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1 Relying on the prerequisites of special insight

This has two points:

- A General presentation of how to rely on the prerequisites of special insight [292]
- B In particular how the view is settled

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A General presentation of how to rely on the prerequisites of special insight

*Stages of Meditation II* sets forth three prerequisites of special insight:

1. relying on holy beings,
2. seeking to hear the Dharma from holy beings, and
3. reflecting on it properly.

With regard to this, there are three points:

- 1 The need to hear and reflect on the scriptures
- 2 The need to follow one of the great trail-blazers as appropriate
- 3 On the history of Madhyamaka

<sup>248</sup> In other words calm abiding and the preparatory stage to the first concentration are attained simultaneously and may be thought of as equivalent. This preparatory stage is not the first concentration proper and therefore not its lowest path. Between the realization of calm abiding and the attainment of the actual first concentration there is a phase of investigating meditation—the so-called six attentions. It follows that the first of those is not the first mental state of the preparatory stage, since the latter is preceded by actual calm abiding which is the first mental state of the preparatory stage. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-1 The need to hear and reflect on the scriptures

It is an indispensable causal prerequisite of special insight to develop the view realizing suchness by means of the wisdoms of hearing and reflecting, having heard the stainless texts in dependence on experts who unmistakably know the essential points of the scriptures. This is because if you lack the view that has resolved the meaning of the mode of being, it will be impossible for the realization of special insight that realizes things as they are to arise.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-2 The need to follow one of the great trail-blazers as appropriate

Again, such a view must be sought by one who is relying not on the interpretable meaning but on the definitive meaning. Therefore you need to understand the difference between interpretable and definitive meaning and understand the meaning of the scriptures of definitive meaning. Again, with this, if you do not rely on a treatise by one of the great, valid, trailblazing founders which elucidates the Buddha's intentions, you will be like a blind person without a guide going off into a dreadful direction. Therefore you should rely on a non-mistaken commentary.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3 On the history of Madhyamaka

This has two points:

- A The need to seek the view relying on Nāgārjuna's system
- B How the ways of explaining Nāgārjuna's intention emerged

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3A The need to seek the view relying on Nāgārjuna's system

Who should you rely on? On Ārya Nāgārjuna, widely renowned throughout the three levels, whom the Bhagavan himself prophesied very clearly in numerous sūtras and tantras as elucidating the essence of his teachings, the profound meaning free from all extremes of existence and non-existence. You should seek the view realizing emptiness relying on his texts.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3B How the ways of explaining Nāgārjuna's intention emerged

This has six points:

- 1 Identification of the original Mādhyamikas
- 2 Analysis of the names applied by earlier generations
- 3 The validity of explanations in accordance with that of Yeshe Dé on the authors of Madhyamaka treatises and the stages by which the Madhyamaka systems of Sautrāntika and Yogācāra emerged
- 4 Those designations are not suited to Master Candrakīrti
- 5 The validity of the designations Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika associated with scholars of the later propagation
- 6 Which of the masters to follow

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3B1 Identification of the original Mādhyamikas [293]

Since the great Mādhyamikas<sup>249</sup> such as the masters Buddhapaṇita, Bhāvaviveka, Candrakīrti, and Śāntarakṣita consider Āryadeva to be as valid as his master, both the father and his spiritual son are sources for the other Mādhyamikas. Therefore earlier generations called those two Mādhyamikas of the original texts and the others partisan Mādhyamikas.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3B2 Analysis of the names applied by earlier generations

This has three points:

- A Names applied from the point of view of how conventionalities are established

Some spiritual teachers of earlier generations say that there are two kinds of Mādhyamikas named from the point of view of how they posit conventionalities: Sautrāntika-Mādhyamikas who assert that external objects conventionally exist, and Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas who assert that, conventionally, external objects do not exist.

<sup>249</sup> Tib. *dbu ma*, “centre” or “middle” and, by extension, the *Middle Way* or *Madhyamaka* as a philosophical system. Its exponents are referred to as Mādhyamikas.

B Names applied from the point of view of how the ultimate is asserted

From the point of view of how the ultimate is asserted, also, two names have been applied: those who assert the collection of an object such as a sprout and its appearance, which lacks true existence, to be an ultimate truth, are *proponents of illusions established by a reasoning consciousness*, and those who assert the affirmative eliminative phenomenon which eliminates the elaborations with respect to appearances<sup>250</sup> to be an ultimate truth, are *proponents of thorough non-abiding*. The first of these were asserted to be masters such as Śāntarakṣita and Kamalaśīla. Some Indians also asserted the designations *illusion-like* and *thoroughly non-abiding*.

C How those names and their meaning to do with the way of asserting the ultimate are obscured

The great translator Loden Shérab says “Positing them as two groups from the point of view of how they assert the ultimate is an obscured presentation generating amazement.”

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3B3 The validity of explanations in accordance with that of Yeshé Dé on the authors of Madhyamaka treatises and the history of the founders of Sautrāntika-Madhyamaka and Yogācāra-Madhyamaka

With regard to this, Master Yeshé Dé explains: “In the Madhyamaka treatises by the noble father, Nāgārjuna, and his spiritual son, Āryadeva, it is not made clear whether external objects exist or not. After them Master Bhāvaviveka refuted the system of mere knowledge<sup>251</sup> and established a system in which external objects conventionally exist. Then Master Śāntarakṣita made a different Madhyamaka system based on Yogācāra treatises, teaching that external objects do not conventionally exist and that ultimately the mind is without inherent existence. [294] Thereby two kinds of Mādhyamikas emerged. The former were called Sautrāntika-Mādhyamikas, the latter Yogācāra-Mādhyamikas.” The great treatises reveal the history of clarification in accordance with that.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3B4 Those designations are not suited to Master Candrakīrti

However, although Master Candrakīrti asserts that external objects conventionally exist, it is unsuitable to call him a Sautrāntika because he does not conform to other proponents of the tenet system. To assert that he accords with the Vaibhāṣika is also inadmissible.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3B5 The validity of the designations Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika associated with scholars of the later propagation

The scholars of the later propagation of teachings in the land of snowy mountains created two designations for Mādhyamikas, Svātantrika and Prāsaṅgika. That accords with Candrakīrti’s *Clear Words (Prasannapadā)*.

Therefore the Mādhyamikas are ascertained to be of two types, those who conventionally assert external objects and those who do not. When the names are applied from the point of view of how the view ascertaining emptiness is generated within the mental continuum, they are also ascertained to be of two types, Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1A-3B6 Which of the masters to follow

This has three points:

A Indication that the earlier Kadampas’ quest for the view following Candrakīrti was in the Elder’s intention

Yet following which of those masters do you seek the intentions of the noble father and his spiritual son? Following the Great Elder who made Master Candrakīrti’s system the main Madhyamaka system, the earlier great masters of these instructions also held to this system as the main one.

<sup>250</sup> These two philosophical positions will be taken up below when the divisions of ultimate truths are presented.

<sup>251</sup> Tib. *rnam rig*, synonym for Tib. *sems tsam* (Cittamātra): the philosophical school of Mind Only so called because its proponents maintain that all phenomena are of the same nature as the mind cognizing them.

- B How Jé Tsongkhapa himself asserts the two systems, Buddhapalita's and Candrakīrti's, as the main ones and then Bhāvaviveka's as important

Master Candrakīrti saw that among the commentators on *Fundamental Treatise on the Middle Way* (*Mūlamadhyamakakārikā*) Buddhapalita had elucidated Ārya Nāgārjuna's intentions completely. He based himself on that system, took a lot of good explanations also from Master Bhāvaviveka, refuted those that seemed slightly incorrect, and elucidated the intentions of Ārya Nāgārjuna.

- C How these two masters are important with respect to explaining the profound meaning [295]

Since the commentaries by these two masters are seen to be very outstanding with regard to explaining the texts of the noble father and son, the intentions of the noble father and son will be settled here following in the footsteps of the masters Buddhapalita and Candrakīrti.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B In particular how the view is settled

This has three points:

- 1 Identification of afflicted ignorance
- 2 Demonstration that it is the root of revolving in cyclic existence
- 3 One wishing to abandon the apprehension of a self should seek the view of selflessness

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1 Identification of afflicted ignorance

This has five points:

- A Although attachment and the like are in a class discordant with knowledge, they are not chief
- B Although in general ignorance is posited as the mere opposite of knowledge, here it is the opposite of the knowledge realizing the lack of true existence
- C Explaining the two subtle apprehensions of a self as mental afflictions
- D How ignorance superimposes what inherent existence
- E Detailed explanation of the apprehension of a self

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1A Although attachment and the like are in a class discordant with knowledge, they are not chief

The antidotes to the other mental afflictions such as attachment taught by the Victor are partial antidotes, whereas the antidote to ignorance he taught becomes an antidote to all of them. Therefore ignorance is the basis of all errors and faults. In *Clear Words* it says:

In the nine divisions of the buddhas' teachings based on the two truths,  
Such as the sets of sūtras proclaimed for the extensive conduct of worldly beings,  
The ones that were taught for the sake of removing attachment will not cause hatred to be exhausted;  
And those that were taught for the sake of removing hatred will not cause attachment to be exhausted;

What was taught for the sake of exhausting pride will not overcome the other defilements.

Therefore they are not so pervasive, all those speeches are not of such great meaning.

Those that were taught for the sake of exhausting delusion<sup>252</sup> overcome all the mental afflictions.

All the mental afflictions are thoroughly based on ignorance; that's what the Victors taught."

That being so, you must meditate on suchness<sup>253</sup> as the antidote to ignorance. Moreover, unless you have identified ignorance, you will not know how to cultivate its antidote. Therefore it is extremely important to identify ignorance.

<sup>252</sup> In the system of Dharmakīrti and Candrakīrti, which the present text is largely based on, delusion (*gti mug*) and ignorance (*ma rig pa*) are synonymous. It is only in the system of Asaṅga and Vasubandhu that the two terms are defined differently with ignorance covering a wider range of meaning than delusion.

<sup>253</sup> The ultimate nature of phenomena without any elaborations; synonym for emptiness.



2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1B Although in general ignorance is posited as the mere opposite of knowledge, here it is the opposite of the knowledge realizing the absence of true existence

Ignorance [296] is the opposite of knowledge, but knowledge on the other hand should not be taken as any knowledge. Rather, it is the wisdom knowing the suchness of selflessness. Its opposite is not suitable to be the mere absence of that wisdom or just something else. Therefore it is its antagonist.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1C Explaining the two subtle apprehensions of a self as mental afflictions

It is the superimposition<sup>254</sup> of a self and, more specifically, the two superimpositions of a self of phenomena and of persons. So both the apprehension of a self of phenomena and the apprehension of a self of persons are ignorance.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1D How ignorance superimposes what inherent existence

The manner of superimposition is to apprehend that phenomena exist by way of their own entity, by way of their own character, or inherently. In this regard it says in the *Questions of Upāli Sūtra* (*Upālipariṣcchā*) that phenomena are posited by the power of conception:

The various flowers that gladden the mind,  
The golden, resplendent, attractive mansions,  
Both completely lack a creator;  
They're posited by the power of conception.  
The world is imputed by force of conception.

And in *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* (*Yuktiṣaṣṭikā*) it also says:

Since the perfect Buddha said  
The world has ignorance as its cause,  
Why would it be invalid to say  
That this world is due to conception?

The commentary on the meaning of this statement explains that the worlds are not established by way of their own entity, but are merely imputed by conception. In *Four Hundred Stanzas* it also says:

If, in the absence of conception,  
Desire and so forth do not exist,  
Who with intelligence would uphold  
Intrinsic realities and conception?

And in the commentary on this:

Things that exist only through the existence of conception and do not exist without conception are without doubt ascertained to be unestablished by way of their own entity, like a snake imputed to a rope.

This statement [297] explains that from the point of view of being imputed while not being established by way of their own entities, attachment and so forth resemble a snake imputed to a rope.<sup>255</sup> Yet the latter is not the same as attachment and so forth in terms of whether or not they conventionally exist.

<sup>254</sup> The Tibetan word *sgro* 'dogs' literally means "attach feathers." It is usually rendered as "imputation," "exaggeration," or "superimposition."

<sup>255</sup> This is a popular analogy: in the twilight someone mistakes a coiled rope for a snake and gets frightened, designating it as "snake" and imputing the characteristics of a snake to it. Tib. *btag pa*, "distort", "tie", "attach", "put on", "name" is therefore translated here and below as the near-synonyms "impute" and "designate" commonly used in this context. However, the main emphasis is not on the actual designation but rather on the characteristics the mind thereby imputes to the object apprehended.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1E Detailed explanation of the apprehension of a self

This has two points:

- 1 Explanation that the apprehension of a self is twofold
- 2 Distinctions between the apprehension of a self and the view of the transitory collection

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1E1 Explanation that the apprehension of a self is twofold

This has two points:

- A How the two apprehensions of a self are the same in their subjective aspect but still differentiated through their observed objects

For those reasons the manner of apprehending things as truly existent, the object of negation, is to apprehend them not as posited by the power of beginningless conception but as established over and above objects by way of their own entities. Its referent object<sup>256</sup> is called *self* or *inherent existence*. The non-existence of this with a person as the substratum is taught to be the selflessness of a person, and the non-existence of it with phenomena, such as an eye and a nose, as the substratum is taught to be the selflessness of phenomena. Therefore the apprehension of that inherent existence as present in persons and phenomena is implicitly understood as the apprehension of the two selves.

- B The reason for differentiating the two apprehensions of a self in that manner

In the *Commentary on the “Four Hundred Stanzas”* it says:

In this regard the so-called *self* is an entity of things that does not depend on anything else—inherent existence. Its non-existence is selflessness. Owing to the division of phenomena and persons, it is understood as twofold: a *selflessness of phenomena* and a *selflessness of persons*.

It is like that.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-1E2 Distinctions between the apprehension of a self and the view of the transitory collection

This has three points:

- A The apprehension of an I, the view of the transitory collection, has a person as its observed object

With respect to the observed object of the apprehension of a self of persons, the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* explains that some Saṃmitīyas<sup>257</sup> assert part of the five aggregates and some assert only the mind to be the basis or observed object of the view of a self. As for the mind, again, Cittamātrins<sup>258</sup> and certain Mādhyamikas who assert a mind-basis-of-all assert that the mind-basis-of-all is the observed object, and some Mādhyamikas such as Bhāvaviveka who do not assert it, as well as many Hearer schools, assert that it is the mental consciousness. However, with these systems, when it comes to the meaning invested in the designation *person*, the one cultivating the paths, the one revolving in cyclic existence, and so forth, [298] you need to know the two modes of positing a mere I and positing something like a mind-basis-of-all as the basis of that I’s characteristics.

With respect to the innate<sup>259</sup> view of the transitory collection<sup>260</sup> which is an apprehension of a self, the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* refutes that the aggregates are its observed object, and in the commentary it is said to have the dependently imputed self as its observed object. It is said that even the mere collection of aggregates is not the conventional self, so neither the collection of

<sup>256</sup> Tib. *zhen yul*

<sup>257</sup> Exponents of one philosophical system within Hinayāna Buddhism.

<sup>258</sup> Follower of the “Mind Only” school of Mahāyāna Buddhism.

<sup>259</sup> Tib. *lhan skyes*, “co-nascent” or “co-emergent,” refers to an association whereby every living being perceives itself as well as other persons and phenomena independently of conscious thought or philosophical tenets.

<sup>260</sup> Although the view of the transitory collection consists in regarding one’s aggregates as self or possessions of the self, they are not its referent object according to the Prāsaṅgika system. The statement that this view is directed at the aggregates should be understood as an explanation of the term *view of the transitory collection* rather than an identification of its referent object. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

aggregates at one time nor the collection which is the continuum of the aggregates from an earlier to a later moment are its observed object. Rather, the mere I which is the observed object of the mere thought “I” arising, or the mere person, should be taken as its observed object. Neither the individual aggregates nor their collection is posited as the basis of that I’s<sup>261</sup> characteristics. However, this point, an unsurpassed distinguishing feature of this system, has been explained in great detail elsewhere.

B The difference between observed objects of the two apprehensions of true existence

The mind thinking “I” that arises toward the observed object of the innate view of the transitory collection must arise naturally. Therefore, although the innate apprehension of the self of a person that apprehends the person associated with someone else’s continuum to be established by way of his own character is innate, it is not the innate view of the transitory collection of that person.

The observed object of the innate view of the transitory collection apprehending mine is the mine itself<sup>262</sup>, the observed object of the innate mind thinking “mine.” It should not be held that one’s own eyes and so forth are the observed object.

Its aspect is to observe that object of observation and apprehend the mine to be established by way of its own character.

The objects of the innate apprehension of a self of phenomena are the form aggregate and so forth, the eyes, ears, and so forth associated with one’s own or someone else’s continuum, as well as the environments and so forth which are not included in a continuum. Its aspect is as explained before. In the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* it says:

Delusion is the ignorance that superimposes a non-existent own entity of things. It has the nature of obstructing the view of their inherent existence, it conceals<sup>263</sup> them.

And:

Thus, [299] through the power of afflicted ignorance included in the links of cyclic existence...

The statement asserts that the apprehension of objects as truly existent is ignorance and that it is an afflicted ignorance. Therefore there is accordance here with the former of two ways of positing the apprehension of a self of phenomena as a mental affliction and as an obscuration to knowledge.

C Showing that this manner of identifying the apprehension of true existence is asserted by the noble father and son

This was also taught by the noble father and son. In *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness (Śūnyatāsaptati)* it says:

That which conceives things born from causes  
And conditions to be real  
Was said by the Teacher to be ignorance.  
From that the twelve links arise.

With good understanding that things are empty  
Through seeing reality, there is no ignorance.  
That is the cessation of ignorance,  
Whereby the twelve links cease to exist.

<sup>261</sup> In other texts, particularly those associated with debate, Tib. *mtshan gzhi* is also translated as “illustration” or “example.”

<sup>262</sup> The Tibetan expression *nga yi ba nyid* literally means “mine-ness.”

<sup>263</sup> The Tibetan word used, *kun rdzob*, is also part of the term for *conventional truth*, Tib. *kun rdzob (kyi) bden pa*. That term therefore explicitly signifies conventional truths as something concealing or obscuring something else.

To “conceive things... to be real” is to apprehend them as established in reality or truly. This is similar in meaning to a statement from *Precious Garland*:

As long as the aggregates are apprehended,  
An I will be apprehended in them.

which says that as long as the apprehension of aggregates has not stopped, you will not stop the view of the transitory collection.

In *Four Hundred Stanzas* it also says:

Like the body sense in the body  
Delusion abides in all of them.  
Therefore, by conquering delusion,  
All the mental afflictions are conquered.

Delusion will no more arise  
If interdependent arising<sup>264</sup> is seen.  
Therefore, with all my effort, here,  
I will only talk about that.

As regards the delusion set forth in this manner, the context is an identification of the delusion which is one of the three poisons. It is therefore afflicted ignorance. In order to stop this ignorance, it is said to be necessary to realize the profound meaning of interdependence, the meaning of emptiness appearing as the meaning of dependent arising. In accordance with the explanation in the commentary on this text, afflicted delusion should therefore be taken to be a superimposition<sup>265</sup> of true existence on things. This manner of understanding [300] was set forth clearly by the venerable Candrakīrti following the example of Buddhapālita’s commentary on Ārya Nāgārjuna’s intention.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-2      Demonstration that afflicted ignorance is the root of  
revolving in cyclic existence

This has six points:

A Whereas the innate apprehension of a self must be posited as the root of cyclic existence, artificial ones are not suitable to be posited so

That being so, the ignorance apprehending the two selves explained above is also not the apprehension of artificial selves of persons and phenomena that are imputed by the uncommon assertions of non-Buddhist and Buddhist tenet systems, (1) a permanent, unitary, and independent person, (2) external objects of apprehension—particles that do not have parts such as an eastern side and gross composites of them, (3) internal apprehending consciousnesses—moments of awareness without time parts such as earlier and later and a continuum of awareness joining such partless moments together, and (4) self-consciousness that is non-dualistic in terms of being empty of such objects and subjects. Rather, it is the two innate apprehensions of a self that all those whose minds are or are not affected by tenets have in common and that have operated beginninglessly without depending on the minds’ being affected by tenets. Just that is held to be the root of cyclic existence here. In the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it says:

In those who spend numerous eons unconscious as beasts  
And do not perceive this unborn permanent something,  
The apprehension of self is still seen to operate.

Through this reasoning it can be understood that what binds all sentient beings in cyclic existence is innate ignorance, and since artificial ignorance is only present in proponents of tenets, it is inadmissible as the root of cyclic existence.

<sup>264</sup> Tib. *rten (cing) ‘brel (ba)*, usually translated here as “dependent relation” or “interdependence.”

<sup>265</sup> This is because *true* or *truly existent* refers to something existing by way of its own characteristics, i.e. independent of other factors.

- B Since the innate mode of apprehension does not involve artificial manners of apprehension, it does not help to stop those manners of apprehension

It is extremely important to gain discriminating certainty about this. If you do not understand that, then, at the time of settling emptiness by means of the view, [301] you will not know how to hold as the main thing the ascertainment of the absence of real existence as apprehended by innate ignorance and how to negate the objects of artificial apprehensions as subordinate to that. If you negate the two selves, neglecting the refutation of the mode of apprehension of innate ignorance, you will ascertain just the selflessness that negates imputations by only the proponents of tenets mentioned earlier. Therefore, at the time of meditation, you will also necessarily meditate on just that because the ascertainment through the view is for the sake of meditation.

- C The absurdity of opposing innate mental afflictions by merely refuting the referent objects of artificial concepts

Therefore, when you meditate on that selflessness and it becomes manifest, even if you take that familiarization to its completion, there will be nothing more to it than just that. Thus it is very absurd to assert that through seeing the non-existence of the two selves merely as imputed by artificial apprehensions, the innate mental afflictions are stopped. In the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it says:

When you realize selflessness, you abandon  
The permanent self, but that’s not asserted as basis  
Of apprehending a self. Hence it’s quite odd  
To say that knowing such selflessness casts out the self-view<sup>266</sup>.

And in the commentary it also says:

For clarification, this point, the mutual unrelatedness, is explained by way of analogy:  
“While seeing a snake in a hole in a wall of one’s house,  
To make oneself abandon the fear of the snake  
By clearing up doubts saying ‘There is no elephant here!’  
Alas would only be laughable to others.”

Although this is said with regard to the selflessness of persons, it is the same also with regard to the selflessness of phenomena:

When you realize selflessness, you abandon,  
The artificial self, but that’s not asserted  
As basis of ignorance. Hence it is quite odd  
To say that knowing such selflessness casts out the self-view.

- D Although both the view of the transitory collection and ignorance are the root of cyclic existence, there are not two roots of cyclic existence

Objection: In *Precious Garland* it says:

As long as one apprehends the aggregates,  
So long will one apprehend a self. [302]  
If there is this apprehension,<sup>267</sup> there’s karma,  
And from karma there is rebirth.

The apprehension of a self<sup>268</sup> of phenomena that apprehends the aggregates as truly existent is explained as the root of cyclic existence. In the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it says:

Seeing with his mind that all the faults of afflictions  
Arise from the view of the transitory collection.

<sup>266</sup> Tib. *bdag (tu) lta (ba)*, translated above as “view of a self.”

<sup>267</sup> Literally “If the apprehension of self exists.”

<sup>268</sup> Tib. *bdag*, “self,” and *nga*, “I,” are used synonymously in the present text.

The view of the transitory collection is explained as the root of cyclic existence. The two explanations are contradictory because two discordant roots of cyclic existence are inadmissible.

Answer: There is no fault. This system distinguishes the two apprehensions of a self by means of their observed objects, but there is no difference in the aspect of their mode of apprehension because both have the aspect of apprehending the object to be established by way of its own character. The contradiction of two roots of cyclic existence is understood to consist in positing two modes of apprehension that do not accord in their way of engaging in their objects as the roots of cyclic existence. Therefore, when the apprehension of a self of phenomena is taught as the cause of the view of the transitory collection, the two internal divisions of ignorance are being pointed out as cause and effect. When the two are taught as the root of the mental afflictions, they are pointed out as the root of all the mental afflictions whose mode of apprehension is discordant with them. Since the two of them also have that aspect,<sup>269</sup> there is no contradiction, just as there is no contradiction in both earlier and later moments of the same kind of ignorance being the root of cyclic existence.

Although it does not appear that Venerable Candrakīrti specifically and clearly explains the view of the transitory collection as ignorance, he generally says that the apprehension of things as truly existent is afflicted ignorance, without distinguishing between persons and phenomena. He also asserts that the apprehension of a self of persons is the apprehension of persons as established by way of their own character. Moreover, he frequently explains the innate view of the transitory collection as the root of cyclic existence. If he asserted it to be different in meaning from the ignorance which is the apprehension of true existence, he would be positing two roots of cyclic existence with discordant modes of apprehension, which would be contradictory. Therefore both of them should be understood as ignorance.

E Demonstration that the noble father and son assert the apprehension of true existence to be the root of cyclic existence [303]

All the other innate and artificial mental afflictions, as they operate, apprehend individual features of that very object superimposed by the innate ignorance explained earlier. Therefore, just as the other four sense powers, eyes and so forth, abide in dependence on the body sense power rather than abiding in a separate sphere<sup>270</sup> independently, all the other mental afflictions also operate in dependence on innate ignorance, which is why delusion is said to be chief.

Delusion abides in all of them like the  
Body sense power throughout the body.

In the *Commentary on the “Four Hundred Stanzas”* it says:

Desire and so forth also operate by superimposing features such as attractiveness and repulsiveness on the mere inherent existence of things imputed by delusion. Therefore they operate in a manner that is not different from delusion and even depend on it, for delusion is chief.

After that, once delusion has apprehended the objects as established by way of their own character, if the object is agreeable with one’s own mind, attachment arises as it is observed, and if it appears to be disagreeable with one’s own mind, anger arises toward it. If the object does not appear either agreeable or disagreeable with one’s mind and remains as an ordinary thing in between, neither of the other two arises when the object is observed but further delusion of the same kind arises. In *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* it says:

Why would the great venom, the afflictions, not arise  
In those with a mind, that is, with their basis.

<sup>269</sup> Tib. *tshul*, usually translated here as “manner” or “way.”

<sup>270</sup> Tib. *de las yul*



Even while in ordinary states  
It's seized by the snake of the mental afflictions.

In the commentary these lines are explained as above.

That the view of the transitory collection arises from apprehending the aggregates as truly existent appears to be the intended meaning of *Precious Garland* as well.

The way the remaining mental afflictions arise should be inferred and understood from the explanations in the context of intermediate beings.

F How to understand the stages of how the mental afflictions arise from the *Commentary on the "Compendium of Valid Cognition"* as well [304]

Also, in the *Commentary on the "Compendium of Valid Cognition"* it says:

He who sees a self will always  
Adhere to what he refers to as "I".  
Through that adherence there's craving for happiness,  
Through that craving faults are obscured.  
  
Good qualities are seen whereby there's strong craving.  
What's "mine" is grasped, that which achieves them.  
As long as there is attachment to self  
One will thus revolve in cyclic existence.

You should come to understand it that way.

Although this system and the way the two apprehensions of a self are posited according to the above explanation are not the same, you should come to understand the stages of how the mental afflictions arise in dependence on it. Initially, once the observed object of the thought "I" is apprehended as established by way of its own character, attachment to the self arises. That generates craving for the self's happiness. However, since there is no independent happiness of the self that does not depend on mine,<sup>271</sup> there is craving for mine. That obscures its faults and causes one to see positive qualities in it. Consequently, mine is grasped as something achieving the self's happiness. Due to the mental afflictions arisen in this manner, actions are committed, and through those actions, again, one is reborn in cyclic existence. In *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness* it says:

Actions have mental afflictions as cause;  
The karmic patterns derive from afflictions;<sup>272</sup>  
The body has actions as its cause;  
Those three are empty of entityness.

You should train in this manner to gain certainty regarding the stages of revolving in cyclic existence.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3      One wishing to abandon that apprehension should seek the view of selflessness

This has two points:

- A The reason why you need to seek the view realizing selflessness if you wish to abandon that ignorance
- B How to generate the view realizing selflessness

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A      The reason why you need to seek the view realizing selflessness if you wish to abandon that ignorance

This has four points:

<sup>271</sup> Tib. *bdag gi rnams* is in the plural unlike the Tib. *nga'i* (what's "mine") in the quotation.

<sup>272</sup> Tib. *nyon mongs las bdag nyid*

- 1 It is stupid not to make an effort for the pure view to arise in one's mental continuum, despite the wish to abandon ignorance
- 2 Showing that the apprehension of a self must be abandoned
- 3 Indication that the analysis of scriptures and reasonings is important for abandoning the apprehension of a self
- 4 In order to abandon the apprehension of a self it is necessary to refute its referent object; the reason for that

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A1 It is stupid not to make an effort for the pure view to arise in one's continuum, despite the wish to abandon ignorance

It is necessary to want the extinction in which the ignorance explained above, the two apprehensions of a self, has been abandoned; it is also asserted as necessary [305] and even seems to be wanted. That being so, someone who wants to but does not put effort into understanding how apprehending a self becomes the root of cyclic existence has very dull faculties. So does someone who, despite partial insight into this, does not put effort into generating the pure view of selflessness in his continuum, having thoroughly refuted the object apprehended by the apprehension of a self with scriptures of definitive meaning as well as reasonings. That is because they have lost the vital essence of the path leading to liberation and omniscience, yet they remain indifferent about it.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A2 Showing that the apprehension of a self must be abandoned

This has two points:

- A How it is taught in the treatises
- B How it is taught in the sūtras

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A2A How it is taught in the treatises

This has five points:

- 1 How it is taught by the glorious Dharmakīrti

This is why the glorious Dharmakīrti said:

Without these objects being negated,  
 They cannot possibly be abandoned.  
 Abandoning hatred, desire, and so forth,<sup>273</sup>  
 Connected with faults and positive qualities,<sup>274</sup>  
 Is done by not seeing these in objects,  
 Not through some external approach.

When removing an external object of abandonment such as a thorn that has pierced your skin, you can completely remove it by means of something like a needle, independently of the object caught<sup>275</sup> in this manner being negated. You do not do it like this when getting rid of an internal mental object of abandonment. Rather, you must abandon it seeing that the object does not have the meaning apprehended<sup>276</sup> by, for instance, the apprehension of a self.

- 2 How it is taught by the glorious Candrakīrti

The glorious Candrakīrti also taught that once all the afflictions, such as attachment, as well as birth, aging, and so forth are seen to arise from the apprehension of a self, the desire to negate and abandon it will arise. At that point the yogi negates with reasonings the object superimposed by the apprehension of a self, the self of a person.

In the *Commentary on the "Middle Way"* it clearly says:

Once his mind has seen: all afflictions and faults  
 Arise from the view of the transitory collection,

<sup>273</sup> literally "desire, hatred, and so forth."

<sup>274</sup> literally "positive qualities and faults."

<sup>275</sup> Tib. *bzung ba'i yul*

<sup>276</sup> Tib. *bzung ba'i don*

A yogi knows the self to be its object  
And performs the negation of the self.

In fact that is what someone who meditates on suchness must do. Therefore it says “a yogi.”

3 This is also the meaning intended by the protector Nāgārjuna [306]

This approach is also the most superior intention of the protector Nāgārjuna. In *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* he says:

That is the cause of all the views,  
Without it afflictions do not arise.  
Therefore, if you thoroughly know this,  
Views and afflictions are thoroughly cleansed.

If you wonder how this is known:  
By seeing dependent origination<sup>277</sup>,  
That things born dependently are unborn.  
That was taught by supreme omniscience.

He is pointing out that the apprehension of true existence called *assertion as real things*, which is the cause of all afflicted views and all other mental afflictions, is abandoned through realizing the suchness of things, their not having inherently arisen, by means of the reason of dependent arising. The insight that there is no inherent existence does not arise without a negation of the object of the apprehension that things are inherently established.

4 How it is taught by Āryadeva

A statement by Āryadeva that accords with this was already quoted earlier. In *Four Hundred Stanzas* he also says:

If selflessness is seen in objects,  
The seed of existence will be ceased.

That is, through seeing that the object of observation apprehended by the apprehension of a self<sup>278</sup> lacks a self, the root of existence, ignorance, is cut.

5 How Śāntideva also taught in accordance with that

Venerable Śāntideva also taught: Thus the emptiness of persons is thoroughly established. Therefore, since their root has been cut, all the mental afflictions do not arise at all.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A2B How it is taught in the sūtras

It is as the *Noble Sūtra of the Tathagata's Secrets* (Ārya-Tathāgataguhyaka-sūtra) says:

Śāntimati, it is like this. For example, when a tree is cut at the root, all the branches, leaves, and twigs dry up. Likewise, Śāntimati, when the view of the transitory collection is fully pacified, all the mental afflictions and secondary mental afflictions are fully pacified. [307]

It is saying that through cultivating the realization of the person as an emptiness empty of inherent establishment, the view of the transitory collection is stopped, and once it has stopped, all the other mental afflictions are also stopped. On the other hand, without the object of the apprehension of a self of persons having been negated, the realization of selflessness is impossible.

<sup>277</sup> Tib. *brten nas 'byung ba*, usually translated here as “dependent arising.”

<sup>278</sup> It is important not to confuse the object of observation of the conception of self with the object apprehended. Likewise, the *aspect* of the mode of apprehension (*'dzin stangs kyi rnam pa*) should not be confused with the *object* of the mode of apprehension (*'dzin stangs kyi yul*) which is non-existent.

The sūtra passage points out that the view of the transitory collection is the root of all the other mental afflictions. If it were different in meaning from ignorance, there would be two discordant roots of cyclic existence. Therefore it should also be understood as ignorance.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A3 Indication that the analysis of scriptures and reasonings is important for abandoning the apprehension of a self

In brief, when the many supreme scholars who commented on the meaning of the scriptures on the profound settled the meaning of suchness, they carried out thorough analysis by means of numerous scriptures and reasonings. They did that having perceived that it is impossible to realize selflessness and emptiness without seeing that the self as apprehended by the mistaken apprehension does not exist and without seeing that it is empty of that self. It is essential to gain certainty with regard to this.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A4 In order to abandon the apprehension of a self it is necessary to negate its referent object the reason for that

This has two points:

- A In order to abandon the apprehension of a self it is necessary to negate its referent object
- B The reason for that

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A4A In order to abandon the apprehension of a self it is necessary to negate its referent object

If you do not meditate like this on the meaning of having negated the mistaken object which is the root of being bound in cyclic existence, even though you meditate on something else that you consider profound, it will not harm the apprehension of a self at all. This is because, unless the mind enters the suchness of selflessness and emptiness, the apprehension of a self cannot possibly be stopped; and because without the object of the apprehension of a self having been negated, you may simply withdraw your mind going off to its object, but that cannot be posited as entering selflessness.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3A4B The reason for that

This has three points:

- 1 The existence in general of three ways of apprehending I

The reason for this is that when the mind gets involved in an object, there are three possible apprehensions: 1) an apprehension of that observed object as truly existent, 2) an apprehension of it as not truly existent, and 3) an apprehension that does not qualify it as either of those two. Therefore, although you do not apprehend something as not truly existent, you do not necessarily apprehend it as truly existent, and likewise, although you are not involved in the two selves, [308] you are not necessarily involved in the two selflessnesses, for there are infinite minds remaining in the third category.

- 2 The need to settle that the very basis with respect to which the apprehension of true existence is mistaken does not exist in the way it is apprehended

The two apprehensions of a self mainly operate while something concrete,<sup>279</sup> a person or a phenomenon, is being observed. Therefore you need to settle that the very bases with respect to which they are mistaken do not exist in the way they are apprehended. Otherwise it will be like searching for a thief in a meadow after he has gone to the forest. Consequently, since you bring the mistake to an end by thus meditating on the meaning that has been settled, such an emptiness is the supreme meaning of suchness. With the meaning of suchness settled as something apart that neglects this, only something imputed by one's wishes will come to an end. Therefore remember that this would deviate from the meaning of the scriptures.

<sup>279</sup> Tib. *ngos po*, usually translated here as "thing."

- 3 The need to greatly cherish the realization of the view of suchness, having seen that if you stop the apprehension of true existence, you will turn away from cyclic existence

That being so, the ignorance that apprehends the elaborations of persons, such as men and women, and of phenomena, such as forms and feelings, to be truly existent is stopped by gaining the view that realizes their emptiness, selflessness, and meditating on it. Once it has stopped, you stop discursive thought, the improper mental attention that superimposes signs such as attractiveness and repulsiveness when the object of the apprehension of true existence is observed. Once they have stopped, the other mental afflictions such as attachment that have the view of the transitory collection as their root are stopped. Once they have stopped, actions motivated by them are stopped. Once they have stopped, rebirth in cyclic existence projected by karma without control is stopped whereby liberation is achieved. With this in mind you should generate strong certainty and then decisively seek the view of suchness. In the *Root Text on Wisdom* it says:

With karma and kleśas<sup>280</sup> spent there is freedom.  
Karma and kleśas arise from conceptions,  
Elaborations elaborate those.  
They are stopped by emptiness. [309]

You need to know those stages of entering into and turning away from cyclic existence and greatly cherish the realization of the meaning of suchness. However, it will not come through a vague involvement that fails to distinguish well the objects of observation.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B How to generate the view realizing selflessness

This has three points:

- 1 The stages of generating the two views of selflessness
- 2 The actual generation, in stages, of the two views of selflessness
- 3 Presentation of conventional and ultimate truths

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B1 The stages of generating the two views of selflessness

This has two points:

- A The stages themselves
- B The reason for that

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B1A The stages themselves

As for the stages in which the two apprehensions of a self arise, the apprehension of a self of phenomena generates the apprehension of a self of persons. Still, when you engage in the suchness of selflessness, you must first generate the view of the selflessness of persons and then, after that, generate the view realizing the selflessness of phenomena. In fact in *Precious Garland* it says:

Persons aren't earth nor water,  
Aren't fire, wind, nor space,  
Aren't consciousness. If they are none of these,  
What could persons be other than that?

Since beings are composites of the six elements,  
They are not real; exactly like that  
Each element is a composite too  
And therefore is not real either.

It is as stated: first the person and then the basis it is imputed to, the elements such as earth, are said to lack inherent existence. *Clear Words* and Buddhapalita also explain that when entering into suchness, one first enters by way of the selflessness of persons. Śāntideva also says it like that.

<sup>280</sup> Tib. *nyon mongs*, usually translated here as “mental afflictions,” is the equivalent of the Sanskrit term *kleśa*.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B1B The reason for that

This has two points:

- 1 Proof through reasoning

The reason why it must be done like this is that although there is no difference in subtlety with regard to the selflessness to be ascertained on the basis of persons and phenomena, due to essentials of the substratum it is easier to ascertain it on the basis of persons and more difficult to ascertain it on the basis of phenomena. Likewise it is more difficult, for example, to ascertain the selflessness of phenomena on the basis of eyes, ears, and so forth, and easier to ascertain it on the basis of reflections and the like, which is why these are taken as illustrations for settling selflessness on the basis of the former.

- 2 Proof through scripture [310]

This meaning is intended in the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* where it says:

Just as you know the notion of self  
Apply it to everything mentally.  
The entityness of all phenomena  
Is completely pure like space.

All of them are known through one and  
All of them are seen through one.

It says that once you know well the mode of subsistence of the I with regard to which the discrimination of a self, thinking “I”, operates, you should apply its reasoning to all internal phenomena such as eyes and ears and external phenomena like pots. By knowing them to be equivalent to it, you will be able to know and see the inherent existence of all other phenomena through knowing and seeing the natural disposition of one phenomenon.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2 The actual generation, in stages, of the two views of selflessness

This has two points:

- A Settling the selflessness of persons
- B Settling the selflessness of phenomena

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A Settling the selflessness of persons

This has two points:

- 1 Identification of persons
- 2 Settling persons as not inherently existent

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-1 Identification of persons

This has four points:

- A The actual identification of persons

*Persons* are persons of the six classes<sup>281</sup>, gods and so forth, and persons who are ordinary beings, āryas, and so forth. Furthermore, they are the accumulators of white and black actions, the experiencers of the effects of those, those revolving in cyclic existence, the cultivators of paths for the sake of liberation, the attainers of liberation, and so forth.

- B Commenting on the meaning of sūtras that teach the self to be merely imputed to the aggregates

A sūtra quoted in the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* says:

The so-called *self* is a fiendish mind and  
You have come to hold this view.

<sup>281</sup> The six types of beings in saṃsāra.



The compositional aggregates are empty.  
There is no sentient being here.

Just as based on collections of parts  
People speak of chariots  
Likewise, in dependence on aggregates,  
Conventionally, they say “sentient beings.” [311]

The first verse indicates the selflessness of persons, that ultimately persons do not exist. The first line says that the apprehension of a self of persons is a fiendish mind, the second one says that those who apprehend in this manner are under the power of bad views, and the third and fourth say that the aggregates are empty of a self of persons. The second verse indicates that persons exist conventionally. More specifically, the first and second lines present an analogy and the last two connect it to the meaning, indicating that persons are merely imputed to the aggregates.

C How to posit that person, the imputed phenomenon, as the object of observation of the innate apprehension of I

The sūtra passage is saying that the collection of aggregates is the basis of imputation of the person, and the basis of imputation is not admissible as the imputed phenomenon. The collection of aggregates must be understood as both the collection of aggregates at a given moment and the collection of aggregates over earlier and later ones. Therefore it is inadmissible to posit the continuum of the collection of aggregates as the person.<sup>282</sup> When the collection is posited as the basis of imputation, that which is collected<sup>283</sup> is also posited as the basis of imputation, and therefore it is unreasonable for both to be the person. In the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it says:

The sūtras say that since it depends on the aggregates,  
The mere collection of aggregates is not the self.

And:

The teacher said: “The aggregates are the self.”  
If that’s why you posit<sup>284</sup> the aggregates as the self,  
It only refutes that the self is not the aggregates<sup>285</sup>,  
For other sūtras make statements like form is not self.

Therefore even the statement “The view of I and mine by some ascetics or Brahmins is only a view of these five aggregates” refutes, by means of the word *only*, that a self that is a different entity from the aggregates exists as the observed object of one’s innate apprehension of an I. That having been refuted, however, the aggregates are not shown to be the observed object of the apprehension of an I. If they were, that would contradict the statements in other sūtras refuting that the five aggregates are the self. The reason for this is that, out of the two, the observed object and the aspect of the apprehension of an I, if they were the observed object, [312] they would have to be posited as the self.<sup>286</sup> Therefore the meaning of the sūtra statement about viewing the aggregates must be explained as referring to observing the self that is imputed to the aggregates.

D Hence the need to differentiate between the self that exists and the self that does not exist

That is why you should differentiate between statements that the mere I, referred to as self, conventionally exists and statements that an inherently established person, referred to as self, does not exist even conventionally. Still, you should not say that this system asserts the self of persons to

<sup>282</sup> This is because one can neither say that it consists in the aggregates at a given point of time nor at an earlier or later point. Where else in the continuum would it be found?

<sup>283</sup> Tib. *tshogs pa can*, literally “that which has a collection” or “that which is provided with a collection.”

<sup>284</sup> Tib. ‘*dod*, usually translated here as “assert” in similar contexts.

<sup>285</sup> Tib. *phung las gzhan*, literally “other than the aggregates.”

<sup>286</sup> They would have to be posited as the self in terms of the *mere I* which is the referent object of the person according to the Prāsaṅgika system. (Oral explanations by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

be conventionally existent<sup>287</sup>. Such an identification of persons is a distinguishing feature of this unsurpassed system. Ascertaining this well is an excellent means of realizing the uncommon selflessness of persons.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2 Settling persons as not inherently existent

This has three points:

- A Settling that the I does not inherently exist
- B Settling that mine does not inherently exist
- C Showing how, in dependence on that, persons appear like illusions

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A Settling that the I does not inherently exist

This has two points:

- 1 How the view realizing selflessness is born from the four essential points being complete
- 2 Extensive explanation of the third and fourth essential points in particular

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A1 How the view realizing selflessness is born from the four essential points being complete

This has four points:

- A The essential point of ascertaining the object of negation
- B The essential point of ascertaining the pervasion
- C The essential point of seeing that the person and the aggregates are not one inherently established entity
- D The essential point of seeing that the person and the aggregates are not established as essentially distinct

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A1A The essential point of ascertaining the object of negation

The first of four essential points that exist with regard to this is to examine one's own mind so as to identify the manner of apprehending a self of persons. That was explained earlier.<sup>288</sup>

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A1B The essential point of ascertaining the pervasion

This has two points:

- 1 If a person is inherently established, it is either one or different and nothing beyond that

The second is the decision that if the person is inherently<sup>289</sup> established, it must be established as either one entity with or different from the aggregates and that there is no means of establishment other than these two.

- 2 Since *accompanied* and *unaccompanied* form a general direct opposition, a third alternative to one and many is excluded

In general it is established through experience that, when you determine something to be *accompanied*,<sup>290</sup> thinking something like “pot and pillar,” you eliminate that it is *unaccompanied*, and when you determine something to be *unaccompanied* thinking something like “pot,” you eliminate that it is *accompanied*. A third alternative, something that is neither one nor many, does therefore not exist. [313] Consequently you are made to ascertain that to be neither one entity nor different entities is also impossible.

<sup>287</sup> Conventionally existent in the sense that an inherently existent person is accepted as existing conventionally.

<sup>288</sup> This point is explained in detail in Jé Tsongkhapa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path* (which was composed before the present text) and other works. In order to get a real sense of this manner we apprehend our own selves, the teachings suggest imagining a situation in which one is unjustly blamed for something. One then observes the sense of I that emerges which is considered a particularly tangible apprehension of “I” in that case.

<sup>289</sup> “Inherently” (Tib. *rang bzhin gyis*), “by its own entity” (Tib. *ngo bo nyid kyis*, also rendered as “essentially”) and “through its own characteristics” (Tib. *rang gi mtshan nyid kyis*) are used synonymously here.

<sup>290</sup> Generally speaking, the opposites “one and distinct” (Tib. *gcig dang tha dad*), “one and many” (Tib. *gcig dang du ma*), “unaccompanied and accompanied” (Tib. *zla med dang zla bcas*) are not real synonyms, however, their alternative use here is due to the fact that Jé Tsongkhapa is summarizing the arguments from various texts. They may therefore be considered equivalent here. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A1C The essential point of seeing that the person and the aggregates are not one inherently established entity

The third is to see the damage to the position that the two, the person and the aggregates, are one inherently established entity.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A1D The essential point of seeing that the person and the aggregates are not established as essentially distinct

The fourth is to see well the damage to the position that the two are established as inherently different. When the four are complete in that manner, the pure view realizing the suchness that is the selflessness of persons is born from that.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A2 Extensive explanation of the third and fourth essential points in particular  
This has two points:

- A The third essential point: refuting that the self and the aggregates are inherently one
- B The fourth essential point: refuting that the self and the aggregates are inherently different

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A2A The third essential point: refuting that the self and the aggregates are inherently one

In this regard, if the self and the aggregates were one inherently established entity, there would be three faults doing damage to this position.

#### 1 First fault

It would be pointless to assert a self. If the sameness of entity of the two were inherently established, they would be a permanently indivisible one. This is because if their sameness of entity were ultimately established, then whatever mind those two appeared to, they would necessarily not appear to be different. The reason for this is that although among falsities—conventions—it is not contradictory for the mode of appearance and the mode of subsistence to be discordant, those two are necessarily contradictory in something established as true because something truly established that appears to a mind must appear just the way it is.

The assertion of a self established through its own entity is for the sake of establishing an agent who discards and adopts aggregates because if he were one with the aggregates, this would be impossible. This is also set forth in the *Root Text on Wisdom*:

Once you understand that apart from the appropriated  
Aggregates there is no self, the appropriated  
Aggregates themselves can only be the self.<sup>291</sup>  
That self of yours does not exist.

#### 2 Second fault

The self would be many. There would be the fault that if the self were established as one with the aggregates, then just as one person has many aggregates, so one person would also have many selves, and just as there is no more than one self, so the aggregates would only be one. In the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it says:

The aggregates are many; if they were the self.  
Therefore there would also be many selves.

#### 3 Third fault [314]

The self would arise and disintegrate. In the *Root Text on Wisdom* it says:

If the aggregates were the self, it  
Would arise and disintegrate.

<sup>291</sup> Literally: “are the self.”

Just as the aggregates arise and disintegrate, so the self would also arise and disintegrate because the two would be one.

4 It would amount to asserting that the self arises and disintegrates not merely conventionally but inherently

You may think “It is asserted that the self or person arises and disintegrates in each moment.” There is no fault in merely asserting this conventionally. However, an opponent who asserts that persons are established by way of their own character thereby necessarily asserts that persons arise and disintegrate inherently.

5 The consequence that memory of former lives would be inadmissible

In this regard the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* sets forth three faults. The first one is set forth in the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”*:

Things distinct by their character, included  
In one continuum do not make sense.

With respect to something earlier and something later established as distinct by way of their own entities, a relationship of dependence between what is later and what is earlier is inadmissible. Since they are established with their own power as capable of setting themselves up, they cannot depend on anything else. If a single continuum is therefore inadmissible, the memory of former lives “In that life, at that time, I was such and such” does not make sense. It is like with Devadatta when he remembers a former life; he does not remember “I was Yajñadatta” whose continuum is distinct from his.

6 The validity of memory in our system

In our system a single continuum of the earlier and the later is not contradictory even though it disintegrates in each moment.<sup>292</sup> Therefore the memory of former lives is valid.

7 When certain people assert that buddhas and ordinary beings are one, it is an extreme view

In people who have not realized the meaning of this, the frequent statement in sūtras: “In the past I was this person” [315] generates the first wrong view out of four bad views that were taught and that are based on an extreme associated with the past: “The two, the person at the time of buddhahood and the person at an earlier time, are one. Moreover, if they were compounded phenomena, they would disintegrate moment by moment and therefore could not be one. Therefore the two are permanent.” In order not to fall to that view you need to understand well the particular manner of remembering in which, at the time of remembering, you remember the “I” in general, without making a distinction in terms of the specific country, time, and nature of a life.

8 The consequence that actions done would be wasted

The fault that actions done would be wasted is that both the agent of an action and the experiencer of its effect could not be grouped together on the one basis of the mere I.

9 The consequence of meeting with actions one has not done

The fault of meeting with actions one has not done is the absurd consequence that the effects of actions accumulated by some distinct continuum would always be experienced by another continuum.

10 If the earlier and the later were established by way of their entities, a single continuum would be impossible

These two faults are associated with the essential point explained earlier in the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* that if the person were established by way of its entity, its earlier and later moments could not be the same continuum. In the *Root Text on Wisdom* it also says:

<sup>292</sup> Since it is *conventional disintegration* which is dependent rather than inherently existent, there is the possibility of transformation and continuation in a future dependent continuum.

If the god and the human were other,  
Their continuum would not be valid.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2A2B      The fourth essential point: Refuting that the self and the aggregates are inherently different

This has five points:

- 1 Indication of a source

But what fault is there if you assert the two, the self and the aggregates, to be inherently different? The fault is set forth in the *Root Text on Wisdom*:

If it were other than the aggregates,  
It would not have their characteristics.

- 2 The consequence that if the two were different by way of their entity, the self would not have the characteristics of the aggregates

In this regard, if the self were different from the aggregates, so established by way of its entity, it would not have the characteristics that characterize the aggregates as compounded phenomena: production, disintegration, and abidance. It would be like a horse, for example, that does not have the characteristics of an ox because it is established as an object other than an ox.

- 3 The other approved syllogism establishing that by the sign of being uncompounded it is unsuitable to be apprehended as the basis of designation of the self or as the self

You may think: “It is indeed like that but...” Well then, it [316] would be inadmissible as the observed object that is the basis of one’s innate apprehension designating the verbal convention “self” because it is an uncompounded phenomenon like, for instance, a flower in the sky or nirvāṇa.<sup>293</sup>

- 4 The consequence that something other than the characteristics of the aggregates would be apprehended as self indicates that it is not apprehended in that manner

Moreover, if it existed inherently different from the characteristics of the aggregates, suitability as form and so forth, it would have to be observed as such, just as, for instance, form and mind are observed as different. Since there is not such apprehension, though, the self does not exist as something factually other. In the *Root Text on Wisdom* it says:

It is inadmissible for the self to be  
Other than the appropriated.<sup>294</sup>  
If it were other, you could apprehend it  
In their absence—which you cannot.

And in the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”*:

Thus, other than the aggregates there is no self,  
For, those apart apprehending it is not established.

- 5 The importance of gaining certainty with respect to such reasonings

You should train in order to gain the firm certainty which sees that such reasonings damage a self existing inherently different from the aggregates because if you have not induced the pure, crushing certainty with respect the two sides of sameness and difference, the conclusion that persons do not inherently exist will be a mere thesis so that you do not gain the pure view.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2B      Settling that mine does not inherently exist

This has two points:

<sup>293</sup> Jé Tsongkhapa is giving two common examples for uncompounded phenomena: the flower in the sky for something non-existent and nirvāṇa for a (conventionally) existent phenomenon.

<sup>294</sup> Tib. *nye bar len pa* (‘i *phung po*), “the appropriated (aggregates).”

- 1 That reasoning negating the inherent establishment of the self also negates an inherently established mine; sources for this

When you have thus sought, with reasonings, whether the self does or does not have inherent establishment, you negate the inherent existence of the self by means of your failure to find it as either one or many. At that point, through the reasoning that analyzes suchness, you will not find an inherently established mine, just like, for example, when you do not observe a barren woman's son, you will not observe his mine, such as his eyes. In the *Root Verses on Wisdom* it says:

If the I does not exist,  
How possibly could mine exist? [317]

And in the *Commentary on the "Middle Way"* it says:

Since without an agent no actions exist,  
Therefore, there's no mine without a self.  
Therefore, by seeing the I and mine as empty  
The yogi is completely liberated.

- 2 The need to know how, through these reasonings, all other persons and their mine are also established as without inherent existence

Thus those reasonings settle that the I of one's own continuum, apprehended thinking "I" or the self or the person does not exist by way of its own entity. Through them you should also realize the entire meaning of the suchness which is the selflessness of persons: that all persons from hell-beings through buddhas and all their mine are not inherently established as one entity with or a different entity from their bases of designation, their contaminated or uncontaminated aggregates. Through those reasonings, you should also know how all their mine is likewise established as without inherent existence.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C Showing how, in dependence on that, persons appear like an illusion

This has two points:

- 1 Indicating the meaning of saying *like an illusion*
- 2 The method in dependence on which things appear like an illusion

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C1 Indicating the meaning of saying *like an illusion*

This has two points:

- A The unmistakable manner of appearing like an illusion
- B The fallacious manner of appearing like an illusion

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C1A The unmistakable manner of appearing like an illusion

This has nine points:

- 1 How all phenomena are ultimately illusion-like without signs

In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtrait* says:

Like a mirage, a gandharva city,<sup>295</sup>  
Like an illusion, just as a dream,  
Meditate on signs as empty of entity,  
Know all phenomena as like that.

In the *Mother of the Victors*<sup>296</sup> it is also taught that all phenomena from form through exalted knowers of all aspects are like illusions and dreams.

<sup>295</sup> Gandharvas are deities from the ancient Indian Vedic scriptures who reveal celestial secrets. Their task is to prepare the divine potion soma. In the Tibetan tradition they are treated as one kind of spirits.

<sup>296</sup> Synonym for *Sūtra on the Perfection of Wisdom*.



- 2 From among the two that are like an illusion, here it is the appearance that is illusion-like

There are two meanings of being like an illusion described in this way: 1) something like an ultimate truth that is said to be illusion-like—although it is established as merely existent, [318] its true existence is understood to be negated—and 2) something like the illusion-like appearance of that which appears while being empty. From among these two, here it is the latter.

- 3 The need for the collection of two, the conventional mind to which appearances appear rather than being utterly non-existent and the reasoning consciousness to which the object dawns as empty of existing in the way it appears

For this, the two, appearing as that and empty of existing the way it appears<sup>297</sup>, are necessary. However, if an object is utterly non-existent even as a mere appearance, just like the horn of a rabbit or the son of a barren woman, and does not dawn as empty of existing in the way it appears despite appearing,<sup>298</sup> then the meaning of it being an illusion-like appearance will also not dawn to the mind.

- 4 The way in which phenomena resemble illusions

Hence this is how you understand other phenomena as resembling the example of an illusion. For example, although the illusions conjured up by a magician are from the start empty of being horses and elephants, their appearances as horses and elephants undeniably arise. Understand that likewise, although phenomena such as persons are from the start empty of inherent existence, of being established by way of their own entities on top of the objects, it is undeniable that they appear as if established that way.

- 5 Such an emptiness is not a nihilistic emptiness, or a mentally fabricated emptiness, or a limited emptiness, or the like

That being so, the appearances as a god, a human, and so forth are posited as persons and the objects that appear as form, sound, and so forth are posited as phenomena. Therefore, although persons and phenomena do not have even a mere particle of inherent existence established by way of their own character, the accumulators of karma and so forth, the actions of seeing and hearing and so forth, all the interdependent actions and agents are valid. All actions and agents are valid; therefore emptiness is not nihilistic. Since phenomena have primordially always been empty like that and are merely understood as empty, it is not a mentally fabricated emptiness either, and since all objects of knowledge are asserted in this manner, it is not a limited emptiness either. That is why, through being meditated on, it becomes the antidote to any adherence associated with the apprehension of true existence. This profound meaning is not unsuitable to become the object of any mind whatsoever. Rather, it [319] can be settled by means of the pure view and it can be made the object of mind by meditating on the pure meaning. Therefore it is also not an emptiness that cannot be practiced at the time of the path or one with nothing to see or realize.

- 6 Setting out the doubt that the ascertainment of reflections as empty of what they appear to be is an ascertainment of their being empty of inherent existence

Well then, if the ascertainment of reflections and so forth as empty of what they appear to be were the realization that their inherent existence does not exist, the absence of inherent existence would be realized by the direct perceivers of normal beings; so the latter would be āryas.<sup>299</sup> Otherwise, how could these be suitable analogies for the absence of inherent existence?

- 7 Even if you realize that a reflection is empty of a face, this is not a realization of its suchness since you have an apprehension of the true existence of the reflection

In *Four Hundred Stanzas* it says:

It is explained that a seer of one thing  
Is a seer of everything.

<sup>297</sup> Tib. *snang ba ltar gyi don yod pas stongs pa*

<sup>298</sup> Tib. *snang yang snang ba ltar gyi don yod pas stongs par mi 'char*

<sup>299</sup> Tib. *'phags pa*, “noble beings,” who have gained direct insight into emptiness, the nature of reality, and thereby reached the path of seeing which makes them higher beings.

What is the emptiness of one  
Is the emptiness of all.

It explains that the seer or realizer of the emptiness of one thing can realize the emptiness of other things. The realization that the reflection of a face is empty of being a face does not in any way damage the object of one's apprehension of true existence that apprehends the reflection to be established by way of its own entity. Without the negation of its object the emptiness of inherent establishment of the reflection cannot be realized. Therefore that mind does not realize the suchness of the reflection. Even if you realize that illusions are empty of being horses and elephants, and that the appearances in dreams are empty of what they appear to be, you have not found the Madhyamaka view realizing that objects are like illusions and dreams.

8 The reason why the analogies of reflections and illusory horses, elephants, and so forth have nevertheless been set forth

However, the reason for taking them as analogies is the fact that it is easier to realize that they do not inherently exist compared to other phenomena like forms and sounds. [320] That they are empty of inherent existence established by way of their own entities is proven by showing the contradiction in their mode of subsistence and the way they appear to the mind, because if an object is established as true, those two cannot be different in aspect. You need to first allow yourself to realize that these examples, well known in the world as false, lack inherent existence, and then generate the realization that other phenomena, not well known in the world as false, lack inherent existence. The meaning intended by stating the need for a sequence in which one of these two is earlier and the other later is not that by realizing the emptiness of one phenomenon the emptinesses of all other phenomena are explicitly realized. Rather, the meaning is that when the mind turns to whether other phenomena do or do not truly exist, it is able to realize it.

9 The need to differentiate between the two realizations, that appearances such as reflections are empty of what they appear to be and that reflections are empty of being inherently established

That being so, it does not have the same meaning to be in a dream, to know it, and to realize that the appearances of men, women, and so forth are empty of those, and what is said in *Ornament for Clear Realization*:

Even in dreams, to view that all  
Phenomena are like dreams and so forth

... that in dreams all phenomena should be viewed as dreamlike. Likewise, the realization, in visions of meditative experience during meditative stabilization, that appearances like pots and woolen cloth are empty of what they appear to be, does not have the same meaning as the realization that they are like illusions and dreams that are not inherently established. Therefore you should investigate well the uncommon manner of appearing like an illusion which is set forth in scriptures and treatises of definitive meaning saying that something should be known to be like an illusion and a dream.

Having said this, a child still unfamiliar with words who apprehends a reflection in the mirror as a face, a spectator who does not know about illusions and apprehends illusory appearances as horses, elephants, and so forth, and someone in a dream who is unaware of it and therefore apprehends the appearances of mountains, houses, and so forth as real [321] resemble each other. On the other hand, an older person familiar with words, a magician, and a person who, in a dream, knows it to be a dream also resemble each other in that they know their particular appearances to be untrue. None of the two have found the view of suchness.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C1B The fallacious manner of appearing like an illusion  
This has eight points:

- 1 Without the discrimination “It is this and not that” due to a mistake concerning the measure of the object of negation and the consequent non-existence of the object to be analyzed and the analyzer, an appearance is vague and nihilistic but does not carry the meaning of an illusion

If the measure of the object of negation explained earlier has not been grasped well and the object is analyzed by means of reasoning and broken up, the thought “That object does not exist” will first come up. Then, the analyzer is also seen like that and since the ascertainer of his non-existence is also non-existent, any ascertainment in terms of “It is this and not that” becomes impossible. Then, the vague appearances that arise do so in dependence on the failure to differentiate between inherent existence and non-existence and mere existence and non-existence. Therefore such an emptiness is an emptiness that also destroys interdependence. Hence, even though the vague appearances arise induced by that realization, this is not at all the meaning of being like an illusion.

- 2 Although such vague appearances arising at the time of analyzing the view are frequent, they are not Madhyamaka illusions

That is why it is not difficult, upon reasoned analysis, to think “Persons and so forth do not in the least have a mode of subsistence established on top of the objects by way of their own entities” and for appearances to simply arise vaguely in dependence on that. Something like that occurs to everyone with an interest in Madhyamaka tenets who has heard a little bit of Dharma being taught about how there is no inherent existence.

- 3 The difficult point with pure illusion-like appearances is that they are a collection of the two, the absence of inherent existence and the existence of mere nominal meaning

However, the difficult point is to achieve certainty, from the bottom of the heart, about negating all inherent existence established by way of an own entity and positing those inherently non-existent persons and so forth as accumulators of karma, experiencers of effects, and so forth. Since that collection of two that enables one to posit them is next to impossible, [322] it is extremely difficult to find the Madhyamaka view.

- 4 If you are mistaken concerning the measure of the object of negation and negate everything, the illusion cannot be anything beyond a rabbit’s horns

Therefore, as you analyze suchness with analytical reasoning, you do not find production and thereby negate inherent production, but you do not negate every kind of production, cessation, and so forth. If you did, they would become empty of performing any function, like the horns of a rabbit or the son of a barren woman. With respect to what little illusion-like appearance would remain, the fault that all interdependent actions and agents would not have validity is set forth. In *Four Hundred Stanzas* it says:

If that were so how would existence  
Not resemble an illusion?

And in the commentary:

Once that which is dependently arisen is seen as what it is, it becomes like an illusory creation but not like the son of a barren woman. If one were to assert that through this analysis production is negated in every way and that therefore the non-production of compounded phenomena is demonstrated, then they would be not like illusions but rather something to be examined in terms of the son of a barren woman and the like. For fear of the conclusion that the dependently arisen does not exist, we do not compare phenomena with those but rather with illusions and the like which do not contradict the dependently arisen.

- 5 Although it would be a fault if a subject existed in the face of a reasoning consciousness, it is not a fault for an illusion-like appearance aspect to remain as a trace of negation by that consciousness

And:

Therefore, upon such thorough analysis, since the inherent existence of things is not established, an illusion-like quality will be left as a remnant for each thing.

- 6 Hence, although it is wrong to apprehend illusion-like appearances as truly existent with their own entityness, it is not wrong to apprehend them as mere illusions

Therefore the apprehension of appearances as something illusion-like, interdependent, merely existent is not a faulty apprehension of illusions, but if illusion-like appearances were apprehended as established by way of their entity and truly existent, [323] it would be a fault.

- 7 A source for those points

In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* it also says:

Going through cyclic existence is like a dream.  
 No one is born there nor does anyone die.  
 No sentient beings or humans nor life can be found.  
 These phenomena are like foam, plantain trees,  
 Like illusions, lightning in the sky,  
 Like the moon in water, like a mirage.  
 Even after one dies here in this world,  
 One does not move on to another world, nevertheless,  
 Actions done are not lost, their white and black fruit  
 Ripen in cyclic existence—there's no contradiction.

When sought with the reasonings that analyze suchness, persons and the like who are born, die, and transmigrate, and who withstand analysis are not found, not even a particle. Nevertheless, positive and negative effects occur relative to illusion-like phenomena. You need to arrive at an understanding of such statements.

- 8 Moreover, even if phenomena appear empty of gross obstructiveness, this is not an illusion-like appearance

Moreover, some do not place and sustain the mind within the view that has come to a decisive conclusion, in meditative equipoise, about the mode of being but gain a stable mere single-pointedness in which the mind does not apprehend anything at all. Through its power, when they arise from it, appearances such as that of a mountain appear insubstantial like a rainbow or thin smoke rather than hard and obstructive as they appeared before. This is also not the illusion-like appearance explained in the scriptures because it is an appearance of objects as empty of gross obstructiveness rather than the appearance of objects as empty of being inherently established. Also, the meaning of emptiness, which is the absence of inherent existence, cannot possibly be the non-existence of obstructive hardness. Otherwise there would be the fault that when apprehending rainbows and the like as substrata, it would be impossible for an apprehension of true existence to arise, and when apprehending obstructive objects as substrata, it would be impossible to generate a consciousness realizing the absence of true existence.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C2 The method in dependence on which things appear like and illusion

This has five points:

- A How illusion-like appearances arise
- B How the collection of the two, a reasoning consciousness and a conventional mind, occur simultaneously with regard to this
- C How there is consequently no need for a separate reasoning settling appearances as illusion-like
- D How the illusion-like subsequent attainment acts on everything
- E Instructions on seeking ascertainment of the illusion-like

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C2A How illusion-like appearances arise

Well then, what do you do for illusory objects to appear without mistake? [324]

For example, you see illusory horses and elephants with your eye consciousness and ascertain, with your mental consciousness, that no horses or elephants in accordance with the appearance exist; in

dependence on that, the ascertainment arises that this appearance of horses and elephants is an illusory or false appearance.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C2B How the collection of the two, a reasoning consciousness and a conventional mind, occur simultaneously with regard to this

Likewise, persons and so forth undeniably appear to your conventional mind while you ascertain, by means of a reasoning consciousness, that they are empty of inherent existence established by way of their own entities; in dependence on these two, the ascertainment arises that the persons are illusory or false appearances.

Due to that, if the meditation on space-like emptiness, a meditative equipoise in which not even a mere particle of the object aims for apprehending attributes exists, hits home, an illusion-like emptiness will appear as you look at the appearance of objects in the subsequent attainment period after you have risen from that meditation.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C2C How there is consequently no need for a separate reasoning settling appearances as illusion-like

Thus you analyze phenomena a lot with the reasoning analyzing whether or not they are established by way of their own entities, and you generate a very strong certainty that they lack inherent existence. Subsequently, when you look at the appearances that arise, they will appear like illusions. There is no separate method for settling the illusion-like emptiness.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C2D How the illusion-like subsequent attainment acts on everything

Therefore, even when engaging in activities on the side of conduct such as prostrations and circumambulations, you should engage in them affected by the ascertainment of your analysis as explained earlier. Thereby you should train in illusion-like appearance, and perform them from within that. Once you have trained in it, they will appear like illusions even through the mere recollection of the view.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2A-2C2E Instructions on seeking ascertainment of the illusion-like

This has three points:

- 1 How to train in emptiness because of the need to induce ascertainment with respect to both appearance and emptiness

Put simply and easy to understand, the method for seeking this ascertainment is as follows. As was explained earlier, you should cause the generality of the object of negation by reasoning to appear well, [325] consider well how ignorance in your continuum superimposes inherent existence, and identify it. Then you should consider how if there were such inherent existence, it would not be beyond oneness and difference, and how there is damage to assertions of it as either. You should induce the ascertainment of seeing the damage and finally stabilize the ascertainment thinking “A person does not even have the least inherent establishment.” Like that you should train in the factor of emptiness a lot.

- 2 How persons appear illusion-like without your forgetting emptiness

Then you should let the undeniable appearances of the designations of persons arise as the objects of your mind, attend to the interdependent factors of positing them as accumulators of karma and experiencers of effects, and gain certainty about how interdependence is valid in the absence of inherent existence.

- 3 How the analogy of a mirror image is necessary when appearances and emptiness appear to be contradictory

At a time when these two appear to contradict each other, you should take the analogy of a mirror image and the like and consider how they are non-contradictory. Although the reflection of a face is empty of the eyes, ears, and so forth, whatever appears, it nevertheless arises in dependence on a face and a mirror and disintegrates when either of the conditions is gone. The two are undeniably

contained in the common basis.<sup>300</sup> You should train in the thought that likewise, although persons also do not have even a particle of inherent establishment, this does not contradict their accumulating karma, their experiencing effects, and their being born in dependence on previous karma, afflictions, and so forth. This you should know in all such circumstances.

#### 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B Settling the selflessness of phenomena

This has two points:

- 1 How there is no difference in subtlety among objects of negation, but rather a distinction between two selflessnesses on account of their subjects
- 2 How it is settled

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-1 How there is no difference in subtlety among objects of negation, but rather a distinction between two selflessnesses on account of their subjects

The basis of designation of a person, the five aggregates, the six elements such as the earth element, the six sense fields such as the eye, are phenomena and their [326] emptiness of inherent existence established by way of their own entities is the selflessness of those phenomena.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2 How it is settled

There are two ways of settling it:

- A Refutation transferring the reasoning explained earlier
- B Refutation by means of another reasoning not explained earlier

#### 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2A Refutation transferring the reasoning explained earlier

Among the things<sup>301</sup> that are aggregates, elements, and sense bases, there are two types. With physical phenomena, you investigate both their parts in the various cardinal directions, such as east, and that which possesses the parts. With consciousnesses, you investigate their temporal parts such as earlier and later ones and that which possesses the parts. Having investigated whether they are established by way of their entities as one or different, you refute them in the above fashion. That is the meaning of a sūtra statement quoted earlier:

Just as you know the notion of self  
Apply it to everything mentally.

#### 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B Refutation by means of another reasoning not explained earlier

This has two points:

- 1 Presenting the argument of interdependence
- 2 How non-products are also established as not truly existent through this and earlier reasonings

#### 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1 Presenting the argument of interdependence

This has ten points:

- A A citation of sources
- B Explanation of what the sūtra quotation means
- C Praise to the argument of dependent arising as that which destroys all inferior views
- D Identification of places where the view goes wrong—the extremes of superimposition and deprecation
- E How the two extremes are simultaneously eliminated through the reasoning of dependent arising
- F Presentations of dependent arising
- G How truly established oneness and difference are also refuted by these two arguments
- H Statements of this in Nāgārjuna's texts
- I How it is praised as a view in which appearances and emptiness are seen as mutual companions
- J Instruction that it is necessary to differentiate between the four, inherent existence and non-existence as well as existence and non-existence in general

<sup>300</sup> The expression *khyad gzhi mthun mong ba* is a technical term in debate referring to a phenomenon comprising the characteristics at issue.

<sup>301</sup> Tib. *ngos po*, “thing” is often used in the more restrictive sense of “tangible object,” but occasionally it refers to any “existent phenomenon.” (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)



2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1A A citation of sources

With regard to the argument of interdependence it says in the *Sūtra Requested by Sāgaramati*:

Those which originate interdependently  
Do not exist by way of their entity.

Inherent establishment is clearly refuted with the sign<sup>302</sup> of dependent arising.

In the *Sūtra Requested by the Nāga King Anavatapta* (*Anavataptanāgarājaparipṛcchā Sūtra*) it also clearly says:

Whatever is born from conditions is not born,  
It is not born by way of its entity.  
Whatever depends on conditions is said to be empty.  
Whoever has realized emptiness is conscientious.

This is said very frequently in the precious scriptures.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1B Explanation of what the sūtra quotation means

The meaning of what the first line refers to as “not born” is explained by the second line saying “not born by way of its entity.” Therefore a qualification of the object of negation is applied to the refutation of birth. In the *Descent to Lañka Sūtra* (*Laṅkāvatārasūtra*) quoted in Candrakīrti’s *Clear Words* it also says:

Thinking of their not being born inherently I said: “All phenomena are unborn.” [327]

For fear that without a qualification having been made, his statements that birth does not exist could be held to indicate that all birth whatsoever is non-existent, the Teacher himself took up the thought of the sūtras and explained the meaning to be the non-existence of inherent birth.

Then, the third line says that dependence and reliance<sup>303</sup> on conditions is the meaning of being empty of establishment by way of one’s own entity. This indicates that emptiness of inherent establishment is the meaning of dependent arising whereas an emptiness of performing functions that would negate mere birth is not.

In the *Root Text on Wisdom* it also says:

That which arises in dependence  
Is inherently pacified.

By reason of arising dependently, it is pacified or empty of establishment by way of its entity. You should know that whatever obscure fabrications have been propounded—that because of dependent arising itself, the Madhyamaka system must propound non-arising and so forth—are thereby cleared away.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1C Praise to the argument of dependent arising as that which destroys all inferior views

The argument of dependent arising which is like that is praised very much. In the *Sūtra Requested by the Nāga King Anavatapta* it says:

Experts see dharmas<sup>304</sup> arise in dependence;  
They do not at all depend on extreme views.

<sup>302</sup> The word *rtaṅgs*, “sign,” is used as a technical term of debate here meaning *logical sign*: that which contains the reason in a proposition. For instance in the proposition “There is a fire on the hill because smoke is rising” the logical sign is “smoke is rising.”

<sup>303</sup> Tib. *la ltos pa*, usually also translated here as “depend(ent) on.”

<sup>304</sup> Tib. *chos*, usually translated here as “phenomena.”

Through realizing dependent arising as it is, one does not depend on views holding to extremes. The meaning of this is set forth in the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”*:

Since things arise in utter mutual dependence,  
These conceptions cannot be imputed.  
Through this reasoning of dependent arising,  
The net of all bad views is therefore cut.

This is the unexcelled distinguishing feature of Mahātma Nāgārjuna, the father, and his spiritual son. That is why, from among various reasonings, I will describe that of dependent arising here.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1D Identification of places where the view goes wrong—the extremes of superimposition and deprecation

Here, there are mainly two obstacles—places where the pure view goes wrong: One is the [328] view of permanence and superimposition which has the object aim of the apprehension of true existence apprehending phenomena as truly existent. As for the second one, the view of annihilation and deprecation, the measure of the object of negation has not been delimited and becomes excessive. Then it becomes impossible to induce the ascertainment of dependently arising causes and effects in one’s own system so that there is no way of identifying that something is this and not that.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1E How the two extremes are simultaneously eliminated through the reasoning of dependent arising

When inherent establishment is negated with a reason inducing the ascertainment that from such and such causes and conditions such and such effects arise, those two are abandoned without remainder. This is because through ascertaining the reason, the view of annihilation is radically negated, and through ascertaining the meaning of the thesis, the view of permanence is radically negated.<sup>305</sup>

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1F Presentation of dependent arising

This has two points:

- 1 Presentation shared with the Cittamātrins

Therefore external things such as sprouts and internal things such as compositional factors originate gradually in dependence on seeds and so forth and ignorance and so forth, respectively.

- 2 The Mādhyamikas’ uncommon way of presenting dependent arising

If that is so, their establishment through their own character is inadmissible because if they were established through their own entities, they would necessarily be established for themselves, through their own independent, self-sustaining inherent existence; so their dependence on causes and conditions would be contradictory. In *Four Hundred Stanzas* it says:

That which has a dependent origin  
Does not have its independence.  
All these don’t have independence,  
Hence, the self does not exist.

Through this you should understand that since persons and pots and the like are also imputed in dependence on their own collections of parts, they do not have inherent establishment.

Those are the two presentations of the argument of dependent arising.

<sup>305</sup> The argument is dependent arising, the thesis is “There is no self that inherently exists.”

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1G How truly established oneness and difference are also refuted by these two arguments

If something arises dependently and is labeled dependently, it does not exist as something established by way of its own entity as one with whatever it depends on. If it did exist as one, all actions and agents would be one.

The two [329] also do not exist as different<sup>306</sup> established by way of their entities because if they did, one could refute their relation, so their dependence would be contradicted.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1H Statements of this in Nāgārjuna's texts

In the *Root Text on Wisdom* it says:

Whatever arises dependent on something  
Is not that thing for a while.  
Neither is it other than it. Hence,  
It's not annihilated nor permanent.

And in *Praise of the Transcendent One (Lokāṭīstava)* it says:

Logicians assert that suffering is  
Created by itself or other,  
Or by both itself and other,  
Or that it is without cause.  
  
You said that it arises dependently.  
That which arises in interdependence  
Is asserted by you as empty.  
“Things do not exist independently!”—  
That's your matchless lion's roar.

Through the argument of dependent arising, the apprehensions of oneness and difference, of the extremes of permanence and annihilation, and of the four extremes of origination<sup>307</sup> are thus said to be refuted.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1I How it is praised as a view in which appearances and emptiness are seen as mutual companions

Having thus induced certainty through the emptiness that is being empty of all the focal objects of an apprehension of signs, one does not give up one's ascertainment of the relation between actions and their effects. The reliance on discarding non-virtues and adopting virtues due to that is highly praised. In *Essay on the Mind of Enlightenment (Bodhicittavivaraṇa)* it says:

Relying on actions and their effects  
While knowing this emptiness of phenomena;  
This is more wonderful still than the wonderful.  
This is more marvelous still than the marvelous.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B1J Instruction that it is necessary to differentiate between the four, inherent existence and non-existence as well as existence and non-existence in general

This has six points:

1 The actual advice

For that to happen it is necessary to differentiate between inherent existence, mere existence, non-existence by way of own character, and non-existence. It is as stated in the *Explanation of Candrakīrti's "Commentary on the 'Middle Way:'"*

<sup>306</sup> Tib. *gzhan du'ang med*

<sup>307</sup> Origination from self, from other, from both, or from neither, i.e. without cause.

What wise person, while knowing the presentation of causes and effects—reflections without inherent existence—would observe to merely exist those forms, feelings, and so forth that do not exist other than as causes and conditions, and thereby [330] ascertain them as possessing inherent existence? Therefore although observed to exist, they do not inherently arise.

2 How you fall to the two extremes if you do not differentiate between them along with a source

If you do not differentiate between those four, things will exist by way their own entity as soon as they exist, and they will be non-existent as long as they do not exist by way of their own entity. You will not move beyond the two extremes of superimposition and deprecation. In the *Commentary on the “Four Hundred Stanzas”* it says:

According to those who propound that real substantial things exist, as long as a thing exists<sup>308</sup>, so long will an own entity exist in accordance with it, whereas when it is rid of its own entity, then the thing will no longer exist in any way and will therefore resemble a donkey’s horn. Therefore, since they do not pass beyond propounding those two, all their assertions only match with difficulty.

3 The manner in which those two extremes are eliminated

This being so, you are freed from all extremes of existence through the absence of existence by way of an own entity, and, within that, from all extremes of non-existence through the ability to posit causes and effects without inherent existence.

4 The mere extremes of existence and non-existence and the two extremes associated with the places where the view goes wrong do not have the same meaning

With regard to *extreme* (Tib. *mtha’*), it says in *Reasoning for Detailed Explanations* (*Vyākhyāyukti*):

*Mtha’* is used for finish, for end,  
Nearness, direction, and the lower.

Such extremes are indeed asserted in our system as well, however, as for the extremes that are places where the so-called *view free from extremes* goes wrong, it says in *Illumination of the Middle Way* (*Madhyamakāloka*):

If there were, in the Madhyamaka, any ultimate thing at all, an object of the mind with its own entity by nature, then, since it would exist for that system, how could the strong adherence thinking “It is permanent” or “It is impermanent” be an extreme? It is unreasonable to say that proper mental attention in accordance with the suchness of things is a position one falls to. [331]

As stated here, mental attention in accordance with how an object actually is, is not a position one would fall to, so it does not constitute holding to an extreme. In the world the edge of an abyss is called *mtha*<sup>309</sup> and falling off it is called *mtha’ la lhung*. Likewise the apprehension of phenomena as truly existent and the apprehension that nothing at all is established or exists constitute the *mtha’ lhung* of permanence and annihilation which are opposites of the correct fact. On the other hand the apprehensions that phenomena do not ultimately exist and that causes and effects conventionally exist and so forth do not constitute holding to extremes because the objects abide in the way they are apprehended.

5 Sources for that

This is why: In *Vigrahavyāvartanī* (*Refuting Objections*) it says:

<sup>308</sup> Tib. *yod pa nyid yin*

<sup>309</sup> Jé Tsongkhapa is playing on the double-entendre of Tib. *mtha’* meaning both “extreme” and “edge” or “brink.” The whole paragraph explores its use in the sense of “extreme,” indicating that it does not refer to one pole of arbitrary sets of opposites (such as warm and cold)—which may well be valid conventionally—but to certain misconceptions.

The lack of inherent existence, inverted,  
Is establishment as inherent.

That is if something is not ultimately non-existent, it ultimately exists. Also:

The non-assertion of conventionalities—  
That is not what we explain.

In *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness* it says:

“Depending on this that arises”—  
This worldly mode was not refuted.

6 The distinction that through phrases such as “neither existent nor non-existent” there is no falling to extremes is a fixation on mere words

Therefore the difference made between the two, “that thing<sup>310</sup> is not existent”<sup>311</sup> and “it exists” as opposed to “it does not exist” and “it is not non-existent”, is nothing more than a difference in the way of expressing it. Yet in the manner the two appear to the mind there is no difference whatsoever, however much you analyze. Therefore it is nothing more than a fixation on mere words to propound that one falls or does not fall to extremes through that manner of expression.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B2B-2B2 How non-products are also established as not truly existent through this and earlier reasonings

This has twelve points:

A Pointing out the intended meaning of the *Root Text on Wisdom* that once products have been established through reasoning as not truly existent, non-products are easily established as not truly existent

Once compounded phenomena, persons and phenomena, have thus been established as not truly existent by way of the reasonings explained earlier, it is established with little difficulty that uncompounded phenomena such as space, analytical cessations,<sup>312</sup> non-analytical cessations, and suchness do not truly exist. With that intention it says in *Root Text on Emptiness*:

Compounded phenomena are not established, [332]  
So how could the uncompounded be?

B The reason for that

An easy method for establishing this is as follows. When inherently established compounded phenomena have been refuted as above, even though they are not inherently established, it is established that with regard to them, agents and actions such as bondage and liberation, causes and effects, objects of comprehension and those who comprehend them may be posited. When that is established, even though non-products like reality and analytical cessations are not established as truly existent, one can posit well the presentation of objects of attainment on the path, objects of comprehension, the Dharma Jewel as refuge for disciples, and so forth. If they are not asserted as truly existent, one cannot at all say that these presentations of the need to posit them are inadmissible. Therefore it would be pointless to assert them as truly existent.

<sup>310</sup> Tib. *gzhi de*

<sup>311</sup> In Tibetan like in many other languages such as Spanish, a clear distinction is made between “to be” as a predicative copula (e.g. “to be young” or “to be a farmer,” Tib. *yin*) and “to be” as an existential verb (Tib *yod*). However, in this particular case where the two are combined to Tib. *yod pa yin* (“to be existent”) as opposed to Tib. *yod pa* (“to exist”) there is no difference in meaning.

<sup>312</sup> Analytical cessations are achieved by overcoming mental afflictions through methods of the path such as investigation and meditation. Cessations are not compound phenomena because they consist in the absence of something.

- C How to refute even the assertion that non-products such as reality and cessations are inherently truly existent by means of the reasoning of interdependence

Those who assert them as truly existent must and do indeed also assert presentations of their definitions and definienda, their causes of separation and effects of separation, their comprehension by such and such valid cognitions and so forth. At that point, if they do not relate them to their respective objects of attainment, characteristics, comprehenders, and so forth, they cannot refute that all unrelated things become definitions and definienda of each other and the like. If they assert relations, they cannot posit them since something truly existent, inherently established, cannot depend on something else.

- D Another refutation by way of their not being one nor many

Similarly, you should also investigate whether uncompounded phenomena are one with or different<sup>313</sup> from their bases of designation and negate their inherent existence. If by this reasoned analysis you cannot refute the assertion that they are truly established, you cannot negate true existence even in the slightest because it is the same in all respects for compounded phenomena.

- E The assertions that a product's emptiness of inherently existing in its own right is a nihilistic emptiness and that suchness is established as truly existent are misguided with regard to emptiness [333]

You may think that if the meaning of “Compounded phenomena are empty of inherently established own entities” is that those phenomena do not have such entities, it is thereby a nihilistic emptiness. However, suchness truly exists because it has its own entity.

That is the furthest you can go wrong when you settle compounded phenomena as empty of inherent establishment, a view that deprecates the interdependence of compounded phenomena. The latter is a terrible view of permanence that superimposes true existence if something has its own entity. Therefore you would be entering into the correct meaning of emptiness<sup>314</sup> wrongly.

- F If emptiness of an own essence thus meant that he himself were empty of being himself, it would also be inadmissible for someone such as the holder of the thesis that certain phenomena truly exist, to think “inherently empty” and posit certain phenomena as truly existent

If the emptiness of an inherently established own entity were the absence of it in itself, the absence in it would mean that nothing at all could possibly exist, so the holder of the thesis that certain phenomena truly exist, the scriptures and reasonings establishing this, and so forth would also be empty of an inherently established own entity. Therefore the basis would not be established, and therefore positing the tenet that some phenomena are truly established is a random statement without investigation.

- G The two, asserting that all phenomena are without true existence, a true existence that has been refuted through reasoning, and propounding that all phenomena are without true existence with a mistaken manner of understanding emptiness, are by no means the same

With good insight into the implications of this way of reasoning, all the Buddhist schools of the country of āryas<sup>315</sup> that propound the true existence of phenomena are called proponents of things since they definitely propound that things are established as truly existent. Propounding that things are without true existence and no more asserting any phenomena whatsoever to be established as truly existent would seem to be a sign of distinct superiority over those who propound the nonsense of this faction.

With the above explanations you should also come to a good understanding of those who advocate two discordant positions with regard to suchness and of how they pursue their modes of debate on

<sup>313</sup> In the case of a non-product one investigates in detail whether it is the same as or different from its definition and definiendum, from its basis of designation and imputed phenomenon, from its essence and its characteristics, and so forth. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

<sup>314</sup> There is an important distinction here between “own entity” (something which does indeed exist conventionally) and “inherently existent entity” (something which is not possible even conventionally according to the Madhyamaka position).

<sup>315</sup> Tib. *phags yul*, a synonym for Tib. *rgya gar*, “India.”



whether or not ultimate reality is ultimately established, having agreed on the above kind of emptiness of an inherently established own entity with regard to conventional phenomena. [334]

This is because the two, not asserting true existence with regard to any things or phenomena, having refuted true existence with regard to phenomena by reasoning, and propounding that all things and phenomena are without true existence in dependence on a nihilistic emptiness, a mistaken manner of understanding emptiness, are dissimilar in all respects.

H The doubt that if all non-products did not truly exist, this would be in contradiction with scriptures that teach nirvāṇa to be true

If the meaning of “Compounded phenomena are not established, / So how could the uncompounded be?”<sup>316</sup> were as explained earlier, would this not be in contradiction to other statements by Nāgārjuna? In *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* it says:

When the Victors teach nirvāṇa  
As the one and only truth,  
Who, what wise person, would think  
That the rest is not the opposite?

Only nirvāṇa is said to be true while everything else is said to be untrue. In *Praise of the Sphere of Reality (Dharmadhātustotra)* it also says:

All the sūtras teaching emptiness  
That were set forth by the Victor,  
Counteract the mental afflictions;  
They do not diminish this realm.

That is the sūtras teaching emptiness, the absence of inherent existence, are for the sake of abandoning mental afflictions and they do not teach that the realm of natural purity does not exist.

I The response to this: although nirvāṇa is non-deceptive to a mind looking at it with direct perception, it is not a truth that bears analysis, so there is no contradiction with the above scriptural passage

Those who think that way approach the meaning of the statements wrongly. The meaning of the above statement is that of the following statement by the Victor:

Monks, this ultimate truth is singular, it is this: nirvāṇa, that which has the quality of non-deceptiveness. All composed things<sup>317</sup> have the quality of being false, deceptive.

This sūtra also says that nirvāṇa is true and that all composed things are false. The earlier part of the sūtra passage very clearly explains that true means non-deceptive and the latter one very clearly explains that false means deceptive. [335] Moreover, the *Commentary on “Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning” (Yuktiṣaṣṭikāvr̥tti)* explains nirvāṇa as an ultimate truth, which it is: Therefore, to a mind looking at it with direct perception, it does not have any deceptiveness of appearing inherently established while not being inherently established. To a mind to which the remaining phenomena, composed things, directly appear, they have the deceptiveness of appearing inherently established while not being inherently established. That is why they turn out not to be established as truths that bear analysis when you examine them with the reasoning that analyzes whether or not they are truly established. Therefore, what is the point of being attached to mere names without thinking deeply about their meaning.

J Establishing the validity of that

In *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* it also says:

<sup>316</sup> Quoted on p. [331].

<sup>317</sup> Tib. ‘du byed, usually translated here as “compositional factors.”

Conditioned existence<sup>318</sup> and nirvāṇa—  
Neither of these two exists.  
Thorough knowledge of existence  
That is what is expressed by “nirvāṇa.”

This is an explanation that both existence and peace do not inherently exist and that nirvāṇa is posited as the very object of the knowledge that an inherently established existence does not exist. So how could this be a position that asserts emptiness, the non-true existence of cyclic existence, as a nihilistic emptiness?

K Although emptiness exists, it need not be truly established; that eliminates the alleged contradiction with the scriptural passage from *Praise of the Sphere of Reality*

The meaning of the scriptural passage from *Praise of the Sphere of Reality*, too, is:

In order to avert the apprehension of things as truly existent, the root of all other mental afflictions, the sūtras teaching emptiness, the absence of inherent establishment, teach that the referent object of that apprehension does not exist. They do not teach that emptiness does not exist—the naturally pure realm which negates the object of that apprehension of true existence, the two types of self.

Although emptiness exists, it is not truly established. That is why this scriptural passage serves as a source for refuting the propositions “The emptiness that negates the object of negation, true existence, does not exist either” and “In order to abandon all the mental afflictions, it is not necessary to realize emptiness, the ultimate suchness.”

L You cannot avert the apprehension of true existence by making a truly established reality your object of meditation

In fact it says in that very *Praise* [336]:

“Impermanence,” “emptiness,” and “suffering”—  
Those three serve to cleanse the mind.  
The teaching that serves to cleanse it best is the  
Absence of inherent existence.

And:

The lack of inherent existence of dharmas<sup>319</sup>—  
Meditate on it as expanse of reality.

The fact that these phenomena lack an inherently established inherent existence is said to be the expanse of reality which is the object of meditation, and just meditation on that is said to be the best purifier of the mind. Therefore, how could it be suitable to interpret this as the position that the emptiness that is the absence of inherent establishment of phenomena appearing inherently established is a nihilistic emptiness and that, therefore, a truly established emptiness separate from it should be posited as the emptiness that is the object of meditation. That is like propounding that when it comes to eliminating the suffering of fear arising from apprehending a snake in the East even though there is none, showing that there is no snake in the east will not serve as an antidote, but that rather one needs to show that there is a tree in the west. This is because one would propound that when it comes to eliminating the suffering of sentient beings as they adhere to true existence with regard to what appears truly existent, the realization that the basis with regard to which there is the apprehension of true existence lacks true existence will not serve as an antidote, but that rather one needs to show some other useless basis to be truly existent.

<sup>318</sup> Tib. *srid pa*, usually translated here as “existence.”

<sup>319</sup> Tib. *chos*, usually translated here as “phenomena.”

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3 Presentation of conventional and ultimate truths

This has four points:

- A The basis on which the two truths are divided
- B The number of divisions
- C The meaning of dividing them in that way
- D Explaining the meaning of the individual divisions

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3A The basis from which the two truths are divided

Earlier scholars had many ways of asserting the basis of division of the two truths. However, here, objects of knowledge are the basis of division because in the *Compendium of Trainings* it says:

Objects of knowledge<sup>320</sup> are also exhausted as these conventional<sup>321</sup> and ultimate truths.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3B The number of divisions

According to the *Fundamental Treatise on the Middle Way* which says: “Worldly conventional truths and ultimate truths,” objects of knowledge are divided into the two, conventional and ultimate truths.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3C The meaning of dividing them in that way

This has two points:

- 1 Presentation of earlier positions [337]

The two that are divided into two must be different, so in what way are they different?

In this regard, there are three types of difference: A pot and a woolen cloth, for instance, are different entities. Product and impermanence, for instance, are one entity and different isolates. With these two types, the constituting causes of the difference are both functioning things. When either is not a functioning thing,<sup>322</sup> the difference is a difference that negates their being one. Many earlier scholars propounded that the two truths were different in that their being one was negated. On the other hand, some asserted that the two were one entity and different isolates.

- 2 Proving the validity of our own system

The relation of essential identity<sup>323</sup> is fine according to *Illumination of the Middle Way* which says that it is not contradictory even for non-functioning things. Therefore the oneness of entity and difference of isolates is not contradictory even if both constituting causes of the difference are non-functioning things or if either of them is. In the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* it says:

Two aspects of the own entity of all things are taught: they are the conventional and the ultimate.

Thus, with regard to the entity of each and every object, there is both a conventional and an ultimate entity. If the two truths were not one entity, since it would also be very unreasonable for them to be different entities, they would be without entity and therefore non-existent,<sup>324</sup> because whatever exists necessarily exists as either one entity or many.

In *Essay on the Mind of Enlightenment* it says:

<sup>320</sup> The Tibetan word *shes bya* literally means “(things) to be known,” i.e. everything there is.

<sup>321</sup> The word *kun rdzob* is mostly rendered here as “conventional(ity)” but occasionally as “concealing” or “concealer” if that alternative meaning is felt to be dominant. The same is true for sections where the primary meaning of its near-synonym *tha snyad*, “designation,” is stressed.

<sup>322</sup> When either is a non-product, a permanent phenomenon.

<sup>323</sup> Tib. *bdag gcig*, “of one nature,” and *ngo bo gcig*, “of one entity” are synonyms in this context.

<sup>324</sup> Everything that exists has its own entity, however, none that subsists only through its own nature. In that respect the statement does not contradict the argument presented in the previous paragraphs as it does not refer to an essence established by its own nature independently of anything else.

Conventions are explained as emptiness.  
Emptiness only is the conventional,<sup>325</sup>  
For surely this does not occur without that,  
Just like a product and impermanence.

If a sprout, for instance, were a different entity from its own ultimate entity, it would also be a different entity from its emptiness of true existence; so the sprout would be truly established. Therefore, since it is not a different entity, it is one entity. Although a sprout is empty of its own true existence, it is not its own ultimate truth.

A few texts [338] set forth that the two truths are neither one nor different. Some of them are referring to inherently established oneness and difference whereas others are referring to their not being either different entities or one isolate.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D Explaining the meaning of the individual divisions

This has three points:

- 1 Conventional truths
- 2 Ultimate truths
- 3 Indication that the number of the two truths is definite

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-1 Conventional truths

This has three points:

- A Explaining the meaning of the words *conventional* and *truth*
- B The definition of a conventional truth
- C Divisions of conventionalities

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-1A Explaining the meaning of the words *conventional* and *truth*

This has two points:

- 1 Explaining the meaning of the word *conventional*
- 2 Explaining the meaning of the word *truth*

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-1A1 Explaining the meaning of the word *conventional*

This has two points:

- A The actual meaning

In *Clear Words* three meanings for *the conventional* are explained: “concealers of suchness,” “mutually dependent objects,” and “worldly designations.” The latter are said to have the characteristics of objects of expression and means of expression, knowers and objects of knowledge and so forth, so they are not just subjective designations, that is consciousnesses and expressions. Also, objects of knowledge and objects of expression should not all be held to be conventional truths.

In this regard, the convention which is the concealing consciousness in whose perspective form and the like is posited as truly existent is the first of the three. In fact it is the ignorance superimposing on phenomena that they have their own inherently established entity which does not exist. This is because true establishment is in fact impossible, which is why the positing of objects as truly existent is in the mental perspective. In a mental perspective that does not apprehend true existence there is no positing objects as truly existent. That being so, it says in the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”*:

Delusion is a concealer, for it obscures nature.  
Its fabrications made to seem truly existent

<sup>325</sup> Geshe Thubten Soepa glossed the first two lines in these terms: “That which is empty is the conventional, and it is conventional only due to its emptiness.”

Were called “conventional truths” by the Capable One<sup>326</sup>  
And fabricated things he called conventions.

B Abandoning mistakes about this

In the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* it says:

In this way, conventional truths are posited for the time being under the power of afflictive ignorance which is included in the limbs of existence. For hearers, [339] solitary realizers, and bodhisattvas who have abandoned afflictive ignorance and who see composed things<sup>327</sup> as resembling the existence of mirror images and the like, they are fabricated natures rather than truths because they do not exaggerate them as truly existent. To children they are deceptive, but to others they are mere conventionalities due to their interdependent arising similar to that of illusions and the like.

This statement does not indicate that whenever conventional truths are posited as existent, they are posited as existent due to ignorance; nor does it indicate that in the perspective of the minds of hearers, solitary realizers, and bodhisattvas who have abandoned afflictive ignorance, conventional truths are not posited.

The reason for the first point is that, as explained earlier, afflictive ignorance is the apprehension of true existence, which is why the object it apprehends does not even exist conventionally. Whatever is a conventional truth necessarily exists conventionally. Therefore, if something is conventional in the sense of a basis for positing phenomena as conventionally existent, it must be something that is not taken as conventional with regard to afflicted ignorance.

The reason for the second point is that those who have abandoned the conventionality of afflicted ignorance do not have the conventionality of adherence to true existence in whose perspective true existence is posited. That is the reason why composed things are established as untrue in their perspective, but it does not establish that they are not conventional truths. Consequently the statement that, in their perspective, composed things are mere conventions means that for them, from among the two components, *conventional* and *truth*, *truth*<sup>328</sup> cannot be posited. So the word *mere* eliminates *truth*, but not *conventional truth*. The intention of setting forth the two, mere conventions and conventional truths, should be understood like that.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-1A2 Explaining the meaning of the word “truth”

This has two points:

A The actual meaning

In *Clear Words* it says [340]:

That which is a truth for the world in a concealing manner is a worldly conventional truth.

This is explained in the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”*:

That which appears truly existent and inherently separate due to a concealer while not existing inherently is true for a worldly, mistaken concealer. Therefore it is a worldly conventional truth.

In accordance with this clear statement, worldly conventional truths should be understood as truths for the concealer which is the ignorance explained earlier. They should not be understood as truly established conventionally because otherwise it would contradict a system in which establishment

<sup>326</sup> Tib. *thub pa*, usually rendered here as “Sage.”

<sup>327</sup> Tib. *‘du byed*, usually translated here as “compositional factors.”

<sup>328</sup> The Tibetan term *bden pa* can mean “truth” as well as “true.” Likewise, *kun rdzob* can mean “conventional,” “conventionally existent,” and “convention.” This uncertainty as to the grammatical function of words can lead to ambiguities, misinterpretations, and extensive explanations of how each word should be understood—like the one here.

by way of own an character is impossible even conventionally. Also, the refutation of true existence and the establishment of the lack of true existence are performed conventionally. The explanation by Master Jñānagarbha of abidance as conventionally true should also be understood in this manner.

B Clearing up doubts about that

Now then, one may think that for a concealer apprehending true existence, reality and the two selves are truths. Therefore they would be truths for a concealer.

If that which is merely true for a concealer apprehending true existence were posited as a truth for a concealer, such would indeed be the case. However, that has not been propounded. It was merely explained for what concealer the *truth of conventional truth* is a true convention, and how it is true for it.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-1B The definition of a conventional truth

This has six points:

1 How all phenomena have two natures, along with a source

Each and every external and internal phenomenon has both a conventional and an ultimate nature. More specifically, if this is illustrated with regard to a sprout for example, they are the sprout's nature found by a reasoning consciousness<sup>329</sup> that perceives the meaning of suchness, a true object of knowledge, and the sprout's nature found by a conventional consciousness that comprehends a deceptive object, a false object of knowledge. The former is the nature of the sprout's ultimate truth and the latter is the nature of the sprout's conventional truth. In accordance with that it says in the *Commentary on the "Middle Way"* [341]:

Two natures<sup>330</sup> of all things are apprehended,  
By seeing what is real and what's deceptive.  
The objects of seeing the real were taught to be suchness,  
Deceptive objects seen are conventional truths.

2 Indication that they are found by dissimilar valid cognitions

This indicates that with respect to the sprout's nature, there are two natures, the two truths. The ultimate nature is found by the former consciousness ("seeing the real"), and the conventional nature is found by the latter ("Deceptive objects seen"). One single nature of the sprout as two truths in dependence on the former and latter consciousness is not indicated. In the *Explanation of Candrakīrti's "Commentary on the 'Middle Way'"* it says:

Two aspects of the own nature of all things have been taught. They are conventional and ultimate.

It is saying that the natures of each and every thing having been divided into the two, the ultimate ones are found by consciousnesses that perceive the real meaning, and the conventional ones are found by consciousnesses that see what is false.

3 How it is necessary to acquire the Madhyamaka view in order to ascertain the basis as a conventional truth

Conventional truths are not really true but merely true in the perspective of the apprehension of true existence. Therefore, in order to ascertain their meaning isolates, it is necessary to ascertain them as deceptive. In order to ascertain a basis of characteristics, for instance a pot, as a false object, a deceptive object of knowledge, it is necessary to acquire a view, with regard to that basis, that

<sup>329</sup> This does not refer to a conceptual consciousnesses only. Direct knowledge of suchness may also be called a *reasoning consciousness (rigs shes)*, presumably because such knowledge is also based on reasoning, having arisen from logical investigation. (Tibetan-Sanskrit-English Dictionary, A project of the Tibetan Studies Institute, Boonesville, Virginia, and the University of Virginia Tibetan Studies Program, © Jeffrey Hopkins 1992).

<sup>330</sup> According to the above explanations the two truths are two distinct aspects of one nature (*ngo bo*). Here these two aspects are being stressed and referred to as two natures (*ngo bo*).



negates the referent object apprehended as true by means of a reasoning consciousness. This is because a falsity is not established by valid cognition without its truth having been negated by reasoning.

- 4 Even if the meaning of *conventional truth* is not established for a mind, that does not contradict its ascertainment of the basis of characteristics, such as a pot

Although a pot, a woolen cloth, and so forth are conventional truths, when they are being established by a mind, the mind does not need to establish the meaning of conventional truth. Likewise, although pots, woolen cloths, and so forth are not inherently existent and accordingly illusion-like in their appearance, the minds that establish them need not establish their meaning of being illusion-like.

- 5 How it is inadmissible to posit pots and the like as conventional in relation to the perspective of a worldly consciousness and as ultimate in relation to āryas

That is why [342] it is inadmissible to propound that, in this system, pots, woolen cloths, and so forth are posited as conventional truths for the consciousnesses of ordinary beings without the Madhyamaka view, and that they are posited as ultimate truths from an ārya's point of view. That would be the opposite of what is set forth in the *Explanation of Candrakīrti's "Commentary on the 'Middle Way'"*:

That is to say, something that is ultimate for ordinary beings is a mere conventionality for āryas with the sphere of activity involving appearances. For them something that is an emptiness of inherent existence is ultimate.

Ordinary beings apprehend pots and the like as truly existent, and precisely that is the apprehension of ultimate existence. In relation to their consciousness, pots and the like are therefore ultimately established rather than being conventional objects. The bases that for them are ultimately established, pots and the like, are conventionalities in relation to the vision of exalted wisdom in the continuum of an ārya which comprehends illusion-like appearances. Since they cannot be posited as true in relation to that consciousness, they are said to be *mere conventionalities*.

- 6 The need to differentiate between pots and the like and their inherent existence

Since their inherent existence is thus said to be an ultimate truth, you should discriminate and say that pots and the like are conventionalities and their inherent existence is ultimate for āryas. You should not propound that pots and the like are ultimates for āryas. This is because their reasoning consciousness seeing the meaning of reality does not find pots and the like, and because that which is found by a reasoning consciousness seeing the meaning of reality is said to be the meaning of an ultimate truth.

## 2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-1C Divisions of conventionalities

This has six points:

- 1 The ways in which Prāsaṅgika and Svātantrika posit the object of negation do not agree, therefore they are also not the same in their distinction of real and wrong conventionalities

The Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas ascertain that consciousness which appears to be established by way of its own character<sup>331</sup> exists just as it appears. Therefore they do not distinguish between real and wrong subjects but instead distinguish whether the appearances of objects do or do not exist by way of their own character in accordance with how they appear.<sup>332</sup> They assert this in accordance with the following statement in Jñānagarbha's *Distinguishing the Two Truths (Satyadvayāvibhaṅga)*:

<sup>331</sup> The Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas assert that all phenomena exist conventionally, but not ultimately, through their own characteristics.

<sup>332</sup> Appearances that do not accord with reality and are recognized by the world as deceptive are *wrong conventionalities* according to proponents of Svātantrika-Madhyamaka. By contrast, conventional phenomena commonly taken to exist and certifiable by conventional means are referred to as *true conventionalities* in that system.

They seem the same, but since some can [343]  
And some cannot fulfill a function,  
A distinction is made between real  
And unreal conventionalities.

This system asserts that whatever appears to the ignorant as established by way of its own character is an appearance of that consciousness polluted by ignorance. Therefore conventional objects are not distinguished as the two, real and wrong.

- 2 Although the reflection of a face is not a conventional truth in relation to a worldly person familiar with words, it is a conventional truth generally speaking

Now, it says in the *Explanation of Candrakīrti's "Commentary on the 'Middle Way'"*:

Whatever is false even conventionally is not a conventional truth.

For the worldly conventional consciousness of someone familiar with words something like the reflection of a face is not true as a face. Hence it is not conventionally true from that point of view. While this is so, it is still the object found by a consciousness seeing a deceptive object, a false object of knowledge; so it is a conventional truth. The consciousness which the reflection appears to be mistaken about its appearing object, and likewise the ignorant to whom something blue and the like appears to be established by way of its own character are mistaken about their appearing object.

- 3 Although that mistaken consciousness does not posit a true object of comprehension, it helps posit a false object of comprehension

When a true object of comprehension is posited, it would be contradictory for a consciousness mistaken in that way to posit it. However, precisely that is helpful for positing false objects of comprehension. Otherwise something could not be posited as a conventional truth if it had not been established conventionally; so when illusion-like falsities are posited conventionally, they could not be posited as conventional truths.

- 4 How real and wrong conventionalities are posited in relation to the world, along with a source

The Prāsaṅgika system posits six consciousnesses unaffected by temporary causes of deception, six consciousnesses that are the opposite of those, six objects apprehended by the former six consciousnesses, and [344] six objects apprehended by the latter six. The wrong objects and subjects are posited as wrong conventionalities, whereas the objects and subjects that are not wrong are posited as real conventionalities. Furthermore, it posits them as real and wrong conventionalities in relation to worldly or conventional valid cognition rather than in relation to a reasoning consciousness that accords with an ārya's vision. In our Madhyamaka system the two, the appearances of reflections and the like and the appearances of blue and the like to someone with ignorance, therefore do not differ with regard to whether or not he is mistaken in relation to his appearing object. That is why real and wrong conventionalities are not distinguished.<sup>333</sup> In the *Commentary on the "Middle Way"* it says:

That which the worldly realize, apprehended  
By means of the six non-defective senses

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The Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas do not subscribe to the latter view. (Geshe Thubten Ngawang, *Systematisches Studium des Buddhismus*, semester no. 7, unit 16, transcript p. 5)

<sup>333</sup> "That is why the Prāsaṅgika-Mādhyamikas do not accept the division of conventional truths into real (flawless) and false (wrong) conventional truths, the way Svātantrika-Mādhyamikas do: According to the proponents of Prāsaṅgika conventional truths are false conventional truths at any rate. Consequently a conventional truth is always deceptive and never unobjectionable and genuine. The only division they endorse discriminates between phenomena the world apprehends as unobjectionable conventional truths and phenomena the world apprehends as wrong conventional truths." (Translated from Geshe Thubten Ngawang, *Systematisches Studium des Buddhismus*, semester no. 9, unit 10, transcript p. 5 f.)

Is true from only the worldly perspective. The rest  
Is posited as wrong from that perspective.

- 5 The exception that conventional valid cognition cannot posit the opposite of the mode of apprehension associated with temporary pollution by bad tenets

Conventional valid cognition does not establish the opposite of, for instance, one of the two apprehensions of persons and phenomena established through their own character: the mode of apprehension arising from the mind's being temporarily polluted by one's own bad tenets. This is an exception.<sup>334</sup>

- 6 A consciousness need not be mistaken even though it has dualistic appearance

Moreover, although dualistic appearances occur for the exalted wisdom knowing the varieties free from all causes of pollution by predispositions of ignorance, it is not mistaken with regard to its appearing objects. The reason is explained elsewhere.<sup>335</sup>

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-2 Ultimate truths

This has three points:

- A Explaining the meaning of *ultimate* and *truth*
- B The definition of an ultimate truth
- C Divisions of ultimate truths

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-2A Explaining the meaning of *ultimate* and *truth*

This has three points:

- 1 The actual meaning

In *Clear Words* it says:

It is an object and it is ultimate; therefore it is the ultimate object.<sup>336</sup> Since it is true, it is the ultimate object truth.<sup>337</sup>

This asserts that both [345] *ultimate* and *object* apply to the *ultimate object truth*.

- 2 How it is true

The way in which an ultimate truth is true is its non-deceptiveness. Specifically, it does not deceive the world, abiding in one way and appearing in a different way. In the *Commentary on "Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning"* it says that an ultimate truth is merely posited as existent by the power of worldly conventions.<sup>338</sup>

<sup>334</sup> This is a departure from the foregoing and an exception in that, here, one's perception is impaired by a temporary source of deception which is not detected as wrong by one's worldly understanding.

<sup>335</sup> The topic is explained in detail in Jé Tsongkhapa's *Illumination of the Thought (dgongs pa rab gsal)*, his commentary on Candrakīrti's *Madhyamakāvatāra*. There it says: "In the case of a buddha, indirect (implicit) knowledge such that something is known without itself appearing to the consciousness is inconceivable. Therefore conventional phenomena must also appear to his wisdom consciousness and be apprehended in this manner directly (explicitly). It follows that the Buddha knows conventional phenomena in a way in which they appear to his wisdom that realizes the multiplicity of phenomena, with the duality of object and subject."

Guy Newland comments on this in *The Two Truths* (Newland 1992: 199): "When a concealer-truth appears to a non-conceptual awareness that explicitly realizes it, it must appear in association with dualistic appearance. This holds true regardless of whether the person involved is a Buddha or an ordinary sentient being. However, when sentient beings—including Hīnayāna Foe Destroyers and pure ground Bodhisattvas—see a concealer-truth, the latencies of their own ignorance cause the object to appear to be inherently existent. Buddhas, on the other hand, do not have any appearance of inherent existence from their own side. They see the appearances of inherent existence that arise within the minds of sentient beings, but see them only through the force of their appearance to those sentient beings. Therefore, while buddhas do have dualistic appearance of pure and impure conventionalities, they have no error or imperfections because all phenomena appear to them exactly as they are, without any superimposed appearance of inherent existence."

<sup>336</sup> Tib. *don dam pa*, usually translated here simply as "ultimate."

<sup>337</sup> Tib. *don dam bden pa*, usually translated here simply as "ultimate truth."

<sup>338</sup> "Without relying on conventions the ultimate cannot be taught." (Nāgārjuna, *Root Text on Wisdom*, chap. XXIV,

3 The different meanings of the word *truth* associated with the two truths

That being so, the meaning of the word *truth* in *conventional truth*, which is a *truth in the perspective of the apprehension of true existence*, and the meaning of the word *truth* in *ultimate truth* are not the same.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-2B The definition of an ultimate truth

This has two points:

- 1 The actual definition
- 2 Rejecting an objection

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-2B1 The actual definition

This has nine points:

A How to identify the definition of an ultimate truth

The definition of an ultimate truth is as explained above: in the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it is said to be that which is found by seeing the meaning of a real object of knowledge. In the commentary on that it says:

That is to say the ultimate gains its own entity through being the object of the special exalted wisdom of those who perceive reality, but it is not established by way of its own selfhood. This is one nature.

It is said to be found by the uncontaminated exalted wisdom comprehending suchness and not to be established by way of its own entity, so the proposition that something is established as truly existent if found by uncontaminated meditative equipoise is being refuted. The words “special exalted wisdom” indicate that what is found by any wisdom of an ārya is not sufficient, and that instead only what is found by a special exalted wisdom, the exalted wisdom that knows the mode,<sup>339</sup> is an ultimate truth. The meaning of “found” is *established as such by that consciousness*, like with conventionalities.

B How it is found by an ārya's uncontaminated exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise that knows the mode

Yet how does it find it? While the eyes of someone with a cataract see falling hairs on the basis of the air around, [346] the eyes of someone without a cataract do not see even an appearance of falling hairs on the same basis. Likewise, those who are damaged by the cataract of ignorance observe an own entity of aggregates and the like. With the uncontaminated exalted wisdom of meditative equipoise of those who have exhausted all the predispositions of ignorance and of āryas on the path of learning, in terms of the mode of perceiving suchness, not even subtle dualistic appearance is perceived, like with the eyes of someone who does not have a cataract. The nature perceived through this mode of perception is an ultimate truth.

C A source for that

In the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it says:

Where wrong entities such as falling hairs  
Are imputed through the force of cataracts  
One with pure eyes sees the nature, suchness.  
Suchness should be known here in like manner.

In its commentary it also says:

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verse 10, translated from Geshe Thubten Ngawang, *Systematisches Studium des Buddhismus*, semester no. 9, unit 3, transcript p. 3)

<sup>339</sup> The other distinctive feature of wisdom is knowledge of the multiplicity of phenomena along with their individual characteristics.

Whatever inherent existence of aggregates and the like, those free from the predispositions of ignorance, the buddhas, perceive in the manner of those without cataracts seeing falling hairs; that is their ultimate truth.

D Indicating that a nirvāṇa is an ultimate truth

The ultimate perceived in this manner is the ultimate nature of two natures that each and every phenomenon has. More specifically, it is both the naturally pure nirvāṇa, which is the emptiness of inherent establishment of phenomena, and just that natural emptiness free from all the different seeds of defilements, the nirvāṇa which is a true cessation.

E It is not the intended meaning of the *Commentary on “Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning”* that nirvāṇa is a conventional truth

In the *Commentary on “Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning”* it says:

Is a nirvāṇa also a conventional truth? It is so.

Also:

Therefore a nirvāṇa is only imputed as a conventional truth.

Those statements mean that positing a nirvāṇa, an ultimate truth, as existent, [347] also implies positing it as merely existent in the perspective of a conventional consciousness, a conventional truth. They do not mean that this system asserts a nirvāṇa as a conventional truth because that same commentary also explains that the three truths are conventional truths and that nirvāṇa is an ultimate truth. In the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* the other three truths are also set forth as conventional truths and the truth of cessation as an ultimate truth. And in response to the objection that if a nirvāṇa were posited as conventionally existent, this would contradict the statement that it is an ultimate truth, it says that it was taught as conventionally true only by worldly designations.<sup>340</sup>

F A source for positing all phenomena by the power of designations

Therefore everything posited as existent is posited by the power of worldly designations. In the *Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitāsūtra (Sūtra of the Perfection of Wisdom in 100,000 Verses)* it says:

All these phenomena are labeled in dependence on worldly designations, they are not ultimate.

And in *Seventy Stanzas on Emptiness* it also says:

Abidance, production, destruction, existence,  
Non-existence or low, equal, special  
Were taught by the Buddha by the power of worldly  
Terms and not by the power of reality.

In other words all the various presentations of production, destruction, and abidance, low, supreme, and intermediate, as well as “This exists and this does not exist” that the Victor taught, were taught as merely posited by the power of worldly designations. He said that they were not posited by the power of appreciating real abidance that is not merely posited by the power of designations.

G Establishing as valid that something need not be truly established if it is ultimately true because of the need to differentiate between a truth for a reasoning consciousness and a truth bearing analysis

Master Jñānagarbha explains:

Since it is a truth for an ultimate consciousness, it is an ultimate truth.

<sup>340</sup> Here the double meaning (*convention* and *designation*) of Tib. *tha snyad* should be kept in mind. In this paragraph and the following it is translated as *designation* because of the context.



He thereby also explains that a reasoning consciousness is ultimate and thus says that what is non-deceptive for it is a truth. However, [348] the intended meaning is not *truly existent* in terms of bearing analysis, because in that text the true establishment of all phenomena is refuted.

Therefore we assert the proposition “If the ultimate were not true for an ultimate consciousness, the conventional would not be true for a conventional consciousness.” However, to propound that “If the former were not established for the former, the latter would not be established for the latter” is to say that if the negation of a truth were not truly established, the phenomena that are the basis of the negation would be truly established. This is because an ultimate truth is posited as the mere negation of true existence in the phenomena that are the basis of the negation, and because to suggest that phenomena are not conventionally established is to suggest that they are not falsely established. Thus it would be totally incoherent because it is due to the very fact that the appearing phenomena, which do not exist in a truly established way, are not established as truly existent, that the bases of negation must be established as falsities.

H For something to be posited as conventionally existent it must not be damaged by any valid cognition

Therefore, although for something to be posited as conventionally existent, it need not be established by a reasoning consciousness of suchness, it must not be damaged by any valid cognition, that is by a conventional or reasoning consciousness. The *Commentary on “Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning”* explains that since the appropriated aggregates conventionally abide as the four, impermanent and so forth, the apprehension of the four is unmistakable in relation to that, and since the aggregates do not abide even conventionally as the four, permanent and so forth, the apprehension of those four is mistaken in relation to that. In the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it says:

The self as imputed by the tīrthikas  
Carried away by the torpor of unknowing  
And what is imputed to magic displays and illusions  
Does not even exist from a worldly perspective.

This is saying that the self, the primal matter, and so forth, imputed by the tīrthikas, as well as the objects conceived as the horses, elephants, and the like of illusions, do not even conventionally exist. Therefore the proposition that it is the Prāsaṅgika approach to posit as conventionally existent what only exists for a mistaken mind [349] is meaningless babble. None of the other great Mādhyamikas asserts this either.

Also, in the *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* objects and subjects are taken to be equal in terms of existence and non-existence; however, not in terms of *mere* existence and non-existence in general. Rather, the two are taken to be equal in terms of inherent existence and non-existence.

I Although phenomena are merely posited by the power of conventions, this does not eliminate their establishment by valid cognition and so forth

That being so, whatever is posited as conventionally existent is posited as existent by the power of nominal conventions, but not everything posited by the power of these is asserted to be conventionally existent. Although phenomena are asserted as merely posited by the power of conventions, the word *mere* eliminates the meaning that they are not subjective conventions. It does not at all eliminate that the objects posited are established by valid cognition.

This system is not dissatisfied with such a way of positing phenomena by the power of conventional imputation. What it does not do is search for an imputed object that is not merely posited like that but exists in accordance with its meaning and, if it is found, posit it as existent whereas otherwise, posit it as non-existent. Rather, it asserts that if something findable emerged as one searches with this search method, it would be truly established. Therefore it does not assert even conventionally that anything is found to exist upon such analysis. From there the dividing line between analyzing and not analyzing suchness is also drawn. So the Prāsaṅgikas see that if something established by



way of its own character existed, it would have to exist by way of its own entity as an object not merely posited by the power of subjective designations. Having seen that, they do not even conventionally assert inherent existence, existence by way of own character, or existence by way of an own entity. This has already been explained in detail elsewhere.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-2B2 Rejecting an objection

This has two points:

- A Setting out an objection
- B Explanatory answer

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-2B2A Setting out an objection

If the Buddha's exalted wisdom knowing the mode of being of phenomena finds ultimate truths, then how about the following statement from the *Explanation of Candrakīrti's "Commentary on the 'Middle Way:'"*

Is such a nature not invisible? Therefore how do they perceive it? That is indeed true, however, [350] it is said that they perceive it by means of non-perception.

It explains that not to perceive anything at all is to perceive suchness. As a source for that Candrakīrti quotes an explanation that ultimate truths are beyond even the objects of omniscient exalted wisdom. He also explains that at the level of buddhahood the movement of the mind and mental factors has permanently stopped and that at the time of the ten powers, when a buddha does not perceive aggregates and so forth, he knows all phenomena. How are you not contradicting these explanations?

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-2B2B Explanatory answer

This has fifteen points:

- 1 There is no contradiction because the meaning associated with this system is to point out that an exalted wisdom knowing the mode does not observe conventionalities in the perspective of perceiving the ultimate

"They perceive by means of non-perception" does not refer to not seeing any objects at all. Rather, it points out that if these objects, observed due to the cataract of ignorance, existed in reality, they would have to be observed by the uncontaminated exalted wisdom of an ārya's meditative equipoise; so their suchness is perceived by way of their utter non-perception. This is because if the object of negation existed, it would be observable. On account of its non-observation, the realization of the negation of the object of negation is posited. The meaning of "Seeing without seeing is the most excellent" should also be understood in this way.

- 2 A source for that

Thus it also says in the *Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines*:

"Those who don't see forms and also don't see feelings,  
Don't see discriminations and do not see intentions,  
Do not see consciousness nor mind nor intellect,  
See the Dharma," thus the Tathāgata teaches.

Sentient beings see space and put that into words.  
Through that way in which space is seen investigate this!  
That's how the Dharma is seen, the Tathāgata teaches.  
Through other analogies, seeing cannot be expressed.

What is not seen are said to be the five aggregates, and what is seen is the truth. [351] That is the meaning of suchness just as in the statement "He who sees interdependence sees the truth."

3 Elucidating the meaning of that sūtra passage

More specifically, in the analogy space is the mere elimination of obstructive, tangible objects, and seeing or realizing it is like not seeing the obscuring obstructive objects of negation which would be observable if they were present. What is seen is space and what is not seen are obscuring obstructions.

The last two lines negate that suchness is seen the way you see blue rather than in accordance with the analogy. The statement that the five aggregates are not seen indicates that in the perspective of suchness perceived by uncontaminated meditative equipoise, phenomena are not seen.

- 4 The *Sūtra on Engaging in the Two Truths* explains that in the perspective of perceiving the ultimate with an exalted knower of all aspects, dualistic appearance disappears, but it does not teach that the ultimate is not realized

In the *Sūtra on Engaging in the Two Truths* it says:

Son of the gods, ultimate truths are beyond all objects up to and including objects of omniscient exalted wisdoms possessing the supreme of aspects; they are not like what is expressed by “It is an ultimate truth.”

It explains that ultimate truths are not seen in accordance with the appearance to the mind of object and subject as separate when you say “It is an ultimate truth.” Therefore the quotation is a source for the disappearance of dualistic appearance rather than for the non-realization of the ultimate by the Buddha.

- 5 How such a mode of perception is also set forth in the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”*

In the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* it also says:

Without touching produced things, he realizes suchness by making manifest their nature only. That is why he is called “Buddha.”

In the perspective of perceiving suchness with a buddha’s exalted wisdom knowing the mode, reality only is said to be realized without touching<sup>341</sup> that which depends on other.

- 6 The sūtra statement that during meditative equipoise there is no movement of the mind posits that there is no movement of conceptual thought

The movement of the mind and mental factors<sup>342</sup> coming to an end [352] means that when suchness is actualized, the movement of conceptual thought comes to an end. It does not indicate that the mind or mental factors do not exist. In *Clear Words* it says:

If conceptual thought is movement of the mind, suchness is non-conceptual, for it is free from it. As is set forth in a sūtra: “What is ultimate truth? If there is not even movement of the mind in it, what need is there to mention letters.”

The meaning of the statement that there is no movement of the mind is explained as the absence of conceptual thought. Moreover, in the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* it is set forth that at the time of an ārya’s meditative equipoise on the path of learning, it has not come to a permanent end, whereas at the time of buddhahood it has.

- 7 How the proposition that an ultimate truth is not an object of knowledge and such like are nothing but wrong

Apart from that, the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”* establishes with an accompanying source, that if that nature did not exist, the bodhisattvas would pointlessly undergo hardships for the sake of realizing it:

<sup>341</sup> According to an explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa “without touching” should be understood metaphorically “the way you can take an egg from underneath a brooding hen without touching her.”

<sup>342</sup> The expression is taken up from a statement by Candrakīrti quoted above.

One may well ask: “What is their nature?” That which is unfabricated about them and which does not depend on anything else: their own entity<sup>343</sup> that is realized by a consciousness free from the cataract of ignorance. Whoever wonders whether or not it exists: If it did not exist, then for what purpose would bodhisattvas cultivate the path of the perfections, why would bodhisattvas undertake hundreds of hardships in order to realize reality?

And as a source for that:

Child of the lineage, if the ultimate did not exist, pure conduct would be meaningless, and it would be pointless for tathāgatas to come forth. Since the ultimate exists, bodhisattvas are called “those skilled in the ultimate.”

If ultimate truths [353] did not exist, it would be pointless to engage in conduct for the sake of the purity of final nirvāṇa, disciples would not be able to realize it, it would be pointless for a buddha to come to the world in order to make them realize it, and the great children of the Victors would not be skilled in ultimate truths. Thus a sūtra establishing that ultimate truths exist is quoted. Therefore it is simply wrong to say that the great master’s system propounds that ultimate truths are not objects of knowledge and that the exalted wisdom realizing suchness does not exist in an ārya’s meditative equipoise.

8 In the perspective of an uncontaminated meditative equipoise, object and subject are not posited as separate

Furthermore it says in the *Explanation of Candrakīrti’s “Commentary on the ‘Middle Way’”*:

Therefore it is posited from imputation that suchness is realized, but actually it is not that something is known by something else because neither the knower nor the object of knowledge have arisen.

The first part means that to posit the realization of suchness, taking exalted wisdom and suchness separately as object and subject, is to posit it merely in the perspective of conventional consciousness rather than in the perspective of that exalted wisdom. “The knower has not arisen” means that with respect to its object which has not inherently arisen, it is like water poured into water.

9 Suchness is actualized by way of stopping the movement of conceptual thought

As for the statement:

Since mind and mental factors do not operate with respect to suchness, the object of exalted wisdom, it is actualized only by the body.

... the object to be actualized is suchness, the subject, exalted wisdom, is that which actualizes it, and the complete enjoyment body is the agent of actualization, that is the knower.<sup>344</sup> The manner in which it is thereby actualized is by way of stopping conceptual activity of minds and mental factors as explained earlier. From the [354] explanation in the *Commentary*, it is understood that the body by means of which suchness is actualized is in the nature of peace because it is free from minds and mental factors.

<sup>343</sup> Tib. *rang bzhin*, “nature” and *rang gi ngo bo*, “own entity” should be understood as synonyms here. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

<sup>344</sup> “How is it manifested?—Through wisdom. Who manifests it?—The sambhogakāya. That is a description of realization and embodiment at the time of buddhahood.” (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

- 10 If a buddha did not perceive the aggregates and the like, his exalted knowledge of varieties would be deprecated

If a buddha did not perceive the aggregates and the like, his exalted knowledge of varieties as well as the varieties of all objects would be deprecated because the two, to exist and not to be known by a buddha, are contradictory.

- 11 The exalted knower of all aspects must know them since they appear to that knower of varieties; hence there are two types of appearing objects

Therefore the varieties of objects must appear to the exalted knower of varieties, and since it is not knowledge without aspects as far as this system is concerned, the aspects appear to it. Yet the varieties of appearing objects are both that which is unpolluted by the predispositions of ignorance such as the major and minor marks of a buddha, and that which is polluted by the predispositions of ignorance such as the impure inanimate and animate world. As for the first of these, it would be meaningless if they came to an end at the buddha level, whereas the latter come to an end at that level because their causes have come to an end.

- 12 How the manner in which they appear to an exalted knower of all aspects that realizes the varieties differs from the manner in which they appear to other persons

The mode of appearance is as follows. When a buddha's major and minor marks appear to a person who has not abandoned ignorance, they are not established by way of their own character but still appear to be. The reason for this is not that those objects arise due to the predispositions of ignorance. Rather, they appear like that due to the subject's pollution by the predispositions of ignorance. This is not because they appear to that subject merely from the perspective of appearing that way to other persons, but because they appear that way from its own perspective. Forms, sounds, and the like, objects that are not established by way of their own character but still appear that way to someone who has not abandoned ignorance, appear to a buddha's exalted wisdom knowing the varieties only by means of their appearance to persons with the pollution of ignorance. [355] They do not appear from a buddha's own perspective, independently of their appearing that way to others. Therefore a buddha knows forms and the like which are not inherently established but still appear to be, yet it is from the perspective of their appearing that way to the ignorant. Independently of their appearing that way to those persons, from a buddha's own perspective, he would not know them in the manner of their appearing that way. Hence, there is no sense that he is deceived by appearances because they do not appear from pollution existing within the exalted wisdom but due to the essential point that the exalted wisdom necessarily knows all objects of knowledge. That being so, all things appear to be selfless, not inherently existent entities from the perspective of an exalted knower of the varieties, whereby they appear as illusion-like falsities. They do not appear as truths. When they appear to that exalted wisdom in terms of their appearance to the ignorant, they merely arise as that which appears true to other persons.

- 13 It is also set forth like this in the *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning*

In *Sixty Stanzas of Reasoning* it also says:

Those who are skilled with respect to things  
See impermanent things, deceptive  
Phenomena, made up, empty, and selfless;  
They see them as what is referred to as "void."

In the commentary on this it says that those who have completed the deeds perceive things in that way.

- 14 Although the two truths, their objects, are one entity, it is not contradictory to posit individual exalted knowers in relation to them

Thus it says in the *Two Truths*:

Omniscient knowers directly perceive  
All that which arises dependently  
Devoid of imputed entities—  
Just this, just as it appears.

They are said to perceive all the varieties directly and vividly. Furthermore:

When consciousness and objects of knowledge  
And the self are not perceived,  
Since signs do not appear to them,  
They do not arise, for they firmly abide.

What is being explained is that omniscient knowers never arise from the concentration in which dualistic appearance has been completely pacified. [356]

To someone who does not understand the modes of both explanations correctly, it may seem contradictory to assert both and not just one of the two, but there is no contradiction. The exalted wisdom perceiving suchness and the exalted wisdom perceiving the varieties are one entity, but that does not in the least contradict the fact that in relation to individual objects it becomes the two, a reasoning consciousness and a conventional consciousness.

15 When the two valid cognitions comprehend objects individually on the occasion of the view of the bases or on the occasion of the fruit, you need to know which of the two valid cognitions is active

This depends on knowing well that there is not the slightest contradiction in there being two different modes of finding objects by means of the two, a reasoning consciousness and a conventional valid cognition, based on one phenomenon on the occasion of the view of the bases.<sup>345</sup> If you know well not only that about the occasion of the fruit, when the objects are comprehended by the two exalted wisdoms, but also which of the two valid cognitions is active, then you will also be able to know that they do not become a common locus<sup>346</sup> even though they do not ascertain their objects separately. Through this you will also understand fine details of the definitions of the two truths.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-2C Divisions of ultimate truths

This has eleven points:

1 The fact that different ways of dividing ultimate truths have emerged

When ultimate truths are divided, it is in accordance with the *Explanation of Candrakīrti's "Commentary on the 'Middle Way'"* which sets forth sixteen emptinesses in the case that emptiness is divided in detail, four in the case of an intermediate division—the emptiness of things, non-things, self entity, and other entity—and two if it is abridged—the selflessness of persons and phenomena.

Other texts set forth two, actual ultimates and concordant ultimates. In *Illumination of the Middle Way* it says:

Non-production accords with the ultimate and is therefore called an *ultimate*, but actually it is not because in actuality the ultimate is beyond all elaborations.

And in *Ornament for the Middle (Madhyamakālaṃkāra)* it also says:

Since it accords with the ultimate,  
This is [357] called an “ultimate.”

<sup>345</sup> The conceptual understanding at a time when emptiness has not yet been realized directly. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

<sup>346</sup> Tib. *gzhi mthun mong ba*

If it really were, it would be  
Free from all hosts<sup>347</sup> of elaborations.

In the *Two Truths* this is stated similarly, and in the auto-commentary on the *Two Truths* as well as the *Ornament for the Mahāyāna Sūtras* it is explained that the negation of ultimately existent production and the like is conventionally existent.

2 How masters of earlier generations explain the entity of the ultimate set forth in those texts

With respect to the meaning of those statements, many earlier masters differentiate two ultimate truths, specified and unspecified ones. They assert that the emptiness which negates ultimate production and so forth with regard to form and the like is the former—an imputed ultimate truth with the characteristics of a conventional truth—and that the latter cannot be made the object of any mind whatsoever, so that it is not an object of knowledge.

3 Those texts explaining the two ultimates are not meant to refer to objects only

Since that is not the meaning of those texts, they should be explained like this: the object, reality, must indeed be taken as an ultimate, but the subject, a reasoning consciousness, is also often explained as such. In the *Two Truths* it says:

Since it is without deception, a reasoning consciousness is an ultimate.

It is just as stated in *Illumination of the Middle Way* as well:

Propositions such as “Ultimately there is no production whatsoever” are also asserted to mean this: all consciousnesses arisen from correct hearing, thinking, and meditating are unmistakable subjects and therefore called “ultimate,” because their objects are most superior.

Of the two types of reasoning consciousness, the non-conceptual exalted wisdom of an ārya’s meditative equipoise is without conceptions, whereas the reasoning consciousness comprehending suchness based on signs is conceptual and so forth. The explanation in *Blaze of Reasoning* that with respect to the ultimate there is both a non-conceptual exalted wisdom and a wisdom that accords with it, has the same implications as the explanation of two ultimates in *Illumination of the Middle Way*. Therefore [358] the meaning of the texts is not that the explanation of two ultimates should be applied to objective ultimates only without applying them to subjects.

4 How to separately posit the two reasoning consciousnesses, the actual ultimate and that which accords with it

In this regard the first is an actual ultimate because when engaging in suchness it is able simultaneously to eliminate the elaborations of true existence and dualistic appearance with respect to its object. That is also what is meant by “beyond all elaborations.” A conceptual reasoning consciousness is able to negate the elaboration of true existence with respect to its object, however, it cannot eliminate the elaboration of dualistic appearance. Therefore it is an ultimate that accords in aspect with the supramundane ultimate.

5 In relation to the perspective of these minds, it is necessary to explain two modes also with respect to the ultimate of objects

It is necessary to explain two modes also with respect to the ultimate of objects, the negation of ultimate production and so forth for forms and the like. For a reasoning non-conceptual consciousness, that emptiness of an object is the actual ultimate always free from the two elaborations. For a reasoning conceptual consciousness on the other hand, it is not an actual ultimate always free from the two elaborations because it is only free from one class of them. Still, this is not to say that in general it is not an actual ultimate truth. So, except for some minds from whose perspective all the elaborations of dualistic appearance are gone, the emptiness of true

<sup>347</sup> Tib. *tshogs*, usually translated here as “collection.”



existence cannot be free from all elaborations. Therefore, the meaning of the texts is not that if something is an ultimate truth, it must be free from all elaborations of dualistic appearance.

- 6 The ultimate asserted by proponents of the establishment of illusions by a reasoning consciousness is not an actual ultimate

This being so, proponents of the establishment of illusions by a reasoning consciousness assert that a mere object established by an inferential reasoning consciousness, the collection of two appearances, that of a basis such as an aggregate and that of its emptiness of true existence, is an ultimate truth. It is a concordant ultimate, but it is not an ultimate truth.

- 7 It is inadmissible to prove that sprouts and the like appear to lack true existence with their appearing free from being one or many

Also, proving that sprouts and the like appear to lack true existence with their appearing free from being one or many [359] does not have the benefit of such a proof for a person with understanding who has not eliminated doubt as to whether or not that basis truly exists. For those who have eliminated the doubt, this sign, although a sign, is not correct.<sup>348</sup> In *Illumination of the Middle Way* it says that both the sign, *free from being one or many*, and the predicate are mere eliminations and that it is the same if *it is neither one nor many* or *it does not exist as one or many* are taken as signs. From those very examples, you can tell that the statements do not refer to affirming negatives.<sup>349</sup> Therefore this is not at all the assertion of Master Śāntarakṣita, his spiritual son Kamalaśīla, or Master Haribhadra.

- 8 The manner in which Mādhyamika proponents of complete non-abidance assert the ultimate is not in accordance with how earlier scholars explain it

As for the elimination of elaborations that are the object of negation with regard to appearances, a distinction is made between an elimination and a determining elimination. None of the great Mādhyamikas assert that the latter, the mere object comprehended by an inferential consciousness, is an ultimate truth. The explanation of their presentations in my extensive lam-rim should be understood in detail along these lines.

- 9 Although the negative of ultimate production and so forth is not a conventionality, that does not contradict the demonstration that it exists conventionally

In the course of explaining the negative of production and so forth as a concordant ultimate truth, Jñānagarbha says in his auto-commentary on *the Two Truths*:

Others hold it to be only real. Therefore “also”<sup>350</sup> has the meaning of *and*. In fact, if analyzed with reasoning, it is only conventional. Why? Since the object to be negated does not exist, it is clear that, in reality, its negative does not exist.

He is saying that others, Cittamātrins, assert that the emptiness negating a self of phenomena in the basis of negation is established in reality while his own system teaches that since the object of negation, the self of phenomena, does not exist, the negation that is its negative is not established in

<sup>348</sup> According to the Tibetan theory of debate, the question as to whether or not something is a logical sign also depends on whether it is suited to the opponent, i.e., whether, given his or her level of understanding, the argument may bring about fresh insight. In the former case the reason is given prematurely (since the person is lacking certain conditions that would make it meaningful and thus worth-while). In the latter case the reason is given too late to spur new realizations. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa.) Cf. The note concerning the term (*logical*) sign.

<sup>349</sup> Affirming negatives are negatives that do not just negate something but also imply i.e. affirmatively establish something else.

Here is an example of a correct reason according to the Prāsaṅgika-Madhyamaka system: “The subject, a sprout, is without true existence because it is free from being one or many.” In contrast, the reason advanced as part of the position criticized here: “The subject, a sprout, appears to be without true existence because it appears to be free from being one or many.”—which is not a mere negation because of the manner of appearing. The exponents of complete non-abiding mentioned in the next outline also accept an understanding which is tied up with appearances and does not realize a mere negation. (Oral Explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

<sup>350</sup> The commentary quoted refers to the word “also” in the root text it elucidates.

reality. Therefore the explanation that a negative of ultimate production and so forth is conventional means that it exists conventionally rather than indicating that it is a conventionality.

10 The statement that when something blue appears, its emptiness of true existence appears to the eye consciousness implies an affirming negative. Therefore it is not contradictory for its emptiness of true existence to be an ultimate truth

In the same commentary it also says:

“Since real production and the like [360] does not appear when a thing appears, it is a wrong conventionality. Likewise, the negative of real production and the like is a wrong conventionality: when the thing, the basis of negation, appears, it does not appear.” The answer to that: “It is not that it does not appear because it is not different from the entity of the thing.”

The explanation that whenever something like blue appears, its appearance of true existence also appears, does not imply that a mere elimination, the negative of true existence, appears to the eye consciousness. Rather, it implies an affirming negative. Therefore something like that has the characteristics of a conventionality, yet it is not contradictory for an emptiness, the mere elimination of true existence, to be an ultimate truth.

11 The way in which the two reasoning consciousnesses, non-conceptual and conceptual, along with their objects, are posited separately as actual and concordant ultimates is as before

*Ornament for the Middle* explains that although the negative of ultimate production and the like is included among real conventionalities, it is a concordant ultimate because it accords with the ultimate. As for the ultimate, it says that the entire web of elaborations such as the existence and non-existence of things has been abandoned. As for the web of elaborations, it says in the *Auto-commentary on the “Two Truths”* (*Satyadvayāvibhaṅghavṛtti*):

“It is not empty, not non-empty,  
Not existent nor non-existent,  
Neither produced nor non-produced,”  
Such is what the Bhagavan taught.

And:

Why is that? It is without elaborations. Suchness is free from the entire web of conceptions.<sup>351</sup>

As explained here, the web of conceptions is a web of elaborations. However, since those stop in the perspective of the direct realization of suchness, that is the actual ultimate. A reasoning consciousness, which is unlike it, along with its object, is a similitude of the former and so forth as before. With regard to the negative of real production and the like, there are also the two, the reasoning consciousness that negates it and its object of comprehension; so the way in which it is included among real conventions should also be understood on that basis.

This manner of explaining freedom from the web of all elaborations that exist in association with the two truths is [361] needed on many occasions.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B1B-3B3D-3      Indication that the number of the two truths is definite  
This has three points:

A The actual indication

If a given basis is positively set off as a false, deceptive object, it is necessarily eliminated as being a non-deceptive object. Therefore non-deceptive and deceptive are mutually exclusive: their

<sup>351</sup> Contrary to our common understanding of *conceptions*, the Tibetan equivalent *rtog pa* is not restricted to conscious thought, but also refers to unconscious mental construction—any meaning the mind imputes on its object (and which a conventional consciousness would then take to be present in the object by its own nature).

presence is contradictory. Since they pervade all objects of knowledge in a mutually exclusive manner, they also exclude a third group. For that reason you should know that with respect to objects of knowledge, the enumeration as the two truths is definite.

B Sources for that

In the *Meeting of Father and Son Sūtra* (*Pitaputrasamagamasūtra*) it says:

In this manner the Tathāgata realizes the two truths, conventional and ultimate. Objects of knowledge are also exhausted in these conventional and ultimate truths.

Thus all objects of knowledge are said to be exhausted in the two truths. In *Noble Concentration Definitely Showing Suchness* (*Āryatattvanirdeśasamādhī*) the enumeration as the two truths is also clearly set forth:

Everything is a convention or likewise an ultimate;  
A third truth whatsoever does not exist.

C Establishing the validity of the need to become skilled in the two truths

It is said that if you know the division between the two truths, you will not be confused about the words of the Sage whereas if you do not know it, you will not know the essence of his teachings. Moreover, you need to know it in accordance with how the protector Nāgārjuna settled it. In *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it says:

Outside the path of Lord Nāgārjuna,  
Methods for pacification do not exist.  
Those are corruptions of truths, of conventions and suchness.  
Through their corruption one cannot attain liberation.

Once conventional truths have turned into methods,  
Ultimate truths will be produced from them.  
One who does not know this twofold division  
Enters bad paths because of wrong conceptions.

Therefore it is extremely important for those who want liberation to be skilled in the two truths.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2 Divisions of special insight

This has three points:

- A The prerequisites of special insight
- B The special insight to be cultivated by ordinary beings will mainly be explained
- C The actual divisions

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2A The prerequisites of special insight [362]

Once you gain the view realizing the two types of selflessness, having attended to the prerequisites of special insight as explained before, you should cultivate special insight.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2B The special insight to be cultivated by ordinary beings will mainly be explained

Now, how many types of special insights are there? Here, not the special insights of exalted levels but the special insights you should cultivate while still an ordinary being will mainly be taught.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2C The actual divisions

This has three points:

- 1 Brief presentation
- 2 Extensive explanation
- 3 Explanation of condensed divisions

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2C-1 Brief presentation

If you carry out an exhaustive division of these special insights, they are the special insights of the four natures, the three doors, and the six search modes.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2C-2 Extensive explanation

This has three points:

- A Explanation of the four
- B Explanation of the three
- C Explanation of the six

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2C-2A Explanation of the four

The four are thorough differentiation and so forth taught in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning*. In this regard, thorough differentiation observes the varieties. Exceedingly thorough differentiation observes the mode. The first has two types, full investigation and full analysis. The second also has two types, investigation and analysis. They differentiate coarse and subtle objects. The identification of those four is set forth in *Śrāvaka Levels, Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom*, and other scriptures.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2C-2B Explanation of the three due to the entrance gates to special insight

The three doors, arisen from a sign, arisen from thorough searching, and arisen from individual investigation, are stated in the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning*. To illustrate them with respect to the meaning of selflessness for example, those three are identified as follows: The first observes the selflessness already ascertained and attends to its signs but does not settle much itself. The second settles the meaning for the sake of ascertaining that which has not been ascertained before. The third carries out an analysis, as was done before, of the meaning already ascertained.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2C-2C Explanation of the six

This has three points:

- 1 Brief presentation of the six in terms of the objects of special insight

The six search modes [363] carry out a thorough research of meanings, things, characteristics, sides, time, as well as reasoning and, having sought them, also individually investigate them.

- 2 Individual explanations

With regard to those six, the research of meanings is the research “The meaning of this word is this.” The research of things is the research “This is an internal thing. This is an external thing.” There are two search modes of characteristics: “This is a specific characteristic, that is a general characteristic,” or it is common—it is uncommon. The research of sides is a research in terms of faults and disadvantages, the black side, and in terms of positive qualities and benefits, the white side. The research of time is the research “In the past such and such occurred. In the future such and such will occur. At present such and such is occurring.” The research of reasoning is of four types. The reasoning of dependency is that the occurrence of effects depends on causes and conditions. It is also a reasoning in terms of the conventional, the ultimate, and their bases taken individually. The reasoning of the performance of functions is this: phenomena perform their own functions, such as fire performing the function of burning. It is a research in these terms: “This is the phenomenon. This is the function. This phenomenon performs this function.” The reasoning of establishment through validity is to establish a meaning without contradicting valid cognition. It is a research reflecting whether or not direct perceptions, inferences, or reliable scriptures—the three validities—exist with regard to such and such. The reasoning of nature is dedicated to natures that are well-known in the world, such as heat being the nature of fire, moisture being the nature of water, and so forth, to inconceivable natures, and to abiding natures. They are sought without thinking of other reasons for their being like that.

- 3 Explaining those six as three groups from the point of view of their objects of observation

Through the sixfold presentation in this way, the objects to be known by a yogi [364] are ascertained as three: the meanings of expressions, the varieties of objects of knowledge, and their mode. The first research is posited in terms of the first object. The research of things and the research of specific characteristics is posited in terms of the second one. The remaining three and the research of general characteristics are posited in terms of the third one.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B2C-3 Explanation of condensed divisions

This has two points:

- A The way in which the three doors and the six search modes are included in the four natures

The gates of the four special insights explained first are three in number while the search modes are taught as six. Thus the three doors and the six researches are included in the former four.

- B How there are four types of mental attention with regard to them

In *Śrāvaka Levels* it is set forth that the four types of mental attention explained above, tight engagement and so forth, are common to both calm abiding and special insight. Therefore the four mental attentions are also present in special insight.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3 How to cultivate special insight

This has three points:

- A Explaining the meaning of the statement that special insight is cultivated in dependence on calm abiding
- B What paths of what vehicle, Hīnayāna or Mahāyāna, this system relates to
- C Explanation of the actual way to cultivate special insight in dependence on calm abiding

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3A Explaining the meaning of the statement that special insight is cultivated in dependence on calm abiding

This has eight points:

- 1 The statement in many texts that they should be practiced in this order

In the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning* it says that special insight should be cultivated later, after calm abiding has first been accomplished. This is also stated similarly in many other texts such as those by Venerable Maitreya, *Bodhisattva Levels* and *Śrāvaka Levels*, Bhāvaviveka, Śāntideva, Kamalaśīla's three volume *Stages of Meditation* and *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom*.

- 2 Those texts do not say that after prior generation of calm abiding observing the varieties, special insight consists in just sustaining the observation of selflessness

The intended meaning of these texts is not that after prior generation of calm abiding observing any object without observing the meaning of selflessness, special insight is understood as just sustaining the observation of selflessness. [365] This is because the two, calm abiding and special insight, are not differentiated by way of their object of observation. *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom* also explains that after observing suchness, the emptiness of duality between subject and object, and generating calm abiding, you generate special insight through analytical meditation observing that same object of observation. Ārya Asaṅga also discusses a special insight that observes the varieties and says that after calm abiding has been generated, a special insight with peaceful and coarse aspects is cultivated in dependence on it. Moreover, he says that it is a path common to both non-Buddhists and Buddhists as well as to ordinary beings and āryas.

- 3 When calm abiding is initially being accomplished, it is inappropriate to analyze various aspects rather than placing the mind single-pointedly on the object of observation

That being so, it is inappropriate for someone who has not attained calm abiding and who is newly accomplishing it, not to practice placing the mind single-pointedly on whatever object of observation it may be, but rather to practice analyzing various aspects with respect to his object of



observation. The reason for this is that in the former manner calm abiding is achieved, whereas in the latter manner it is unachievable.

- 4 If instead of mere stabilizing meditation analytical meditation is carried out by means of the calm abiding achieved previously, very powerful single-pointed concentration is achieved

If instead of extending your earlier habituation to mere stabilizing meditation, you use the calm abiding you achieved previously to carry out analytical meditation that individually differentiates with wisdom whichever object is appropriate to the occasion—the mode or the varieties—you can eventually induce a special single-pointed concentration. Since the extremely powerful kind of single-pointed concentration achieved through that cannot be achieved through the former method of mere stabilization, analytical concentration is praised.

- 5 The true manner of accomplishing it is the reason why there are the two different modes of sustaining calm abiding and special insight even with regard to one object

The true manner of accomplishing it is to first seek calm abiding and then afterwards cultivate special insight in dependence on it. [366] So that is the general reason why there are the two different modes of sustaining calm abiding and special insight even if the object of observation, for instance selflessness, is the same.

- 6 The great power of cultivating the special insight that has the aspects of peacefulness and coarseness and the special insight that has the aspect of selflessness

In particular, the requirements for the arising of a strong and stable ascertainment are the cultivation of the special insight that has the peaceful and coarse aspects of individually analyzing the faults and positive qualities of higher and lower realms, and the cultivation of the special insight that has the aspect of selflessness in which the meaning of selflessness is investigated and then sustained by means of the wisdom of individual investigation are necessary. Therefore they have great power with respect to abandoning their individual objects of abandonment.

- 7 How there are still other special insights that observe the varieties

The special insight that observes the varieties is not merely the meditation that has the peaceful and coarse aspects of abandoning manifest mental afflictions. According to the explanation in *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom* it is also the analytical meditation that differentiates the characteristics of the eighteen spheres. Thus, from that illustration, you should know that there are still other special insights, meditations that differentiate the objects associated with the varieties.

- 8 The way in which the order here, while different from that explained in *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom*, is in accordance with the assertions of Śāntideva and so forth

*Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom* explains that prior to the generation of calm abiding and special insight observing the mode, calm abiding and special insight on the level of yoga observing the varieties should be generated. However, here, in accordance with the assertions of Śāntideva, Kamalaśīla, and so forth, some kind of calm abiding is developed first and then special insight is developed. In fact, just that special insight observing the mode will be taught here.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3B What paths of what vehicle, Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna, this system relates to

This has three points:

- 1 Explanation that this procedure is common to all vehicles, Mahāyāna and Hīnayāna, and that it is similar even for the three lower classes of tantra

Now, what does this sequential approach to the generation of calm abiding and special insight relate to, Mahāyāna or Hīnayāna, sūtra or mantra? It is common to the vehicle of hearers and solitary realizers and the great vehicle of the perfections, in fact to the four tenet systems. In my *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path of Mantra*, I have already explained the assertions of individual tantras and their great commentators to the effect that it is similar for the three classes of tantra.



- 2 Highest Yoga Tantra asserts a mode of attaining calm abiding and special insight through the yoga of analysis and stabilization, observing mind only, suchness, and so forth [367]

With regard to Highest Yoga Tantra it says in *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom* quoting from the *Guhyasamājatantra*:

When you examine your own mind—  
All phenomena dwell in the mind.  
Phenomena dwell in that vajra of space.  
Phenomena do not exist nor their nature.

Also, in the *Descent to Lañka Sūtra*:

In dependence on mind only—  
External things are not conceived.

With these and other statements Ratnākaraśānti explains that three levels of yoga are taught: the one mentioned, observing mind only, one observing suchness, and one without appearance. It appears that the mode of attaining calm abiding and special insight on the first two levels through stabilizing and analytical meditation is explained as above. Therefore he asserts that the way they are generated in a mind that observes the mode is similar.

- 3 The requirement that even in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra, the method for developing an understanding of the view accords with the Madhyamaka texts, and the subtlety that although it is necessary, during completion stage meditative equipoise, to place the mind within the view, no analytical meditation is performed

Even in the context of Highest Yoga Tantra, our system requires one's method for developing an understanding of the view to be in accord with what appears in the Madhyamaka texts. With respect to how it is sustained, there is analysis of and then mental attention to suchness during some subsequent attainment phases of the generation and completion stages. However, those practicing the completion stage who have attained the ability to penetrate vital points of the body<sup>352</sup> certainly must meditate placing the mind within the view when sustaining the meditative equipoise on suchness; nevertheless they do not perform the analytical meditation of special insight in accordance with what appears in other texts. Therefore, at that point, do not stop your single-pointed meditation on suchness within the view on the occasion of stopping analytical meditation. Since this is not the right context to clarify the reasons why proceeding like that is sufficient, I will explain here the reasons for proceeding like that on the other paths.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C Explanation of the actual way to cultivate special insight in dependence on calm abiding

This has two points:

- 1 The need to find the view
- 2 Summary of the essential points on how to sustain the view

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-1 The need to find the view

If you have not found the view of selflessness, no matter what system of meditation you perform, [368] that meditation will not rest on the meaning of suchness. That is why it is necessary to find the view.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2 Summary of the essential points on how to sustain the view

This has three points:

- A The actual way to sustain the view
- B How those ways to sustain the view were set forth by siddha pandits such as Atiśa
- C Specifics—the preparation, conclusion, and so forth of sustaining special insight

<sup>352</sup> Practitioners of completion stage yoga who can cause their energies to enter the central channel. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A The actual way to sustain the view

This has six points:

- 1 The need for both analytical and stabilizing meditation
- 2 The need to alternate analytical and stabilizing meditation
- 3 How stabilizing meditation is necessary if the stability aspect of one's meditation is lessened due to increased analysis and how more analysis is necessary if it has been impaired by increased stabilizing meditation
- 4 It is inappropriate to stop analytical meditation, holding all conceptions to be apprehensions of signs that are apprehensions of true existence
- 5 Not only that, it is also inappropriate to think that, when the ultimate is taken as the object, anything the mind apprehends is an apprehension of signs even though this is not asserted for the apprehension of conventional objects
- 6 Rejecting an objection

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A1 The need for both analytical and stabilizing meditation

If you have an understanding of the view but are not mindful of it and do not place the mind upon it during meditation on suchness, the latter will not be a meditation on suchness. Therefore, placing the mind without reflecting on anything at the end of some little preparatory analysis of the view does not constitute sustaining suchness either. Becoming mindful of the view and merely familiarizing oneself with placing the mind within it also amounts to nothing more than the above method for sustaining calm abiding. Hence, that is not the meaning of the texts explaining a different method for sustaining special insight.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A2 The need to alternate analytical and stabilizing meditation

That is why you should individually analyze the meaning of suchness by means of wisdom as explained before and then sustain it. If you only do analytical meditation, however, your calm abiding developed before will deteriorate. Therefore you should mount the horse of calm abiding, sustain analysis, and occasionally alternate it with stabilizing meditation.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A3 If the stability factor lessens through too much analysis, stabilizing meditation is needed, and if too much stabilizing meditation damages one's analysis, more analysis is needed

More specifically, if the stability factor lessens through increased analytical meditation, you should do more stabilizing meditation and refresh the stability factor. If you do not really want to analyze because of increased stabilizing meditation or if despite analysis your mind is not fit to go anywhere and becomes engrossed in the quiescence factor, you should do analytical meditation a lot. Since it is very powerful if you cultivate the two, calm abiding and special insight, in continuous equality, you should do it that way. In *Stages of Meditation III* it says:

At times when wisdom becomes very predominant because special insight has been cultivated, calm abiding is lessened. Therefore, since the mind will flicker like a butter lamp set in a breeze, it will not perceive suchness very clearly. That is why you should cultivate calm abiding at those times. Also, whenever calm abiding predominates, like someone asleep [369] you do not see suchness clearly. Therefore, at those times, you should cultivate wisdom.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A4 It is inappropriate to stop analytical meditation, holding all conceptions to be apprehensions of signs that are apprehensions of true existence

With respect to sustained analysis in this manner, it is inappropriate to hold all conceptions whatsoever to be apprehensions of signs that apprehend true existence, and stop them. This is because it was proven several times before that conceptions that are apprehensions of true existence are only one class of conceptions.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A5 Not only that, it is also inappropriate to think that, when the ultimate is taken as the object, anything the mind apprehends is an apprehension of signs even though this is not asserted for the apprehension of conventional objects

The view that anything apprehended by conception falls down, a casualty of reasoning, is a deprecation whose object of negation is excessive, and it has been proven that this is not the meaning of the scriptures either. Even without making such an assertion about other objects, you

may wonder if everything the mind apprehends regarding suchness is an apprehension of signs which is an adherence to true existence. This also is a fault, the fault of an erroneous mode of apprehension, but it does not concern everything apprehended, for it has been set forth that those who do not see beyond and seek liberation need to search for suchness by various means of scripture and reasoning.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A6 Rejecting an objection

This has two points:

- A The objection
- B The response

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A6A The objection

Now, if meditation on suchness is for the sake of generating non-conceptuality, it will not arise from individual investigation, for cause and effect must accord.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2A6B The response

This has ten points:

- 1 How non-conceptual wisdom arises from individual investigation

The Bhagavan himself gave a clear answer to that. In the *Kāśyapa Chapter* he says:

Kashyapa, it is like this. Fire springs up from two trees rubbed together by the wind and once it has sprung up, both trees are consumed by it. Likewise, Kashyapa, when there is correct individual investigation, an ārya's wisdom faculty develops and through its development that individual investigation itself is consumed.

Thus, the Buddha [370] says that an ārya's wisdom arises from individual investigation.

- 2 If you analyze in this manner, non-conceptual wisdom will arise; it does not arise because you merely abandon mental attention

In *Stages of Meditation II* it also says:

That is how they analyze with wisdom. When yogis definitely do not apprehend any entityness of things ultimately, they enter the meditative stabilization of complete non-conceptuality. They also realize that the entityness of all phenomena is non-existent. Those who fail to individually investigate the entityness of things with wisdom and to meditate on that, who instead cultivate just the mere abandonment of mental attention, will never stop conceptual thought. They will never realize the non-existence of entityness either because they will lack the light of wisdom. The Bhagavan said: "When the fire of knowing reality just as it is thus springs from correct individual investigation, it consumes the wood of conceptions like the fire that springs from wood rubbed together."

- 3 It would be very absurd if cause and effect had to be alike in all aspects

If it were not like that, the uncontaminated would not possibly arise from the contaminated, nor the supramundane from the mundane, nor a buddha from a sentient being, nor an ārya from an ordinary being, and so forth because the causes and their effects are not alike.

- 4 The passages where Nāgārjuna, in his *Essay on the Mind of Enlightenment* and so forth, reproves adherence to concepts such as the object of investigation and the investigator indicate a refutation of adherence to true existence but they do not refute the wisdom of individual investigation

In *Essay on the Mind of Enlightenment* it says:

Where conceptual thought appears,  
How could there be emptiness?

Tathāgatas don't perceive minds with aspects  
Of analyzers<sup>353</sup> and objects to analyze.

Where these agents and objects exist,<sup>354</sup>  
Enlightenment does not exist.

What is being pointed out is that someone who apprehends objects of investigation and investigators as truly existent has not attained enlightenment. If the wisdom of individual investigation were refuted [371] and if the mere objects of investigation and investigators were refuted, this would be in contradiction to the settling of suchness, in this text, through many avenues of analysis associated with individual investigation. Also, if those two were not perceived by buddhas, they would be non-existent.

And in that same text it says:

Meditating on emptiness—  
Called *non-production*, *emptiness*,  
And *selflessness*—as inferior nature,  
Is not to meditate on it.

This does not refute the meditation that observes selflessness, the emptiness which is the non-existence of inherent production. Rather, it refutes the meditation on an emptiness that is being reprovved, an inferior nature apprehended as truly existent. In *Praise of the Transcendent One* it says:

When you teach the nectar of emptiness  
To clear away all conceptual thinking,  
Whosoever adheres to it,  
Is very much reprovved by you.

In the same way it says in *Precious Garland*:

Accordingly self and selflessness  
Are not, as they should, correctly observable.  
The views of a self and selflessness  
Were therefore rejected by the Buddha.<sup>355</sup>

It is also saying that since neither self nor selflessness are established in reality, the Buddha rejected the view that the two really exist but did not refute the view of selflessness. This is because according to the above quotation from *Refutation of Objections* (*Vigrahavyāvartanī*), if phenomena were not without the inherent existence of inherent establishment, inherent establishment would exist.

5 Likewise, how sūtra statements about engaging in signs also imply truly established signs

In the *Verse Summary of the Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* it says:

Although the bodhisattva thinks “This aggregate is empty,”  
Engaged in signs he distrusts the basis of non-production.

And in the *Perfection of Wisdom in One Hundred Thousand Lines* (*Śatasāhasrikāprajñāpāramitā-sūtra*):<sup>356</sup>

When engaging in what is called *empty and selfless form* one engages in signs, one does not engage in the perfection of wisdom.

<sup>353</sup> Tib. *rtog byed*; *rtog* is usually translated here as “investigate.”

<sup>354</sup> Literally “Where investigators and objects of investigation exist.”

<sup>355</sup> Tib. *thub pa chen po*, “Mahāmuni”, “great sage.”

<sup>356</sup> The sūtra is referred to here as Tib. *yum chen mo*, “Great Mother.”

The meaning of these statements [372] refers to the apprehension of emptiness and so forth as truly existent.

6 Otherwise it would contradict the praise in the sūtras for the analysis of emptiness with wisdom

Otherwise the phrase “He distrusts the basis of non-production” would not make sense either, for to have trust in it would also be to engage in signs. In the same sūtra it says:

One who thoroughly knows that things<sup>357</sup> lack inherent existence  
Is engaged in the supreme perfection of wisdom.

And:

When uncompounded, compounded, black, and white phenomena  
Are shattered by wisdom and not even dust remains to be seen,  
In the world this is counted as the perfection of wisdom.

In the *King of Meditative Stabilizations Sūtra* it also says:

If phenomena are discerned<sup>358</sup> as selfless,  
And once discerned are meditated on,  
That is the cause for attaining the fruit, nirvāṇa.  
Through any other cause you won’t find peace.

Also, in *Essence of the Perfection of Wisdom (Prajñāhṛdaya)*, Śāriputra asks:

“How should a bodhisattva who wishes to engage in the profound perfection of wisdom train?”

And Avalokiteśvara replies:

“He should thoroughly and correctly view even these five aggregates as empty of inherent existence.”

There are many statements like these which would otherwise be contradicted.

7 Nāgārjuna and Candrakīrti praise individual investigation and analysis of the meaning of selflessness as the cause of complete liberation

That is why it says in *Praise of the Sphere of Reality*:

The Dharma supremely cleansing the mind  
Is the lack of inherent existence.

And:

As long as one apprehends “I” and “mine”,  
One imputes aspects from without.  
When the two aspects of non-self<sup>359</sup> are seen,  
The seeds of conditioned existence<sup>360</sup> cease.

In *Commentary on the “Middle Way”* it also says:

Therefore, by viewing the self and mine as empty,  
The yogi will be completely liberated.

You should understand this in accordance with the statements and sustain the continuity of ascertaining selflessness and the absence of inherent existence.

<sup>357</sup> Tib. *chos*, usually translated here as “phenomenon.”

<sup>358</sup> Tib. *so sor rtog (pa)*, usually translated here as “individually investigate.”

<sup>359</sup> Tib. *bdag med*, usually translated here as “selflessness.”

<sup>360</sup> Tib. *srid pa*, usually translated here as “existence.”

- 8 The meaning of the *Dhāraṇī of Non-Conception* is also not merely to abandon mental activity; it implies investigation by means of wisdom followed by stabilization of the mind free from the observed object of the apprehension of true existence [373]

Here it says in *Stages of Meditation I*:

In *Dhāraṇī of Non-Conception (Nirvikalpavatarasūtra)* it says: “The signs of form and so forth are abandoned by not attending to them.” This implies that one does not attend<sup>361</sup> to whatever is not observed upon investigation with wisdom. It does not imply the mere absence of attention. It is not an abandonment through merely abandoning the attention which is the beginningless strong adherence to form and so forth, like in the absorption of non-discrimination.<sup>362</sup>

These passages from the scriptures are saying that the apprehension of signs should be abandoned through a meditation in which the mind does not attend to anything. Yet the intended meaning set forth is that you correctly investigate with analytical wisdom and then establish meditative equipoise on the meaning of your realization that not even a particle of the observed object of the apprehension of true existence is observed.

- 9 In *Stages of Meditation* the *Cloud of Jewels of Sūtra* is quoted and said to mean that one enters into signlessness only through analytical meditation on the meaning of emptiness and not by merely abandoning mental attention

In *Stages of Meditation II* it says:

There is the following statement: “When you search what the mind is, you realize that it is empty. When you thoroughly search for the mind realizing that, its entityness, you realize that it is empty. Through such a realization you enter the yoga of signlessness.”

This indicates that preparatory reflection is the entrance to signlessness. It very clearly indicates that it is impossible to enter into complete non-conceptuality by merely abandoning mental attention altogether, without analyzing the entityness of things by means of wisdom.

This statement from the *Cloud of Jewels of Sūtra* is saying that if you have not found the view of suchness through correct prior analysis, you [374] will not be able to engage in the meaning of suchness non-conceptually.

- 10 Advice that you need to understand the ways in which *Stages of Meditation* refutes the bad propositions of the Chinese Hashang, the assertions that one enters complete non-conceptuality by abandoning mental attention

In *Stages of Meditation III* it says:

In order to refute the presumptuous claim that you can then realize what is said to be inconceivable, beyond mind, and so forth by merely hearing and thinking about the profound meaning, it was taught that since these are objects known by the individual āryas themselves, they are inconceivable by others, and the like. This was also set forth in order to refute improper reflection upon apprehending the profound meaning as truly existent. However, it does not refute correct analysis by means of the wisdom of individual investigation. It is said that if that were refuted, many reasonings and scriptures would be contradicted. Although it is considered an entity of conceptual thought, non-conceptual wisdom arises from it because it is an entity of correct mental attention. Therefore those who want that wisdom should rely on it.

<sup>361</sup> The Tibetan expression *yid la byed pa* can mean “attention,” but also, more generally, “mental activity.” It is the mental factor directing the mind toward a given object.

<sup>362</sup> A level of the formless realm where the mind is so deeply absorbed that it abides in some kind of unconscious state.



It is very important to understand the way in which these statements refute the Chinese abbot's proposition that even without finding the view that settles suchness in dependence on scriptures and reasonings, suchness is realized by meditative equipoise without any mental attention whatsoever.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2B How those ways to sustain the view were set forth by siddha pandits of the past such as Atiśa

This has two points:

- 1 How the past Kadam masters explained the meaning intended by Atiśa

These methods of meditation also appear in earlier instructions on the stages of the path. In Potowa's *Jewel Box*<sup>363</sup> it says:

While hearing and thinking, through reasonings, some say,  
You settle that there is no inherent existence,  
But when you meditate, cultivate non-thought.<sup>364</sup>  
If you do that, this emptiness, unconnected,

Cultivated apart, will not serve as antidote.  
Thus even at the time of meditation,  
Investigate<sup>365</sup> that which you are familiar with:  
Not one nor many, dependent relation, and so forth.  
Also abide a bit in the non-conceptual.

If you meditate like that [375] you'll cure the afflictions.<sup>366</sup>  
Those who wish to follow the divine one,  
And wish to practice the system of the perfections—  
That is their method for cultivating wisdom.

Familiarized with the selflessness of persons  
They should engage in it accordingly.

- 2 Between the two, Mādhyamikas and Cittamātrins, Atiśa praised Nāgārjuna and his spiritual son. The explanations of his oral instructions are in agreement with Master Kamalaśīla

The Elder also said this:

Well, through whom is emptiness realized?  
Through him foretold by the Tathāgata,  
Who saw reality, that which is true,  
Nāgārjuna's student Candrakīrti.

Through oral instructions transmitted from them,  
The truth, reality, will be realized.

These instructions set forth by Atiśa in his *Madhyamaka Instructions (Madhyamakopadeśa)*, and Master Kamalaśīla's intentions which appear to be similar, are amplified here.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B3C-2C Specifics to do with the preparation, conclusion, and so forth of sustaining special insight

In order to sustain special insight in that manner, you should know how to observe the six preparatory practices and how to act during the actual meditation session, afterwards, and in between sessions. In particular, you should know the above methods for sustaining it free from laxity and excitement.

<sup>363</sup> The word Tib. *be'u bum* refers to a round container, Tibetan Buddhist practitioners use to stow and transport texts as well as other precious items. (Oral Explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

<sup>364</sup> Tib. *mi rtog*, usually translated here as "non-conceptuality."

<sup>365</sup> Tib. *so sor brtag*, usually translated here as "individually investigate."

<sup>366</sup> Tib. *de ltar bsgoms na nyon mongs gnyen po*, literally "If (you) meditate like that mental affliction antidote."

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6B4 The measure of having achieved special insight through meditation

This has five points:

- 1 Indication that it has been accomplished when pliancy arises through analytical meditation

As long as you analyze with the wisdom of individual investigation and the pliancy explained above does not arise in your meditation, it is a similitude of special insight. When pliancy has arisen, it is fully qualified special insight. The entity of pliancy and the way it arises are as explained above.

- 2 The mere pliancy of calm abiding is not enough

Yet since the calm abiding already accomplished has not deteriorated and also induces pliancy, the measure for having accomplished special insight is not the mere presence of pliancy. Well then, what is it? When the power of analytical meditation itself is able to induce pliancy, then there is special insight. It is the same for both the [376] special insight observing the varieties and the special insight observing the mode.

- 3 The source for the fact that such is the measure for having attained special insight

In accordance with that the *Sūtra Unraveling the Intended Meaning* also says:

“Bhagavan, as long as that bodhisattva has not achieved physical and mental pliancy, what do you call his mental attention that mentally attends to images within, to the objects of meditative stabilization relative to phenomena he has properly thought about?” “Maitreya, it is not special insight. It should be described as an inclination that corresponds with special insight, as something associated with it.”

And in *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom* it also says:

Thereby he abides in that physical and mental pliancy he has attained. He should individually investigate, with special aspiration, the meaning of precisely what he has reflected on, the object that is the internal image of his meditative stabilization. As long as physical and mental pliancy have not arisen, it is a mental attention that accords with special insight. However, when they have arisen, at that point it is special insight.

- 4 How firm meditative stabilization is induced when pliancy is induced by analysis

When it is able to induce pliancy by its own power, it is also able to induce single-pointedness of mind. Therefore, inducing calm abiding like this through the power of analytical meditation that individually investigates is a positive quality of having accomplished calm abiding before.

- 5 How misconceptions about this are therefore inappropriate

Through the analytical meditation practice of someone well-accomplished in calm abiding, the calm abiding thus becomes more excellent. That is why you should not hold that if you practice the analytical meditation of individual investigation, the stability factor of your meditation will lessen.

### Explanation of how calm abiding and special insight unite

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6C How calm abiding and special insight unite

This has two points:

- 1 The actual explanation
- 2 Advice on the need to abandon errors and come to an understanding in accordance with authentic texts as well as a summary of the general path contents

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6C1 The actual explanation [377]

This has six points:

A For calm abiding and special insight to unite, both calm abiding and special insight must have been achieved

If calm abiding and special insight have not been achieved as explained in the context of the measure for their accomplishment, there will be no cause for their union. That is why, for their union, both must have definitely been achieved.

B The achievement of special insight and the achievement of the union are simultaneous

Now, from the point where special insight is first achieved, the union is also achieved. It is therefore like this: When mental attention is achieved by the power of analytical meditation in dependence on prior calm abiding, that attention operating naturally without actual application as explained before in the context of calm abiding becomes the union.

C A scriptural passage concerning the union of calm abiding and special insight, saying that the two need to be united equal in strength

In *Śrāvaka Levels* it says:

To what extent do calm abiding and special insight mix and unite evenly, and why is it called the *path where they enter into union*?

From the nine mental abidings onward it is like this: One attains that which constitutes the ninth abiding associated with meditative equipoise, and in dependence on that full accomplishment of meditative stabilization one puts great effort into higher wisdom, the thorough differentiation of phenomena. At that point, the path of that thorough differentiation of objects will operate naturally and effortlessly. Since it is without actual application just like the path of calm abiding, the special insight will be completely pure and completely refined; it will follow calm abiding and will be completely conjoined with a sense of bliss. This is why calm abiding and special insight mix and even out and why it is called the *path where calm abiding and special insight enter into union*.

D A source for the time when the union is accomplished

In *Stages of Meditation III* it also says:

When [378] the mind is balanced due to freedom from laxity and excitement and becomes extremely clear with respect to suchness because it operates naturally, at that point you should establish equanimity by letting go of the effort. You should know that at that point you have accomplished the path of union between calm abiding and special insight.

It is as stated: from the juncture where fully qualified special insight has been achieved there is union.

E A source saying that at the time when investigation induces calm abiding, calm abiding and special insight simultaneously unite in mutual association

In *Instructions on the Perfection of Wisdom* it also says:

Then you observe that very image connected with the analysis. When you experience both of them in your mind through the continuum of uninterrupted and unobstructed mental attention, it is called a *path of union between calm abiding and special insight*. That is to say calm abiding and special insight are a pair and their relation is one of conjunction: they operate bound to each other.

“Unobstructed” means that there is no need to stop the process of analytical meditation and place the mind in non-conceptuality. Non-conceptuality is induced by that analytical meditation itself.

F Although analysis and stabilization were sequential, not simultaneous, they operate in correlation once united

To “experience both” is to experience both the calm abiding that observes the non-conceptual image and the special insight that observes the image connected with analytic conceptions. “Through the continuum” should be understood from the point of view that the analytical special insight and the calm abiding at the end of the analysis do not arise simultaneously. However, when there is actual calm abiding induced by the power of analysis, both special insight, the intense differentiation of phenomena that observes the mode, and calm abiding, the meditative stabilization that firmly and single-pointedly abides on the mode, operate in association. At such time calm abiding and special insight are mixed and operate equally.

For that, it is [379] necessary to gain a realization arisen from meditation. Therefore a collection of the two that allows one to individually investigate the meaning of selflessness from within a non-conceptual state of firm stability—like a little fish moving through water that remains still—may be posited as something that corresponds with calm abiding and special insight. Yet this is not the meaning of the actual union of calm abiding and special insight.

2B4B-2A2C-2C3A-3C2B-6C2 Advice on the need to abandon errors and come to an understanding in accordance with authentic texts as well as on the need to get to know the extensive explanation of the stages of the path from the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*

You should understand this manner in which calm abiding and special insight unite in accordance with what appears in those authentic texts rather than trusting explanations that fabricate<sup>367</sup> it in some other way.

Reasoned conclusions, scriptural source passages, and detailed methods for cultivating the stages of the path to enlightenment should be known from the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*.

2B4B-2B Brief summary of the topics of the general path<sup>368</sup>

This has three points:

1 General procedure

Now I will present a brief summary of topics of the general path. Before anything else: the root of the path rests on the way you rely on a spiritual teacher, so you should be clear and decisive about that. Then, if an uncontrived wish to take the essence of your leisure has arisen, it will urge you on to practice from within. Therefore, in order to generate it, you should meditate on the topics of the leisures and endowments. Then, if your endeavor for things of this life is not inverted, a serious endeavor for future lives will not arise. Therefore apply yourself to meditation on impermanence, the fact that the body you have obtained will not last long, and the way you will wander in the lower realms after death. At that time a natural attitude<sup>369</sup> of conscious fear will arise, so you should sincerely develop certainty about the positive qualities of the Three Refuges, abide by the vow of common refuge, and train in its trainings. Then you should develop—from many angles— the faith of conviction in actions and their effects, the foundation of all white dharmas. Having made it firm, you should try hard to engage in virtue and counteract non-virtue, always entering the path of the four powers. [380]

Once you have thus garnered the cycle of teachings of lesser beings, you should think about the general and specific disadvantages of cyclic existence a lot and turn your mind away as much as you can from cyclic existence in general. Then identify the causes from which cyclic existence arises, karma and mental afflictions, and develop the uncontrived desire to abandon them. Apply

<sup>367</sup> Tib. *sgro btags*, usually translated here as “superimpose.”

<sup>368</sup> This outline by Trijang Rinpoche occurs in the first chapter under 2B4B-2. Jé Tsongkhapa however appends this paragraph here without setting it off from the foregoing, and then continues with the outline: “In particular how to train in the Vajrayāna”, due to which the numbering of the outlines is not sequential here.

<sup>369</sup> Tib. *blo*, usually translated here as “mind.”

yourself to the three trainings in general, the path of liberation from cyclic existence, and in particular to the vow of individual liberation which you yourself have taken.

Once you have thus garnered the cycle of training of intermediate beings, contemplate that just like you yourself have fallen into the ocean of existence many others have. Train in the mind of enlightenment which has its root in love and compassion. You need to try as hard as you can for it to arise; without it the six perfections, the two stages, and so forth are like a roof without foundations. When you have had some little experience of it, you should assume it through the ritual and apply yourself to its trainings so that you make the aspirational mind as stable as you can. Then hear about the great waves of bodhisattva conduct. As you get to know the boundary between what you should counteract and what you should engage in, generate the desire to train in it. When that has arisen, take the engaging vow through the ritual. Train in the six perfections that ripen your own continuum and in the four means of gathering disciples and so forth that ripen the continua of others. In particular, risk your life to avoid a root downfall. Try hard not to be tainted by small and medium contaminations or infractions either. If you are, try hard to restore your vow.

Then you need to train in the last two perfections in particular. Therefore become skilled in the method for sustaining concentration and accomplish meditative stabilization. Do everything you can for the pure view of the two selflessnesses to arise in your mind. Having found it, understand how to sustain it by placing the mind in the context of the view and sustain it. Such concentration and wisdom are designated with the names of *calm abiding* and *special insight*. However, since they are not different from these two, they come within the points of training of the bodhisattva vow once it has been taken.

- 2 The difference between meditation that does or does not hit home and how to pierce through to the core through detailed thought

Also, [381] cultivating the lower paths, you should grow more and more keen on attaining the higher ones, and hearing about the higher ones, you should increasingly wish to accomplish the lower ones. When you meditate on them, you also need to purify your thoughts and balance your mind. Thus, if your respect for the spiritual teacher who guides you on the path appears to be low, you put effort into your manner of relying on him, for the root of your collection of goodness would otherwise be cut off. Likewise, if your enthusiasm for practice is little, you should make meditation on the topic of pleasures and endowments your main thing whereas if your adherence to this life increases, you should mainly meditate on the topics of impermanence and disadvantages of the lower realms. If you seem to neglect the ethical boundaries you have accepted, you should mainly meditate on actions and their effects. If your disillusionment with cyclic existence is little, your endeavor for liberation will be nothing but words, so you should reflect on the disadvantages of cyclic existence. If you do not seem to have the great strength of mind to make everything you do into something for the benefit of sentient beings, the root of the Mahāyāna will be cut off, so you should train in the aspirational mind of enlightenment along with its causes. In case you take the vow of the Victors' children and train in their conduct: if the bond which is the apprehension of signs appears to be very strong, you should break down the object aim of that apprehension with a reasoning consciousness and train in space-like and illusion-like emptiness. If your mind does not stay on its object of observation and appears to become a servant of distraction, you should mainly train in the stability factor of your single-pointed meditation. This is what the earlier masters taught.

- 3 Advice that your practice should not become one-sided

From these indications you should also understand situations that have not been explained. In brief, you should not become one-sided. Your mind should be serviceable in all virtuous directions.

## CHAPTER 6

### Conclusion

#### Explanation of how to train in the uncommon vehicle, the Vajrayāna

2B4B-2A2C-2C3B In particular how to train in the Vajrayāna

This has five points:

- 1 The advice to make sure and engage in mantra

In particular how to train in the Vajrayāna: Having thus trained in the paths that the two, sūtra and mantra, have in common, [382] you should doubtlessly engage in mantra because that path is extremely rare compared with other Dharma teachings and makes you complete the two collections quickly.

- 2 It is essential to rely on a spiritual teacher when you engage in mantra

When you engage in it, you should first make your teacher happy in excess of what was explained above according to statements in *Lamp for the Path to Enlightenment*. It should be someone who has at least all the characteristics explained there.

- 3 The gateway, receiving an empowerment, and the importance of guarding one's commitments and vows

Then you should first have your mental continuum ripened by means of an empowerment explained in the authentic tantra texts. Then you should hear and understand the commitments and vows taken on that occasion and guard them. If a root downfall occurs, even if the vow can be taken again, the development of positive qualities of the path will be greatly delayed in your continuum, so endeavor not to be tainted by that. Try not to be tainted by a serious downfall and apply the means of restoring your commitments if you get tainted by one<sup>370</sup> because they are the root for cultivating the paths. Without them it will be like a decrepit house whose side walls are collapsing. In the *Root Tantra of Mañjuśrī* it says:

The King of Sages did not teach  
Mantra attainments for the immoral.

Statements such as this are saying that there will be no great, medium, or small accomplishments whatsoever. In the Highest Yoga Tantras it also says that those who do not guard their commitments, have an inferior empowerment,<sup>371</sup> or<sup>372</sup> do not understand suchness will not accomplish anything despite their practice. Therefore someone who claims to cultivate the path without keeping his commitments and vows is straying far from the principles of mantra.

- 4 How to train in the paths of ripening and liberation

That being so, those who guard vows and commitments should gradually [383] train in the two yogas with and without signs according to the three lower tantra classes and in the two stages of yoga according to the highest one in order to cultivate the paths of mantra.

Here only the side of entering mantra is presented just nominally, so you must get to know these in detail from *Stages of the Path of Mantra*.

- 5 How to make your leisure and endowments meaningful in that manner

If you train in such a way, you will train in the complete body of the path that summarizes all the essential points of sūtra and tantra, and you will make the leisure you have achieved meaningful

<sup>370</sup> Tib. *brgya la gos na*, literally “if (you get) tainted with respect to the hundred (commitments).”

<sup>371</sup> An inferior empowerment is one in which either the one giving it or the one receiving it does not meet all the necessary requirements. (Oral explanation by Geshe Thubten Soepa)

<sup>372</sup> Tib. *dang*, usually translated here as “and.”



through your training. You will be able to make the jewel of the Victor's teachings develop in your own mind and that of others.

3 The conclusion of the explanation

This has three points:

- A How the treatise was composed
- B Dedicating the virtue of its composition
- C The author who put together the text and how he did it

3A How the treatise was composed

This has three points:

- 1 Explaining the greatness of the instructions
- 2 The purpose of writing a treatise that has such great qualities
- 3 Indication of the sources: the instructions from which the subject matter of this treatise was transmitted

3A1 Explaining the greatness of the instructions

This has three points:

- A The greatness that, in general, all the scriptures of sūtra appear as instructions

The Victor taught the sūtra and tantra approaches—

Two aspects of the path. The excellent texts,

On paths of all the sutric scriptures and treatises,

Easily come to be seen as direct instructions

Through the fearless faith that one is given.

- B The greatness that, in particular, all the essential points of the paths shared by sūtra and mantra are made clear

Common great vehicle paths explained in the tantras

Are all made clear, which supremely trains the mind.

- C The greatness of removing places of error about the meditative stabilization of yogis through a clear explanation of how the meditative stabilization common to non-Buddhists and Buddhists is achieved

Moreover you realize well the errors of paths

Sought by yogis and correctly explained

According to very clear texts by many scholars

On stabilization<sup>373</sup> common to Buddhists, non-Buddhists,

Hīnayāna, both kinds of Mahāyāna,

Higher and lower tantras and both stages.

3A2 The purpose of writing a treatise that has such great qualities

This summary of the stages of the path<sup>374</sup>

I rearranged for those who want liberation,

3A3 Indication of the sources: the instructions from which the subject matter of this treatise was transmitted [384]

The path of the view that's profound and extensive behavior

Passed on from the Regent, Maitreya, and noble Mañjuśrī

To the protector, Nāgārjuna, Asaṅga,

And Śāntideva, three rivers that were merged:

The supreme instructions of Śrī Atiśa.

<sup>373</sup> Tib. *ting nge 'dzin*, usually translated here as “meditative stabilization.”

<sup>374</sup> Tib. *byang chub gyi lam*, usually translated here as “path to enlightenment.”

3B Dedicating the virtue of composing the treatise as a cause for the propagation of the teachings

Through the merit gained here by my effort  
May the Victor's teachings, root of all welfare<sup>375</sup>  
Prosper, uncorrupted, for a long time.

3C The author who compiled the text and how he did it

This was a summary of all the scriptures of the Buddha, the tradition of the great trail-blazers Nāgārjuna and Asaṅga, the Dharma system of supreme beings who progress toward the level of omniscience. It was a presentation of the stages of the path to enlightenment that teaches in full all the stages to be practiced by the three types of beings, the meaning of instructions that I have heard and that were transmitted both from Gönpawa to Neuzurpa and from Chenngawa, from Potowa to Sharawa, and from Potowa to Dölpa. This additional summary of an extensive presentation of the stages of the path was composed by the learned and renounced monk Tsongkhapa Lozang Dragpai Pal on Mount Gédén.

This text, the *Middle Length Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment* composed by the Lord of the teachings of the three realms, the great Tsongkhapa, is also known as the *Lesser Exposition of the Path*. Its outlines are not restricted to the ones found in the original text. Since I had never seen nor heard about a more detailed explanatory division, I thought "If only there were a detailed division along the lines of the *Four Annotations*<sup>376</sup> on the *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path to Enlightenment*." With that pure intention I based myself on points taken from everywhere that were clear and matched in the outlines of the *Four Annotations*. Owing to conflicting arrangements and more condensed or more detailed divisions, I left some out and made insertions as appropriate in a given context. The outlines of new divisions that were necessary, for instance on the topics of calm abiding and the two truths, were put in wherever the argument could be broken up. I received the boon of profound and extensive explanations on this middle length exposition of the stages of the path from both the exalted master endowed with inconceivable great compassion, Büldü Dorjé Chang Lozang Yeshé Tenpai Gyaltsen Pal Zangpo of Drepung Gomang and the sovereign holding the essence of kindness that comprises all the refuge objects of the three times till the end of saṃsāra, Dorjé Chang Pabongkha Pal Zangpo [385] in that order. Written down by the indolent idler lying around and lacking practice, the guise of a teacher, the tutor by the reincarnation name of Ganden Trijang called Lozang Yeshé Tenzin Gyatso, in the Tibetan year of 2903 and the Western year of 1966 in Dharamsala, in the state of Himachal Pradesh, India. I kindly request impartial scholars to correct any distortions—additions, omissions, and errors—that I have made.

Through this virtuous effort may all lives  
Be undivorced from this supreme, complete,  
And flawless path. May I grasp all the Victor's teachings,  
And gain the power to guide all migratory beings.

Prayer for the purity of publications

Meant for a multiplicity of good things, either present or future, such as the complete propagation of the Śākya lion's long-standing tradition that points out the path of non-harm and peace all over the world, the following lines were composed as a dedication prayer that may be appended to any publication or reproduction of Buddhist scriptures associated with non-partisan schools of thought by the Śākya's monk, exponent of the Dharma, the Lord of Speech, Lozang Tenzin Gyatso.

<sup>375</sup> Tib. *skye dgu'i phan bde'i rtsa ba*, literally "root of the welfare of all living beings."

<sup>376</sup> Well-known text book by scholars of Sera Monastery. It contains a detailed outline and annotations to Jé Tsongkhapa's *Great Exposition of the Stages of the Path*.

Of the same taste as that ocean-like peace—liberation:  
The slow-moving river of limitless Dharma that flows there  
Whose every word component removes some stains  
Of the three poisons—the nectar of good explanations.

Through the massive virtue of its publication  
May open the hundreds of thousands of doors of pure Dharma.  
May all five kinds of beings without exception  
Command the jewel treasure of definite goodness.